

Their Lordships Divided?

The Representation of Women in the Transitional House of Lords 1999-2009

**A Thesis Submitted to the University of Manchester for the
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Abstract

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Their Lordships Divided? The Representation of Women in the House of Lords 1999-2009

This thesis set out to discern how women's representation, as a multi-faceted concept and process, plays out in the context of the House of Lords. The primary motivation of this inquiry concerned the reality that women are persistently under-represented in political chambers worldwide. Beyond this, scholarship has overlooked the site of the House of Lords despite significant advances made in women's presence that facilitate closer analysis. This is also compounded by the status of the chamber itself: in its 'transitional' phase post the passing of the House of Lords Act 1999 the chamber is suggested to act with greater legitimacy and effectiveness. Finally concentration upon the representation of women in the transitional House of Lords is pertinent as the chamber remains in a state of flux and there is an opportunity to prioritise women's representation as a key plank of the reform agenda. Normative feminist interpretations of representation are the primary frameworks of analysis. Methodologically, this research inquiry synthesised and triangulated the use of quantitative and qualitative research techniques in order to unpack the processes and influences upon all dimensions of women's political representation in the House of Lords. This helped to present a sufficiently nuanced analysis. There have been obvious attempts to numerically feminise the chamber, although there are systemic *de facto* and *de jure* reserved seats for men in the chamber which guard against radical improvements in women's descriptive presence. Women peers undertake important roles and the House of Lords maintains a culture and institutional norms that are befitting for women and feminised styles of politics which is positive for the symbolic representation of women. Finally, women peers actively seek to represent women through the agenda-setting features of the Lords, although the way this is manifested is mediated by political affiliation. The opportunities to substantively represent women through the legislative features of the House of Lords are narrower, although both male and female peers have successfully influenced legislative output to act for women.

Declaration

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Dedication

For Gilly and Ronnie (my parents)

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1. Introduction

Concern about the political representation of women has been premised in a number of ways, often based upon three main dimensions that constitute women's political representation. The descriptive representation of women is concerned with how a political institution reflects the social composition of the citizenry (Duverger 1955; Vallance 1979; Phillips 1980; Vallance 1982; Vallance 1984; Vallance and Davies 1986; Randall 1987; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Childs 2000; Edwards and Chapman 2000; Criddle 2001; Mackay 2001; Dovi 2002; Edwards and McAllister 2002). The symbolic representation of women suggests that the presence of women politicians may influence the aspirations, attitudes, and actions of women citizens (Leader 1977; Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002; Tremblay 2003; Lawless 2004; Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007; Koning 2009). Finally, substantive representation relates to the expression and representation of women's issues through the political agenda (Leader 1977; Dahlerup 1988; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Norris 1996; Bochel and Briggs 2000; Reingold 2000; Tremblay and Pelletier 2000; Wangnerud 2000; Childs 2001b; Childs 2001a; Lovenduski 2001; Childs 2002b; Read and Marsh 2002; Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Childs 2004b; Childs and Withey 2004; Bird 2005b; Chaney 2006; Childs 2006; Childs and Withey 2006; Tremblay 2006; Annesley and Gains 2007; Beckwith 2007; Celis, Childs et al. 2008; Curtin 2008; Catalano 2009). The political representation of women raises many questions, most often organised around the central problem: why does women's presence matter? Thematically this body of work addresses important political concepts such as justice, representation and democracy however it is notable that the existing literature on women has omitted to consider second chambers and non-elected political institutions such as the UK House of Lords.

In the House of Lords, the proportion of women peers almost doubled overnight when the House of Lords Act 1999 received Royal Assent on November 11th 1999, despite there being no net increase numerically. In a wider programme of constitutional reform, New Labour moves to reduce the hereditary principle in the House of Lords increased women's presence from 8.8% to 15.8%.¹ The removal of most hereditary peers was the first stage of reform and the Lords entered its 'transitional' phase.² One decade later the number of

¹ Source: House of Lords Information Office.

² Transitional refers to the House of Lords as undergoing a process of reform (the removal of the hereditary peers as the first stage) which has not yet been completed.

women peers has increased from 106 at the start of the 1999/2000 parliamentary session to 148 in March 2009; an increase of 40%. Moreover women constitute an unparalleled one fifth (20.0%) of the Lords membership (House of Lords 2010a, 41).³ The attainment of such unprecedented levels of representation facilitates inquiry into the roles, contributions and activities of women peers within the House of Lords which is especially important as women's representation in this chamber has been noticeably overlooked.

Attention to women's presence in the House of Lords is important for three reasons: firstly due to women's increased numbers and presence; secondly due to the changing role of the chamber and thirdly because the chamber is undergoing a process of reform and modernisation. The House of Lords has played an increasing role in the political process over the past decade, leading some scholars to suggest the chamber is becoming more effective and legitimate (Russell and Sciara 2006; Cowley 2007, 181; Russell and Sciara 2007a). Even though it is suggested that parliament has a peripheral influence upon policy making, the House of Lords may sometimes steer or modify government policy (Cowley 2002; Cowley 2007; Russell and Sciara 2008). Although the House of Lords is undemocratic in the sense that its members are appointed rather than popularly elected, it is still a component part in the political process and therefore is a significant site of inquiry for academic consideration. The changing nature of the role of the House of Lords means that it should not be ignored as a site of inquiry but actively studied.

Concentration upon the representation of women in the 'transitional' House of Lords is also pertinent as the chamber remains in a state of flux. The removal of most hereditary peers through the enactment of the House of Lords Act 1999 was deemed the first stage of reform, however further reform subsequently stalled, with ongoing debate following the conception of the Coalition Government in May 2010 at the time of writing. A research agenda focused upon women's political representation in the transitional House of Lords from 1999-2009 is key to understanding the nature of representation and how the different dimensions of women's representation play out as further change is debated. Moreover, when blueprints for further House of Lords reform have emerged, all manner of concerns have been addressed: from the mode of composition, size of chamber, its relationship with the Commons, even speculation has arisen as to what a reformed or new institution ought to be called. These issues should not be dismissed; but should be considered alongside the

³ Correct as of 31 March 2010.

issue of women's under representation. The improvements made in women's presence over the last decade in the House of Lords could be forfeited if the construction of a new or reformed institution fails to prioritise this issue. Women's representation has certainly not been centralised as a feature of future reforms and should be illuminated whilst constitutional issues remain on the political agenda in order to add a vital extra dimension to any future proposals for reform.

The Political Representation of Women in the UK

The political representation of women is commonly understood in terms of its three main dimensions. The descriptive representation of women refers to whether the composition of a legislature reflects the proportion of women in the citizenry (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002; Celis and Childs 2008). The symbolic representation of women suggests that the presence and actions of women politicians may influence the aspirations, attitudes, and participation of women citizens (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002; Tremblay 2003; Lawless 2004; Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007; Koning 2009). The substantive representation of women relates to the expression and representation of women's issues in the political process. Calls for an increased presence of women in politics are often premised upon a speculated relationship between the descriptive and the substantive representation of women based upon a contention that once in power women will seek act for women (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002). Notably, the persistent under-representation of women in politics is a starting point in the exploration of women's political representation. This section pays attention to women's political presence in the UK and situates the House of Lords alongside other political institutions. Including the House of Lords as a point of focus will broaden the body of existing research by addressing an appointed institution that has been omitted from contemporary study.

Although just one aspect of women's representation, the descriptive representation of women remains a useful foundation for any academic inquiry. Put another way the 'feminizing' of politics can be understood as the 'insertion and integration of women in terms of numbers (and ideas)' (Lovenduski 2005, 12). The feminization of politics in terms of women's numbers is becoming more evident in elected political institutions; however women still remain largely under-represented despite making up approximately one half of the population. Worldwide, the calculated proportion of women parliamentarians across all

political legislatures is just 18.4%; therefore over four-fifths of all politicians are men.⁴ When this is disaggregated by the type of political chamber, the share of women in lower houses or single chambers is calculated to be 18.6%. For upper chambers or senates, this proportion is marginally reduced at 17.5% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009).

The advances in women's numbers and presence in the Lords are embedded amidst wider tiers of political representation. Conceived with the over-arching theme of equality in mind, the establishment of new elected political institutions in Scotland, Wales and London saw women's numerical presence reach unprecedented levels. In the 2007 elections for the nationally devolved institutions women comprised 33.3% of Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and 46.7% of Assembly Members (AMs) in the Welsh Assembly (Mackay and Kenny 2007). The proportion of women AMs in the London Assembly reached 32% in the 2008 elections, and in the recent elections for the European Parliament in 2009, women comprised 33% of UK Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). These levels of women's representation clearly outstrip the worldwide averages yet the miscellaneous distribution of women legislators across UK political institutions is quite striking. Women's numerical representation is particularly higher in the devolved and sub-national institutions, whereas at Westminster women's presence is approximately one fifth of each chamber. In the House of Commons, the proportion of women increased from 9.2% in 1992 to 18.2% in 1997. Between 2005 and 2010, women comprised 19.8% of all Members of Parliament (MPs), rising to 22% following the 2010 general election. In March 2010, the proportion of women in the House of Lords stood at 20.0%. The assertion that 'where power is, women are not' (Vallance 1982) appears appropriate when considering Westminster and especially the House of Commons as the main powerhouse of politics within the UK.

When considering women's representation in the House of Lords set against the backdrop of UK wide politics it is fairly typical in the sense that whilst incremental advances are apparent, women are still largely under-represented. The elected institutions such as the House of Commons (Vallance 1979; Rasmussen 1983; Vallance 1984; Norris and Lovenduski 1993; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Lovenduski 1997; Bochel and Briggs 2000; Childs 2000; Ward 2000; Childs 2001b; Childs 2001a; Lovenduski 2001; Childs 2002a; Childs 2002b; Harrison 2002; Ward 2002; Childs 2003; Cowley and Childs 2003;

⁴ Correct as of May 2009.

Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Childs 2004a; Childs 2004b; Childs and Withey 2004; Bird 2005a; Childs 2005; Childs and Withey 2006; Childs 2008; Catalano 2009), the Scottish Parliament (Bradbury, Mitchell et al. 2000; Bennie, Denver et al. 2001; Busby and MacLeod 2002; Russell, Mackay et al. 2002; Mitchell and Bradbury 2004; Mackay and Kenny 2007; Mackay 2009), the Welsh Assembly (Bradbury, Mitchell et al. 2000; Edwards and Chapman 2000; Chaney and Fevre 2002; Edwards and McAllister 2002; Russell, Mackay et al. 2002; Edwards and Chapman 2003; Chaney 2004; Mitchell and Bradbury 2004; Chaney 2006), the European Parliament (Vallance and Davies 1986; Harrison 2005; Kantola 2009; Harrison 2010; Kantola 2010) and at local government level (Mackay 2001; Borisyuk, Rallings et al. 2007; Bochel and Bochel 2008; Game 2009) have been subject to increased academic and media attention in terms of women's representation. However this is not true of the Lords where only a small number of works have considered women's representation (Iwi 1953; Morgan 1975; Drewry and Brock 1983; Russell 2000; Sutherland 2000; Crewe 2005; Takayanagi 2008) and none of these literatures have focused upon the chamber during its current transitional phase. As such there is a notable lacuna in the contemporary academic literature devoted to women's representation and the House of Lords and this thesis seeks to remedy this.

The purpose of this thesis is to plug a gap in the existing literature by exploring women's representation in the contemporary House of Lords through the descriptive, symbolic and substantive strands. This study aims to explicate fully the positioning of women in the chamber, and analyse the contributions, roles and behaviours of women peers in the current transitional House. This will allow a fuller picture of women's political representation in the UK to emerge, as well as draw attention towards women's presence in second chambers, potentially highlighting new directions of study towards these overlooked institutions. Moreover, as the House of Lords remains in a transitional state, this thesis could add to the discourse on House of Lords reform. The main research questions which structure the thesis are now considered.

Research Questions

This thesis discusses three principal empirical questions pertaining to women's representation in the House of Lords. These questions are certainly not original in terms of the study of women's political representation, however in respect of the 'transitional' House of Lords they have yet to be posed:

1. How are women represented in the House of Lords?
2. How do women peers act in the House of Lords?
3. Do women peers represent women in the House of Lords?

First of all, the primary question is aimed at analysing the descriptive dimension of women's representation in the House of Lords. Counting the numbers of women in political institutions remains important and necessary because women continue to be underrepresented as parliamentarians (Randall 2002, 114). Probing why women are underrepresented in political institutions is not a novel venture; there are numerous studies world-wide that consider the myriad of factors that influence women's presence in a wide range of political chambers. Whilst there has been a heavy concentration upon elected political chambers there is little knowledge on appointed political chambers and how women's presence fares in these chambers. Beyond this, there will be wider focus on the descriptive representation of women in terms of the diversity of social characteristics and professional backgrounds of women who gain access to the House of Lords.

The second question considers the symbolic aspect of women's political representation in the House of Lords and women's participation in the work of the chamber. The symbolic representation of women suggests that women politicians may influence the feelings and interests of women citizens simply by virtue of their presence. Such perceptions may be based upon how women representatives 'act' as peers in the House of Lords, therefore it is important to understand the culture and institutional norms of the Lords and consider the efficacy and participation of women peers which may influence public perceptions and hence contribute to the symbolic representation of women, although taking into account the views of citizens towards women peers is beyond the scope of this study. The chapter also focuses upon whether women peers seek to act as role-models to other women.

Finally the third question is concerned with interrogating the substantive representation of women in the House of Lords primarily through the actions of women peers. Examining if, when and how women peers represent women through the work of the House of Lords, both successfully and unsuccessfully, is one way to test whether the feminist interpretations of representation explored in chapter 2 are applicable for the House of Lords.

Overview of the Thesis

The following chapter sets up the main theoretical framework of the thesis. The point of departure for any research on women's representation is an examination of classic political representation scholarship. It is commonplace for Pitkin (1967) to underpin any discussion. This must also be in conjunction with feminist normative texts which have sought to bring a feminist perspective to the notion of political representation. A key literature is *The Politics of Presence* (1995) by Anne Phillips which creates the core architecture through which to analyse the political representation of women for the empirical chapters of this thesis, as well as subsequent feminist engagement and interpretation of women's representation (Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002). Following the normative section, the chapter turns to review the way in which empirical study has considered the different dimensions of women's political representation.

The third chapter lays out the research design formulated for the thesis by reflecting upon the triangulated methodology used to generate the data and evidence for the main empirical chapters. The use of a feminist lens and multiple methods for this thesis has helped broaden and deepen the scope of study in order to highlight and unpack the nuances of women's representation in the House of Lords. This dexterous application of research methods using documentary evidence, interviews and statistical analysis helped to fulfil the aims of this research project.

Chapter 4 presents an exposition of the House of Lords in terms of its composition and main functions. The inclusion of this chapter is highly important because Lovenduski argues that in order to 'understand the feminization of politics it is necessary to understand the institutions in which the processes are taking place' (Lovenduski 2005, 11). Therefore this chapter considers the House of Lords in juxtaposition to other second chambers globally, taking into account basis of composition, mode of composition, size of chamber and term of office. The chapter also presents a fine-grained exposition of the main types of peers in the House of Lords. Finally, the chapter summarises the main roles, powers, functions and norms of the House of Lords.

The fifth chapter considers the descriptive dimension of women's representation in the House of Lords. Firstly, the numerical aspect of women's descriptive representation is explored by analysing the main pathways used to access the House of Lords in order to identify the facilitators and constraints to women's presence in the Lords. The chapter then

turns to consider the diversity of women peers using a variety of different socio-economic characteristics. Finally, the attitudes of women peers' towards ideas of descriptive representation in political life and the House of Lords are reflected upon. This chapter finds that whilst there has been a concerted effort on the part of (most) party elites and the House of Lords Appointments Commission to bring more women into the House of Lords this has only resulted in incremental advances because systemically the set up of the House of Lords guards against radical advances in women's presence.

The symbolic representation of women in the House of Lords is the focus of chapter 6. The initial section presents an analysis of women's participation in the House of Lords by exploring everyday activities such as attendance and participation as one measure of how women peers act in the chamber. Following this analysis, the chapter assesses how women peers experience the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords and whether the institution is amenable to women peers using data from interviews. Lastly, the attitudes of women peers towards notions of symbolic representation are explored including their relevance for the House of Lords and the idea of the role-model effect. The findings from this chapter suggest that for the most part the institutional norms and culture of the chamber are befitting for women peers and feminised styles of politics. The formal and informal practices of the chamber entrench consensual relations meaning the overriding culture is less masculinised than other adversarial political chambers such as the House of Commons. Thus women peers are active and visible members in the House of Lords which could be positive for the symbolic representation of women, although there is a caveat in that this good example occurs in the less powerful chamber of Westminster which operates at a subterranean level publicly.

Chapter 7 centres upon the substantive representation of women in the House of Lords and develops in three directions. The chapter primarily gauges whether women's issues are prioritised by women peers, and considers whether and how women peers have managed to raise women's issues onto the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords through starred questions, supplementary questions and non-legislative debates. The chapter then considers how easily the legislative functions of the House of Lords can be used by women peers to substantively represent women taking into account the use of amendments and private members' bills. Thereafter the attitudes and predispositions of women peers towards the notion of the substantive representation of women are unpacked. The findings

suggest that women peers do seek to represent women, most often through raising and advancing issues onto the agenda of the House of Lords. The way women peers approach the substantive representation of women, either as a catalyst or in a supportive or reactive manner, is coloured by political affiliation, which also affects how women's issues are framed. Notably male peers are secondary actors in the substantive representation of women, although there is some evidence that male peers are taking the lead on acting for women legislatively in the House of Lords through Private Members' Bills.

Chapter 8 first of all reviews the rationale of study and revisits the research questions posed in this introductory section. Thereafter the findings and contributions made by this thesis are laid out in terms of the theoretical study of women's political representation; its empirical insights and the mixed methods approach utilised. Finally features of the future reform of the House of Lords will be discussed in respect of how this would influence the political representation of women according to the findings of this thesis.

Overall this thesis demonstrates that the political representation of women in the transitional House of Lords primarily matters in terms of justice and the under-representation of women peers matters in terms of the diversity of women in the chamber and how this links to the expertise of the composition and the issues and interests raised and acted upon in the chamber. Yet the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords have been highlighted as more befitting to feminised styles of politics meaning that women peers play a vital role in the House of Lords, which has been overlooked by feminist scholars. Finally, this thesis could be used to feminise the contours of debate on future reform of the Lords to ensure that the status of women's representation can be maintained or enhanced in a post-transitional House of Lords.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature focused upon women's representation and is made up of two distinct sections. The first section examines the classic normative accounts on political representation. Pitkin's (1967) interpretation of representation provides a theoretical grounding for the first half of this chapter in terms of identifying the descriptive, symbolic, and substantive strands. This will be followed by a review of contemporary feminist insights into the concept using the work of Anne Phillips (1995) as an important point of departure. In addition, the theoretical contributions of other feminist authors such as Mansbridge (1999) and Dovi (2002) will be discussed, who have consolidated, refined and developed the theoretical framework offered by Phillips. The latter section addresses empirical scholarship on women's representation and is organised around the main strands of the concept, descriptive, symbolic and substantive, with a particular emphasis on literature focused upon the UK that have informed this study of women's representation in the House of Lords.

The Theoretical Concept of Political Representation

The first serious conceptual analysis of political representation was undertaken by Pitkin (1967). This seminal contribution has underpinned the bulk of any subsequent scholarship that engages with representation. Pitkin begins by surveying the linguistic derivations of the word 'representation' to explicate its various meanings. From this overview the basic meaning of representation is clarified to be simply 'making present again' in the literal and physical sense. However, such a straightforward definition does not truly elucidate the complexity of the concept or the nuances between the 'entire family of words on the root represent-' (Pitkin 1967). Therefore in order to produce a refined understanding of the concept, Pitkin draws distinctions between four main types of representation: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic and substantive.

The first type of representation that Pitkin identifies is formalistic representation, comprised of two perspectives, whereby representation is understood in terms of how structures and actions are prescribed (Pitkin 1967, 39). The authorization view is defined in terms of giving and having authority. It suggests that formal representation is based upon an agreement between the represented and the representative. In this case elections are seen as an enabler to representation; representatives have attained a right to act which did not exist previously. This is in contrast to the accountability view of formalistic representation by which representation and its processes are more circumspect and the

representative is in effect held to account. Therefore elections act as a safeguard for the represented and can be used to curb or stop the actions of the representative and make them answerable to the represented (Pitkin, 1967, 59).

According to Pitkin the formalistic view of representation is unsatisfactory because it centres upon the mere transaction of representation, rather than activity: 'Neither can tell us anything about what goes on *during* representation, how a representative ought to act or what he is expected to do, how to tell whether he has represented well or badly' (Pitkin 1967, 58). This assessment provides a glimpse of how Pitkin prioritises the activity of representation over and above other understandings of the concept. This type of 'acting for' or substantive representation is overlooked once the 'standing for' dimensions, descriptive and symbolic, of representation have been examined.

Descriptive representation is recognised as an understanding that a political assembly should reflect or mirror the general population it serves. A political institution can claim to be representative once an exact correspondence between the citizenry and the assembly has been achieved. This strand of representation merely emphasises 'the depiction of something visible' (Pitkin 1967, 67). It does not prescribe any further necessary features beyond an institution's composition. 'Descriptive representation introduces the idea of correspondence or likeness and the importance of resembling one's constituents' (Pitkin 1967, 111).

Pitkin finds this interpretation of representation inadequate for a number of reasons. For one, the likelihood of an institution's membership producing a miniature version of the citizenry is seen to be impossible. Furthermore, the question of what is to be descriptively represented may be constantly in flux (Pitkin 1967, 87). There could be competing threads of descriptive representation that could not be fulfilled adequately in a single legislature. Moreover the assumption that a representative's characteristics may influence their behaviour is seen as intangible because there can be: 'no simple correlation' (Pitkin 1967, 89). Pitkin espouses that descriptive aspects cannot be used to predict or guarantee political behaviour or activity. In this view descriptive representation is not comprehensive and only presents a narrow account of representation which fails to capture political activity within it.

Symbolic representation presents the idea that something or someone can symbolise something else. Pitkin uses the example of a flag representing a nation; the Star-Spangled Banner is a symbolic representation of the USA. Similarly, a human being can stand for a nation much like a flag can. Thus, a monarch or a president can symbolise a nation as a flag can do. 'To say that something symbolises something else is to say that it calls to mind, and even beyond that evokes emotions or attitudes appropriate to the absent thing.....we are emphasising the symbol's power to evoke feelings or attitudes' (Pitkin 1967, 96-97).

It is important to stress that Pitkin's perspective is that symbolic representation does not oblige any activity on the part of the symbol; they are 'essentially passive' (Pitkin 1967, 107). However, Pitkin does recognise that a representative does have to make themselves acceptable through some activities, distinct from acting for constituents. The representative is a: 'symbol-maker, making himself into an accepted leader through his activity' (Pitkin, 1967, 107). From this perspective symbolic representation is bound up with some partial interpretations of activity that may or may not be acceptable to citizens. Pitkin is careful to stipulate that this activity is: 'A kind of activity to foster belief, loyalty, satisfaction with their leaders, among the people. Representation becomes identified with effective leadership' (Pitkin, 1967, 107). This dimension of representation is again unsatisfactory for Pitkin because symbolic representation is not contingent on an activity in terms of acting for the represented and is more to do with the feelings the represented construct about their representatives.

The final type of representation delimited by Pitkin is substantive representation. This strand of representative is essentially 'acting for' and takes into account the roles and activities of a representative: 'The activity of representing as acting for others must be defined in terms of what the representative does and how he does it, or in some combination of these two considerations' (Pitkin 1967, 143).

However, the representative may act in different ways with different agendas. 'Acting for others involves special behaviour and obligations. People do behave differently, reach decisions differently, when they are acting on behalf of others' (Pitkin 1967, 118). In times when there is divergence between the wishes of the represented and the actions of the representative, the representative must be willing to explain their reasoning for such discord, be open to reconsider their views and be able to justify their choice.

The descriptive and symbolic views of representation are deemed inadequate because they do not engage with the activity of representing. The foremost reasoning of Pitkin is that the 'standing for' modes of representation provide incomplete views of representation, they 'do not exhaust the concept of representation' (Pitkin 1967, 111). As Pitkin states 'in the realm of action, the representative's characteristics are relevant only insofar as they affect what he does.....the activity of representing as acting for others must be defined in terms of what the representative does and how he does it,' (Pitkin, 1967 142-143).

However, even though Pitkin prioritises substantive accounts of representation, descriptive representation has been endorsed by others, and has been subject to increasing sympathy over the last fifty years. Such arguments are not new. John Adams, one of the 'Founding Fathers' of the USA, was a known advocate of the ideas of descriptive representation and suggested that parliament ought to be: 'In miniature an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason, and act like them' (quoted in Goodin 2004, 453). Yet such views were not shared amongst all of the 'Founding Fathers'. Hamilton dismissed these ideas as impracticable, unnecessary and contrived due to the possible dilution of powers to the ruling elite yet he did acknowledge some benefits as this quotation reveals 'all classes of citizens should have some of their own number in the representative body, in order that their feelings and interests may be the better understood and attended to' (Hamilton 1788). The raising of 'feelings and interests' is an early recognition of the linkage between who is in power and what their subsequent actions. Questioning the importance of reflecting the 'feelings and interests' of the citizenry raises important questions as to how the descriptive representation of women overlaps with other strands of representation such as symbolic or substantive representation.

However in the context of UK politics, Birch argued that the descriptive representation arguments 'rarely cut much ice' due to the homogenous nature of the country. He argued that there were few fault lines that divided Britain along social or religious grounds, therefore the impact of such arguments has been limited (Birch 1971, 20).

Yet more recently 'microcosmic notions of representation in Britain' (Judge 1999, 33) have gained momentum. The reality of democratic deficits in representative institutions and subsequent demands from under-represented or marginalised groups has shifted an emphasis towards descriptive ideas of representation. The persistent empirical fact of

women's under representation has led to claims for their enhanced presence. Thus, feminist engagement with the concept and processes of representation has consolidated in recent times and these interpretations shall now feature for discussion.

The Politics of Presence

Feminist writers have increasingly theorised upon the subject of women's representation. In particular, *The Politics of Presence* (1995) authored by Anne Phillips has emerged as an important treatise where the dominant politics of ideas is discussed in contrast to a proposed politics of presence. The conventional understanding of a politics of ideas refers to an understanding of difference, and political attachment is concerned with political ideas and output (Phillips 1995, 1). The politics of ideas rejects the notion that who does the representing matters. This is closely aligned with Pitkin's main criticism of descriptive representation; emphasis should focus upon 'policy, preferences and ideas' (Phillips 1995, 4) rather than the individual representative.

Phillips accepts the potency of such claims, however points out that politics of ideas arguments overlook the way in which some types of people such as women or ethnic minorities have been excluded from participating in political life. The politics of presence calls for 'a major reframing of the problems of democratic equality' (Phillips 1995, 5) in which there would be fair representation for the marginalised achieved by quotas in order to satisfy their demands for inclusion. Importantly Phillips does not advocate a rebuttal of the politics of ideas in direct opposition to the politics of presence, rather that a pathway can be found that intersects both understandings: 'It is in the relationship between ideas and presence that we can best hope to find a fairer system of representation' (Phillips 1995, 25). The move towards a politics of presence can then be argued normatively in terms of symbolic and substantive reasons: first of all by creating a precedent to rule; by broadening the policy spectrum; improving advocacy for the disadvantaged and finally articulating overlooked interests. Each of these shall now be considered.

The primary normative claim made for a politics of presence draws on symbolic arguments. The domination of one group within a legislature means that the excluded are in effect subordinate (Phillips 1995, 39). A panacea for this would be the use of proportional representation as a guarantee of fair legislative presence. This would overturn previous historical exclusion by creating a precedent for the previously excluded to govern and thus create political inclusion.

Secondly, the nature of the representative process is highlighted by Phillips as problematic because the policies a party promotes may not encapsulate a whole spectrum of issues. Whereas some can be elucidated from a party's manifesto, when other issues emerge that have not warranted prior discussion it is not always simple to ascertain how our representative would think or act with an autonomous decision, or to speculate how a political party would direct its representatives. It is at this stage additional characteristics of a representative such as sex, ethnicity or religion 'become of major significance' (Phillips 1995, 43) and descriptive and substantive representation may be intertwined.

The third argument suggests that descriptive representatives are necessary at particular stages of the political process because at certain times only disadvantaged representatives can deliver vigorous advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups. Phillips argues: 'When there is a significant under-representation of disadvantaged groups at the point of final decision, this can and does have serious consequences' (Phillips 1995, 44). Other representatives have the independence to act, however the failure to include the disadvantaged at any stage of the decision-making process is disconcerting as there would be a failure to include important perspectives of the marginalised.

Finally, the fourth reason in favour of a politics of presence suggests that there are ideas and concerns of marginalised groups that may not have been articulated within the confines of the political process. Phillips argues the disadvantaged may not 'formulate these new issues if they are not first drawn into the political process' (Phillips 1995, 45). Therefore once they become representatives they are well placed to widen the existing spectrum of policy issues.

The four arguments detailed above establish the theoretical basis for a politics of presence in terms of disadvantaged groups. Phillips then makes the normative case for the fair representation of women (Phillips 1995, 62). It is argued that women's under-representation ought to be considered in terms of justice between men and women; as related to symbolic arguments of women's presence, where the potential of the role-model effect is raised; male dominated institutions would overlook and disregard issues of particular interest to women and finally women may have a different relationship to politics and that their presence will improve politics.

The first argument recognises women's under-representation as being unjust. Historically, women have been noticeably absent or sidelined from political participation and life. Within the UK women only gained suffrage rights in 1918 and the right to stand as a candidate in general elections the same year. One decade later women were granted suffrage rights equal to men. Phillips suggests that were there a level playing field for women and men, then women and men ought to be randomly distributed in political legislatures. Yet women are under-represented due to intentional or structural discrimination, as well as prescribed and entrenched gendered roles that have stymied women's fair representation in public and political life (Phillips 1995, 64). Furthermore, Phillips raises that men are not genetically superior to women, and that any suggestion that men have enhanced political skills is as a result of their monopoly of social goods and their domination of legislatures, facilitated by structural barriers that prohibit women's full participation (Phillips 1995, 65). Therefore, Phillips reasons, the justice argument stands up.

The second argument denotes that successful women politicians can be role-models. This argument aligns with symbolic arguments of representation. In terms of women's representation, these are constituted as the requirement for women to be physically resident within a political institution in order to 'evoke feelings or attitudes' (Pitkin 1967, 97) amongst women so they feel represented by virtue of women's physical presence. There is a suggestion that an increased numerical representation of women would have a positive effect upon the self-esteem of women, who would then be more inclined to consider such roles. Moreover, it is speculated that entrenched gender roles in particular areas of public life and professions would be challenged and disrupted (Phillips 1995, 63).

However Phillips follows the pathway of Pitkin in that it 'still overlooks what is peculiar to representation as a political act. When democracy has been widely understood as a matter of representing particular policies or programme or ideas, this leaves a question mark over why the sex of the representative should matter' (Phillips 1995, 66). Once again, standing for arguments are seen as unsatisfactory because they do not address policy in terms of conception, processes nor outcomes. Phillips dismisses this argument quite rapidly in that it has 'little purchase on politics per se' (Phillips, 1995, 63), in much the same way that Pitkin found symbolic representation was focused upon feelings rather than any action.

The third argument engages with the idea that women's under-representation from legislatures means that particular interests are overlooked. The crux of this argument contends that women are more likely to act for women than their male counterparts. The following extract identifies the key components of this argument suggesting that there are particular interests that arise from the experience of being female which are overlooked by an overwhelmingly male composed polity:

There are particular needs, interests and concerns that arise from women's experience and these will be inadequately addressed in a politics that is dominated by men. Equal rights to vote have not proved strong enough to deal with this problem; there must also be equality among those elected to office (Phillips, 1995, 66).

The immediate problem that develops from such an argument concerns the existence of clearly defined 'women's interest'. Indeed, Phillips herself asks: 'Do women have a distinct and separate interest?' (Phillips, 1995, 67) Whilst accepting that there is not a homogenous women's experience, Phillips suggests that there are some issues of particular concern to women:

Women have distinct interests in relation to child bearing; and as society is currently constituted they also have particular interests arising from their exposure to sexual harassment and violence, their unequal position in the division of paid and unpaid labour, and their exclusion from most arenas of economic and political power (Phillips, 1995, 67-68).

The main problem with demarcating a women's interest lies in the heterogeneous realities of women's lives and risks essentialising women's experiences. Indeed, it is troublesome to conceive of a universal women's interest that can be applied to all women across all contexts. This is recognised by Phillips who suggests the establishment of a unified women's interest is unnecessary. Instead emphasis ought to elucidate when there are differences between the interests of men and women. Yet these arguments tend to be underpinned by a binary consideration of men and women, whereas a more nuanced understanding that takes into account additional characteristics such as race, class and sexuality would circumnavigate the risk of essentialising women and mean that discrete women's interests could be addressed more sufficiently.

The fair presence of women achieved by electoral guarantees would likely deliver women legislators from a plurality of backgrounds. Thus it is argued that some women would feel the need to take on the responsibility for speaking for women as a whole (Phillips, 1995,

168). Explicitly, Phillips does not anticipate that all women seek to represent all women. However, the greater representation of a diversity of women within a legislative assembly would develop the likelihood that someone would speak for women as a more heterogeneous mode of representation.

The problem that women are far removed from processes of political dialogue and policy formulation intimates that their issues and interests may not be sufficiently addressed. However the fair presence of women will give a 'voice' (Phillips 1995, 70) to issues of greater concern for women than men, which are likely to be better understood and better supported by women representatives. Such an understanding is central to the linkage between the descriptive and substantive representation of women: 'If the range of ideas has been curtailed by orthodoxies that rendered alternatives invisible, there will be no satisfactory solution short of changing the people who represent and develop ideas' (Phillips 1995, 70-71). Therefore it is argued that the presence of women will shift, stretch and overhaul the boundaries of politics, which is less likely to emerge when male dominance is the status quo.

The final argument that Phillips puts forward as a defence for a fair presence of women in politics suggests that women would adapt and reinvigorate the political system. Women, it is argued, would base their politics on need rather than desire which would appeal to 'a more basic and common humanity; instead of asserting a stake in political battle, it formulates claims in more obviously moral terms' (Phillips 1995, 72). However, rather than eschewing interest politics in favour of need arguments, Phillips suggest there is a pathway that traverses between interest politics and politics of need. Both ought to recognise the requirement for the presence of concerned parties when the interpretation of either needs or interests is undertaken.

In addition, these arguments are set within broader arguments that stress women's different relationship to politics and the way their presence will enhance the quality of political life:

The broader claim made by those who disdain the politics of interest is that increasing the proportion of women elected introduces new kinds of behaviours and values. It is often suggested, for example, that women will be less competitive, more co-operative, more prepared to listen to others; that women bring with them a different, and more generous, scale of values; that women raise the moral tenor of politics. These arguments are always associated with women's role as caring for others (Phillips 1995, 73).

These arguments stem from women's tendency to be positioned in the private sphere as main care giver, what has become known as the 'new politics of care' in Nordic countries (Phillips 1995, 74). The consequences of gendered constructions come into play here. However, for Phillips this line of reasoning is disconcerting because it 'loads too much on women's role as mothers' (Phillips 1995, 75).

The main arguments used to defend a fair representation of women do observe that the main supposition that women will seek to represent women is delicate: 'The shared experience of women as women can only ever figure as a *promise* of shared concerns....there is no obvious way of establishing strict accountability to women as a group' (Phillips 1995, 83). Once women come to political office there is not a pre-requisite for women's interests and issues to be pursued. However, the possibility that once elected women may shift political priorities is the main thrust of the politics of presence thesis and that this is 'far more likely to reach its target than when those shooting are predominantly male, but still open to all kinds of accident' (Phillips 1995, 83). Moreover, it is recognised that some claims may be more pertinent in some contexts than others. The chapter now turns to consider the additional normative feminist contributions that have been made in favour of women's representation.

Beyond 'The Politics of Presence'

Since the presence thesis emerged as an important treatise, feminist theoretical literature has furthered the debate on the representation of women and other social groups. Whilst some claims iterate those of Phillips, there are additional claims made that steer such arguments in alternative directions. The symbolic and substantive strands of the representation of women have been particularly addressed and comprise the main areas of examination here, with an understanding that such arguments may be linked to the descriptive representation of women.

Symbolic Representation

Whilst symbolic representation has been a marginal concern of theorists explored earlier in this chapter (Pitkin 1967; Phillips 1995), attention is shifting to this dimension. Symbolic arguments are underpinned by the potential of the role-model effect and build upon the main benefits that were recognised by Phillips. Mansbridge argues that women's descriptive representation produces symbolic benefits by constructing a precedent and social meaning for women to partake in governing activities (Mansbridge 1999, 649). Other feminist

writers have suggested similar advantages that would arise out of women's presence within political legislatures (Leader 1977; Phillips 1995; Sawer 2002). The descriptive presence of women within legislatures is argued to exemplify equality to women by demonstrating 'the equal role that women can and should play in the politics of a representative democracy' (Leader 1977, 266), denied when women were excluded or marginalised from the political process.

However, Mansbridge does point out that the benefits of symbolic representation may be contingent upon a diversity of women's descriptive representation having been achieved (Mansbridge 1999, 649). Thus as women representatives tend to be white and heterosexual, there may be negative implications for the symbolic representation of black or lesbian women. In this case, symbolic representation can be understood as either positive or negative, dependent upon the diversity amongst women representatives as well as the characteristics of the represented.

In separate accounts Leader and Sawer also argue that the symbolic representation of women in politics promotes alternative career pathways for women. Thus, women politicians would be role-models and could encourage the erosion of traditional and rigid sex roles (Leader 1977, 266). Political roles would have previously been unconsidered due to embedded attitudes about sex and gender roles, as well as women's occupation of the private sphere, therefore it is argued that women's political presence would disrupt such cultural norms (Sawer 2002, 7). It is implicit within these arguments that symbolic benefits would perhaps resound beyond political life to the wider public sphere.

A further benefit to the symbolic representation of women concerns 'institutional legitimacy' (Sawer 2002, 6) whereby it is raised that once descriptively represented women would be more likely to relate to a political institution because it would appear valid. Thus, the presence of women within a political institution alongside male politicians as a normal feature of politics would legitimise such an institution in the eyes of female citizens, clearly linking women's descriptive and symbolic representation (Mansbridge 1999, 628). It would make 'some women feel actively represented in ways that a photograph of male legislators could never have done' (Mansbridge, 1999, 650-651). Such a contention is important for the everyday representation of women in politics but also at the highest levels of political

office and across all manner of portfolios in different political contexts in order to challenge the embedded masculinised traditions of most political legislatures.

Some feminist scholars have drawn attention to the embedding and normalisation of masculinised and adversarial behaviours in political institutions. This brings into question the perceived efficacy of women representatives who depart from such masculinised norms such as aggression, ambition and competitiveness and prefer to practice more consensual styles of decision-making (Randall 1991, 529; Acker 1992; Kenney 1996; Lovenduski 1998; Mackay 2001; Chappell 2006; Kenny 2007; Mackay 2009). Thus it is important to consider whether and how gender has been embedded and normalised within political institutions through its culture and everyday practices as this could arguably contribute to the symbolic representation of women either negatively or positively.

Substantive Representation

The work of Jane Mansbridge (1999) posits that descriptive representation may produce substantive advantages, following on from arguments previously raised by Phillips. However, Mansbridge confines her argument within the boundaries of deliberative functions of democracy. Descriptive representatives are reasoned to be better positioned to catalyse substantive benefits in two main ways: they can provide sufficient communication in contexts of mistrust between representatives and constituents (vertically) and can introduce original thinking in times when interests have not been wholly articulated amongst representatives (horizontally) (Mansbridge 1999, 628-629).

The first argument considers that communicative channels could be improved for groups previously marginalised once their descriptive representation is realised, an avenue unexplored by Phillips. The subordinate position of women has arguably led to neglect of any such communication/consultation on the part of male dominated legislatures; this could be alleviated by the descriptive representation of women which in turn would help 'forge bonds of trust' (Mansbridge 1999,641) between women constituents and women representatives, a vertical formation of representation. The likelihood of shared experiences between such descriptive representatives and women constituents means that new avenues of communication would be opened up (Mansbridge 1999, 641-643). However, such an argument fails to consider the multiple and cross-cutting identities of individuals. Would a Muslim woman constituent contact a Jewish female MP on a particular issue rather than a male representative of the same Islamic denomination in the adjoining constituency? In this

case, these particular deliberative benefits may be stifled when the heterogeneities of women's lives and identities are in tension across constituency borders.

The second argument develops and strengthens some aspects of Phillips' works and is focused upon occasions when interests have not been crystallised because they are relatively new to the agenda; the recognition of such interests amongst representatives is not visible in discourse, or that political parties have not formulated a stance on such issues (Mansbridge 1999, 643). Descriptive representation is seen as crucial for horizontal communication amongst representatives when newly expressed interests become a focal point of attention, because descriptive representatives are better placed to draw on personal experiences, their viewpoint has greater authority. Furthermore, it is suggested that a descriptive representative who draws on their own experiences in the discussion of unarticulated interests within legislatures or party programmes has the benefit of 'a certain moral force in making an argument' (Mansbridge 1999, 648).

The descriptive representative is also suggested to be able to pursue and advance issues with a tenacity that would not come from non-descriptive representatives, an argument that Phillips previously advanced. However, this does demand that a representative recognises themselves as a descriptive representative. Ann Widdecombe, a Conservative MP between 1987 and 2010 was well known for renouncing her female identity when claiming that she was not a woman MP, rather she was an MP who happened to be a woman (Hari 2000). This example demonstrates that not all women legislators' identities are governed by their sex and highlights the danger of essentialising all women.

The problem of essentialism underpinned in the accounts of Phillips and Mansbridge is circumnavigated by Dovi (2002) who overcomes the uncertainties of the 'potential' actions of representatives by introducing a criterion by which descriptive representatives can be judged. This is important, she argues, because such qualification does not feature in the work of other theorists who write in support of descriptive representation. Thus, Dovi advances the notion of the preferable descriptive representative: they should 'possess a particular kind of relationship (mutual) and they should have this kind of relationship with certain subgroups of historically disadvantaged groups (dispossessed)' (Dovi 2002, 735). Therefore, Dovi (2002, 729-735) posits that the relationship between representative and constituent is important and that a representative should maintain and develop a strong

reciprocal affiliation with the subgroup from whence they are drawn as a prerequisite to any further representation and groups unjustly marginalised would have greater opportunity to access and influence the workings of political institutions through 'their' representative. In summary, the idea of 'preferable descriptive representatives' relies upon the maintenance of connections and communication between the representative and their dispossessed sub-group. This introduces an element of accountability to the actions of the descriptive representative, as the linkages between descriptive and substantive representation are deemed to be important.

However, a caveat that is recognised by Dovi is that of 'shared fates, but not aims' (Dovi, 2002, 738). There are evidently cleavages within dispossessed groups and Dovi emphasises how such cleavages, including class, race and religion, may challenge the representative process and may require a plurality of representatives in order for cleavages and subgroups to be able to be taken seriously and as a means to end their marginalisation (Dovi, 2002, 741). The suggestion for descriptive representatives to share and sustain a relationship provides a new angle from which to explore women's political representation. As Dovi raises when should difference between women matter in the process of representation? Within different political contexts and about different political issues can, does and will the white woman represent the black woman sufficiently in particular scenarios, and reciprocally, can, does and will the black woman represent the white woman in particular scenarios? This underlines the fact that historically dispossessed groups may require a plurality of representatives in order for cleavages and subgroups to be able to be taken seriously, and to end the likelihood of marginalisation within a dispossessed group (Dovi, 2002, 741). However, the suggestion that descriptive representatives ought to share and sustain a relationship provides a new angle from which to explore women's representation, even though the application of this criterion would be problematic in any political context.

More recently, feminist scholars have sought to reconceptualise the study of the substantive representation of women in taking forward an approach that is not necessarily contingent upon the contributions of women political representatives. Indeed, some feminist scholars have called for more reflexive research approaches that do not necessarily look to women as agents of change with regard to the substantive representation of women. Instead of asking questions such as 'do women represent women?' and assessing the impact of women on the political process, new frameworks of analysis have been articulated that broaden the scope of focus for the contemporary study of the substantive

representation of women (Celis 2008; Celis, Childs et al. 2008). Central to this notion is the critical actor. Critical actors are responsible for advancing policy proposals based on the substantive representation of women either individually or in small groups and notably their gender is irrelevant (Childs and Krook 2008, 116). In considering the development of these normative debates concerned with women's substantive representation it is clear they offer new pathways of exploration for feminist scholars.

The first part of this chapter has considered representation as a normative concept and introduced, discussed and analysed more recent feminist interpretations. This chapter now turns to consider how these feminist normative frameworks have been operationalised. Even though these empirical literatures under review have been centrally concerned with examining the implication of women's representation in elected political institutions, such literatures still have a relevance for this thesis.

The Empirical Study of Women's Representation in the UK (and beyond)

The operationalisation of empirical inquiry into women's political representation is usually organised around the descriptive, symbolic and substantive strands. Empirical studies focused upon these aspects of representation will be considered consecutively. Following the discussion of these literatures, the chapter will turn to consider what they offer for the study of the House of Lords.

The Descriptive Representation of Women

The starting point for the study of women's descriptive representation is usually centred upon legislative recruitment in terms of how many women are represented within a legislature. Different stages of analysis have been identified which shape the composition of legislatures, including systemic, political and individual factors (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Systemic factors structure the wider environment in which legislative recruitment operates and includes legal frameworks, methods of composition, the available opportunity structures in terms of incumbency and legislative turnover, and use of gender quotas. Political parties are the main distributors of political personnel; therefore are an important unit of analysis when exploring women's legislative recruitment. At the individual level factors have been identified that may constrain (or help) aspirant candidates into politics. These factors were found to have differential influence upon the numerical representation of women in elected political institutions.

Legal frameworks establish who is qualified to become a political representative and may include age and nationality criteria, the payment of a deposit and campaign spending limits. In addition, certain individuals are disqualified from standing for election.⁵ As such the legal framework sets up various requisites that preclude only a small minority of people from contesting elections. Thus legal frameworks are not generally found to discriminate against the representation of women (Childs 2008).

However in marked contrast it is evident that the way a political institution is composed influences the representation of women. A great number of studies have found that proportional representation (PR) electoral systems favour women's representation whereas countries which employ majoritarian systems with single member plurality (SMP) tend to deliver lower levels of women's representation (Duverger 1955; Lakeman 1975; Norris 1985; Vallance and Davies 1986; Beckwith 1992; Darcy, Welch et al. 1994; Rule 1994; Matland and Studlar 1996; Matland 1998; Caul 1999; McAllister and Studlar 2002; Russell, Mackay et al. 2002; Norris 2004; Salmond 2006; Tremblay 2006). However there is a clear danger in isolating one mere factor. As Rule suggests whilst electoral systems have a primary influence on the level of women's representation, this is compounded by additional secondary causes such as the political, economic and social context (Rule 1994, 689). Thus, it is important to stress that the analysis of a political institution's composition ought to be considered within broader contexts where there are additional related and external factors.

Another factor found to structure the composition of legislatures relates to the opportunity structure. High rates of incumbency and low levels of legislative turnover are thought to constrain political opportunities for aspirant candidates, whereas low rates of incumbency produce increased opportunities for aspirant candidates. For example in the UK the turnover of MPs varies from election to election in the House Commons. In 1997, 40% of the House composition were newly elected MPs whereas in the 2001 general election, only 15% of MPs were new, rising to 19% in the following 2005 election (Criddle 2001, 182; Criddle 2005, 146). Higher rates of incumbency affect the turnover of political representatives, offering reduced opportunities for women and constraining the advancement of women because incumbents are more likely to be men (Schwindt-Bayer

⁵ This includes lunatics, undischarged bankrupts, people found guilty of corrupt or illegal election practices, other convicted persons, persons convicted of treason, peers, clergy and officeholder from the civil service, armed forces, police, judicial office, ambassadors and high commissioners and election commissioners for example (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, 26-27).

2005). In contrast, the introduction of new tiers of political representation in 1999 through the construction of new parliamentary spaces in the form of the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the Greater London Assembly opened up new electoral opportunities and null-incumbency for the first elections. With no 'bums on seats' women made substantial gains, particularly in the Scottish and Welsh institutions (Bradbury, Mitchell et al. 2000; Bennie, Denver et al. 2001; Mitchell and Bradbury 2004). However in this case it is necessary to point out that null-incumbency interacted with political party strategies and the use of proportional representation electoral systems to ensure women achieved fairer levels of representation in the new institutions.

Legal gender quotas have increasingly been used as a way to guarantee women's representation either through constitutional amendment or electoral law (Krook 2010). The implementation of gender quotas has caused significant controversy (for example see Squires 1996; Bacchi 2006) such arguments are beyond the focus of this inquiry. Around forty countries use legal gender quotas (Dahlerup 2006b, 3). For example, within the constitution of Rwanda, Article 9(4) affirms that women are granted at least 30% of posts in decision making organs. Electoral Law also prescribes that of the 80 members of the Chamber of Deputies (Rwandan lower house) 24 must be women (Quota Project 2009) The minimum 30% threshold has been exceeded with women attaining 56.3% of seats at the 2008 elections for the lower house. Empirical inquiry has found that developing countries are more inclined to adopt gender quotas through law because high levels of women's representation in national political institutions is seen to signify modernisation (Dahlerup 2006a). There are regional variations in the use of legal gender quotas (Krook 2010). Latin America and the Balkan States are more likely to utilise legal quotas at candidate level (Antic and Lokar 2006; Araujo and Garcia 2006; Dahlerup 2006a); whereas the Arab regions, South Asia and some parts of Africa are more likely to use quotas in the form of reserved seats (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Dahlerup 2006d; Rai, Bari et al. 2006) This literature has not as yet offered any further scrutiny into the type of women who are successful through quota channels which would be a logical turn, although a study of quota women in France is one exception (Murray 2010).

Political parties can make use of strategies to assist the representation of women and these have been categorised into three broad areas: equality rhetoric, equality promotion or equality guarantees (Lovenduski 2005). The adoption of such strategies can be influenced by the ideological positioning of political parties.

Equality rhetoric strategies accept at the very least that women have a claim to contest power. Such approaches make use of words and discourse in oral and written party statements for the advancement of women's claims, having the potential to impact upon attitudes and belief systems (Lovenduski 2005, 90; Childs 2008). Equality promotion acts to facilitate women's ascent into politics by offering support or setting aims for the presence of women at different levels. Support is offered because there is recognition that women may not have certain resources deemed important for pursuing elected political office. Therefore, women may be supported by receiving additional training or mentoring, or financial assistance. Emily's List is an example of a group that raises money for aspirant Labour women MPs. Equality promotion strategies can set soft targets for levels of women's presence and parties may stipulate that there must be at least one woman when candidates are short listed for constituency lists. However, such strategies may fall short of influencing the outcome of legislative recruitment, and are advisory rather than prescriptive (Campbell, Childs et al. 2006; Caul Kittilson 2006).

Finally, equality guarantees are a form of positive discrimination that ensure women will achieve minimum levels of representation within political institutions (Lovenduski 2005). Such strategies take different forms such as quotas, twinning, and zipping. Political parties may also utilise quotas to guarantee women's representation at some level. In the UK, the Labour Party has used all women shortlists in retirement and target seats as a strategy to increase the presence of women. After legal challenge, Labour passed the Sex Discrimination (Electoral Candidates) Act 2002 to permit political parties to use all women shortlists when selecting parliamentary candidates, however has been the sole party to make use of this legislation.

These 'equality' assessments of party strategies offer great utility, however it is important to stress that analysis has to incorporate broader factors such as electoral mechanism and opportunity structure. For example, in the first Welsh Assembly elections, the Welsh Labour Party enforced equality strategies in the form of twinning and zipping, which did precipitate some resistance from masculinised quarters of the Party (Edwards and Chapman 2000; Chaney and Fevre 2002; Edwards and Chapman 2003). The forty Welsh constituencies were 'twinning' into pairs for the national election and the 'twinning' constituencies had to select one male and one female candidate. The remaining twenty

seats were decided through top-up lists. 'Zipping' refers to men and women being placed alternatively on party lists, or women are deliberately clustered at the top of lists (Darcy, Welch et al. 1994; Farrell 2001).

The Supply and Demand model advanced by Norris and Lovenduski (1995) accounts for the individual factors that facilitate and constrain women's presence. Supply-side explanations include those who come forward for selection, and those who are perturbed due to constraints on resources such as time, money and experience deemed necessary and desirable. Time and money were identified by the Liberal Democrats as a reason why women candidates were hard to field in general elections, in part due to women's inferior economic status and caring responsibilities (Evans 2008). Furthermore, motivational factors which influence political ambition have been found to prove critical in the pool of talent that is coming forward. In an American study, it was found that there were deeply embedded moulds of gender socialisation permeating American society. The consequences of this was that from the fields of law, education, activism and business well qualified women showed little ambition to run for political office, whereas their male counterpart was more likely to regard their prospects positively and actively consider running for office (Lawless and Fox, 2000).

Demand side factors are those thought to influence the decision of gatekeepers when they make their selections. Social bias in parliament reflects direct and imputed discrimination of party selectors. Direct discrimination means that individuals are judged on criteria of group characteristics. There is evidence that women do face direct discrimination across all the main political parties. Women in the Labour Party and the Conservatives reported sexual harassment as a problem in the selections for the 2001 general election (Shepherd-Robinson and Lovenduski 2002). Indirect discrimination means that party members favour 'types' of candidates and may perceive certain candidates who depart from the male norm as vote losers; thus party selectors have prefixed ideas about what a good candidate should be (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). As this tends to endorse the political norm, the strength of incumbency prefixes the dominance of middle-class, middle aged white males as the preference for political selection.

However, the turnout of voters has not been affected by the presence of women candidates contesting elections. Indeed, voters seem to be indifferent to the sex of

candidates (Rasmussen 1983, 309). One study found that this was a common defence used by the Liberal Democrats as to why there were less women candidates selected for winnable seats (Shepherd-Robinson and Lovenduski 2002). Moreover, women comprise a far greater share of candidate lists than candidates, one key illustration that demand side factors can block women's advance to political office. Furthermore, this suggests that 'parties centrally are keener to get women on their lists than constituencies are to select them' (Vallance 1984, 304). For general elections, local party members are the crucial gatekeepers who may stifle women's presence, even if the party elite and hierarchy aim to encourage women's presence.

Whilst the previous section has considered the numerical presence of women, such analyses do not extend to consider the differences amongst women who gain entry to political office. The following considers research on the backgrounds of politicians in terms of class and former employment. The heterogeneity of women's lives was recognised previously as something that may problematise women's representation (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002); therefore inquiry into women's descriptive representative has to go beyond merely the numerical aspect in order to fully interrogate women's descriptive representation and take into account characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, education and professional background.

Attention to the backgrounds of politicians has emerged over recent decades due to changes in the political elite, and in particular the convergence of politicians regardless of party. Early research focused upon the changing class composition of the British political elite. It was recognized that the dominance of aristocratic representation at Cabinet level was being replaced by the middle-classes (Guttsman 1951, 133-134). The changing professional backgrounds of politicians has also been an important research trajectory, where the increasing numbers of lawyers and professional men was an identified trend (Guttsman 1951, 134; Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Mellors 1978). Other work has documented the rise of the career politician with an abundance of political experience but 'less experience of the world outside politics than their predecessors' (King 1981, 285). Broadly speaking the research was examining male representatives due to the small numbers of women in British political institutions. Therefore there is a lack of longitudinal data examining the backgrounds of women representatives per se and it is difficult to take note of any trends in women's representation, although it was found that one quarter of

women MPs in the 1970s had previously worked in the education sector (Mellors 1978, 112).

More recently, the increased presence of women in political institutions has meant that wider empirical investigations into gender differences at elite level can be pursued. In a recent study on the political personnel of Scotland post devolution, the greater presence of women MSPs was seen to have fortified the dominance of the professional classes. Almost two thirds (64%) of women MSPs were deemed to have a professional background compared to just less than half (46%) of male MSPs (Keating and Cairney 2006, 51-52). There are few contemporary studies that have focused upon women's descriptive representation in the UK beyond the numerical aspect therefore it is necessary to concentrate upon women's representation in different countries.

One comparative analysis of women MPs in 27 industrialised countries established that class had a pronounced effect upon the ability of women to manoeuvre their way to political power. Hence, women from lower class backgrounds were far less likely to reach the higher levels of public power than males from a similar class background, particularly in fully capitalist countries (Liddle and Michielsens 2000a; Liddle and Michielsens 2000b). Analysis into MPs in the Canadian House of Commons found that women MPs were less likely to be married, have a university degree or to be a representative in a rural area compared to their male counterpart (Tremblay and Trimble 2004, 103). However, there were broad similarities between the pathways of male and female MPs (Tremblay and Trimble 2004, 115). It is then important to highlight that women's descriptive representation has to be considered in comparison to male political representatives.

The Symbolic Representation of Women

Empirical research focused upon the symbolic representation of women is limited in comparison to the descriptive and substantive strands of women's representation, and has tended to examine different aspects of the role-model effect which features as the initial focus of discussion. This section also considers how scholars have studied the gendered nature of political institutions and political styles.

One British study considered whether the political presence of women MPs had any effect upon the turnout of women at general elections and their assessment of the government. Using data from the British Election Study 2001 it was found that in constituencies with a

woman MP, women's voter turnout was 4% higher than male turnout, a statistically significant difference. In contrast in seats where a male MP was elected to Parliament, there was no gender gap. Moreover, almost half (49%) of all women sampled agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the 'Government benefits people like me,' when they had a female MP, 11% higher than for women who had a male MP (Norris, Lovenduski et al. 2004, 47). Similarly an American study found that women represented by women tended to offer more optimistic evaluations of the Congresswomen (Lawless 2004). These findings provide credence to feminist interpretations regarding particular aspects of institutional legitimacy. However, the American research found that the political presence of women did not appear to influence women's political trust, efficacy, competence or engagement (Lawless 2004). Such findings were replicated in a study on the Netherlands, whereby women did feel more included in the political system when there were increased female representatives, although increases in women's political presence in the Netherlands did not make women more interested in politics (Koning 2009). These findings provide partial support towards feminist interpretation of symbolic representation.

The symbolic representation of women has also been theorised to challenge entrenched cultural norms. Some research has suggested that when there is an increase of non-traditional contenders for power, there will be shifts in the notion of who has the required and necessary skills for political office leading to greater diversity in those who seek political office and are successfully elected (Liddle and Michielsens 2007). The attitudes of Labour women MPs newly elected in 1997 were examined to consider whether they had been inspired to pursue political office due to the presence of previous women MPs and for some women this was the case. Moreover, they believed that their presence would also be positive for future generations, affirming an optimistic assertion of symbolic representation of women (Childs 2004b, 60-62). However it was also raised that whilst symbolic representation has potentially positive ramifications, there may also be negative consequences. Some New Labour women MPs interviewed were cautious about supporting the view that the symbolic representation of women was always encouraging. In particular, they highlighted that attention to role-models was burdensome for the individual women who were singled out. Furthermore, some cited that perceived 'roles models' such as Barbara Castle may not always be useful because she was exceptional, magnificent, like a pop star or a Queen Bee (Childs 2004b, 60-64). These attitudes highlight how it is

important to consider the dyadic potential of symbolic representation in terms of positive and negative outcomes.

Other American focused research investigated the role-model effect amongst adolescent girls in terms of political interest and future aspirations to contest political office. Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) investigated whether girls were more likely to want to be active in politics when they observe women running for visible political office in a national context. They found that when women politicians received unprecedented media attention through the media (especially 1984 and 1992 elections – the ‘year of the woman’), girls demonstrated an increased desire to have a political involvement which could translate to future political ambition, supporting Mansbridge (1999) and Sawer’s (2002) normative claims regarding challenging entrenched gender roles. However this research provides only tentative findings as it measures mere ambitions, rather than provide tangible evidence that ambitions translate through to a political career at adulthood.

The media is an important tool for the symbolic representation of women as it is at the interface between citizens and political representatives. In this way it is responsible for images of politicians that may mould the ‘feelings and interests’ of citizens. Once again there is limited literature that engages with this aspect of symbolic representation perhaps due to small number of women in politics until 1997. However in the context of British scholarship, it is notable that scholars have suggested that media characterises women politicians as invisible, objectified or unsuitable.

First of all, women representatives are often ignored by the media and are therefore invisible. One study focused upon the lack of attention received by Margaret Beckett in the 1994 Labour leadership race which was suggested to be as a result of inherent patriarchy within both politics and media circles (Ross 1995). This finding was reflected in analysis of attention towards female representatives (or candidates) during general elections (Ward 2000; Ward 2002; Campbell and Lovenduski 2005; Childs 2005). Analysis focused upon the media’s presentation of the 2001 general election found that just 9.8% of images of politicians during the campaign were of women, increasing to 13.7% of images in the 2005 general election (Campbell and Lovenduski 2005, 191). This finding suggests that despite increases in the descriptive representation of women, in some regards the media is

still portraying male representatives as the cultural norm which could have negative effects upon the symbolic representation of women.

However when women politicians did receive media attention, it often served to externalise them by focusing upon their physical appearance. Labour women MPs during the Major years felt that the media often objectified them, focusing upon physical characteristics and outward appearance (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996; Ross 1997). This finding was supported by later research into the New Labour women MPs who reported petty attention towards physical appearance and clothing choices. The consequence of these findings is that women politicians are trivialised and not taken to be 'serious' politicians which relegates and challenge the overall status of women politicians (Childs 2004b, 64-66). Moreover, some women MPs had used to media to highlight and draw attention to negative experiences in the House of Commons that related to the demands of the job and instances of harassment and discrimination. However some women MPs warned that this would entrench adverse stereotypes of women's political presence upon women citizens and could potentially halt some women from pursuing politics (Childs 2004b, 64-66). In this way, the media would establish and replicate negative representations of women politicians that could have negative influences upon women's symbolic representation.

There has been some research into the gendered norms of political institutions and gendered political styles, although none for the House of Lords. The implication that women undertake a distinct style and approach to politics that departs from the prescribed male norm has been subject to some empirical investigation. Women representatives have often put forward the view that they approach politics differently from men (Vallance and Davies 1986; Bochel and Briggs 2000; Mackay 2001; Childs 2004a; Childs 2004b). Women politicians felt they behaved differently to their male counterparts in terms of political style (Bochel and Briggs 2000). One study focused upon women MPs who undertook feminised modes of behaviour. They were viewed suspiciously because they departed from prescribed and entrenched masculinised norms and also often disregarded as 'weak' politicians (Puwar 2004, 33). Moreover, other research has emphasised that some women felt pressured to adopt conventional, masculinised modes of behaviour in the political chamber itself which they recognised could influence the symbolic representation of women (Childs 2004a; Childs 2004b). The adoption of masculinised techniques by women was reflected in other parties. Research into the Liberal Democrat Party indicates that female MPs who have

been successful within the party tended to be ‘bally’ women with masculinised styles of behaviour (Evans 2008). This provides a further example that feminised styles of political behaviour are not perceived as effective and therefore resisted in favour of masculinised practices embedded within political institutions for centuries.

In other institutional settings, the newness of a political institution has been argued to encourage women to consider being a representative because masculinised practices have not been embedded. For example it is suggested that women are encouraged to become MEPs because there are no ‘long histories of male hegemony’ and the nature and culture of the European Parliament, as based on committee work and consensual styles of politics, are preferable to women MEPs (Vallance and Davies 1986, 8-11; Kantola 2009). The newly devolved political institutions in Scotland and Wales were purposefully constructed to depart from adversarial politics that was common at Westminster, with the thinking that devolution would usher in a more consensual and co-operative politics that would dovetail with more feminine styles of politics. Yet research found a sort of ‘nested newness’ in that institutions were not necessarily breaks with the past and are still burdened by ‘past institutional legacies and by initial and ongoing interactions with already existing institutions within which they are nested and interconnected’ (Mackay 2009, 16). However the European Parliament has been highlighted as an institution preferable to women, in part because it was newly developed in the 1970s therefore had no obvious male legacies.

The Substantive Representation of Women

Empirical investigation into the substantive strand of women’s representation has often been underpinned by the notion that female political representatives will seek to represent women. This section starts by exploring critical mass as a tool of analysis for the substantive representation of women, then moves on to consider the way other research trajectories have been operationalised in order to demonstrate the different approaches to the study of the substantive representation of women and consider how they could be suited for the particular context of the House of Lords.

Critical mass has been used as a conceptual framework to investigate the gender make-up in different institutional settings such as social groups, working organisations and businesses (Hacker 1951; Kanter 1977) and latterly political institutions (Dahlerup 1988; Grey 2002; Bratton 2005; Chaney 2006). This concept is borrowed from nuclear physics, where it used to refer to the amount of matter required to bring about a reaction which would invoke a permanent change (Dahlerup 1988, 275-276). When applied to the setting

of political institutions it is suggested that once women make-up approximately 30% of political representatives, changes within political institutions may advance such as reactions towards women politicians, the culture of an institution, its working practices and policy process and outcomes. In particular, the ability to influence policy was underlined as particularly important for political institutions (Dahlerup 1988, 283-284). In Dahlerup's study of five Nordic countries, the idea that when women attained a numerical threshold change was accelerated was rejected, although it was demonstrated that increased numbers of women arguably affected the political culture meaning that 'numbers do count' (Dahlerup 1988, 290). Instead Dahlerup reasoned that critical acts were a more important focus when analysing the changing position of minorities within political legislatures (Dahlerup 1988, 296).

Feminist scholars have also questioned the utility of critical mass as an analytical concept when engaged with the substantive representation of women especially regarding the idea of a tipping point as 'perhaps a mirage' (Stokes 2005, 34). Other critique has emphasised that there has been a lack of consideration towards other variables such as party political allegiance, the centralisation of governing political parties and discrete political contexts (Dahlerup 1988, 293; Stokes 2005, 24; Childs and Krook 2006, 525-526; Tremblay 2006). Critical mass is exposed as a simplistic tool because it does not consider the complexities of political processes and different institutions. Instead, it is advanced that the focus should shift towards critical actors as important units of analysis which provides a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play (Childs and Krook 2006; Childs and Withey 2006).

However, there are some academics who suggest that the general essence of critical mass in terms of women's numbers is still useful alongside other multifaceted explanations (Bratton 2005; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Stokes 2005; Grey 2006; Tremblay 2006; Gains, Annesley et al. 2010). Stokes emphasises that when women's numbers were measured at less than five percent prior to the 1970s, their presence was not thought to have altered politics in anyway (Stokes 2005, 23). A longitudinal study of New Zealand's legislatures suggested that the numerical representation of women had to be considered alongside the positional strength of women within particular contexts (Grey 2002). Yet even though political scientists have rejected the utility of critical mass, it has been increasingly used in political discourse by parliamentarians in conjunction with targets for women's

representation and quota levels for women in new democracies and political institutions globally and is therefore a useful tool for manoeuvre in the construction of institutions (Childs and Krook 2006; Dahlerup 2006c). For example, the Royal Commission on House of Lords Reform recommended that there ought to be a statutory duty to ensure a minimum of 30% women and men in a newly reformed second chamber (Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords 2000). Thus critical mass theory has permeated normative goals for women's presence in political institutions and parliamentary discourse.

Some studies have sought to test feminist interpretations that women seek to represent women by gauging the attitudes of women representatives. Early studies of women MPs in the UK established that some (but not all) women MPs did feel a responsibility to take on women's issues within the Houses of Parliament. Some women raised that they wanted to be treated equally to male MPs and felt that taking on women's issues would reduce their status as politicians therefore women's issues were actively avoided (Vallance 1979; Phillips 1980). A study of the attitudes of MPs and candidates contesting the 1992 general election into women's rights found that for each of the main political parties women were more supportive than their male counterparts (Norris 1996). Attitudinally, analysis of women legislators from Arizona and California established that female legislators were more likely to express some commitment to representing women and/or women's concerns (Reingold 1992).

This was also articulated in research on women MPs in Britain over the last decade. Within Parliament New Labour women MPs felt that their presence would help to transform and feminise the political agenda through debates, select committees and the Parliamentary Labour Party Women's Group (Childs 2001ba; Childs 2002b). Similarly, interviews with some women councillors from Scotland established that they felt a responsibility to speak and act upon equality matters, evidenced also by relations with women's organisations and community groups (Mackay 2001). Other analysis of MPs and candidates who contested the 2001 general election established that women representatives across the main parties did have different values on issues affecting women's equality across the public and the private sphere, (Lovenduski and Norris 2003). Exploring the attitudes of elected women representatives on the subject of the substantive representation of women provides tentative support to feminist interpretations that (some) women seek to represent women.

However, establishing supportive attitudes towards feminist ideas does not necessarily mean that policy change would be advanced or achieved.

Other research has focused upon discerning whether there are differences between male and female representatives in their parliamentary work. In the Welsh Assembly women were more likely to initiate and partake in debates in areas relating to child care, domestic violence, equal pay and other women's issues (Chaney 2006, 708-709). However, as the number of political representatives in the Welsh Assembly is limited to just 60, this research failed to present a fine-grained analysis of similarities and differences amongst women by party affiliation. Analysis of debates in the House of Commons established that women MPs participate more often in health debates and voice concerns for women (Catalano 2009). Such a finding reflects research into the policy priorities of women citizens in the UK. Women are more likely to prioritise education and health whereas men prioritised the economy. Moreover when women were disaggregated into age categories education was prioritised by younger women, whereas for older women the key issue was healthcare (Campbell 2006).

Content analysis of parliamentary questions in the House of Commons found that women MPs were more likely to use the terms 'women' and 'gender' in their questions and this was more frequent for women MPs from Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Whereas women MPs addressed a wide range of issues across policy areas, the questions of those male MPs who asked such questions focused upon health or social security (Bird 2005b). New Labour women MPs acted for women by signing significantly more feminist Early Day Motions (EDMs) than their male counterpart (Childs and Withey 2004). Other UK focused research investigated the passage of legislation that removed Value Added Tax from sanitary items, where it was established that women acted individually and collectively with other women in order to make the legislation pass (Childs and Withey 2006).

The analysis of legislative votes is a further research trajectory. One study examined the voting patterns of legislators in the USA. In both the Democrats and the Republican Party women were found to be more supportive of the Equal Rights Amendment than their male counterparts. However, overall the Democrats were more supportive of feminist policies than the Republicans meaning that the political affiliation of a representative was a stronger predictive variable than sex on particular feminist issues (Leader 1977). In Canada research

found that female representatives were more likely to support policies deemed feminist. However once again it was noted that political party did come into play, meaning that some male representatives, particularly from the New Democrats, had more feminist outlooks than Reformist or Conservative women (Tremblay and Pelletier 2000). Taking these findings into account demonstrates that whilst feminist interpretations on female representatives are assured in terms of women being more likely to represent women, it is also important to consider the political attachment of a representative. In the UK context it is important to note that party discipline is enforced rigorously in the House of Commons therefore the examination of legislative votes may not be entirely useful or revealing. For example New Labour women MPs were not part of the Lone Parents Benefit Revolt and were deemed to have failed to act for women (Cowley 2002; Cowley and Childs 2003). Thus, there is not a definite relationship between women's descriptive presence and the onset of the substantive representation of women in certain contexts. Furthermore, other research has considered the positional power of women within legislatures. The newness of women legislators and implied lack of political experience acts as a potential inhibitor to the substantive representation of women (Beckwith 2007). Such examples indicate how attention towards unsuccessful attempts made to represent women also constitutes a valid research trajectory.

The Empirical Study of Women's Representation in the House of Lords

The purpose of this section is to consider what prior scholarship focused upon women's representation in elected political institutions offers this study focused upon the House of Lords, an appointed political chamber. This section proceeds by considering how the different dimensions that constitute women's political representation in the Lords could feature for study, taking cues from the existent empirical literature where appropriate as well as highlighting the studies that have addressed women and the House of Lords.

The Descriptive Representation of Women in the House of Lords

First of all the 'legislative recruitment' of women to the House of Lords through the systemic, political and individual levels of focus (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) is the initial concentration and this will serve to set up chapter 5 which explores the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords. As elections are most commonly used to compose legislatures, the selection and *election* of women dominates the academic literature as reviewed earlier in this chapter. In comparison, the study of political patronage, appointments, and women's presence is relatively undeveloped. There are a few accounts

that have overviewed the historical campaign to allow women to become life peers and the battle for hereditary peeresses to be admitted to the House of Lords (Iwi 1953; Drewry and Brock 1983; Sutherland 2000; Takayanagi 2008). This will be subject to greater focus in Chapter 4 which examines how peers are appointed (or elected) to the House of Lords.

Systemically, legal frameworks do not discriminate against women gaining access to elected political institutions (Childs, 2008); however this is not the case for women in the House of Lords. Women were not legally permitted to sit as representatives until 1958 as life peers and 1963 as hereditary peeresses. Thus the institutional and legal frameworks have had a long-term constraining effect upon women's representation in the House of Lords because terms of appointment are for life.

Existing analysis into women's representation in the House of Lords has tended to provide the basic gender breakdown of the chamber (Shell 1992; Russell 2000; Rush 2001; Shell 2007). As chapter 4 will demonstrate, there are different routes of entry into the House of Lords and different types of peer. Chapter 5 builds upon this by suggesting that the discrete typologies of representation (such as Lords Spiritual, Law Lords and Hereditary Peers) influence the representation of women in the House of Lords.

There are other factors that are thought to influence the composition of women in second chambers and/or appointed political institutions. It has been suggested that the basis of membership of second chambers is often connected to 'a record of achievement elsewhere in politics' (Russell 2000, 100). Thus it is reasoned that women's presence in second chambers is more likely to be minor because women tend to be under-represented in elite level politics. Chapter 5 tests this claim by scrutinising the backgrounds of women peers against a sample of male peers.

In terms of the political opportunity structure for women entering the House of Lords, there are no electoral cycles. The number of appointments made annually to the House of Lords is at the discretion of the Prime Minister. Notably this factor of representation does interact with other factors such as party strategies and elite attitudes towards women's representation, which is a further thematic development of chapter 5.

The stage of analysis that examines how political parties may adopt strategies for improving women's representation is important for the House of Lords as it is the elite of political parties that make appointments to the chamber. Randall (1987, 141) speculates that central party elites are more inclined than local party memberships to promote women. Where party elites control recruitment, as they do for the House of Lords, it is suggested that women's presence may be higher. Linked to this, Russell (2000, 101-102) proffers that appointed chambers offer party elites the opportunity to foster women's numerical presence, especially where it has failed in other (elected) political institutions. Within the Canadian political system, women's presence in the Senate (the appointed upper chamber modelled on the House of Lords) is almost ten percent higher than their House of Commons (elected lower House). Rush (2001, 27-38) suggests this is no accident and the use of appointments has been used consciously by political parties to promote women's presence and 'deliberately shift the balance' to improve women's representation in Canada. These claims have not been subject to empirical inquiry, however chapter 5 will use data on appointments and interviews with women peers and gatekeepers to explore the ideas that party elites are more disposed to advance women's presence when they control the selection of candidates for appointed (second) chambers.

At the individual level, the supply and demand model (Norris and Lovenduski 1995) is a highly useful tool of analysis for elected institutions. However, its wholesale application to non-elected political institutions may not be entirely appropriate. As chapter 4 lays out, the majority of appointments are made by elites and the vast majority of members do not apply to become a peer. However, since 2000 individuals can now apply to the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) to become a crossbench peer, therefore the empirical exploration of some factors raised by the Supply and Demand model is pertinent. Moreover the demand side of the supply and demand model quite clearly links to political party elites and their decisions on appointments (as discussed above) which will be a further thematic trajectory addressed in chapter 5.

In terms of exploring the socio-economic characteristics of women political representatives, it is evident that this is not a dominant sub-field in UK scholarship as discussed earlier. Therefore as well as exploring the political backgrounds of women peers as mentioned in this section, chapter 5 will also incorporate broader analysis of the

diversity amongst peers using indicators such as age, ethnicity, sexuality, education and professional background.

The Symbolic Representation of Women in the House of Lords

There is no existing literature focused upon the symbolic representation of women in the House of Lords. Some scholars suggest gender practices may be embedded in political institutions and these govern the behaviour of women parliamentarians which could influence their symbolic representation (Randall, 1991; Lovenduski, 1998; Puwar, 2004). Whilst Crewe (2005; 2006) provided an anthropological analysis of the culture of the House of Lords, gender was only a minor consideration. Therefore this thesis seeks to build upon this by considering the gendered nature of the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords in order to assess how women act as peers through everyday participation. Moreover the attitudes of women peers towards the notion of the role-model effect and how active women peers are in encouraging women to have an interest and participate in politics features for discussion in chapter 6 (Childs, 2004).

The Substantive Representation of Women in the House of Lords

Literature focused on exploring the substantive representation of women has developed in two main directions either through quantitative analysis of behaviours or through qualitative analysis of interview data. Quantitatively, research pathways have considered when women seek to represent women through specific functions of legislatures such as parliamentary questions or legislation for example. There was certainly some 'circumstantial' (Childs and Krook, 2008) evidence that women play an important role in facilitating the substantive representation of women, although this is mediated by other factors such as context, the political complexion of the government and the individual actor.

The House of Lords offers a unique site of inquiry as it is firstly a second chamber therefore largely plays a scrutinising and deliberative role in the political process. Drewry and Brock considered the extent to which women peers contributed to debates in the 1960s and 1970s on matters of legislation concerning the substantive representation of women such as rights to abortion, divorce and equal pay. It was found that attitudinally within debates women peers had 'mixed reactions' in their approval or lack of support for these bills and there was no evidence of a 'unified female orientation in political debate' in the House of Lords (Drewry and Brock, 1983, 33-35).

With a modified composition, this thesis seeks to explore whether this finding holds true a few decades later and provides contemporary analysis of the substantive representation of women in the transitional House of Lords. The research agendas overviewed for elected political institutions can be replicated for the House of Lords, and indeed the latter two sections of chapter 7 explore whether and how women peers have sought to represent women through aspects of the parliamentary agenda and the legislative functions of the House of Lords.

In addition, qualitative analysis has interrogated the attitudes of women representatives towards feminist ideas of substantive representation (Reingold, 2000; Mackay, 2001; Childs, 2004). Thus chapter 7 explores the predispositions of women peers towards the normative ideas around this dimension in a latter part of the chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to review the main theoretical literature focused upon the political representation of women, how empirical study has been operationalised for its different dimensions within a UK context and how these normative and empirical studies lend themselves to exploring women's representation in the contemporary House of Lords.

Using Pitkin's (1967) work as a theoretical linchpin has allowed this section to provide a rich exploration of the concept of representation and its various dimensions. The main dimensions of representation (descriptive, symbolic and substantive) were explored. Pitkin's detailed exposition certainly helped to draw out the complex nature of representation by highlighting its nuances.

However feminist interpretations of representation starting with Phillips (1995) unearthed substantially important points about the political representation of women specifically. As women have been and are under represented in political institutions worldwide, Phillips (1995, 62) countered that who represents (or is indeed excluded from participating) matters for reasons of justice, symbolic implications related to the role-model effect, the representation of women's interests and perspectives and the way in which politics is conducted and women's relationship with politics. In particular, the purported linkage between women's descriptive and substantive representation in that women representatives would seek to automatically represent women has raised particular caveats that centre upon the danger of essentialising all women (Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002).

Indeed more recently feminist writers (Celis 2008; Celis and Childs 2008; Celis, Childs et al. 2008; Mackay 2008) have sought to refine the theoretical consideration of the substantive dimension. It is advocated that the study of the substantive representation of women needs to ‘consider varying contexts in order to reveal which representatives and representative acts make the substantive representation of women happen regarding a variety of issues and interests’ (Celis 2008, 116). This research project takes this cue by exploring women’s representation in the site of the House of Lords, a second chamber that has been largely overlooked by feminist scholars.

The new frameworks of analysis reject women centred approaches in favour of exploring the critical actor who advances the substantive representation of women who may be female or male. However it is argued here that it is first necessary to utilise the politics of presence framework when the multi-dimensions of women’s representation have not been addressed fully in a political institution in order to be able to understand how women’s representation plays out in a political institution.

Empirical inquiry focused upon the political representation of women has considered its different dimensions. First of all the descriptive representation of women has focused upon the legislative recruitment of women to political institutions at different levels of analysis and to a much lesser extent the backgrounds and characteristics of women representatives in juxtaposition to their male counterparts and amongst women. In order to consider ‘how are women represented in the House of Lords’, the central research problem of chapter 5, inquiry will focus first of all upon how the systemic, political and individual levels may structure women’s numbers in the House of Lords. In addition, the diversity of women peers will be subject to scrutiny taking cues from literature focused upon the social composition of parliaments and beyond that women peers’ attitudes to descriptive ideas of women’s representation will be explored.

The symbolic literature, although not as well developed as other dimensions of women’s representation, provided some tentative support to feminist interpretations that women’s presence would challenge cultural norms and inspire women and girls to consider political office. Moreover, women representatives suggested themselves that they approached politics in a different way to their male counterpart. Chapter six considers ‘how do women act as peers’ in chapter 6. The chapter starts by exploring the everyday attendance and participation of women peers, whether the House of Lords is amenable to women through

its culture and institutional norms and the perceptions of women peers towards ideas related to the symbolic representation of women and whether they seek to act as role-models to other women.

Finally, the substantive dimension of women's political representation has developed as a large sub-field of inquiry. Indeed, research agendas have been centrally concerned with examining whether the presence of women in political legislatures has made a difference to the parliamentary agenda, the political process and legislative outcomes. Notably second chambers are missing from scrutiny, as are appointed political chambers, even though the House of Lords has some functions akin to lower chambers. As empirical exploration of the substantive dimension of women's representation in the Lords is outdated, especially when the chamber has been subject to change (as explored in chapters 4 and 5) the central question of chapter 7 chooses to explore 'do women peers seek to represent women' as a logical first step in operationalising study into this dimension. This research question has been developed to consider whether, how and to what extent the substantive representation of women can be and is achieved by women peers in this institutional setting through some of its deliberative, scrutinising and legislative functions, and probes the predispositions of women peers towards feminist notions of substantive notions of representation.

Empirical scholarship on women's political representation has engaged with different research approaches and techniques. Therefore advancing a research methodology that blends qualitative and quantitative work facilitates the emergence of richer data, which could offer more nuanced understandings of the political representation of women in the House of Lords. Thus the following chapter discusses and reflects upon how the research design was developed for this particular project.

3. Research Design

This chapter outlines and reflects upon the selected approaches and methods deployed to satisfy the aims of the research project. Having highlighted the complicated nature of political representation in the previous chapter, it is evident that any inquiry into political representation as a concept and a process requires a research design that combines research methods in order to generate rich and original data. Using a blend of methods will help to discern the nuanced nature of women's political representation in the House of Lords. The chapter begins by considering this work as a piece of feminist political science research and explains the use of mixed methods. It then discusses the research design and provides a rationale for using different types of approaches and methods. Finally there is an overview of how the data was collected, generated, coded and analysed.

Feminist Political Science and Mixed Methods

Research design does not simply refer to the methods used to collect data; rather it incorporates the conceptualisation of a research problem, the engagement of particular approaches and the selection of appropriate methods, data collection, coding, analysis and conclusions (Creswell 2007, 5). One of the main challenges in developing a research design is ensuring that it is suited to the specific research problem. Within political science, there are a variety of approaches and methodologies that have evolved as options for the researcher (Stoker 1995). However, every approach and method has both benefits and drawbacks (Burnham, Gilland et al. 2004). With this in mind, the research design constructed for this empirical project traversed theoretical approaches and deployed a plurality of research methods in order to satisfy the main aims of the thesis.

At the crux of this research inquiry is a concern for the representation of women in Westminster's second chamber. The production of knowledge based upon the presence (or indeed absence) of women in political (or public) roles which could transform social relations between women and men is a common theme of feminist research, an endeavour which this research is clearly committed to (Smart 1984, 159; Lovenduski 1998). This research inquiry set out to interrogate the political representation of women in the site of the House of Lords underpinned by feminist interpretations of representation (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002).

A further common theme of feminist research is ‘to name new topics, to examine the invisible, to study the unstudied, and to ask why it had been ignored’ (Reinharz, 1992, 248). The House of Lords has been largely bypassed as meaningful site of inquiry for scholars, as noted in chapter 2. Indeed the theme of representation when explored in the House of Lords is usually posited around the mode of appointment as undemocratic. The representation of women in the House of Lords has not been a central focus for study, even though women have played an increasingly important role, an argument this thesis develops. Moreover debates about the democratisation of the House of Lords have not yet addressed gender and the case of Rwanda, as raised in the previous chapter, demonstrates how gender and modernisation are closely linked. Applying a dynamic research design to study women’s role in the House of Lords will illuminate and clarify the multi-dimensions of women’s representation. Chapter 2 established that representation is a complex concept, and the dimensions of representation may play out discretely in different political institutions and contexts. Thus unpacking the multifaceted processes of women’s representation in the House of Lords by implementing a research design that was reflexive and combined research methods was regarded as a suitable means to satisfy the overarching aims of the inquiry.

Feminist analyses of women’s representation are often eclectic and incorporate a multitude of methodological frames and research approaches to facilitate a thicker account of women’s representation (Harding 1987; Reinharz 1992; Burns and Walker 2005; Krook and Squires 2006). This research project follows this lead. For example, when investigating the descriptive dimension of women’s representation in the House of Lords (see chapter 5) data on appointments to the House of Lords have been used. In addition to these descriptive statistics, women peers and gatekeepers have been interviewed in order to help to cast light upon some of the more opaque aspects of the appointments processes.

Engaging with plural approaches has been signposted as a common trait of feminist research (Krook and Squires 2006). Importantly, Harding stresses that the idea of an exclusive ‘feminist’ method of inquiry is misguided and it is better to focus upon the common strengths evident in some feminist research. For example, feminist research commonly uses the experiences and voices of women as data, until recently an untapped resource. The use of these experiences allows for the dominant ‘malestream’ perspective to be challenged and serves to stretch epistemological boundaries. Moreover, it is recognised

‘that the cultural beliefs and behaviour of feminist researchers shape the results of their analyses no less than do those of sexist and andocentric researchers’ (Harding 1987, 9). This is not to say that women’s representation scholars do not favour particular research methods rather that the goals of feminist research are to be understood from a certain perspective. Randall (1991, 525) suggests that feminist approaches are quite often driven to give voice and clarity to the experiences of women.

Mixed methods have been increasingly valued in the social sciences. For example the Economic and Social Research Council, one of the main funding bodies, favours policy studies that embrace both quantitative and qualitative methods (Burnham, Gilland et al. 2004, 278). The triangulation of research methods has been utilised more frequently in political science since the 1990s. Positivism and quantitative methods are the favoured approaches for political scientists, however the additional utilisation of qualitative methods in conjunction with quantitative methods has been recognised as being able to explore perspectives that singular approaches could not reach (Read and Marsh 2002). Engaging with increasingly diverse research approaches and methods is seen to deliver particular profits, for example researchers can increase their awareness into the research problem (Stoker 1995). Read and Marsh contend that using one method offers a partial account and the researcher is unlikely to be able to focus upon different aspects of the research problem (Read and Marsh 2002, 237). Thus, the use of multiple methods can evade this caveat by broadening and deepening the scope of study and engaging with multiple perspectives. Burnham et al point out that using the triangulation of methods can sometimes produce complementary data which can add weight to findings because the research problem has been considered from alternative perspectives (Burnham, Gilland et al. 2004, 31).

Using two or more methods is also seen to increase the validity of the research process and findings (Bryman 1988; Reinhartz 1992; Read and Marsh 2002; Burnham, Gilland et al. 2004). For example, when designing a large-scale survey, a researcher may use a pilot study to check that the intended questions are appropriate for the intended research goals and interview a small number of people beforehand as a way to ensure that the questions are suitable for the intended research goals (Read and Marsh 2002, 233). Deploying a combination of approaches facilitates a cross-checking aspect that allows the researcher to be confident of their findings and claims (Read and Marsh, 2002, 239). Moreover, it allows for nuanced findings to emerge.

In seeking to unpack the political representation of women in the House of Lords, it is clear that using mixed methods would deliver clear benefits to this research process. Whereas traditional feminist studies sought to give a voice to women and highlight their position using qualitative studies, there has been a notable turn in feminist studies towards providing quantitative data alongside qualitative evidence. Thus feminist mixed methods approaches allow the researcher the best opportunity to unpack complex research problems (Hodgkin 2008). For this particular research project the use of mixed methods would help to safeguard against some of the pitfalls associated with the sole use of interviews which will be considered in more depth later in this chapter.

The Research Approaches and Methods

Whilst this thesis is underpinned by a feminist concern to draw attention to the political representation of women in the House of Lords, it was also necessary to engage with additional analytical approaches to maximise the interrogation of this subject matter. These approaches included behaviouralism, institutionalism and interpretivism.

The purpose of behaviouralism is to understand the processes of politics by observing behaviours at micro or macro level, followed by the empirical testing of any accounts for such behaviours (Sanders 2002). Behaviouralist approaches were necessary when quantitative methods were utilised. It has been a common practice more recently for feminist scholars to engage with behaviouralist approaches in order to test claims made about the substantive strand of women's representation (Krook and Squires 2006) and each empirical chapter engages with quantitative analysis.

Whilst feminism underpins this thesis, in order to understand how sex and gender play out in the House of Lords institutional approaches also informed this work. Institutional and new institutional approaches seek to understand both formal and informal procedures and rules of an institution (Lowndes 2002) and some scholars have sought to develop the idea of a feminist new institutionalism (Kenney 1996; Kenny 2007; Chappell 2010). Within chapter 6, the culture, working practices and institutional norms of the House of Lords are examined in terms of whether women have sought or been able to feminise the House of Lords, therefore institutionalist approaches are used in order to unpack certain unwritten conventions that contribute to the culture for example.

Interpretative approaches concentrate on meanings, beliefs and discourses: ‘To understand actions, practices and institutions, we need to grasp the relevant meanings, beliefs and preferences of the people involved’ (Bevir and Rhodes 2004, 130). Using interpretive approaches is important because, it is argued, such beliefs have a bearing upon actions (Bevir and Rhodes 2006). Engaging with an interpretive approach that centres upon women peers is useful in order to understand how women peers frame and comprehend different aspects of representation. Moreover one of the best ways to find out about ritual and informal practices that may shape behaviours in the House of Lords is to use an interpretive approach as one tool of inquiry (Crewe and Müller 2006, 13).

Whilst this work is underpinned and benefits from a feminist approach, using a blend of approaches is appropriate due to the overall aims of this study. The eclectic nature of approaches utilised for this project reflects the demands of the research problem to explore the attitudes, experiences and contributions of women peers and helps to consider representation from different perspectives. This is also facilitated by engaging with both quantitative and qualitative methods. This chapter now turns to reflect upon the use of qualitative and quantitative research techniques, and considers in detail the particular research methods deployed for this research project.

Qualitative Research and Elite Interviews

The main purpose of qualitative research techniques is to generate in depth and detailed data about a small number of cases and are most suitable for research which aims to understand experiences or the study of processes by concentrating on a small number of cases in depth (Devine 1995). Feminist research has favoured the use of qualitative approaches as a way to understand social processes and important actors (Stoker 1995, 15). This is true of research focused upon political representation of women, where elite interviews have been favoured to explore the dimensions that constitute women’s representation and this thesis is guided by these works (See for example: Vallance 1979; Reingold 1992; Bochel and Briggs 2000; Childs 2001a; Mackay 2001; Childs 2002a; Childs 2004b).

Using interviews in social research facilitates thorough inquiry by allowing informants to expand upon their attitudes, principles as well as account for their performance and behaviours in different contexts (Devine 2002, 198; May cited in Lilleker 2003). Researchers can ask open-ended questions in order to locate information not readily

available or easily attained from large-scale surveys, as well as being able to probe participants to reveal unique insights (Devine 2002, 202-204). Thus, interviews were an ideal research tool to gather the normative perspectives of women peers, as well as allowing the researcher to explore the ‘differences among people’ (Reinharz, 1992, 19) in terms of their attitudes and perspectives, demonstrating the suitability of in-depth interviews as one methodological approach. Engaging directly with women peers provided thicker explanations and helped to unpack the complexities of representation. Notably using interviews solely as the research method is construed as hazardous (Lilleker 2003, 208), thus this project has bypassed this potential pitfall by using interview data in conjunction with quantitative analysis.

The qualitative element of this research was based upon interviews with 30 women peers from across the main political benches and crossbenches, comprising about 20% of the female membership of the House of Lords. Approximately one fifth of both Labour and Crossbench women peers were interviewed, thirty percent of Liberal Democrat women peers and 17% of Conservative women peers. Interviewing women from across the political and cross benches ensured that ‘a wide range of informants with different subjective interpretations’ (Devine 1995, 142) were included, a course of action usual for qualitative studies. One caveat of elite interviews relates to the inability to generalise research findings wider than those interviewed. The findings of one research study are unique and unlikely to be replicated by a different researcher and a different interviewer may produce different data and interpret it differently. Moreover, data and knowledge gained from interviews is only partial and situated (Richards 1996; Burns and Walker 2005, 68). Therefore it is important to achieve a representative sample in order to capture as rich data as possible. At times the reliability of participants can sometimes be brought into question, especially if they are older, a problem for this research where the average age of members is rather high due to lifetime terms of appointments to the House of Lords. When recounting events that occurred a long time into the past, interviewees may struggle to establish their own part in events from what they have subsequently read on the subject (Richards 1996; Lilleker 2003).

In addition two male peers were interviewed who had specific roles as gatekeepers. They provided situated knowledge, adding an extra dimension to some findings. Efforts were made to interview an additional male peer. It was not possible for this interview to be

undertaken face-to-face due to the busy schedule of the peer, therefore correspondence over email was entered into at their suggestion. In order to elicit the required information, this opportunity was taken and would only be recommended in circumstances when interviews face to face or over the phone were not possible. This example illustrates one of the pitfalls with interviewing elites in that gaining access is often the first hurdle in using interviews as a research methodology. The busy nature of political representatives' lives means that access is often restricted due to their time commitments (Puwar 1997, 5.1-5.4). This means it may be difficult for the researcher to interview a representative sample of participants which may lead other researchers to question the validity of the research findings in terms of representativeness and reliability (Richards 1996; Devine 2002).

The majority of interviews took place in June 2008 or between October and December 2008 (see Appendix 1). The locations of the interview varied. Some took place in and around the House of Lords: within individual peers' offices, the Royal Gallery, the tea rooms, on the terrace, the family room close to the Peer's Entrance to the Houses of Parliament, as well as other locations in and around Westminster such as Millbank. Four interviews were conducted over the phone, which were useful in eliciting perspectives from women peers; however on reflection it was sometimes difficult to build a rapport with the interviewed women, and face to face interviews were a much preferred method of gaining interview data for this research project. The total number of interviews conducted for this thesis (32) is in accordance with suggested norms for qualitative interviewing of between thirty to forty interviews (Devine 1995, 142).

At the outset of all interviews permission was sought for a digital voice recorder to be used alongside note taking. All but three participants agreed to this request, and of these two interviewees permitted note taking. One interviewee refused either request and notes were taken immediately after this interview was concluded. All participants were assured of anonymity, however when the inclusion of some interview extracts would divulge the identity of a peer, permission was sought for particular extracts to be featured (Lilleker 2003). The phone interviews were not recorded due to technological difficulties, although notes were taken for all these interviews.

Whilst historically, interviews were used by feminists as an important tool to help challenge women's subjugation (Reinharz, 1992, 22-23); in the bulk of feminist interviewing, the

analysis is apportioned onto the powerless, whereas female political representatives hold a privileged position as part of the elite and indeed this research constituted 'researching up' (Randall 1991; Puwar 1997). This may disadvantage researchers because interviewees may wish to control or limit their participation (Richards 1996; Lilleker 2003). Moreover, interviewees from political parties may be guarded, protective and hesitant about criticising their own political party, or more likely to criticise their direct political opponents simply because of their political allegiance. Indeed, the nature of researching up means that the researcher has to be prepared for the elite to steer the interview. However, being equipped for this eventuality by researching the participants biography, probing deeper, and persisting in returning to some of the predetermined areas of inquiry are tools that can be used by the researcher to overcome these potential pitfalls (Lilleker 2003). Thus, being able to divert the interviewee from holding control of an interview is imperative in order to direct the interview in the desired areas of the researcher.

The conduct of the interviews followed the norms of elite interviewing by using semi-structured interviews. The positive function of using elite interviews hinges upon the ability to be able to probe the interviewee in order to clarify and consolidate their responses (Richards 1996). Each interview covered key themes related to the multi-dimensions of women's representation and interviews were effective in obtaining the attitudes, dispositions and personal experiences of women peers (Devine 2002). Interviews ranged from 25 to 90 minutes. The difference in duration highlights one shortcoming in that the full schedule of interview questions was not directed to all women interviewees. For this reason, standardising the interview data for quantitative purposes was not deemed to be a suitable way to interpret the data therefore the analysis that takes place for the interview data is characteristically qualitative. Once interviews had been fully transcribed, a manual process of coding was undertaken. Extracts from each interview were organised into themes and sub themes within an excel database. This would allow 'judgement about the data in the light of the theoretical framework' (Burnham, Gilland et al, 2004, 217) to be made.

Within chapter 5, which considers how women peers are represented in the House of Lords, qualitative data was attained from women peers in order to explore their personal story of appointment to the House of Lords and insights into party attitudes towards

women's numerical representation as well as their attitudes towards normative ideas of descriptive representation and feminist interpretations.

Once again, qualitative data constituted an important component of chapter 6 which sought to interrogate how women peers act in the House of Lords as an aspect of symbolic representation. Women peers' perceptions towards their participation and visibility in the House of Lords were gauged through interviews. The second section of this chapter once again utilised data from interviews with women peers to explore the culture of the House of Lords, whether women peers felt that they engaged with a women's style of politics in their work in the House and whether the chamber was deemed amenable to women and/or a feminine style of politics. Finally, the attitudes of women peers towards normative and feminist ideas of women's symbolic representation are explored generally and with specific reference to the House of Lords. Women peers also recounted their attempts to act as a role model for other women in politics.

With the substantive representation of women (by women peers) under investigation in chapter 7, the elite interviews with women peers asked women peers to recount instances when they had sought to represent women in the House of Lords and how easy this process had been. A further theme of exploration concerned the way women peers understand the idea of women's issues and the substantive representation of women.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative methods are a staple research tool for political science researchers, and use large frequencies of cases in order to observe and measure actions and items such as voting behaviour, attitudes in surveys or allocation of resources over a period of time (Miller 1995; John 2002; Read and Marsh 2002). There are clear advantages to using quantitative methods in political science because it produces tangible data on which claims can be made and supported. Within political science, feminist research has increasingly made use of statistical research as a means to analyse and identify patterns across a wide array of issues and topics (Reinharz 1992; Chapman 1995; Krook and Squires 2006). Previous research investigating women's presence in the House of Lords used basic descriptive analysis because at the time women comprised only 5% of the membership (Drewry and Brock, 1983, 39). Over twenty five years later women's presence in the House of Lords has increased to 20% of the House membership, meaning that statistical analysis can be applied more easily. In order to fully interrogate the different dimensions of women's

representation it has been necessary to use quantitative methods for ‘rigorous’ analysis (Russell quoted in Reinharz 1992, 76). A number of original datasets were constructed (see appendix 2), and the thesis also incorporates some secondary data.

Criticisms have been levelled at the use of quantitative methods. One such critique concerns the nature of the data. Miller points out that in Britain unemployment was defined in many different ways which brings into question the validity of such data (Miller 1995, 166-167). Whereas interviews allow for deep social inquiry, quantitative methods do not have this function and cannot necessarily capture sophisticated or complex realities (Ragin 2000; John 2002). Thus, the narrow focus of some quantitative methods in terms of questions within a survey may not interrogate the true intricacies of an issue. Indeed, whilst such methods can be used to reveal what, when or how many, quantitative methods do not permit for the ‘why’ to be fully understood which intensive interviews would (Miller 1995). Yet some authors emphasise that qualitative and quantitative researchers have to accept that each type of method offers only one-sided observations (John 2002, 218). Thus, using research methods that traverse the quantitative-qualitative divide avoids such caveats and offers a dynamic research design.

Chapter 5 evaluates women’s descriptive representation in the House of Lords therefore a logical starting point was the acquisition of data on appointments over time and by party/bench to gauge any trends. At the start of each parliamentary session, the House of Lords List of Members is published (HL1) and this was used from the 1999/2000 session. When this was not available online, the House of Lords Information Office provided a hard-copy version from their archives. In order to produce an informed picture of women’s descriptive representation in the Lords, a biographical dataset of women peers from the 2007/2008 session was constructed, as well as a sample of male peers (n= 200) from the same parliamentary session. This sample was comprised of male peers from all types of peerage and affiliation which accorded approximately with their make-up in the House of Lords. Using a sample of male peers allowed for similarities and differences between peers by sex to be ascertained, as well as amongst women peers as a group. There is a clear drawback to using only a sample of male peers however due to time constraints it was not feasible to include all current male peers in the data analysis. Know UK⁶ was the main data source, an online reference service that compiles contemporary and up-to-date

⁶ Available at <http://www.knowuk.com>

information from over 100 UK reference books including the House of Lords Biographies and Who's Who⁷. All women peers were logged in an SPSS data book, alongside the sample of male peers, and the variables were filled in for each peer.

Chapter 6 examines participation and again quantitative methods were used for analysis specifically for attendance levels at the House of Lords. This data was attained from the House of Lords Information Office. The mean attendance of peers by sex and party was analysed using the t-test. Furthermore, attendance was then grouped into areas 90% and above, between 50-90%, 10 to 50% and under 10% in order to present information in a cross tabulation where the chi-square test was used to ascertain significance. Following some claims made by women peers as to the levels of attendance by male peers, further variables were created that logged whether a peer had a directorship and how many they had. This data was analysed using a t-test. In addition, there was investigation into the asking of written questions (from the 1999-00 session) where the number of questions asked per peer was logged. Similarly, data was also gathered relating to the asking of starred questions and follow-up supplementary questions in the House of Lords in the 2004-05 in order to analyse trends in participation.

Chapter 7 investigates the substantive representation of women and uses quantitative methods in some distinct ways. First of all, data was gathered and analysed from the *House of Lords Biographies*, available from parliament.uk, in order to assess the stated political interests of peers. This included all women peers and the sample of male peers used for the analysis in chapter 5. A database was developed that included all stated interests, and following this process, a further database was developed in order to group issues when relevant. For example a stated interest in family law would be included in the law, order and justice category. Whilst the nuanced picture of political interests may not emerge, this use of data was within the scope of the thesis, and a future research project could develop a questionnaire in order to more fully explore the political interests of peers.

This chapter also made use of data from the previous chapter on starred questions, but coded each oral question and each supplementary question as to whether they were considered to be addressing women's issues. In order to be considered a 'women's' starred question women or women's issues had to be considered to be the primary subject matter.

⁷ The award of a peerage automatically results in an entry into the next edition of Who's Who.

For example the starred question asked on 9th February 2005 ‘Driving Offences: Sarah McCaffery’ was rejected as a women’s question because the question was addressing the cost of prosecution for a minor traffic misdemeanour. Other details were recorded such as the peer who asked the question, their affiliation and sex, as well as all other peers who asked a supplementary question. In addition if a starred question had been coded as a non-women’s starred question but a subsequent supplementary question asked concerned women’s interests this was coded as well. Various statistical measures were used to measure the proportions of peers by sex and party who asked starred and supplementary questions. Analysis into the participation of peers in the ‘Women’s’ debates motioned by Baroness Gould of Potternewton used simple descriptive quantitative analysis due to the small numbers. Finally, quantitative analysis was also used to analyse the extent of support amongst peers by sex and party affiliation for Baroness Hollis’s amendment which was Division. No 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/07 in the House of Lords. The data was taken from Hansard.

Conclusion

This chapter has overviewed and critically reflected upon the research design. Providing discussion of theoretical approaches is important in locating the ontological and epistemological stance that informs the study. Moreover, the decision to employ a triangulated methodology that blended qualitative and quantitative methods with feminism as an underlying approach was clarified as the best means to capture the complexities of the political representation of women in the House of Lords. The research design provides appropriate methods for the aims of the research project. Any pitfalls experienced in this research process have been highlighted.

This is an empirical project that utilises elite interviews and secondary data, as well as the creation of datasets in order to interrogate women’s representation in the House of Lords. For each research question quantitative and qualitative data have been triangulated in order to tease out the nuances of women’s representation.

The first research question concerns the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords and features in chapter 5. It uses quantitative analysis to analyse trends in women’s numerical representation. These descriptive statistics were synthesised with interview data in order to provide a more detailed analysis of women’s recruitment to the House of Lords as to why there were notable advances on some political benches. When

addressing the descriptive representation of women peers data was analysed on the social characteristics and professional backgrounds of women peers in order to tease out the similarities and differences amongst women peers, as well as being compared to a sample of male peers. Finally, chapter 5 probed the attitudes of women peers towards normative feminist interpretations of descriptive representation and diversity.

The second research question concerning symbolic representation explores the participation of women peers in the House of Lords through attendance and participation in questions and also took into account their attitudes on the culture and institutional norms in the chamber, as well as ideas concerning the symbolic representation of women and the role-model effect.

Similarly the third research question made use of mixed methods. Quantitative analysis was used to establish the extent of support for women's issues, and identify occasions when the parliamentary agenda and the legislative process had been 'feminised'. Moreover in order to tease out both the predispositions of women peers towards the substantive representation of women as well as highlight their reported personal actions to represent women through the deliberative and legislative functions of the House of Lords interview data on this strand of women's political representation was made use of.

On a final note, it is important to underline that whilst feminist approaches to political science often engage with mixed methods that cross the qualitative-quantitative divide, such approaches and methods are not exclusive to feminist political scientists. In exploring the nuances of representation per se, it is clear that a dexterous application of research methods can help to fulfil the overriding research aims that are concerned with the representation of discrete groups. The research design constructed for this project could be easily implemented by scholars investigating the representation of other groups or issues within all manner of political institutions.

4. The Composition and Functions of the House of Lords

This chapter overviews the composition and functions of the House of Lords. The complex nature of representation as a process has already been highlighted in chapter 2 through discussion related to the different dimensions that constitute it. In addition it is crucial to recognise that: 'The practice of political representation is institutionally specific....the forms it takes and its importance depend where it is sited' (Lovenduski 2005, 15). Therefore establishing how an institution is composed and its main functions is highly important in order to explicate how women's representation plays out in the House of Lords. The chapter is structured into four main sections. The first section acknowledges that the UK has a bicameral political system and places the House of Lords within the broader context of second chambers. The second section produces an exposition of the main types of peers in the House of Lords and also includes a gendered analysis. Thirdly, the main roles, powers and functions of the House of Lords are summarised. The final section considers the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords.

Second Chambers

The UK political system is bicameral, meaning that Parliament is composed of two separate chambers, whereas a unicameral system of government has a sole parliamentary chamber (Tsebelis and Money 1997). Bicameral types of parliament originate from the times of ancient Greece and Rome, when different chambers sat simultaneously. Upper chambers would generally include elders who represented the powerful and wealthy, in contrast to the lower house which was normally intended to represent the masses (Patterson and Mughan 1999, 2; Russell 2001, 19). In 2010 the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) classified 77 national parliaments as bicameral, constituting 40% of all parliaments (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2010 -b).

Basis of Representation

The basis of representation for second chambers is often distinct to their lower house, and may be fashioned upon a geographical region, social class or may be related to profession. A territorial basis of membership for the second chamber is common for countries with a federal political structure. In the United States of America each state elects two representatives to protect the voice of smaller states in the Senate, the Upper House, as opposed to the House of Representatives where the number of seats per state is based upon population size (Borthwick 2001, 22). Linked to this in Belgium the constitution

states that the Senate must have representation across language groups to include Dutch and French speaking senators (Belgian Senate 2009). The House of Lords emerged in order to represent distinct sections of society and included affluent landowners, nobility and influential people of the day such as bishops (Russell 2000, 19) whereas the Commons was composed of individuals from local communities (Shell 2001, 5). Vocational representation is a further means of composition for second chambers (Russell 2000, 31). Some members of the Seanad Éireann in Ireland represent one of five vocational interests: National Language and Culture, Literature, Art, Education; Agriculture and allied interests and Fisheries; Labour, whether organised or unorganised; Industry and Commerce, including banking, finance, accountancy, engineering and architecture and public administration and social services, including voluntary social activities (Laver 2002, 51).

The Mode of Composition

In 2010 the IPU classified 34.7% of second chambers as directly elected, 34.7% are indirectly elected, 27.0% are appointed and the remaining 3.7% are composed by other means (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2010 -a). Second chambers also vary in terms of how they are composed which may influence their legitimacy in the eyes of citizens (Tsebelis and Money 1997). The elected second chambers, either directly or indirectly, may use a different type of electoral system from the lower house (Russell 2000, 29). Appointments may be used to compose a chamber either wholly or partially. In the Canadian Senate all members are appointed by the Governor General on advice of the Prime Minister. Entirely appointed second chambers are common in the Caribbean, as modelled on the House of Lords (Borthwick 2001). In the Lords, most peers are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister, although in practice such decisions lie with the respective party leaders and the Chair of the House of Lords Appointments Commission in the case of crossbenchers.

There are three second chambers with an element of hereditary membership. By statute the House of Lords has 92 hereditary peers who are indirectly elected. Two thirds of the Lesotho Senate is made up of hereditary Principal Chiefs. Belgium entitles the children of the King to sit in the Senate on an ex-officio basis (Russell 2000, 30; Belgian Senate 2009). Some second chambers also include some ex officio membership. The former Presidents of some countries also become automatic members of the upper house including Italy, Chile, Kazakhstan, Uruguay and Venezuela (Russell 1999). In the House of Lords, 26 of the most senior bishops of the Church of England are entitled to seats.

Size

Second chambers are usually of a smaller size than the lower house, on average having approximately 60% of the members of the first chamber. Most chambers have a fixed member although, the UK, Kazakhstan and Burkina Faso are exceptions (Russell 2000). The House of Lords has more members than the House of Commons and there is no upper limit on the number of life peers that can be appointed to the House of Lords. In other second chambers Borthwick (2001) points to the inclusion of ex-officio members that can lead to a fluctuation in membership size such as the King's children in Belgium or ex-Presidents in other countries. In Italy, the President has the power to appoint up to five life members (Russell 2000, 27).

Term of Office

The length of office also varies across second chambers. There are fixed terms of office in some countries, which usually exceed those for the lower house. However, membership changes can sometimes coincide with the election of the lower house. In the House of Lords the majority of members are appointed for life, except the Lords Spiritual who have to retire at 70. Canadian senators do not have fixed terms of office but must retire when they are 75 (Borthwick 2001). This section has identified the divergent nature of second chambers. The following section presents a sharper picture of the composition of the Lords.

The House of Lords: Composition

The House of Lords has longstanding origins, with early prototypes emanating from Anglo-Saxon and Norman times. The Witan was used to advise the sovereign and included members who had personal expertise and social standing, consisting of archbishops, bishops, princes and thegns.⁸ Its composition was not fixed and the Witan met on an ad-hoc basis in order to discuss the issues of the day and matters relating to law and taxation (Butt 1989, 2-3; Bown 1994, 105). The inclusion of noblemen and bishops fashioned the basis of membership for the House of Lords and during the fourteenth century the barons and churchmen would meet separately to the knights and burgesses, establishing the emergence of two separate chambers in the UK (Norton 2005, 30). Such features of membership maintain relevance because of the continued place for different types of peers in the House of Lords. The following section provides a more fine-grained exposition of the types of peers in the House of Lords since 1999, as detailed in Table 4.1 and

⁸ A thegn was a lesser noble in Anglo-Saxon England.

demonstrates how particular facets of the chamber's composition influence women's representation.

The Admittance of Women to the House of Lords

Women could not sit in the House of Lords until 1958 as life peers, and as hereditary peeresses until 1963. However, women were permitted to enter the galleries of the House of Lords in an observational capacity in the nineteenth century, although the admittance of women as spectators caused consternation from some (male) peers (Crewe, 2005, 116). In 1855 Lord Redesdale suggested that women's presence in the Lords, even just as spectators, was unwelcome because they 'created a frivolous atmosphere and even dissuaded a colleague from speaking, making the Lordships' House look more like a casino than anything else' (Hayman 2007).

Table 4.1. Types of Membership in the House of Lords from 1999 to Present

Type of Peer/Lord	Occupies:	Membership	Number	Route to Membership
Life Peers under Life Peerages Act 1958	Party and Crossbenches	Life	No limit by statute	PM, or PM on advice of Party Leader in case of opposition parties, or HOLAC in case of crossbenches since 2000
Elected Hereditary Peers under House of Lords Act 1999	Party and Crossbenches	Life	92 by statute	2 ex-officio; 15 office-holders elected by the House; 75 party and Crossbench Members, elected by their own party.
Lords Spiritual ⁹ (Bishops)	Bishops and Archbishops	Until Retirement	26 by statute	Archbishops of Canterbury and York; Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester. 21 other Bishops according to seniority of appointment (Lewis-Jones 1999, 5).
Life Peers under Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 (Law Lords) ¹⁰	Crossbenches	Sit as judges until 70 or 75, but remain a member of the House on retirement.	12 by statute; plus retired Law Lords	Appointment by Lord Chancellor from senior judges

In the UK women finally gained the opportunity to compete for elite level politics through the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918. This act gave women the capacity to be

⁹ Bishops are not peers, but Lords of Parliament (Lewis-Jones, 1999, 5).

¹⁰ From 2009 the 'Law Lords' were disqualified from the membership of the House of Lords due to s.137 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 as a holder of disqualifying judicial office. As the temporal focus of this thesis is between 1999 and 2009 references to the Law Lords are still relevant.

able to be elected as an MP, with equal rights to sit and/or vote in the House of Commons as their male counterparts. However, this legislation applied only to the House of Commons and did not accord women the same right to sit in the Lords. The disparity between women's entrance to the lower house, and their sustained barring from the upper house was not reserved to the United Kingdom, although Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales and Queensland remedied this upper house discrimination rather more quickly than the forty years it took for women to enter the House of Lords (Sutherland, 2000, 219-220). In discussion of reform and composition of the House of Lords in 1948, it was agreed by all three party leaders that women should be able to be appointed to the second chamber akin to their male counterparts (House of Lords 2006). One decade later, women were finally able to be appointed to the House of Lords when the Life Peerages Act 1958 was passed, with the entrance of women hereditary peers coming five years later in 1963.

Hereditary Peers

The inclusion of nobility within the House of Lords predated its official formation in the fourteenth century and served to set up the tradition of hereditary peers. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was common for barons who had regularly attended the Curia Regis to have their male heir called upon to attend in their place. Thus a father's duties would transfer to his son on death establishing the hereditary principle (Norton 2005, 30). Furthermore, Prime Ministers were allowed to award a hereditary peerage of the first creation onto individuals prior to the advent of life peers. Even though women were hereditary peeresses and could inherit titles, such titles did not give women the right to sit in the House of Lords; therefore the House of Lords was an entirely male institution. Moreover, the process of primogeniture, whereby privileges pass to eldest sons, has historically disadvantaged women's presence.

Women with hereditary titles began to make demands for their inclusion within the House of Lords following the granting of suffrage to women in 1918. Viscountess Rhondda was the figurehead for this campaign. Her father, whose two sons had both died, had changed the letters patent of his title explicitly naming his daughter as heir and recipient of his title, so that she could claim the title and its associated rights to enter the Lords. Viscountess Rhondda attempted to use the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 as a means to enter the Lords because this legislation sought to remove exclusions on the grounds of sex: 'A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public

function?. However, the Committee for Privileges in the House of Lords argued that Viscountess Rhondda could not use this Act to gain a writ to the House of Lords because it was unable to grant rights that had not been in force previously. Following this effort, there were other attempts to initiate legislation to allow hereditary peeresses to enter the Lords which were again unsuccessful (Iwi 1953; Sutherland 2000; Hale of Richmond 2004).

Women were excluded from using their titles to gain access to the House of Lords until the Peerage Act 1963 came into operation. The main purpose of the Peerage Act was to allow hereditary peers to disclaim their peerage so they could contest general elections should they choose to. In addition, section six stated that women could use their hereditary peerages to receive writs of summons to attend the House of Lords on equal terms to male hereditary peers. Whilst women had been able to enter the House of Lords five years previously due to the Life Peerages Act 1958, this legislation finally eliminated all forms of discrimination by sex in terms of representation in political institutions. The first woman to take her seat in the House of Lords as a hereditary peeress was Baroness Strange of Knokin on 19 November 1963. Yet this equalising of opportunity still privileged male political presence because the bulk of hereditary peerages descend down the male line. A stark illustration of this is the gender distribution of hereditary peers in April 1998. There were 759 hereditary male peers and 17 hereditary women peers; women comprised just two percent of all hereditary peers (Russell 2000, 13).

In their 1997 manifesto the Labour Party established their plans to reform the House of Lords (Labour Party 1997). In order to 'clean up politics' it was necessary to 'end the hereditary principle in the House of Lords' and legislation was advanced to change the composition of the chamber. The main purpose of the legislation was to improve political representation in the second chamber so that no party or group had overall control of the House of Lords. However the hereditary principle was not discontinued entirely. Lord Weatherill, the convenor of the crossbench peers at the time, moved an amendment which would retain a number of hereditary peers. In order to ensure the easy progress of the legislation through the House of Lords, the Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the leader of the Conservatives in the House of Lords, Lords Cranbourne, struck a deal to ensure that Conservative peers would support this amendment (Russell 2000, 15).

The House of Lords Act 1999 established a fixed number of 92 hereditary peers; 90 elected by members of the Lords and two ex-officio members as outlined in Table 4.1. Of the 90 elected peers there are 15 office holders, either Deputy Speakers or Deputy Chairmen, elected by the population of the House of Lords from across the main political parties and the crossbenches. The remaining 75 peers are composed in proportion to the numbers in the hereditary peerage, calculated in November 1999 before hereditary peers were disbanded: 42 Conservative, 28 Crossbench, 3 Liberal Democrat and 2 Labour. These members were elected by the hereditary peers of each group, with the first elections taking place in October and November 1999. Five women were elected successfully, comprising 5.4% of all hereditary peers.¹¹ The ex-officio peers remain in the House of Lords because they are Hereditary Office Holders: the Earl Marshall and the Lord Great Chamberlain. There were 11 surviving male hereditary peers of first creation, and these peers were awarded a life peerage in order to return to the House.

The number of elected hereditary peers was fixed at 92, therefore when an elected hereditary peer died, their vacant seat was filled by the individual who had polled the next highest number of votes in 1999 elections. This process changed in November 2002, and by-elections now occur for vacancies. To be eligible to contest a by-election, candidates must be on the official register. The most recent register of candidates contains no women; therefore there can be no net increase to the numbers of women elected hereditary peers.¹² At present, only two elected hereditary women peers remain (2.1%). Furthermore, during the 2009 Labour Party Conference the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, asserted that: 'In this next year we will remove the hereditary principle in the House of Lords once and for all' (Brown 2009). The Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill, announced in the November 2009 Queen's Speech aimed to end the use of by-elections for elected hereditary peers, which would gradually reduce the numbers of hereditary peers.

Even though the House of Lords is undemocratic in the sense that its members are mainly appointed or indirectly elected, retaining hereditary members who come to the House solely due to accident of birth sits uncomfortably with ideas of modern democracy. Moreover, when other types of peers bring expertise and knowledge to the House of Lords, the purpose of hereditary peers is less defensible, especially when any individual can now

¹¹ These were Baroness Darcy de Knayth, the Countess of Mar, Baroness Strange of Knokin, Baroness Wharton and Lady Saltoun of Abernethy.

¹² HL2-2007/2008.

apply to the House of Lords Appointments Commission to become a crossbench peer. Furthermore, the retention of hereditary peers in the Lords means they are in effect de facto male reserved seats, comprising over 10% of seats.

The Bishops/ Lords Spiritual

The inclusion of religious representation in the second chamber is longstanding in the UK and likely to have emanated from the bishops' landowning rights given by the sovereign, rather than in relation to the spiritual dignity (Morris 2009, 44). Whilst ecclesiastical presence within the UK was weakened during the Reformation, and denied from 1640-61, the Clergy Act 1661 permitted the presence of bishops in the Lords (Drewry and Brock 1971, 248). The Bishopric of Manchester Act 1847 capped the number of places at 26 (Maer and Makwana 2009, 3). Of the 26 Lords Spiritual, five positions are ex-officio: the two archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishops of London, Durham and Winchester. The remaining 21 Lords Spiritual are appointed from the other 42 diocesan bishops in order of seniority (Lewis-Jones 1999, 5). Although there are technically 44 diocesan bishops in the Anglican Church, the Bishop of Europe and the Bishop of Sodor and Man are not eligible to sit in the House of Lords. The Bishop of Sodor and Man is an ex-officio member of the Isle of Man's upper house, the Legislative Council (Edge and Pearce 2004).

The Lords Spiritual are not peers, rather they are termed Lords of Parliament (Lewis-Jones 1999, 5). Once a bishop retires from their religious office, usually before they reach the age of 70 they relinquish their rights to sit in the House of Lords thus Lords Spiritual are the only type of peer not to have lifetime terms of appointment (Edge 2001). However, some former archbishops or active bishops have subsequently received life peerages (Shell 1992, 31; Bown 1994, 105). For example Richard Harries, former Bishop of Oxford, sat in the House of Lords as a Lord Spiritual from 1993-2006. During that time he contributed to the work of the Lords as convenor of the Bishops, chairing a select committee on stem cell research and being a member of the Royal Commission on House of Lords Reform. He was appointed to the Lords as a life peer in 2006, following his retirement as from religious office and currently sits as a crossbencher (Maer and Makwana 2009, 4).

There are duties specific to the Lords Spiritual. On each day the House of Lords sits, a Lord Spiritual is responsible for taking prayers and a rota is implemented each year to ensure the presence of a Bishop for an allotted week. Although the five ex-officio bishops

are not required to take prayers, they can stand in to take prayers when the requisite duty Bishop is absent (Bown 1994, 105). Beyond this, according to 3.07 of the 2007 version of the *Companion to the Standing Orders and Guide to the Proceedings of the House of Lords* it allowed that: ‘a member of the House who is a clergyman of the Church of England may read prayers. If no such member is present, the Lord on the Woolsack reads prayers’ (Clerk of Parliaments 2007, 22).

The attendance of bishops to parliament varies. Some research found that between 1979 and 1987 the mean attendance for the Lords Spiritual was 12.2% of sitting days, however individual attendance ranged from 2% to 51.1% of sitting days (Bown 1994, 107). The Lords Spiritual still have to undertake their duties related to their religious office which comes some way to explaining the low levels of attendance. Bishops are free to participate in any aspect of the Lords’ business. The bishops appoint a convenor from themselves as a way to ensure that the voice of bishops is taken into account within the House of Lords, being a point of contact for other peers or political parties, as well as to be informed of legislation with an ecclesiastical element. Furthermore, Lambeth Palace acts to ensure that bishops are aware of any relevant debates in terms of ecclesiastical content and that there will be at least one bishop present, as well as any debates that incorporate the specialist interests of bishops (Drewry and Brock 1971, 233). The contribution of individual bishops in the House of Lords is often influenced by their presence on the prayer rota (Drewry and Brock 1971, 246).

The Lords Spiritual are eligible to vote in the House of Lords, however as their presence at the House of Lords is irregular, their participation is rather limited and it is uncommon for the bishops to turn out and vote en masse (Drewry and Brock 1971; Bown 1994; Russell and Sciarra 2007b). Even though their voting participation is said to have increased in frequency (Partington and Bickley 2007), other research suggests that the more important role of Bishops in divisions is their ability to influence the votes of other peers in the Lords; their participation in divisions has seldom made a difference to legislative outcomes (Russell and Sciarra 2007b, 311).

The place of the Lords’ Spiritual within Parliament is not without contention. First of all it is important to note that the bishops in the House of Lords are not representative of the Anglican Church in the sense that they are not ‘mandated either by the General Synod or

their diocese, or bound to agree with or represent their views. Each bishop in the House of Lords speaks and votes as he thinks fit...’ (Lewis-Jones 1999, 7). Whilst bishops embody the Anglican faith, their actions within the House of Lords are determined individually and not controlled by the Church of England. For example in divisions on the Civil Partnerships Bill during 2004 eight bishops supported the government whereas two did not (Russell and Sciara 2007b, 311). Moreover only the Anglican Church has guaranteed representation within the political system when worshipping levels for this faith are in decline. Even though the numerical proportion of the bishops in the House of Lords comprises only a meagre percentage of the Lords’ membership, the nature of official and assured presence for one faith within the UK Parliament raises questions and has been one feature of the debate on further reform to the House of Lords (Drewry and Brock 1971; Maer and Makwana 2009). The rise in religious pluralism within the UK raises wider questions related to issues of religion and representation, especially when religiosity in the dominant population is in decline as mentioned previously (Davie 1999; Davie 2000). Approximately 5% of the UK population are adherents of other faiths such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism (Lewis-Jones 1999). However these communities are not formally reflected in the UK Parliament, except within the identities of individual MPs or peers.

Finally, the retention of bishops as legislators in Parliament means that there are 26 *de jure* male reserved seats in the House of Lords. Women are not permitted to become diocesan bishops within the Anglican Church therefore there are no female Lords Spiritual. There are movements within the Church of England to ensure that the ordination of women bishops occurs in the near future, however as yet only men can become Lords Spiritual (Gledhill 2009). Whilst numerically bishops comprise only a nominal section of the Lords’ membership, approximately 3.5% of the House, this still acts to constrain women’s numerical representation and raises concerns related to women’s symbolic representation.

The Law Lords

Whilst the House of Lords had a judicial function from the fourteenth century, it was only during the nineteenth century that personnel were appointed to the House of Lords specifically for their legal backgrounds. The enactment of the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 created four Law Lords at the time, with this number increasing to twelve in contemporary times Law Lords for life, in effect the earliest form of life peers in the House

of Lords (Shell 1992, 15; House of Lords 2008a). However, the judicial function of the House of Lords ceased in October 2009, when the Supreme Court was established.

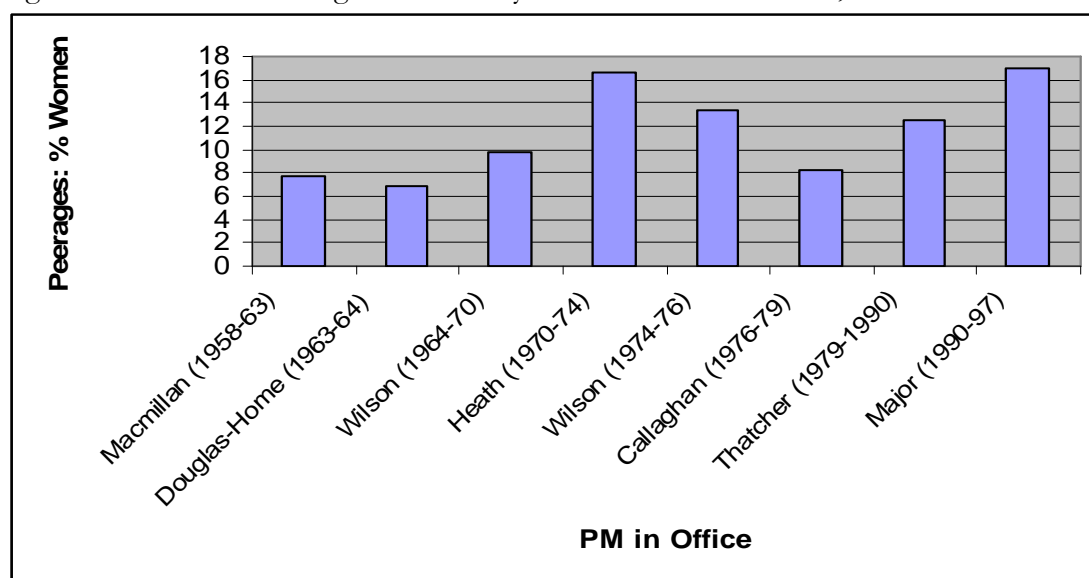
The Law Lords sit on the crossbenches and do not partake in the ‘political’ work of the House. In terms of their input into the business of the House, much of this is generally confined to legal and moral implications of legislative impact (Drewry and Morgan 1969). As it is the highest levels of legal office which allow access to the second chamber as a Law Lord, the status of women within the legal profession is an important influence on the gender composition of the Law Lords, although the judiciary is seen to favour the presence of middle-class white men (Malleon 2006; Malleon 2009a). The Law Lords appointed to the House of Lords were entirely male until the appointment of Baroness Hale in 2004 (Kenney 2004). Therefore the presence of Law Lords in the House of Lords constrains women’s numerical presence because Law Lords had lifetime terms of appointment and could have a negative influence on women’s symbolic representation due to lack of women. However, as identified in Table 4.1, the inclusion of Law Lords in the House of Lords ceased in 2009. The judicial function of the House of Lords was diverted to the new Supreme Court of the UK and all 12 serving Law Lords became Justices in the new Supreme Court, automatically disqualifying them from sitting or voting in the House of Lords.

Life Peers

The Life Peerages Act 1958 allowed for the creation of a peerage for an individual’s life, however distinct from hereditary peerages life peerages cannot be handed down from generation to generation. The purpose of the Life Peerages Act at the time was to rejuvenate the membership and work of the House of Lords and the idea of life peers materialised as a way to increase the numbers of peers who participated and augment the overall activity of the House (Norton 2005, 33). R.A. Butler, Conservative Home Secretary at the passing of the Life Peerages Act 1958, presented the notion that life peers would broaden the membership of the second chamber with ‘men and women of distinction from all main sectors of our national life.....By this means...the House of Lords will adequately and accurately reflect the life and thought of the nation’ (HC Hansard, 12 February 1958, Vol. 582, col. 408-409). Thus the introduction of Life Peers to the House of Lords linked to arguments of descriptive representation.

The passage of the Life Peerages Act faced resistance in the Lords. An amendment called for only men to be able to become Life Peers. There were 30 peers who voted in agreement with the amendment, a notable figure seeing as the average attendance of peers during that particular session was only 110. However, the amendment did not pass and the Life Peerages Act did pass to admit women into the House of Lords. Shortly after the legislation was enacted into law, fourteen new life peers were announced on 24th July 1958, of whom four were women (29%).¹³ However the proportion of appointments going to women was not maintained, as Figure 4.1 illustrates. During the first decade of women's admittance to the House of Lords, they comprised less than ten percent of new appointees although comparatively women comprised 4% of all MPs. Women comprised just one third of the labour force (Joshi, Layard et al. 1985).

Figure 4.1. Women's Peerage Creations by Prime Minister in Office, 1958-1997¹⁴



Source: LLN2005-008; parliament.uk

Lists of nominees vary with the frequency they occur and there are again different types of list. Whilst the numbers of other types of peer in the Lords are fixed by statute, there is not a maximum number of life peers who can sit in the House of Lords. Appointments of life peers are at the discretion of the Prime Minister. There are various routes to a life peerage, notwithstanding Law Lords who have featured for discussion previously. At the end of a Parliament it is common for peerages to be given to former MPs from across the political parties who have left the House of Commons. Linked to this, a prime minister who has

¹³ These were Baroness Darcy de Knayth, the Countess of Mar, Baroness Strange of Knokin, Baroness Wharton and Lady Saltoun of Abernethy.

¹⁴ This takes into account newly created hereditary peers, life peers and law lords.

resigned from office is permitted to recommend peerages for their supporters and advisers. There are also political lists where individuals receive peerages in order to support their party's work in the Lords, dubbed 'working' peers'. At other times the prime minister may make one-off announcements to allow for an individual to be appointed to the House of Lords in order to become a minister such as Peter Mandelson who was ennobled as Baron Mandelson of Foy in the County of Herefordshire and Hartlepool in the County of Durham on his re-entry to British politics in July 2008. Otherwise, there are conventions that the occupation of some positions in public and political life precipitate a peerage once an individual has stepped down, such as the Speaker in the House of Commons (House of Lords 2008a). Other public roles that also tend to bring a peerage include civil service posts such as the Cabinet Secretary, Chief of the Defence Staff, the Governor of the Bank of England and the Private Secretary to the Queen (Russell and Sciara 2009, 34). Interestingly, all of these roles have been occupied by men over the past fifty years, demonstrating that the dominance of men in certain positions within public life such as the civil service disadvantages the representation of women in the House of Lords.

The cross-bench element of the House of Lords contains members who do not hold a party allegiance (Rogers and Walters, 2006) also described as non-party-political peers. Prior to 2000, all crossbench members of the House of Lords were appointed by the Prime Minister. The publication of *Modernising Parliament: Reforming the House of Lords* (Cm. 4183) in January 1999, a White Paper that primarily catalysed the removal of most hereditary peers from the Lords, also indicated that an independent Appointments Commission would be established to make nominations to the cross benches (Cabinet Office 1999). The House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) was established in May 2000 and has made all recommendations on non-party-political peers since this time. It was chaired by Lord Stevenson of Coddanham from its conception until September 2008 and is currently headed by Lord Jay of Ewelme. The primary purpose of the Commission is to make appointments based on individual merit. Beyond this they should ensure 'the composition and balance of the House better reflects the different experience and backgrounds..... for example from women, those with disabilities and those from ethnic minority groups who have the appropriate skills and experience' (House of Lords Appointments Commission 2007).

Whilst the decision of who comes to the Lords as a working peer is decided upon by the respective party leader and as such is not a transparent process, the Liberal Democrats have made efforts to bring an element of democratisation and transparency to the process of peerage appointments since 1999, allowing party members to put themselves forward for consideration. The party membership then votes upon these names, creating a panel of aspirant peers (Peers Panel). The party leader can then choose appointments from this list although they can appoint individuals who do not appear on this list. All former Liberal Democrat MPs can opt to be considered for a peerage. However, in practice, the party leader can and does by-pass this process when appointing to the Lords.¹⁵

This section has overviewed various features of the composition of the House of Lords determining that the basis of representation for the chamber has influenced the types of representatives who now reside there. The House of Lords has a hybrid composition of appointment, indirect elections of hereditary members and ex-officio membership of religious representatives. None of these methods are perceived to be democratic, which is perceived to influence the way in which it uses its ascribed powers. Furthermore, discussions of the mode of designation of members of second chambers may have a bearing upon the legitimacy, powers and relationship with the lower house (Scully 2001). This will be explored in the following section on the functions, powers and work of the House of Lords.

The Powers and Functions of the House of Lords

This section now turns to consider the powers and functions of the House of Lords. Patterson and Mughan (2001) link the means of composition to gravitas of a second chamber: 'The democratic fertility of the milieu in which senates reside doubtless impinges on the scope of their functions and their relative power' (Patterson and Mughan 2001). Thus, if a chamber is democratically elected by citizens, the second chamber is likely to have wide-ranging powers; reciprocally appointed second chambers are deemed to be weaker. To some extent, this assertion is borne out in the UK context. The House of Lords is a largely appointed chamber, with fewer formal powers than the House of Commons and the capacity to delay rather than reject legislation. The main functions of the House of Lords are: making laws (legislative), keeping a check on government (scrutiny) and providing a forum of independent expertise. Until October 2009 it held a judicial function

¹⁵ All information gained from private correspondence.

as the highest court within the UK (House of Lords 2008b).¹⁶ This section is subdivided into two main areas; first of all considering the powers invested in the House of Lords and then moving on to consider the main legislative and scrutiny functions.

The Powers of the House of Lords

The powers of the House of Lords have gradually receded over centuries. Historically the Lords' membership consisted of clergy and the gentry and the House was consulted on relevant issues by the sovereign. Yet as the enfranchisement of citizens was established and widened during the nineteenth century, the overall influence of the House of Lords began to wane and it became the weaker parliamentary chamber (Russell 2000; Russell and Sciara 2008). The relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords reached a critical stage during the first decades of the twentieth century. This was sparked by the Liberal government's radical programme of social reform, intended to be partly funded by higher levels of taxation upon the upper classes. However, as the House of Lords included just Hereditary Peers, Law Lords and Lords Spiritual it was opposed to such redistributive measures and therefore legislative deadlock between the two chambers occurred when the House of Lords vetoed the 1909 budget. Following two general elections in 1910 that asserted the authority of the Liberal government, the Liberal Party eventually warned the Lords that in order to get its legislation passed it would flood the House of Lords with new Liberal hereditary creations. This threat was effective, and the Parliament Act 1911 was passed, legislation which curtailed the powers of the House of Lords from universal veto to delay for a maximum period of two years. In addition, money bills could only be held up by the House of Lords for one month (Russell 2000, 12-13). The delaying powers for public bills were reduced to just one year by the 1949 Parliament Act. In this way the House of Lords is substantially weaker than the House of Commons, although it retains a power to delay legislation.

The Legislative Function of the House of Lords

The House of Lords spends a majority of its time on legislative matters, and this is seen to be one of its valuable functions because it takes pressure away from the House of Commons and often enhances the detail of legislation. In the 2003-04 parliamentary session, the House of Lords spent 60.6% of its total sitting time on business related to legislation (Shell 2007, 91). This is almost double the amount of time afforded by the

¹⁶ The judicial function of the House of Lords is not considered in this thesis.

Commons where approximately one third of its total sitting hours are spent on legislative matters (Rogers and Walters 2006, 234).

The House of Lords deals with different types of legislation. The main type of legislation that the House of Lords is involved with is public legislation, which includes government bills and private members' bills, and usually applies to the general population. In contrast private legislation which gives powers to individuals or organisations, such as local authorities, to obtain powers that may be beyond, or in conflict with existing legislation.

In addition, secondary or delegated legislation is used as a way to stop overloading parliament and allows for ministers to make law themselves by order, rules and regulations. In essence, whilst an Act of Parliament specifies the broad framework of policy, delegated legislation can help to provide fine-grained details, or keep an Act up to date, known as Statutory Instruments. Statutory instruments have increased, and may at times be of high importance. In the Lords there are two committees that assist in this process. The Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee scrutinises delegated powers in primary legislation to assess what powers ministers are requesting. The Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee looks at secondary legislation which appears from the exercise of these powers. Whilst these committees have no formal powers to block statutory instruments, they are both well regarded therefore their views are generally accepted by the government (House of Lords 2009)¹⁷.

The Legislative Process

It is important to keep in mind that the Executive dominates the legislative programme by instigating most bills which will likely be enacted into law because of the nature of the party discipline system (Drewry 1992). The legislative process in the UK requires bills to pass through both chambers of parliament. Whilst it is usual for bills to start their legislative journey in the House of Commons, bills can also begin in the House of Lords. The stages that a bill has to pass through are the same within each chamber, however there are differences of procedure. Such differences contribute to the greater amount of time spent by the Lords on legislative business.

¹⁷ Whilst an increasing feature of the House of Lords, statutory instruments are not subject to in-depth analysis in terms of women's representation, however could be a future research trajectory.

The first reading of a bill does not usually involve any debate, and is merely a formal introduction. Once two weekends have passed the second reading occurs, which is usually opened by the relevant Government Minister in the Lords. At this stage there is a debate to discuss the overriding principle and purpose of the bill and any peer may speak in the debate providing they have submitted their name to the proposed list of speakers.

After fourteen days the bill goes to committee stage. The main purpose of the committee stage, which is usually taken on the floor of the House of Lords, is to inspect the bill line by line, as well as consider any amendments which have been put down. In the Lords all amendments put down by peers are considered, as distinct from the Commons where the chair of the standing committee or the Speaker has direct influence in choosing the amendments to be considered (Norton 2005, 88-89). Thus, backbench peers have a greater potential to express their views and influence legislation because their amendment is guaranteed to receive parliamentary time, which is not so for a backbench MP. Indeed, a determined peer has greater opportunity to express their point of view and influence legislation than a backbench MP (Rogers and Walters 2006, 237). Moreover by introducing amendments the Lords has a power to make the government think again. For example in the 2006-07 parliamentary session, the House of Lords had 1911 amendments to legislation accepted from a total of 5559 tabled amendments (House of Lords 2008b). Following committee stage, the bill will be reproduced if any proposed amendments have been accepted. Once again a period of fourteen days has to pass before the bill moves to the report stage where all members of the House of Lords have another opportunity to consider the amendments made. If all further amendments are accepted at this time the bill is again reprinted.

The bill moves to the third reading where the Lords can once more make amendments. The use of amendments at this stage may refine a particular element of a bill or ensure that the government has acted upon previous promises. This is the final stage for the bill in the Lords provided it started in the House of Commons, where it is returned to the Commons for all changes to be considered. Once both chambers have agreed upon the final version of a bill, the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament and is enshrined into law.

However, if the Commons does not agree upon a Lords amendment and the Lords insist upon it, the bill will pass between each House in a process called 'ping-pong'. In March 2005 the passage of the Prevention of Terrorism Bill was stalled by ping-pong. In the

House of Lords there were 18 government defeats, one third of which saw the government losing by margins of more than 100 votes (Russell and Sciara 2006). The Bill moved from House to House four times and the Commons' amendments were rejected until a sunset clause that would review particular clauses of the legislation annually was accepted. According to Baroness D'Souza this example illustrated the strength of the delaying power of the Lords when the chamber sat for over thirty hours from Thursday 10th March through to Friday 11th March 2005 (D'Souza 2009). Yet Norton notes that in practice most Lords amendments are acceptable for the Commons, however if the two chambers clash then the House of Lords usually defers, although not always immediately. The House of Lords has been relatively restrained in rejecting legislation from the House of Commons as it is not the popularly elected chamber. Moreover, the Government can use the Parliament Act to get its own way, although this is rare and has only occurred four times since 1949 (Norton 2005, 89).

Some research suggests that government defeats are more common in the House of Lords since it entered its transitional phase in 1999 because it perceives itself as a more legitimate chamber (Whitaker 2006). The main actors in delivering government defeats are the opposition parties, particularly the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The bonded effect of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat opposition benches was responsible for 90% of government defeats from November 1999 to May 2005 (Russell and Sciara 2007b). However other research recognises that whilst government defeats are one way for the House of Lords to exert influence upon the Government, there are compromises reached that occur behind the scenes thus are difficult to quantify (Russell and Sciara 2008).

Private Members' Bills

Peers are able to construct and advance their own legislation in the House of Lords and have an 'unfettered right of legislative initiative' (Natzler and Millar, 1993, 168) in the form of a private members' bill. A private members' bill is a public bill sponsored by a member of either House. Whilst private members' bills can be introduced in the Commons through the ballot, by the ten minute rule procedure and ordinary presentation, peers are free to introduce a private members' bill to the House of Lords (House of Commons Information Office, 2008a). Once a Lords private members' bill has been introduced successfully into the House of Lords and gone through the necessary stages there, it is taken to the Commons where an MP has to agree to take the bill through the lower chamber.

When a peer attempts to introduce a private members' bill, they are bringing an item or issue of interest onto the political agenda, as well as committing themselves to changing the law in some or advancing a particular policy. Peers are free to introduce their own private members' bill to the Lords, however some private members' bills occur as a result of persistent lobbying by pressure groups and peers may agree to take on the cause of a pressure group due to their individual interest (Borthwick, 1993). In the 2006/2007 Parliamentary Session, there were in total 22 private members' bills introduced by peers; however, only one of these bills was successful in receiving royal assent, the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007; however very few Lords private members' bills are enacted into law. As Table 4.2 illustrates since 1997 only six percent of Lords private members' bills have successfully received royal assent. Whereas time is reserved in the parliamentary programme for Ballot Bills, this is not so for Lords private members' bills: 'Since they usually reach the Commons late in the session; they are likely to be behind the Commons bills in the queue' (House of Commons, 2008a, 4). In theory, peers are well placed to advance their own legislation, more so than backbench MPs (Bromhead 1958, 196). However in practice it is doubtful that a Lords private members' bill will go to receive Royal Assent and it is more likely that private members' bills emanating from the Commons will become an Act of Parliament (Russell 2000). In this way, individual peers have agenda-setting powers rather than legislative powers. Some private members' bills are introduced by peers if government legislation has failed to progress due to the end of parliamentary sessions, for example the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Bill introduced by Lord Clement-Jones in the 2002-02 session, the previous session a similar bill was considered and passed through the Commons and had reached its second reading stage in the House of Lords but did not become law (Shell 2007, 93).

Table 4.2. The Success Rate of Ballot and Peers Private Members' Bills, 1990-2007

Time Period	Total Ballot Bills Introduced	Number of successful Ballot Bills	Success Rate	Total Peers PMB introduced	Number of successful Peers PMB	Success Rate
1990/1991 to 1996/1997	140	68	48.6%	53	19	35.8%
1997/1998 to 2006/2007	200	46	23.0%	95	6	6.3%

Source: House of Commons, 2008b

The introduction of private members' bills by peers allows an alternative way for peers to raise an issue onto the parliamentary agenda in the House of Lords, even if they know the bill will not advance very far through the requisite stages. Moreover, it guarantees a government response to an issue where policy discourse may not yet have been crystallised. Finally, introducing a private members' bill is a more straightforward procedure than having to ballot for a short ballot (Natzler and Millar 1993).

Scrutinising Government

Aside from its legislative role, the House of Lords also has a scrutiny function which takes up approximately 40% of its sitting time. The nature of this scrutiny is often deliberative, in the form of debates and questions directed to the government (House of Lords 2008b, 11). The main scrutiny tools available to peers to examine the government are questions, which take up about 7% of the House of Lords' time (House of Lords 2008b, 1) and include starred questions, questions for short debate (QSDs), private notice questions and written questions. Debates take up nearly 30% of the Lords' sitting time. Select committees are also a key tool in which the House of Lords scrutinises the work of the government.

Parliamentary Questions

The earliest recorded parliamentary question was asked in the House of Lords on 9 February 1721 regarding Robert Knight, a Chief Cashier of the South Sea Company who had absconded and was detained in Belgium (Irwin, Kennon et al. 1993; House of Commons Information Office 2008). Starred questions were only asked on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the House of Lords and were limited to three per day up until 1954 and were not deemed to be a frequent feature of Lords' business at the time (Norton 1993, 20). At present starred questions occur on a daily basis when the House of Lords sits from Monday to Thursday, and do not feature in the Lords' business when the House sits on a Friday. Four questions are asked per sitting and the duration of 'question-time' in the Lords is time limited to half an hour (Rogers and Walters 2006, 338-339).

Starred questions can be put down by any member of the Lords and are asked to the Government rather than an individual Minister or Department. The peer asking the question may then ask a follow-up question, and after that any peer may intervene, precipitating a mini-debate. Each question asked receives a government response from the minister. The half hour of question time in the Lords is a focal point of attention and, like the Commons, attracts the best attendance and sometimes creates a boisterous atmosphere

in the House of Lords (Shell 1993, 150). The use of starred questions allows peers to influence the parliamentary agenda directly and raise issues that are external to those already established on the legislative treadmill. Peers do use starred questions to represent women, which is the focus of chapter 7. Moreover, there is now a tradition whereby the subject of questions on International Women's Day solely concerns women.

In addition questions for short debate (QSDs), formerly known as unstarred questions, may be asked in the House of Lords. QSDs may be tabled with relatively short notice and are to introduce a short debate on any sitting day, usually lasting for sixty minutes. QSDs normally feature in the dinner break hour and advance a form of mini debate in the Lords. The peer who asks the question is entitled to speak for ten minutes. At the close of the debate a minister replies for twelve minutes and the other time is divided between the peers who wish to speak in the Lords. A list of speakers is prepared in advance, which also includes time-limits for speakers. Norton notes that QSDs function well for the introduction of mini-debates as peers can place an item onto the agenda and develop their points, as well as receive a ministerial response. Moreover the subject matter is usually non-partisan and can concern different societal groups (Norton 2009a). There are no votes on QSDs therefore they largely function in terms of influencing the parliamentary agenda.

There are also private notice questions which are used to raise attention to urgent and pressing matters. In the daily business of the Lords private notice questions usually appear following starred questions, and are time-limited to ten minutes. The use of private notice questions is often reactive to certain events and government response. Norton outlines one example of the use of a private notice question in the Lords relating to the government's decision to ban Geert Wilders from entering the UK, a Dutch MP who holds controversial views on Muslims and Islam (Norton 2009b). These offer the opportunity for the leaders of the opposition parties to ask questions. Following this peers are open to ask questions. Events such as summer floods and the seizure of Royal Navy personnel by Iran featured in the 2006-07 parliamentary session (House of Lords 2008b, 13). Once again, private notice questions serve to draw attention to an issue on the parliamentary agenda.

Written questions are often used by peers to elicit hard to come by information from the government and have been used increasingly in the House of Lords. In the 1959-60 parliamentary session there were just 48 questions put down for written question, however this increased to 1202 in the 1988-89 session, and multiplied to 7374 in the 2005-06 session

(Shell 1993, 10; House of Lords 2008b, 12). In the 1970s peers were persuaded to ask written questions, rather than starred questions as a way to save parliamentary time (Shell 1993, 172). Written questions can be tabled by any peer, and by convention no more than six written questions may be tabled per day by a single peer (Rogers and Walters 2006, 339).

Debates

Peers can use non-legislative debates as a tool by which to check on the government as well as to react to 'issues of the day' (Borthwick, 1993, 210) or to 'air a policy matter of personal interest with the guarantee of a government response' (Rogers and Walters 2006, 309). Individual peers take the initiative for placing an item onto the political agenda for debate, and they must persuade their political party or bench that their debate allocation should be based on a particular subject (Borthwick, 1993, 214). It is in this way that a peer can directly influence the political agenda. The Lords is renowned for the high quality of debate that occurs and some debates attract media attention when there are renowned contributors speaking on issues that may be controversial or challenge the Government for example. This is of course facilitated by the membership of the Lords, who as discussed in earlier in this chapter, are often appointed due to individual expertise in wide-ranging areas (Baldwin 1999, 39).

Debates on motions occupy the greatest amount of time, and are allocated to the main political parties in the House, including the crossbenches. It is up to individual peers to influence their own party grouping in order to determine the subject for debate. These debates are usually held on a Thursday. Beyond this backbench peers can submit a debate through a ballot system, which feature once a month (Shell 2007, 96). These debates may be used for political means, and sometimes feature prior to the passage of a bill through the Lords in order to test the mood of the House, and can serve to develop support amongst peers, either in favour or against proposed legislation (Shell 1992, 185). Whilst some peers perceive these debates to have great utility and influence, this feeling is not universal and according to Shell a former minister almost totally disregarded Lords debates as: 'Ninety percent is puff' (Shell 1992, 198).

Select Committees

Select committees are an important feature of work for the House of Lords and play an integral part in the scrutiny process. The work of Lords' Select Committees is often regarded as having overall value for the political process: 'The House of Lords has taken

the initiative to develop its functions, not in a competitive way to the Commons, but rather in a complementary way, seeking to fill the gaps in the work of the lower House and to avoid duplicating the activities of the Commons' (Shell 2007, 35).

Select committees in the House of Lords emanated in the 1970s, and include ad-hoc, European, sessional, legislative¹⁸ and joint committees with the House of Commons. The function of Lords' select committees may be agenda-setting, legislative or to scrutinise government policy. For example, in 1972 an early ad-hoc select committee was established in the House of Lords to examine an anti-discrimination bill. The findings of the select committee were influential, indicating that women were subject to discrimination and suggesting some improvements (Shell 2007, 115). In this way 'Lords committees have the potential to influence political debate, and at times set it' (Grantham and Hodgson 1985), once again demonstrating the agenda-setting power of the House of Lords. However other types of select committees have more legislative functions and the EU committees in the House of Lords seek to scrutinise draft EU legislation at the earliest stage possible. The Science and Technology Committee, with two sub committees, is well-regarded for having prestigious scientists to consider science policy. Overall, the influence of Lords select committees upon Governments is hard to predict. Rogers and Walters (2006) suggest that if the findings of a select committee accord with Government policy, reports seem to have an effect. However, Lords select committees may have a wider influence than just Westminster, for example the European Commission heeds the output of the Lords' European Committees. In this way the select committees of the Lords have a potentially influential agenda-setting power that may at times spill-over to influence legislation.

The Culture and Rituals of the House of Lords

Focusing upon the formal functions of the House of Lords is an important task in order to understand its main roles yet in order to truly understand an institution it is also necessary to focus beyond formal rules and take into account its rituals and culture. In this context rituals refers to 'the softer, informal as well as symbolic aspects of modern politics' (Crewe and Müller, 2006, 7). Indeed, it is argued focus towards informal rules and practices is particularly pertinent for UK institutions as the constitution is unwritten therefore non-written rules are taken seriously (Crewe and Müller 2006, 9).

¹⁸ This refers to select committees mentioned earlier in this chapter on delegated legislation.

The House of Lords has been emphasised as a political chamber in which politeness and reverence are extolled virtues. Indeed *The Companion to the Standing Orders and Guide to the Proceedings of the House of Lords* emphasises that there is ‘customary courtesy’ (Clerk of the Parliaments 2010, para 4.29) in the procedure of the House of Lords and Standing Order 20(1) maintains that ‘the Lords in the Upper House are to keep dignity and order’ (House of Lords 2010b). The civil culture is embedded in the Lords through various functions. For example, during a peer’s maiden speech (their first official contribution in the House of Lords) all peers should be seated and the next speaker should offer congratulations (Clerk of the Parliaments 2010, para 4.45). In addition in some restaurants used exclusively by peers at Westminster there are long tables with long benches, the convention being that a peer sits at the next available space so that peers mix and get to know each other.¹⁹ Indeed the idea that party-lines are drawn loosely in the House of Lords (Drewry and Brock 1983) which contribute to the culture of the House can be demonstrated through other practices in the social spaces of the Lords as one peer emphasised during interview: ‘In the House of Commons tearooms, Labour and Conservative members sit separately. That would never happen here. People just sit together. So I think it’s less partisan’ (Labour). This shows how the overriding congenial culture of the House of Lords transcends party divisions.

Another factor that contributes to a sense of respect amongst peers is that the House of Lords regulates itself. The Lord Speaker (and the Leader of the House) have no formal authority to rule on matters of order although the Leader can advise on these matters (Clerk of the Parliaments 2010 paras. 4.01 to 4.10). This means that ‘peers threaten or cajole each other to be courteous, restrained and uncontroversial....aggressive, partisan or insulting speeches are out of the question’ (Crewe 2006, 91) which helps to contribute to the culture of good manners in the House of Lords. There are other conventions for particular working functions of the House. For example if a peer takes part in a debate it is expected that they are present in the chamber for its duration otherwise it is considered ‘discourteous’ (Clerk of the Parliaments 2010, para 4.32). Peers are able to listen to the contributions of others which reinforces the courtesy of the House. One peer emphasised how this was in contrast to the House of Commons where it is habit for MPs to make their speech and then leave the chamber.²⁰

¹⁹ Information gained from interview with Crossbench peer during 2008.

²⁰ Information gained from interview with Liberal Democrat peer during 2009.

In an earlier section of this chapter it was highlighted that the composition of the House of Lords includes a significant proportion of former MPs. Research into the development of political culture and practice in the Scottish Parliament established that the ‘new’ parliament was not a ‘blank slate’ nor ‘free-floating’, and Westminster politics played out at times in this institution because some MSPs had been or were currently MPs at the Commons, despite the efforts to implement a new type of politics in the Scottish Parliament (Mackay 2009). However, as the culture of the House of Lords has been deeply embedded over a long time period, the manifestation of adversarial politics is resisted. Former MPs come to assimilate to the culture of the House of Lords, and indeed lifetime terms of appointment means that peers help to reinforce this.

In chapter 6 there will be greater attention paid to how women experience the House of Lords. Indeed, Lovenduski (2005, 3) notes that ‘to perform effectively women politicians are expected to conform to the rules of the game.’ Thus exploring the institutional norms of the House of Lords and how they may be gendered is highly pertinent in order to unpack how women act as peers in the chamber and whether they are assimilated positively (or negatively) into the culture and working practices of the House of Lords.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to produce an exposition of the composition and functions of the House of Lords. In reviewing the composition of the House of Lords it was made evident that certain types of peer in the House of Lords are more likely to facilitate male presence such as Lords Spiritual and Hereditary Peers which in turn constrains women’s numerical representation. This research trajectory will be pursued in greater depth in chapter 5.

The main functions of the House of Lords have also been reviewed. Peers in the House of Lords have a capacity to exercise temporal powers of delay. The expertise of peers, combined with these delaying powers can be used effectively to make the government think again. Moreover through certain functions of the Lords such as divisions, amendments, and compromise behind the scenes the House of Lords can influence the government to a differential extent. In this way the powers go beyond delay and peers can mould and steer government policy at times. The House of Lords can be used to set the agenda on certain issues which could be important for any attempts to represent women in the policy process and the work of the House of Lords.

Moreover, the House of Lords clearly has an agenda setting power through some of its functions. Although the media attention directed towards the House of Lords is minimal, it is apparent that this may occasionally force the Government into making changes. Moreover, peers have an individual capacity to introduce their own legislation, a power not invested in backbench MPs. Admittedly, only a small minority of Lords' private members' bills reach the statute books, yet this power means that individual peers can get parliamentary time directed upon an issue. Examining how some functions of the House of Lords are used by women peers is a worthwhile pursuit in order to test whether the feminist interpretations of representation explored in chapter 2 remain valid in the site of the second chamber.

5. How are women represented in the House of Lords?

The Descriptive Representation of Women in the House of Lords

This chapter is concerned with examining the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords. The descriptive representation of women refers to the extent the composition of a political institution or assembly reflects women's presence in the population (Lovenduski 2005, 17). This chapter develops in three directions in order to interrogate the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords.

First of all, this chapter focuses upon the numerical aspect of women's descriptive representation which refers to the numbers of men and women in a political institution. As chapter 1 highlighted, the numerical dimension remains of central importance whilst women are still under-represented as parliamentarians (Randall 2002, 114). Therefore, auditing women's presence in elected political legislatures has become a predominant research trajectory in the analysis of women's descriptive representation (Childs 2000; Lovenduski 2001; Busby and MacLeod 2002; Harrison 2002; Trimble and Arscott 2003), although notably the appointed House of Lords is absent from the contemporary literature. Initially this chapter sets out empirical data on appointments made to the House of Lords since 1999 and relates this to the variety of access routes to the Lords described in the last chapter, finding that the distribution of women peers by peerage and political attachment in the Lords is not uniform. Qualitative data was collected from interviews with women peers from the main political parties and the cross-benches, and two male peers who incorporated different gatekeeper roles. As most peers come to the Lords via a system of patronage, it is important to know how these processes function because of their opaque nature (Flinders and Matthews 2009). Moreover, using the personal stories of peers allows for a unique insight into appointment policies (Devine 2002; Burnham, Gilland et al. 2004). In addition, the backgrounds of women peers are considered against a sample of male peers in order to investigate whether pathways to the Lords could be considered gendered.

The second section builds upon the numerical analysis to capture a more dynamic picture of descriptive representation by examining more fully socio-economic criteria additional to sex. The backgrounds of women peers in terms of education and professional expertise are explored to consider whether women peers are markedly different or similar from their male counterparts. In addition there will be focus upon the diversity amongst women

peers, as such heterogeneities are argued to improve the representative process (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002).

The final section of this chapter explores the attitudes of women peers towards the descriptive representation of women in politics in order to gauge whether women peers are supportive of feminist interpretations of representation (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002). It will also probe whether women peers interpret the contemporary composition of the House of Lords in terms of numbers and diversity positively and reflect upon their predispositions.

The Numerical Representation of Women in the House of Lords

Over a decade, the numerical presence of women peers has increased by more than a third, from 106 women peers at the start of the 1999/2000 session, to 149 in August 2009 as Table 5.1 overleaf shows. Indeed, women comprised over twenty percent of new appointees to the House of Lords when Tony Blair was Prime Minister and in Gordon Brown's first year of office, 37.5% of peerages creations went to women (Brocklehurst 2008, 11). These advances represent a clear upwards trend and demonstrate a feminization 'in terms of numbers' (Lovenduski 2005, 12). However, the overall size of the women's group in the Lords has increased only nominally. Since November 1999, women's presence in the House of Lords has grown from 15.8% to 19.3% at the start of the 2007/2008 parliamentary session. At the time of writing, women's presence had increased to its highest ever level reaching 20.2% in August 2009.

The trends in women's presence will now be analysed using the theories on recruitment discussed in chapter 2 including centralised party elites, prior political experience and notable constraints to women's presence. First of all the speculation that party elites are more disposed to advance women's presence when they control the selection of candidates will be subject to investigation (Randall 1987; Childs 2008). The House of Lords provides an opportunity to test this notion empirically due to the centralised control of appointments for each party and group. Formally, the award of a peerage is by the Crown; yet in practice the Prime Minister decides on appointments for his/her own party, and nominees from other parties are selected by their respective party leaders. Since 2000, the Prime Minister has transferred patronage powers to the House of Lords Appointments Commission, a Non Departmental Public Body responsible for recruiting and nominating non-party political or cross bench appointments to the second chamber. The fieldwork for

this thesis was undertaken during 2008 therefore this chapter does not consider the compositional changes to the House of Lords that have occurred since the Coalition Government of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats came into being in May 2010, although this is clearly a relevant and timely research trajectory.

Table 5.1. Women Peers in the Transitional House 1999 and 2008²¹

Party or Affiliation	Women Peers on 17 November 1999	Women Peers as on 17 November 1999 (%)	Women Peers as on 3 December 2008	Women Peers as on 3 December 2008 (%)
Conservative	35	15.0	34	17.2
Cross-Bench	18	10.8	35	17.0
Labour	41	22.5	54	25.1
Lib. Dem	11	20.4	20	27.8
Other Parties	1	10.0	3	20.0
Total	106	15.8	146	19.9

Source: House of Lords Information Office

Labour Peers

During the 1980s the Labour Party engaged with a process of modernisation that led to the Party making substantial efforts to improve the representation of women at all levels of the Party in order to present a female friendly image (Perrigo 1996; Short 1996; Childs 2004b; Lovecy 2007). The effort to feminise the Labour Party can be characterised by the election of 101 women New Labour MPs in the 1997 general election. This trend has been reflected in the House of Lords. The proportion of Labour women peers has increased from 22.5% at the start of the 1999 Parliamentary session to 25.1% at the close of 2008, matching the proportion of New Labour women MPs.

The number of women peers has increased by almost a third from 41 to 54 in December 2008, comprising over one third of all women peers within the House of Lords. One Labour woman peer remarked: ‘Blair did a marvellous job bringing in more women – black women, disabled women, just more women generally’. An interview with a different Labour woman peer confirmed that the increased representation of women in the Lords since 1997 was not accidental. She highlighted the ‘increased’ numbers of women in the House of Lords, and associated the award of her own peerage as part of a deliberate project to feminize the Lords by bringing in more women appointees: ‘At that time in 2000, all the parties were looking for more women. I think that I was the right sex at the right time for once!’ This illustrates the capacity of the Labour Party elite to feminize the

²¹ This does not include peers on a leave of absence.

Lords, with Blair's presence in particular deemed a crucial contributing factor to women's greater numbers in the House of Lords.

The presence of Blair as Party Leader (and Prime Minister) is clearly important, and he is argued to have exercised his ministerial patronage to increase the numbers of women peers. This capacity is also applicable to Gordon Brown's tenure as Prime Minister. As one Labour woman peer stressed: 'In recent years they've been concerned that lists are more balanced.' Even though there is not a quota policy for Labour Party appointments to the Lords, both Blair and Brown have used their position to bolster the presence of Labour women in the Lords. According to a separate woman peer: 'Labour has never to my knowledge had a policy that we had to nominate fifty-fifty men and women. But actually I think the last couple of PMs have sought to do that just because it feels right to do so.' Using appointments in this way was perceived to be important: 'As long as we have an appointed system (for the Lords) I think it's incumbent on all the political parties and the Appointments Commission to address the gender imbalance' (Labour). This example demonstrates the attitude that appointments ought to be used by party elites as one way to increase women's representation in the House of Lords.

The ability to network has often been construed an important positive factor that aids the achievement of political office (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, 162). Thus proximity to the party elite is important because in the case of appointments to the Lords, the party elite are the primary gatekeepers and decide directly upon appointments to the House of Lords. One Labour woman peer attributed her peerage to her long standing ties with the party elite. During Labour's Opposition period: 'Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and Jack Straw...used to come to my area campaigning. I really got to know them well at that time, from when they were rising stars until they got to the top positions.' In this case, the feminization period aided this particular woman peer whose closeness to the party elite was associated as an important factor in her own appointment to the Lords.

It was also suggested that women's presence within the elite of the Labour Party delivers benefits to women's numeric representation. One woman peer had actively advocated the abilities of other women as prospective peers: 'Before I was in the Lords I've suggested a couple of people for peerages informally within the party, and both of these have been women.' Other women peers gave examples of when they had used their strategic

positioning within the Labour Party to recommend women for a Labour peerage from a former Leader of the House of Lords who was: 'always on the lookout for good women to nominate to Number 10'. Such examples also support feminist interpretations of representation that suggest women representatives can act to advance the causes of women (Phillips 1995). These examples also demonstrate how the Labour women peers interviewed for this research could be seen as active role-models, a theme that will be explored further in chapter 6.

Liberal Democrats Peers

Currently, the Liberal Democrat party has the highest proportion of women peers on its benches at almost 28%. This is surprising because at the 2005 general election only 14.5% of Liberal Democrat MPs were women (Evans 2008). This had led some academics to refer to the Liberal Democrats as a 'male party' (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005). The higher level of Liberal Democrat women peers was attributed directly to the actions of particular party leaders by some women peers. In a newspaper interview, Baroness Hamwee stressed that her appointment to the Lords was due to her sex: 'I'm here because Paddy Ashdown wanted a woman peer' (Bunting 1992). Similarly, an interview with another Liberal Democrat woman peer reinforces this contention. When meeting Paddy Ashdown, then party leader, she was told there were two peerages to give away and he wanted: 'to give one to a man and one to a woman. I had spent years in the party battling on about women, trying to get them selected as candidates. I couldn't resist the one man one woman approach.' This was corroborated in a further interview with another Liberal Democrat peer when she confided that: 'Paddy had a number of peerages to give away and he didn't want them all to be older blokes; he wanted a bit of diversity. In particular he wanted women.' Ashdown's presence as Party leader, similar to Brown and Blair for Labour, was deemed essential to improving the numbers of Liberal Democrat women peers in the House of Lords according to these women peers. In at least three other interviews Nick Clegg, the current leader of the Liberal Democrats, was also identified as being keen to use his position to ensure there were more Liberal Democrat women in the House of Lords. Although since Clegg became Leader in December 2007, there have been no opportunities for the Liberal Democrats to make any appointments to the House of Lords.²²

The Liberal Democrats have attempted to thus introduce an element of democratisation and transparency to the process of peerage appointments through a Peers Panel since 1999,

²² Information gained from the office of Nick Clegg MP and correct up to September 2009.

which allows party members to put themselves forward as an aspirant peer. The party membership then votes upon these names. Thus, the party leader may put the most popular names upon a list to be considered when peerages are offered, although they are not confined to these choices and can appoint off-list. There is unease among some women peers that the continuation of the Peers Panel may be harmful to women's numbers in the Lords: 'A lot of us are very concerned that the next list from whom the leader will have to choose new peers will not contain enough women. A much higher proportion of men apply to go on that list.' Similarly, another Baroness admitted: 'There are few women who put themselves forward at the moment.' The prospect of more women coming to the Lords using this channel may decline because women are less likely to put their names forward, which accords with some research on political ambition (Fox and Lawless 2004; Lawless and Fox 2005). However, other research on the Liberal Democrats suggests that there is a good supply of women who aspire to the Commons at Westminster (Evans 2008). Moreover, other peers emphasised that in practice the party leader was not bound to select the most popular choices from this list and can and does bypass this mechanism when making appointees.

Conservative Peers

Just 17.2% of Conservative peers are women, and although this is a 2.2% increase over a decade, this is due to the overall size of the Conservative group in the Lords decreasing. In 1999, the Conservatives had 35 women peers; a decade later the number of women peers has decreased to 34. However, the current leadership is keen 'change the way' the Conservative Party looks and 'change the scandalous under representation of women in the Conservative party' (Cameron 2005). There are early indications that this assertion applies to the Lords. During Cameron's leadership of the opposition Conservative Party, he has appointed three peers to the Lords, of whom two are women and both are from black and minority ethnic groups. Indeed Baroness Warsi, one of Cameron's first appointments to the Lords was subsequently appointed to the shadow cabinet, becoming the first Muslim woman appointed as a member of the cabinet/shadow cabinet. At these early stages, Randall's elite thesis is applicable to the Conservative Party.

Crossbench Peers and the House of Lords Appointments Commission

The proportion of women on the cross-benches has improved since 1999 from 10.8% to 17% and the number of women peers almost doubled from 18 women to 35 in December 2008. The House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) has appointed all

crossbench members since 2000, marking the first time that British citizens could personally apply to become members of the House of Lords (Shell, 2007, 61-62). The HOLAC was chaired by Lord Stevenson of Coddensham from 2000 until September 2008, and is currently chaired by Lord Jay of Ewelme. The HOLAC is charged with making appointments based on merit; beyond this they should ensure that ‘the composition and balance of the House better reflects the different experience and backgrounds.... for example from women, those with disabilities and those from ethnic minority groups who have the appropriate skills and experience’ (House of Lords Appointments Commission 2007). The Commission does not record nominations on an annual basis, rather these are considered in rounds at irregular intervals. The proportion of female applicants has varied during each round as detailed in Table 5.2. Overall, women have constituted approximately one fifth of applicants.

Table 5.2. House of Lords Appointments Commission and Women’s Applications²³

Round 2001-2008	% Women Applicants
1	31
2	20
3	17
4	21
5	20
6	19
7	23
8	26
9	26
10*	27

*Round 10 had not closed at the time of writing

Since 2001, the HOLAC has nominated 51 crossbenchers to the Lords, of whom 19 were women, over one third of all appointments as detailed in Table 5.3 overleaf. This represents a positive distortion compared to women’s applications.²⁴In interviews, a small number of women peers reasoned that the HOLAC was deliberately ensuring that more women peers would be resident in the Lords. Two cross bench women peers remarked in separate interviews that it was due to: ‘positive discrimination.’ Furthermore, these interviews identified the Chair of the HOLAC, Lord Stevenson, as being critical to advancing women’s representation.²⁵ According to one interviewee, the proportion of women receiving peerages from the HOLAC was part of a general process of feminization

²³ Information gained from Commission Secretariat, October 2008.

²⁴ Correct as of July 2009. By May 2010 the HOLAC had made 55 appointments in total of which women comprised 20 (36.4%).

²⁵ Interviews were undertaken during 2008 when Lord Stevenson was still Chair of the HOLAC.

to the House of Lords: ‘I think there’s an understanding of the need to improve the gender-balance.’

Table 5.3. House of Lords Appointments Commission Peerage Nominations Since 2000²⁶

Men	Women	Total
32 (62.7%)	19 (37.3%)	51

However when interviewed two members of the HOLAC stressed that there were no special measures given to women applicants. It was emphasised very strongly that the calibre of female applicants was exceptional and the idea of positive discrimination was refuted adamantly. The following two extracts from two separate members of the HOLAC underline their claims:

Although we have had few women come forward, the quality has been extremely good. None of us believe in a statutory burden, in other words appointing someone just because she’s a woman. They have to be able to do the job. Women have no different interviews from a man at all. It’s the same interview, the same questions, the same pressure put on. So we’ve had a real quality there, but we would still like to get the number of nominations up.

For women, the percentage applying was dramatically low, but happily for us the overall *quality* of women who applied was a big group. To put it to the extreme, if the truth was that the only people we got who we thought were outstanding were white males, actually we should only appoint white males. In practice there were loads of outstanding women. If you look at Frances D’Souza, Valerie Howarth, Lady Butler-Sloss, Elspeth Howe, Elaine Murphy – anyone who tries to suggest that any of these women are token is mad!

The primary actors who had influence over Crossbench appointments denied speculations of positive discrimination yet this does not mean Randall’s assumption on elite control of recruitment is not applicable. The evidence still suggests centralised elite actors are more open to advancing women’s presence, whether involuntary or part of a more purposeful feminization.

The HOLAC was the first time individuals could apply to become a peer in the House of Lords. Of the women interviewed for this project who came to the House of Lords via the HOLAC, all had been encouraged in some way to put themselves up for consideration. One woman peer was: ‘actually put forward by someone else’ demonstrating the importance of having supportive actors in the process. Another woman linked her decision to apply to the Appointments Commission with the paucity of women in British

²⁶ Correct as of July 2009.

parliament: ‘I had never had any intention of doing this at all. There was a friend who kept on saying “There is this new opportunity and you should do it” because of everything I had done. One of the reasons I did apply was because it would be another woman getting in’ (Crossbench). This provides clear evidence that the HOLAC route was utilised deliberately by one woman peer as a means to improve the numerical dimension of women’s representation in the House of Lords.

Peers and Prior Political Experience

The following section turns to consider political experience as a factor that influences women’s presence in the House of Lords. It has been suggested that membership of second chambers is often connected to ‘a record of achievement elsewhere in politics’ (Russell 2000, 100), therefore women are under-represented in the Lords because women are under-represented in UK politics more generally. Norris and Lovenduski conceptualised the pathway to Parliament as a vertical ladder of recruitment. Members of Parliament were found at the top of the ladder and movement to the Lords can be horizontal from the Commons (Norris and Lovenduski 1995, 15-16). Therefore in the House of Lords, former MPs are an identifiable ‘type’ of peer. In 2006 over a quarter of the second chamber membership had been an MP (Shell 2007, 63). This provides a basis from which to explore Russell’s contention that women’s under-representation in second chambers is linked to their under-representation in political life more generally (Russell 2000, 100). Using Russell’s assertion, a hypothesis can be made that male peers are more likely than female peers to have been an MP. This can be tested by exploring the political backgrounds of current peers by sex.

Table 5.4. The Political Backgrounds of Peers

	Male	Female	Total
Life Peer was elected as an MP	66 31.4%	20 14.0%	86 24.4%
Life Peer was not an MP	144 68.6%	123 86.0%	267 75.6%

Using chi-square test, table is significant:
p value equals 0.000 (n=353)

An analysis of the political backgrounds of current women peers against a sample of male peers reveals a significant gender divergence.²⁷ As Table 5.4 demonstrates almost one third

²⁷ This table is based on data analysis of all current female peers and a sample of 200 male peers.

of sampled male life peers had previously been an MP compared to less than 15% of female peers, supporting Russell's political achievement theory. As the political world has been male dominated, and it is only since the late 1980s to the 1990s that the proportion of women MPs has moved from ten percent to just under twenty percent of the House of Commons membership there is clear evidence that women's under representation in the House of Commons indirectly affects women's presence in the House of Lords because there is a smaller supply-pool of women from which party leaders can choose from.

Yet women have still achieved the higher levels of political office, and this secures their presence in the Lords as Russell contended. Margaret Thatcher was made a peer in 1992, having been Prime Minister from 1979-1990. Prime Ministerial office is usually followed by a peerage, however Major and Blair are yet to be honoured, and Thatcher is the only female interruption to what has been an overwhelmingly male position, emphasising how women's presence in other political positions influences women's presence in the Lords. Barbara Castle had a considerable career with the Labour Party, and was made a life peer in 1990, following her request to Neil Kinnock, Labour Party leader at the time (Perkins 2003, 446). Similarly, Shirley Williams, former Labour MP and one of the founder members of the SDP, was made a life peer in 1993. By convention, those who have chaired the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) receive a peerage once they leave the Commons. Jean Corston, the first woman Chair of the PLP from 2001-2005, retired from the Commons in 2005 and was made a peer the same year. Likewise, it is tradition for former speakers of the House of Commons to receive a peerage (House of Lords 2008a). Betty Boothroyd became a peer in 2001, after serving as the first woman speaker of the Commons from 1992 to 2000. This illustrates the linkage between the occupation of a high-ranking and prestigious political role and a peerage. The feminization of the Lords is a gradual process and contingent upon feminization within the Commons and political parties more generally.

Correctional and Compensatory Peerages for Women

The final idea to be examined is Russell's assumption that appointments can be utilised to foster female presence where it is low in other political institutions (Russell, 2000, 101-102). Within the Canadian political system, women's presence in the Canadian Upper House is almost ten percent higher than the Lower House which is not accidental and the use of appointments has been used consciously to promote women's presence and 'deliberately shift the balance' to improve women's representation in Canada (Rush 2001). Whilst

women's presence in the Lords and the Commons is similar, comparing women's presence in both Houses of Westminster by political party and group could give weight to this claim.

At the start of the 2007/2008 session, women made up almost 27% of Liberal Democrat peers. Yet in the Commons women comprise only 14.5% of MPs. Interviews with Liberal Democrat women peers suggested that some peerages may be considered 'compensatory' due to women facing reduced electoral prospects. Whilst all Liberal Democrat women peers were in favour of a directly elected second chamber, they did recognise the advantage of patronage. The higher proportion of Liberal Democrat women peers compared to MPs was, according to one peer, an attempt to: 'Address the deficit we have in the Commons in terms of women'. A further peer revealed: 'We have the power of appointment here and Paddy and Nick were both keen to use that facility to try and counteract the under-representation of women in the Commons.' Furthermore, a separate woman peer recognised the difficulties that the Liberal Democrats face as the third party and linked this to women's greater presence in the Lords: 'It's a little easier when you're appointing people and you don't have to be subject to the vagaries of elections. It is a deliberate move, but it hasn't gone far enough by any means.'

The use of correctional peerages for women in the House of Lords stretches to other party elites. It was suggested in an interview with a Labour woman peer that Cameron was deliberately 'gendering' his available appointments to the Lords due to the inherent sexism in some quarters of the Conservative Party who controlled selections in safe Conservative seats:

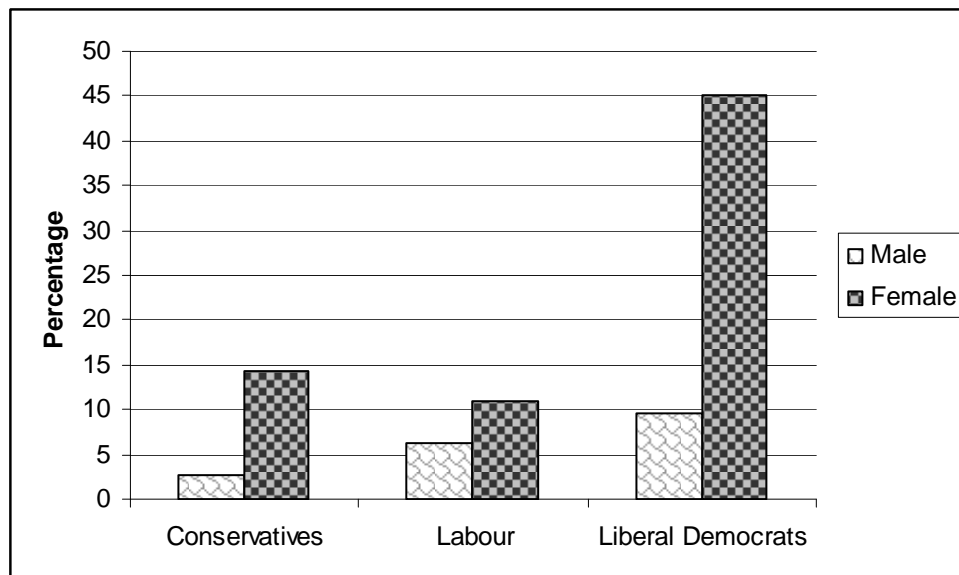
The Lords seems to be used by the Conservative Party to advance the causes of women, like Sayeeda Warsi, the young Conservative peer, somebody who did stand for Parliament but didn't get in, because of course we all know what Conservative selection policies can be like. For women to be selected in safe seats for the Tory Party is very, very difficult because they don't have the all women shortlists we do.

For this interviewee, the use of the appointments system was perceived to allow opposition party elites to circumnavigate the local selectorate who are not seen to be as liberal or woman friendly as the party elite and help to correct the lower levels of Conservative women representatives. Women may not be sole beneficiaries of correctional peerages however. Shell makes note of peers who 'may have stood for election to the Commons but without success' such as Lord Carter, made a Labour Peer in 1987 (Shell 2007, 65). A

further example is Lord Taylor of Warwick, a Conservative male peer, a prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) who stood in 1987 for Birmingham Perry Barr and in 1992 for Cheltenham where his selection for a safe Conservative seat was subject to perceived racial hostilities from the local party membership and fighting, which led to this seat being lost by the Conservative Party.

The idea that peerages are being used intentionally to get more women to the Lords in order to correct gender deficits in other political arenas can be tested by analysing data on the political backgrounds of current women peers. Figure 5.1 demonstrates that significantly more women peers have been PPCs who were not elected to Westminster compared to the sample of their male counterparts. For the Liberal Democrats, 45% of women peers failed to reach Westminster through the Commons, compared to less than 10% of sampled Liberal Democrat male MPs. In all of the main political parties, women are significantly more likely to have attempted but failed to reach the House of Commons. This provides further evidence of the use of appointments to correct the lower of presence of women in other political institutions, as well as to compensate loyal party actors.

Figure 5.1. Life Peers who stood as a PPC but were not elected as an MP²⁸



Using chi-square test, table is significant. P-Value=0.000

One interview with a Conservative woman peer revealed: ‘My interest was always getting into the House of Commons, it never occurred to me in a million years it would be the House of Lords!’ Having been told by an aide of Margaret Thatcher that gatekeepers in

²⁸ This graph is based on data analysis of all current female peers and a sample of male peers. Source: Dod’s Parliamentary Companion 2008; Know UK House of Lords Biographies.

the Party were not favourable to women candidates, she attempted to make herself a more suitable candidate for Conservative selection committees by starting a business and getting involved in the Conservative Party at local and national level. Whilst never adopted as a candidate for a viable constituency nor elected as an MP, her actions to make herself a desirable candidate contributed to the award of her peerage, even though the House of Lords had not been the favoured political chamber.

In addition, there are still women peers who are in the Lords due to 'male equivalence', which means that women were appointed to the House of Lords following their husband's death as a way to recompense posthumously for the contributions a husband had made (Currell 1974; Drewry and Brock 1983). In the current House of Lords, Baroness Sharples was made a peer in 1973 the same year her husband was assassinated as Ambassador for Bermuda. Baroness Smith of Gilmorehill was made a peer in 1995 the year after her husband John Smith, former leader of the Labour Party, died of a heart attack. However the continued use of such patronage appears to be in decline.

Systemic Constraints on Women's Presence in the House of Lords

It can be illustrated that institutional and systemic factors contribute to the nominal increases in women's presence since 1999. As set out in chapter 4 women were barred from participating in the activities of the House until 1958, and only received a small minority of peerages from this point. This, coupled with lifetime terms of appointment, means the resident population is predominantly male. Furthermore, there are no electoral cycles whereby the House membership faces wholesale change. For this reason women's presence can only make gradual improvements. Finally, there are no statutory fixed numbers of appointments annually. The Prime Minister has discretion on numbers of appointments, meaning the political opportunity structure is highly unpredictable. Thus it is evident that some institutional features of the House of Lords prevent major increases.

Hereditary Peerages and Women

The retention of hereditary peers in the House of Lords has already been emphasised as a factor that privileges male presence in the House of Lords. This is because primogeniture is a process whereby sons are favoured over daughters for inheriting titles. For example prior to the passage of the House of Lords Act 1999, women comprised just 2% of hereditary peers in the House of Lords (Russell 2000) meaning that there was a distinct lack of supply of women when the hereditary elections occurred.

The 92 hereditary peers were first decided upon by different means. There are two ex-officio members (royal appointments) who remain in the House of Lords because they are Hereditary Office Holders being the Earl Marshal and the Lord Great Chamberlain (both male). In addition there are an additional 15 office holders who occupy the roles of either Deputy Speakers or Deputy Chairmen, elected by the population of the House of Lords. The remaining 75 peers are composed in proportion to the numbers in the hereditary peerage calculated in November 1999 before hereditary peers were disbanded: 42 Conservative, 28 crossbench, 3 Liberal Democrat and 2 Labour. These members were elected by the population of hereditary peers of each party group, thus only Conservatives could elect Conservatives. The elections are conducted using the alternative vote system, where candidates are ranked by the voter and peers could write a short manifesto in no more than 75 words.

The first elections were held in October and November 1999 for the 15 office-holder seats and 33 individuals stood for election. There were two women who contested these positions, the Countess of Mar and Baroness Strange, comprising 6.1% of the total candidature. The Countess of Mar achieved the most number of votes overall and was duly elected. However, after the transfer of votes Baroness Strange finished in twentieth place. Following the selection of the 15 office holders, elections were held for the remaining 75 places. The 18 peers who had been unsuccessful in the office-holder elections could also put themselves forward for the relevant party political elections.

There were 79 individuals who contested the elections for the crossbench hereditary seats of which six were women (7.6%). Notably four women were successfully elected as crossbench peers thus women comprised 14.3% of successfully elected crossbench peers. However there were no women candidates for the Labour, Conservative or Liberal Democrat vacancies meaning these were all male contests. Thus in total five women were elected as hereditary peers in 1999 constituting 5.4% of all hereditary peers. Since 1999 three of the originally elected hereditary women peers have died leaving only two women hereditary peers, comprising just 2.2% of all hereditary peers in the House of Lords.

No women have entered the House of Lords since 1999 as an elected hereditary peer. The number of hereditary peers is fixed at 92, and since 2003 by-elections have been held to fill positions made vacant by the death of a peer. In order to contest a hereditary by-election an individual must be on the Official Register. No women have contested any of

the hereditary by-elections. Furthermore there are no women eligible to contest these by-elections because no women feature on the register. Therefore, the presence of women in the hereditary group is in decline because there is not a supply of women. Moreover this interacts with the tendency for women to be less likely to put themselves forward which was explored in chapter 2 (Lawless and Fox 2005). The absence of any female names on the current official register demonstrates this point. One of the elected hereditary woman peers did admit that she had to be persuaded to stand: 'People did have to encourage me to stand. I was nervous. I wanted to stand, and I did' (Crossbench).

Interestingly the two hereditary women peers interviewed for this project did not feel that it was important for women to be represented as hereditary peers. The extracts emphasise the way in which sex and gender are not considered as important characteristics for hereditary peers to embody:

I have certainly never been conscious as regards my role in the House as a woman. I don't see myself as a woman in the House, simply a member.

The word peer means equal. The fact that I am a woman, as opposed to a man never entered my head. I stood for election because I had and have a lot of unfinished business.

Whilst both women peers interviewed believed it was important that women were represented in the House of Lords generally, this perception did not extend across all types of peers. These two women peers denied that the descriptive representation of women was important amongst the hereditary group of peers. However, the status of hereditary women peers is still important to consider for descriptive and symbolic reasons, even if the hereditary women peers deny that such characteristics are important. Even though hereditary peers comprise only 12.5% of the House of Lords membership, the bulk of this 12.5% is made up of male peers. Elected hereditary women peers constitute less than a half a percent (0.27%) of the Lords membership, whereas over 12.2% of the Lords membership is in effect reserved for male peers, not least because there is currently no supply of women to contest this facet of membership.²⁹

The Lords Spiritual and Women Peers

Dovetailing with this, one facet of direct discrimination against women still exists over fifty years since women were first permitted to enter the Lords. In the contemporary House a

²⁹ Calculated December 2009 when the membership of the House of Lords was 735 peers according to parliament.uk.

small proportion of seats are reserved exclusively for men. The twenty-six 'Lords Spiritual' are comprised of the most senior bishops of the Church of England. This occupation is currently open exclusively to men and women cannot attain membership of the Lords this way, though this may change in the future as the Anglican Church considers the ordination of women bishops. Whilst the right to sit in the Lords is terminated upon retirement from religious office, some retiring archbishops have subsequently received life peerages and returned to the House of Lords (Shell, 1992, 31). Admittedly, some women have come to the Lords by virtue of their religious attachment such as Reverend the Baroness Richardson of Calow appointed as a crossbencher in 1998; Rabbi Baroness Neuberger appointed as a Liberal Democrat peer in 2004 and Baroness Warsi, a Conservative Peer, the first female Muslim to take on a frontbench role in either chamber of Parliament. Of course, numerically bishops comprise only a nominal 3.5% of the Lords' membership. However, they constitute 26 *de jure* male reserved seats and whilst only a small proportion of the seats in the Lords, this may be symbolically powerful because women's presence is once again systemically barred.

Law Lords and Women Peers

In addition to the retention of the Lords Spiritual and hereditary membership of the House of Lords guarding against women's presence, the inclusion of Law Lords in the House of Lords up until July 2009 also served to privileged male presence. The twelve Law Lords were appointed by statute through the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876. Whilst Law Lords did not partake in the 'political' work of the House, there were still symbolic consequences of their membership. Baroness Hale is the first and only female Law Lord, appointed in 2004. Furthermore, on retirement from office former Lords of Appeal in Ordinary retain their seat in the Lords, all of whom are male. As it is the highest levels of legal office which allow access to the second chamber as a Law Lord, women must break through the glass ceiling in the legal profession for a peerage to be awarded (Malleon 2009b). Once again, this exemplifies how women's representation in politics is contingent upon women's progression in other public spheres which was stressed by one female peer: 'In this place you have to have expertise and an ability to earn. But part of it is in the outside world..... women's expertise is growing. Brenda Hale got to be eminent in the Law, and then came in here, so the pool of people has changed as that generation from the 1950s and the 1960s has grown and gone forward' (Liberal Democrat). In October 2009, the sitting Law Lords were transferred to the Supreme Court as Justices, meaning their membership of the House of Lords was terminated, although those Law Lords may return to the House of Lords on

retirement from judicial office. However, newly appointed justices appointed from October 2009 onwards will not become a member of the House of Lords by right. In sum, particular modes of membership guard against dramatic changes towards the numerical dimension of women's representation in the House of Lords. This chapter turns from considering the numerical representation of women and probes the diversity of women peers.

The Descriptive Representation of Women Peers

The previous section identified that there are clear structural constraints that guard against women's presence in the House of Lords, although it is evident that some political parties have appointed more women into the House of Lords. This section builds upon the numerical data in order to explore the diversity of women peers. As chapter 2 explored women have heterogeneous lives and identities therefore this section seeks to explore whether the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords reflects the descriptive representation of women generally. Thus exploring the social characteristics and education and professional backgrounds of women peers against a sample of male peers is necessary because numerical data on sex may disguise the diversity or uniformity of women peers. The results in the following section are based upon biographical analysis of female peers from the 2007/2008 Parliamentary Session, as well as a sample of 200 male peers.

Table 5.5. The Mean Year of Appointment to the House of Lords

Party	Mean Year of Appointment	
	Men	Women
Conservatives	1994.91	1992.71
Labour	1997.09	1997.33
Liberal Democrats	1997.06	1999.85
Crossbench	1995.86	1999.27
All Peers	1996.16	1997.00

Source: parliament.uk

First of all, it was established that there were no striking differences in the average year of appointment for peers (Table 5.5). The mean year of appointment for male peers was 1996 whereas it was 1997 for women peers, although there were slight differences amongst the parties. For Labour peers the average year of appointment was 1997 for both male and female peers. However, on average Conservative male peers were appointed in 1995, two

years later than for Conservative women peers with a mean of 1993. This is likely attributable to the Conservative Party having fewer opportunities to appoint to the Lords since Labour got into power in 1997. For both the Liberal Democrats and Crossbenches, women peers had a later mean year of appointment than their male counterparts which also supports the feminization trends highlighted earlier in this chapter.

Table 5.6. The Age-Profile of Peers in the House of Lords

Party	Male Peers	Female Peers	Sig. (t-test)
Conservative	72.1	71.2	n/s
Labour	68.8	64.5	.017
Liberal Democrats	70.6	61.2	.004
Crossbenches	70.2	66.8	n/s
All	70.2	66.1	.000
Average	68.5		

Source: parliament.uk

Russell notes that members of second chambers tend to be older than members of lower chambers, which can be explained by older age-qualifications (Russell, 2000, 33). This trend is followed in the UK whereby in the 2007-08 session the average age of a peer was 68.5 (Table 5.6) and at the 2005 general election the average age of an MP was 51 (Cracknell 2005). When the data on peers is disaggregated by sex women peers tended to be younger than their male counterpart, a finding that was true across all affiliations. Conservative peers were on average the oldest and had the least variance in age, which could again be attributed to the lack of appointment opportunities afforded to the Conservatives since 1997, although Baroness Warsi's appointment to the Lords at the age of 36 suggests that Cameron may be attempting to introduce younger representatives to the House of Lords. Liberal Democrat women peers are on the whole the youngest group of women peers with an average age of 60 in the 2007/2008 parliamentary session.

Table 5.7. Ethnic Diversity in the House of Lords

	Male	Female	Total
White	95.7% (563)	91.2% (134)	94.8% (697)
Black or Ethnic Minority	4.3% (25)	8.8% (13)	5.2% (38)
Total	100.0% (588)	100.0% (147)	100.0% (735)

Source: Operation Black Vote, 2009.

In terms of ethnicity and gender, there are developing concerns that women are not diversely represented across political institutions and indeed in public life more generally

(Fawcett Society, 2008b). Information on the ethnic diversity of parliamentarians in the UK is not collated centrally, although Operation Black Vote, a pressure group dedicated to black politics, has information on black and minority ethnic politicians on its website (Operation Black Vote 2009).

The data on peers in the 2007-08 session (Table 5.7) demonstrates that 38 peers are black or minority ethnic, making up 5.2% of all peers. Whilst there are almost twice as many black or ethnic minority male peers, 25 compared to 13 women, there are a greater proportion of ethnic minority women peers compared to male peers at 8.8% and 4.3% respectively. The proportion of ethnic minority women peers appears to reflect the UK according to data from the most recent census in 2001, where the Black and Minority Ethnic population was estimated to be 7.9% of the total population of the United Kingdom (National Statistics Online, 2003). Until the 2010 general election, out of a total of 126 women MPs, there were just two black women MPs (1.6%), Dawn Butler and Diane Abbott.

Table 5.8. Black and Minority Ethnic Women Peers by Affiliation

Party/Affiliation	n	% of Women
Conservatives	2	5.7
Crossbenches	5	14.7
Labour	5	9.1
Liberal Democrats	1	4.8

Source: Operation Black Vote, 2009.

Whilst the proportion of women peers from an ethnic minority background in the House of Lords generally reflects the population, it is apparent that the distribution of ethnic minority women across the main affiliations in the House of Lords varies (Table 5.8). Crossbench women peers have the greatest amount of ethnic diversity at nearly 15% of their peers, compared to 9% of Labour women peers, 6% of Conservative women peers and just 5% of Liberal Democrat women peers. It is important to highlight that ethnic minority is an umbrella term that incorporates many different minorities which may not all be represented in the House of Lords.

Like information on ethnic minority representatives, there is a lack of readily available data on disabled, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) representatives. Attaining data on disability could only have been amassed through a questionnaire, although this was

beyond the scope of this study. Thus disability as an aspect of diversity cannot be examined statistically, however the opinions of women peers towards disabled peers is contained in the final section of this chapter. Whilst there is no central government data on LGBT representatives, information can be found in press reports which are admittedly a less reliable source. In the House of Lords, there are just four openly gay and lesbian peers: Lord Alli, Lord Mandelson, Lord Smith of Finsbury and Baroness Wilkins, all affiliated to the Labour Party. Lord Alli publicly confirmed his sexuality during a debate in the House of Lords (Crewe, 2005, 122) and Baroness Wilkins is assumed to be lesbian from the record of her civil partnership of 2006 as recorded in Who's Who (A&C Black 2007). LGBT people are thought to comprise approximately 6% of the UK's population (Campbell 2005). During the 2007-08 session there were approximately 750 peers, with only 3 openly gay and lesbian peers in 2007 (0.4%) which in no way reflects the estimated make-up of the UK for either sex.

Table 5.9. The University Attendance of Peers

	Attended University	Did not attend University	Total
Male peers	82.2% (176)	17.8% (24)	100.0% (214)
Female Peers	83.4% (121)	16.6% (38)	100.0% (145)
Total	82.7% (297)	17.3% (62)	100.0% 359

Source: Who's Who (A&C Black 2007); www.knowuk.com

The educational attainment of political representatives is an area of scrutiny for scholars interested in legislative recruitment. Previous research has established the proportion of MPs with a degree far outstrips the level in the general population (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, 113). In the current House of Commons elected in 2010, 91% of MPs had attended university, up from 72% elected in 2005, with over 28% of the 2010 cohort of MPs having attended either Oxford or Cambridge, an increase of one percent from those MPs elected in 2005 (Sutton Trust 2005; Sutton Trust 2010). 74% of peers had attended university, and 42% had attended either Oxford or Cambridge (Sutton Trust 2005). Notably none of this analysis was disaggregated to take account of the sex of representatives.

As Table 5.9 demonstrates there is little variance amongst the university attendance of male and female peers. In this sample, 83.4% of women peers had attended university compared to 82.2% of male peers, suggesting that the education backgrounds of women peers converge with this sample of male peers. It must be noted that the proportion of the

peers having attended university in this sample (82.7%) is higher than the levels established by the Sutton Trust in their 2005 study where 74% of peers were analysed to have attended university. This could be partially explained by the different time-point that the studies were conducted. The Sutton Trust calculations occurred at the start of 2005, whereas this data applied to peers in the House of Lords during the 2007/2008 parliamentary term. Moreover, the Sutton Trust sampled over 90% of peers whereas this research took into account all women peers and a sample of male peers. However, keeping this in mind, university education appears to be a key attribute for peers in the House of Lords regardless of gender. This is unsurprising considering personal expertise is a key criterion for representation in the House of Lords as chapter 4 identified.

Table 5.10. The University Attendance of Women Peers

	Attended University	Did not attend University	Total
Conservative	77.1% (27)	22.9% (8)	100.0% (35)
Labour	83.6% (46)	16.4% (9)	100.0% (55)
Liberal Democrat	90.0% (18)	10.0% (2)	100.0% (20)
Crossbench	84.4% (27)	15.6% (5)	100.0% (32)
Other	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)
Total	83.4% (121)	16.6% (24)	100.0% (145)

Source: Who's Who, 2007; www.knowuk.com

When the analysis only takes into account women peers there are slight variations in the proportion of women peers who attended university by party, however these differences are not significant (Table 5.10). The vast majority of Liberal Democrat women peers attended university (90%), with approximately 84% of Labour and Crossbench women peers having attended university and over three-quarters (77%) of Conservative women peers. The lack of appointment opportunities for the Conservative Party as demonstrated in Table 5.10 may have influenced the proportion of Conservative women peer with degrees due to fewer younger women appointed and over time access to higher education has expanded.

Table 5.11. The Attendance of Peers at Oxbridge

	Attended Oxbridge	Did not attend Oxbridge	Total
Male peers	40.7% (87)	59.3% (127)	100.0% (214)
Female Peers	21.4% (31)	78.6% (114)	100.0% (145)
Total	32.9% (118)	67.1% (118)	100.0% 359

Table is significant $p=.000$

Source: Who's Who, 2007; www.knowuk.com;

As politicians tend to be drawn from social elites attendance at Oxford or Cambridge (Oxbridge) is a traditional pathway for a political representative (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Whilst there was no evidence of differences amongst peers in terms of university attendance (Table 5.9), it is evident that there were notable distinctions between male and female peers in terms of attendance at the elite universities of Oxford and Cambridge. As Table 5.11 demonstrates, male peers were almost twice as likely to have gone to Oxbridge as their female counterpart and this difference was significant suggesting that the social profile of male peers may be more elitist.

Table 5.12. The Attendance of Women Peers at Oxford and Cambridge

	Attended Oxbridge	Did not attend University	Total
Conservative	20.0% (27)	80.0% (28)	100.0% (35)
Labour	16.4% (9)	83.6% (46)	100.0% (55)
Liberal Democrat	35.0% (7)	65.0% (7)	100.0% (20)
Crossbench	21.9% (7)	78.1% (25)	100.0% (32)
Other	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)	100.0% (3)
Total	21.4% (31)	78.6% (114)	100.0% (145)

Source: Who's Who, 2007; www.knowuk.com

Amongst women peers there are interesting divergences when considering Oxbridge attendance which is displayed in Table 5.12. Over one third of Liberal Democrat women peers attended Oxbridge, compared to around one-fifth of the Crossbenches and the Conservative peers, and only one-sixth of Labour women peers. The proportion of women peers who are drawn from social elites varies by party, however it is still important to

underline that women peers are on the whole representative of a social elite untypical of the general population of women.

The exploration of parliamentary elites has found there to be particular professions that seem to aid the pursuit and achievement of elected political office which include law, education, journalism and politics which are reasoned to facilitate careers through the development of skills, networking, social status and flexibility in working patterns (Mellors 1978; Norris and Lovenduski 1995). One of the most comprehensive analyses of the occupation backgrounds of MPs found that:

The Parliamentary Labour Party is dominated by public sector employees: lecturers, teachers, local government managers, and welfare officers. In the Conservative ranks, there are more private sector managers, company directors, financial advisers and barristers. However, within each party the socio-economic status of MPs, candidates and applicants is almost identical (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, 96-99).

Keating and Cairney suggested that the Scottish Parliamentary elite had tended to converge around a professional bias, and that ‘gender equality had been achieved at the cost of social representativeness, since women MSPs were even more professional (64%) in their background than their male counterparts (46%) (Keating and Cairney 2006).

Table 5.13. The Former Professional Occupations of Peers³⁰

Professional Occupation	Male Peers (%)	Female Peers (%)	Sig.
Arts	6.0	4.1	
Business	15.0	10.3	
Charities/ Voluntary Sector	3.7	15.2	****
Engineering	4.5	0.7	*
Finance	17.2	8.3	*
Health	4.1	19.3	****
Land	7.1	2.1	*
Law	18.0	13.1	
Media	12.7	11.0	
Military/Security	12.7	0.7	****
Teaching (Primary & Secondary)	4.1	14.5	****
Trade Unions	4.5	6.2	
University	15.0	17.2	

*: P≤.05; **: P≤.01; ***: P≤.001; ****: P=.000

Exploring the prior professional occupations of peers has established widespread divergences between men and women, illustrated in Table 5.13. This is most likely as a result of entrenched gender segregation in particular occupations within the UK. The

³⁰ This analysis takes into account all occupations listed for a peer in their Who’s Who or Know UK entry. Multiple occupations may be listed for peers therefore values do not add up to 100%.

occupations which establish the greatest degree of difference between male and female peers include the military where 12.7% of male peers have experience compared to just 0.7% of women peers. This is unsurprising due to the military being particularly male-dominated especially at the highest levels where some roles such as Chief of the Defence Staff (the professional head of the military) are positions which usually lead to a peerage. However again this demonstrates a constraint on women's numerical presence.

There are three particular occupations from which predominantly women peers are drawn which are significantly different from male peers: the health sector where 19.3% of women peers have employment experience compared to just 4.1% of male peers; the education sector at primary and secondary level where 14.5% of women peers have been employed compared to just 4.1% of male peers and the voluntary sector where 15.2% of women peers have worked compared to just 3.7% of male peers. Illustrating difference among peers provides support to feminist arguments that the greater presence of women in Parliaments would alter and shift the issues brought to the table and the perspectives proffered in the policy process. In certain occupations this data clearly demonstrates difference between male and female peers. However, this must be underlined by the finding for some areas of employment there are no discernable difference between male and female peers which includes law, the arts, business, universities, the media and trade unions.

Campbell established that women citizens tended to prioritise health and education issues whereas for men the most important issue was the economy (Campbell 2006). On the whole these issues were reflected in the occupational backgrounds of peers. From Table 5.13 it is clear that most women peers had prior experience of the health sector (19.3%) as well as education at primary and secondary level (14.5%). Similarly, 17.2% of male peers had prior experience in the finance sector, over twice as much as for women peers, which reproduces the interests men tend to prioritise. Whereas the social make-up of peers does not reflect the population at large, the prior occupations of peers largely echoed the interests of the gendered political interests of the population.

Investigation into differences amongst women peers did not yield too many significant results, apart from two specific areas of business and trade unions (Table 5.14). The link between the Labour Party and trade unions is demonstrated amongst women peers, as well as the tendency for the Conservatives to be the party for business and finance (Norris and

Lovenduski 1995). Broadly speaking the differences established between male and female peers are not played out amongst the population of women peers although this may be as a result of the small sample size of women peers in the House of Lords.

Table 5.14. The Occupational Backgrounds of Women Peers by Political Affiliation

	Conservative (%)	Labour (%)	Liberal Democrat (%)	Crossbench (%)	Sig.
Business	25.7	5.5	15.0	3.1	*
Finance	20.7	5.5	5.0	6.3	
Trade Unions	0.0	16.4	0.0	0.0	**
Education (Primary and Secondary)	17.1	14.5	15.0	12.5	
Health	11.4	14.5	25.0	28.1	
Law	20.0	9.1	10.0	12.5	

*: $P \leq .05$; **: $P \leq .01$

The Attitudes of Women Peers towards the Descriptive Representation of Women

This section explores the attitudes and predispositions of women peers regarding the descriptive representation of women. It was underlined in chapter 2 that descriptive arguments of representation are highly contested, particularly with reference to women's representation, which makes its discussion amongst women peers crucially significant. Added to this, as the basis of representation in the Lords differs, it is useful to examine whether descriptive arguments of women's representation accorded similar viewpoints.

The vast majority of women peers interviewed believed strongly that it was valuable to have a fair representation of women in political life. Their arguments were firmly anchored to the basic principles of descriptive representation: 'A political institution should pretty much reflect the constituents or the community it's supposed to be representing' (Labour); 'Because women make-up 51% of the population, I think we should reflect that' (Labour); 'I think women should be everywhere and they should be really in proportion to their numbers, which are more than fifty percent in the community' (Conservative); 'Women's representation matters, of course it does. We are half the population, half the electorate. Of course it matters!' (Lib Dem); 'Political places should reflect the community it serves in some way' (Crossbench); 'After all, there are more women voters than there are male and therefore politics should be proportionate' (Crossbench).

These examples demonstrate that women peers found real purchase in descriptive arguments. The principle of mirroring or reflecting women's proportions in the population

was recognised as an important feature for the composition of political institutions. This was clear from their choice of words and language which manifested a clear understanding of the basic ‘reflection’ arguments of descriptive representation. Thus, feminist interpretations of descriptive representation garnered clear support from women peers across the political parties and crossbenches in the contemporary House of Lords when talking generally about women’s presence in political life.

Some women peers also introduced other arguments that related to women’s descriptive representation. One crossbench peer suggested that a wholly male chamber was unjust, clearly in support of Phillips’ arguments on justice: ‘Women make-up just over half the population as it happens. So I think if you’ve got or had a parliament of only men it would be completely awful and basically saying that women had been relegated and returned to being second-class citizens’ (Crossbench). This peer’s allusion to the past historical situation, when women were barred from entering political life on an equal footing to men, demonstrated a clear resonance with the basic tenets of feminist ideas of representation highlighted in chapter 2.

For one woman, the presence of women was seen as crucial to the representative process due to different life trajectories:

Both Houses are appallingly under-represented of half the population. You must get more women in because not only do they have abilities on an equal basis, they also have different life experiences and that’s not reflected in the most important place, in Parliament when making the law of the land (Crossbench)

This assertion recognised that men and women tend to have different life experiences which may subsequently influence attitudes. This was backed up by a Labour woman peer: ‘I think women’s presence in all strands of political life is critical otherwise you get a completely distorted view, and then you get distorted opinions and attitudes and all the rest of it’ (Labour). Thus, women’s descriptive presence in politics was seen as a way to ensure that a wide array of opinions and perspectives would be considered throughout the representative process because on the whole men and women do not share congruent life experiences.

Conversations with women peers turned to specifically consider the descriptive representation of women in the House of Lords. Even though the House of Lords is appointed and citizens do not have an electoral tie to the chamber, some women peers still

thought that the House of Lords ought to have a greater representation of women. They drew on the basic arguments used in favour of women's descriptive representation: 'As a proportion, the number of women in the Lords is not really acceptable. It doesn't reflect society. I think it's important for the Lords. We're supposed to be representing society' (Labour). Other women peers presented similar attitudes that supported feminist interpretations of representation for the House of Lords specifically. Even when they were challenged whether descriptive arguments were valid because peers were appointed rather than popularly elected, women peers presented steadfast opinions that supported general descriptive arguments:

It's wrong to say that just because it isn't democratic, that the diversity of its members doesn't matter in some sense (Conservative)

This House is part of the legislature, which means it is important that we try to, we strive to, get as higher proportion of its population of the whole population as possible. (Conservative)

Other peers also supported the idea that although there were not direct links between peers and citizens, the functions of the House of Lords as part of the representative and political process meant that the membership of the Lords mattered and was a relevant point of concern in terms of descriptive characteristics.

Some women peers felt that the numerical representation of women in the House of Lords ought to reach parity between the sexes: 'We should move to a fifty-fifty balance. We've got that in the population' (Labour); 'I would like to see gender balance' (Crossbench); 'Of course, they say that when women's presence goes beyond thirty percent, other advances occur, so that seems a reasonable aim' (Liberal Democrat). Such statements demonstrate a clear commitment towards increased female representation in the House of Lords.

However, these attitudes were not shared by all women peers who exhibited a more relaxed attitude towards women's presence: 'Twenty percent is not acceptable but as long as it goes in the right direction and as long as it doesn't take four hundred years, that's fine' (Labour). Interestingly, two other women peers were not convinced that the House of Lords needed more women: 'I'm not the sort of person who says there ought to be a lot more women in the House. I'd like to see more women in decision-making positions whatever it may be and public life! That's my aim, not necessarily this place. It's not the be all and end all of everything' (Crossbench); 'I don't have any feeling on whether I want to see more or less

women in the House' (Crossbench). These sentiments came from women peers appointed to the crossbenches prior to the conception of the HOLAC. Notably the latter statement was from a hereditary crossbench woman peer and it is important to highlight again how the attitudes of these particular types of peers were less attuned to feminist interpretations of representation as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Women peers were not united when questioned on their attitudes towards the proportion of the Lords women should constitute. Whereas some Labour women peers had been forthright in advocating fair gender representation in terms of proportionality in the population, these views were not shared with crossbench women peers appointed by the HOLAC. As independent members, their understanding of representation centred upon expertise and they felt that the make-up of women in professional life was a useful reflection for women's representation in the House of Lords:

I think that the number of women who now succeed in public life or professions is much higher than the proportion of women in the Lords would indicate. I think there's more than twenty percent of women in top jobs, whatever sphere you look at. More than twenty percent. Whereas we've got just less than 20% in here, so I think that is not a fair representation of the women who have achieved in the outside world and that should change (Crossbench)

I think women should make up thirty percent of the House. Going back to this idea that it represents more fairly the people who have reached the tops of their professions, who have demonstrated that they are the experts in their field. I think that's fair for a revising chamber. Over time that will probably become fifty percent. (Crossbench)

There are clear fault lines between the attitudes of some women peers on the proportion of women who ought to be in the Lords. Crossbench women peers who had been appointed to the Lords because of their expertise suggested that the proportionality of women ought to relate to women's involvement in the work force. This is in contrast to political 'working' peers, largely Labour women peers, who framed and aligned their understandings of descriptive representation towards women's composition in the population. This underlines why it is crucially important to consider the different types of representatives within a political institution, as the divergences evident in the House of Lords appears to influence the attitudes of individuals on some subject areas.

Women peers were also asked to consider the diversity of representation in the House of Lords beyond sex. Ideas of diversity were perceived positively by some women peers. As

one peer emphasised, having diversity amongst representatives was a good thing for representation in the House of Lords per se: 'If you think of the House of Lords like a rich enormous jigsaw puzzle you don't want the same pieces all the time, you've got to have different ones' (Crossbench). Other women peers, particularly from the Labour benches and the crossbenches, emphasised particular strands of diversity that were present in the House of Lords: 'It's getting much better. I would guess that only in the last five years has the number of women, blacks, people with disabilities and so on has begun to be addressed' (Labour); 'I think that we have diversity in the House as a whole. And that's diversity in terms of gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic background or disability. So there are all sorts of diversity. In any parliamentary chamber diversity is a good thing' (Crossbench); 'You've got to remember that we have more disabled here than anywhere else, we've got more people from ethnic minorities than the Commons, so actually we're not doing too badly' (Crossbench).

In particular, the diversity of women representatives in the House of Lords was highlighted as being advantageous for the functions of the House of Lords because it widened the scope of expertise: 'I think that by having a large enough proportion of women here is that we now have women from many, many walks of life here so that actually they can bring that perspective and that voice into almost anything' (Crossbench). The attitudes of women peers towards diversity and descriptive representation was for the most part positive, however when women peers were pressed to talk about other social cleavages that crosscut women's lives some women peers began to question the extent to which there was a descriptive diversity of women peers in the House of Lords.

Many women peers drew attention to the age of women peers. There was a common feeling that the overall membership of the House was considered to be elderly: 'People do think we're dinosaurs here' (Liberal Democrat) and 'There really is a lack of young women in the House of Lords, even though there are young women in the Commons. Even in the House of Lords there really ought to be even more of an effort to ensure there is a cross-section of society because the appointments system allows this'. (Liberal Democrat) Although it was acknowledged that the basis of representation for the House of Lords where the achievement of expertise or a previous career in politics then leads onto a peerage means that women tend to be older: 'In the Lords, women have got their family behind them by and large. They've done that and been in a profession. They couldn't have come in before when they had their professions or their children' (Crossbench). However,

other women peers suggested that the ongoing feminisation of the House of Lords had increased the age diversity of women peers: 'I'm glad to see that we are getting much younger women in as well as some of those grand old ladies who fought the battles over the decades' (Labour).

It was recognised by a portion of women peers that the House of Lords outstrips the House of Commons in terms of the ethnic diversity of its members, as explored in the previous section, even though this is not widely known outside of the House of Lords itself: 'I think the balance here, well the diversity footprint of the Lords is better than the Commons, and you don't realise that until you come here' (Labour); 'There are probably more people from ethnic minorities in here than the Commons' (Conservative).

It was suggested that the greater presence of ethnic minority women peers was as a result of the appointments being used to deliberately foster diversity amongst women's presence in the Lords. An interview with a male peer added weight to this claim: 'Let's be honest, I think the Lords does offer an opportunity to speed up and short circuit the (electoral) system by getting in younger, ethnic minority women who would have a very difficult job getting selected' (Male Gatekeeper). Indeed four ethnic minority women peers had tried to enter Parliament as an MP. Baroness Uddin failed to reach the shortlist as a potential candidate for Bethnal Green and Bow, Baroness Falkner of Margravine stood for the Liberal Democrats unsuccessfully in 2001 and Baroness Warsi for the Conservatives in 2005, whereas Baroness Verma stood in 2001 and 2005 for the Conservative Party. Thus, 30% of the ethnic minority women peers had failed to enter the House of Commons, illustrating one of the beneficial uses of the appointments system. Certainly the diversity of minority ethnic women peers in elite level British politics is highly important. For example Baroness Warsi (Conservative), the first Muslim woman to be a member of a shadow cabinet, went to Sudan with Lord Ahmed (Labour) to campaign for the release of Gillian Gibbons in Sudan regarding the 'blasphemous' naming of a teddy-bear in December 2007.

Yet some women peers felt ethnic minority diversity amongst women peers was deficient in the House of Lords. This was apparent in two interviews with Liberal Democrat women peers: 'We don't have many people of colour, although they're creeping in' and 'The House is pretty diverse, although not diverse enough, certainly we need more ethnic minorities.' These comments reveal a lack of awareness of the realities of the House of Lords (see

previous section), but could perhaps be indicative of the Liberal Democrat's poorer record on the representation of ethnic minority groups across different political arenas having just one woman peer from an ethnic minority background as highlighted in the previous section.

However, the disconnection between the perception and realities of ethnic minority representation in the House of Lords was also raised by other women peers from the Labour Party, who suggested there was a need to prioritise ethnic minority representation above gender representation:

I mean worse than the gender gap is the cultural and religion gap. We do have some Asian peers, both men and women. But the fact that you can name these people tells you how few of them there are. It nothing like reflects society. It might reflect Hertfordshire, but it doesn't reflect the UK as a whole by any means.

I mean we need more women but particularly we need more black and Asian representatives. It looks a very white chamber. It feels very white to me. I'm on a committee that's all white.

Notably these statements highlight how ethnic minority representation is not necessarily disaggregated to account for diversities within ethnic minority representation which may not necessarily be represented in the House of Lords. Certainly this links to points raised by Mansbridge that link the descriptive and symbolic representation of women as discussed in chapter 2 (Mansbridge 1999, 649). The preponderance of white women peers may have negative implications for the symbolic representation of black, disabled or lesbian women.

Even though there is no statistical data on disabled peers, it was acknowledged that because of the older membership of the Lords, there was a notable association between age and illness/disability: 'Disability is not always about age, but we know more about it here than the Commons' (Labour); 'The House is very good on disabled people because we've got a lot of understanding because day to day we see disabled people in the Lords' (Liberal Democrat) and 'We do have a hugely higher percentage of people with disabilities than in the Commons, we are exponentially bigger' (Conservative). However one male gatekeeper drew attention to the lack of disabled people in the House of Lords as a direct consequence of disability benefits: 'The disabled aren't nearly represented enough...so we've put a series of people in and it's damn difficult because disabled people tend to be poor and/or need

money. Nicky Chapman³¹ is on social security, it took a lot of fixing and it was almost shamefully impossible for someone like her to go to the House of Lords in terms of money' (Male gatekeeper).

Finally, despite the small number of openly gay peers in the House of Lords, some women peers recognised that having politicians who were open about being gay or lesbian was positive in the sense that it helped to shift attitudes:

Lord Alli astonished everyone when he made his maiden speech when he told us all he was a homosexual. He was happy declaring it and as a result he has an unassailable position. He doesn't speak very often but when he does....He doesn't necessarily speak for gays, but he does speak as someone who has a different sexual orientation (Liberal Democrat)

Having out gay men in the place makes a difference because you're not talking about gay men or gay people in the abstract, you're talking about real people like Chris Smith or Waheed Alli (Labour Peer), people who you deal with, you know. So yes, having gay people does make a difference. (Liberal Democrat)

In this respect the lack of identification amongst peers regarding being gay or lesbian demonstrates how this aspect of diversity is brought into question. Whereas women peers addressed the importance of diversity of women peers in terms of ethnicity, the sexuality of women peers was not directly addressed, most likely due to the lack of women peers who identify as being a lesbian. This is an important finding because it suggests that women peers construct descriptive diversity in narrow terms around a small selection of socio-demographic characteristics.

Conclusions

This chapter set out to explore the descriptive representation of women in the Lords and examine the diversity of women peers. This chapter was divided into three main sections in order to consider the numerical aspect of women's presence; women's attitudes towards normative ideas pertaining to women's descriptive representation and analyse the diversity of women peers in terms of some social characteristics.

First of all, this chapter has established that the House of Lords has experienced a notable numerical feminization, although when this is considered in terms of women's presence as the proportion of the House's composition there have only been modest increases. It is evident that party elites, party leaders and the HOLAC support the idea and practice of an increased female presence in the Lords, which provides clear support to Randall's (1987)

³¹ Baroness Chapman was appointed to the House of Lords in 2004 through the HOLAC and died in 2009.

claims that party elites are more likely to support the enhanced presence of women, although this is more evident for the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, and since 2000, the Crossbenchers. Whilst appointment is seen as an undemocratic means to compose a political chamber, its use for the House of Lords was clearly being used by some parties in a compensatory way for women who had tried and failed to reach the House of Commons. At other times the use of appointment was also seen as a device to correct for women's poor levels in other political chambers, particularly the House of Commons, and this was most apparent for the Liberal Democrats. The systemic operation of the House of Lords does not discriminate against women's numerical presence, notwithstanding the Lords Spiritual, yet some features of the House of Lords effectively safeguards against major increases. The retention of particular types of peer in the contemporary House of Lords such as the hereditary peers, the Lords Spiritual and peers appointed by the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 constrains women's presence. And certain structural characteristics of the House of Lords such as its large size combined with life-time terms of appointment means that the impact of the feminisation is stifled.

The diversity of women peers has been explored in a number of ways. On the whole women peers are younger and a larger proportion of women peers come from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to their male counterparts. Women peers are akin to their male counterparts in terms of educational achievements, reinforcing previous knowledge on the education of political elites (Mellors, 1978; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). However there is some evidence that male peers were more likely to have been educated at elite universities in the UK, although generally speaking male and female peers are drawn from social elites that do not reflect the population at large. Examination of the prior occupations of peers demonstrates some clear gender differences, although this is sometimes mediated by political attachment.

Finally, women peers emphasised the importance of descriptive representation for the make-up of the Lords, apart from those crossbench women who suggested that women's make up in the House of Lords ought to reflect women's distribution in professional life. The population of women peers in terms of diversity indicates that whilst peers represent diversity in terms of ethnicity and disability, this construction of diversity is organised around a narrow understanding that fails to reflect social cleavages evident in the general population.

6. How do women peers act?

The Symbolic Representation of Women in the House of Lords

According to feminist writers the symbolic representation of women requires the physical presence of women representatives within a political institution in order to induce sentiments amongst women so they feel represented by virtue of women's presence (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Sawer 2002; Childs 2007). Symbolic representation does not need a representative to engage in any political activity, they can be 'passive' (Pitkin, 1967, 107). Yet Pitkin also suggested that a political representative has to 'foster belief, loyalty, satisfaction.....through his activity' (Pitkin, 1967, 107) in order to fulfil public expectations. As exploring the views of women citizens towards the representation of women in the House of Lords is beyond the scope of this study, this chapter focuses upon the internal processes of the institution and how women act as peers by analysing women's participation in the business of the House of Lords, whether the culture of the Lords is gendered, as well as the perceptions of women peers towards ideas of symbolic representation.

This chapter is structured into three main sections. First of all it investigates the attendance and participation of women peers in the House of Lords. The second section explores how women peers experience the culture of the House of Lords as a place of work and whether it is amenable to women. In the third section the attitudes of women peers towards ideas of symbolic representation of women and the role-model effect are examined. Quantitative data has been gathered relating to participation in order to consider fully the different aspects of the symbolic representation of women in the House of Lords, as well as utilising qualitative data attained from interviews with women peers.

Women's Presence in the House of Lords: Attendance and Participation

This section explores whether male and female peers have different patterns of behaviour in the House of Lords. It is concerned with the everyday workings of the Lords and analyses attendance and some aspects of peers' participation in the functions of the House of Lords including written questions and starred questions.

Attendance

Analysis of the attendance of a peer to the House of Lords is one way to measure the activism of a peer, although admittedly this is a blunt tool of analysis in that attendance does not necessarily translate to active participation. The simplest way to account for this

type of activity is to analyse attendance to the House over parliamentary sessions which is illustrated in Table 6.1 between 1999 and 2007. Clearly the average attendance rate of women was found to be significantly higher than male peers for every parliamentary session between 1999 and 2007.

Table 6.1. The Attendance of Peers by Sex, from 1999/2000 to 2006/2007³²

Parliamentary Session	Male Mean	Female Mean	Maximum Attendance
1999/2000	83.83	105.72*	177
2000/2001	36.32	46.31*	76
2001/2002	97.42	128.75*	200
2002/2003	85.38	112.5*	174
2003/2004	75.91	96.34*	157
2004/2005	32.94	42.16*	63
2005/2006	103.59	132.31*	206
2006/2007	72.91	93.61*	142

*T-Test $p < .001$

Source: House of Lords Information Office

Many women peers spoke positively when talking about the general attendance of women peers. There was a perception that women peers as a group had a superior attendance record compared to their male counterpart:

Women are in overall terms less, but in terms of participation rates we are certainly more so, because the paper membership of this House is not the active membership of this House. (Labour)

Women are good attendees. They attend when they're supposed to. Off the top of my head I would say there are many more male defaulters than there are women. There are many more aged male peers who on the whole don't turn up. (Crossbench)

These points underline that it is important to look beyond the numerical composition of the House of Lords. Women peers stressed that their attendance levels at the House of Lords outstripped their 'paper' membership, which is clearly demonstrated from Table 6.1. One woman peer linked the older age profile of male peers (as explored in chapter 5) to their lower rates of attendance.

However, mean attendance reveals little about the perception that male peers were more likely to be 'defaulters'. Thus the data has been disaggregated to account for the proportion

³² The maximum daily attendance is included in the right hand column because parliamentary sessions do not have fixed lengths.

of sitting days attended in the 2006-07 session (Table 6.2). Rates of attendance have been organised into 4 main categories: attended more than 90% of sitting days, attended between 50% and 90% sitting days, attended between 10% and up to 50% of sitting days, and finally attended less than 10% of all sitting days in the parliamentary session.

Table 6.2. Attendance rates of the House of Lords during the 2006-2007 Session

Percentage of Days Attended	Male Peers	Female Peers	Total
90% and above	15.8% (99)	24.7% (36)	17.5% (135)
50% to 90%	41.1% (257)	52.7% (77)	43.3% (334)
10% to 50%	23.2% (145)	16.4% (24)	21.9% (169)
10% and below	20.0% (125)	6.2% (9)	17.4% (134)
Total	100.0% (626)	100.0% (146)	100.0% (772)

Using chi-square, p-value=.000

Source: House of Lords Information Office

Just as the mean attendance was higher for women peers, almost one quarter of women peers attended over 90% of sitting days in 2006/2007 compared to just 16% of male peers. Moreover, over half of women peers attended from 50% to 90% of sitting days; whereas just 41.1% of male peers did. Cumulatively, 77.4% of women peers attended over half of the sitting days in the parliamentary session, compared to just 56.9% of male peers.. The chi-square goodness of fit test shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the attendances of male and female peers.

The contention that male peers are more likely to be ‘defaulters’ can be explored from Table 6.2. One fifth (20.0%) of all male peers attended less than 10% of sitting days in the 2006/2007 session; whereas comparably the proportion for women peers was just 6.2%. Thus, male peers were three times more likely to attend the House for less than 10% of sitting days. The observation that male peers are more likely to be ‘defaulters’ is supported from this evidence.

Using sex and party to examine attendance provides a further perspective of the activism of peers (Table 6.3). Whereas women peers had higher average levels of attendance to the House of Lords, introducing party affiliation demonstrates that amongst Labour and Liberal Democrat peers there are no significant differences in attendance between male and

female peers. The mean attendance of Labour women peers was five percent higher than their male counterparts and there is virtually no difference between the attendance rates of Liberal Democrat peers, just 0.06% higher percent in favour of male peers.

Table 6.3. Mean Attendance by Sex and Affiliation in 2006/07 Session

Affiliation	Male Peers (%)	(n)	Women Peers (%)	(n)
Conservative*	54.33	175	70.40	35
Labour	70.08	162	75.21	55
Liberal Democrat	70.05	58	69.66	21
Crossbench*	37.16	177	55.32	31
Bishops	15.34	28	n/a	n/a

* = T-Test $p < .01$

Source: House of Lords Information Office

However, significant differences in attendance can be found amongst the Conservatives and the crossbenchers. On average, women peers of both affiliations attend the chamber approximately 16-18% more than their male counterpart. However, whilst the attendance of Conservative women peers is similar to both Labour and Liberal Democrat women peers at around 70% of all attendances, the attendance of crossbench women peers is notably lower at 55% of sitting days. This could be explained by the difference between political and ‘independent’ peers. Thus women peers attached to a political party may be under to pressure to attend the House of Lords as a working peer.

There has been media attention towards the lower attendance level of peers appointed to the House of Lords by the HOLAC (Woolf 2004). In March 2009 the HOLAC announced that it was emphasised to prospective peers that membership of the Lords was viewed as a job rather than as a honour so they could devote the time necessary ‘to make an effective contribution to the House of Lords, rather than, as previously, stating that they had “the time available” to do so’ (House of Lords Appointments Commission 2010, 7).

Lower male attendance might also be explained by the different types of peer resident in the Lords. It is important to bear in mind that the 26 Lords Spiritual are working diocesan bishops and have duties to fulfil across the country therefore ‘few attend regularly’ (Shell 2007, 54) . When present in the chamber, the Lords Spiritual take prayers in the chamber and this is run on a rota basis. Although only minor in terms of the small proportion of the

House overall, the lower levels of attendance by bishops (Table 6.3) contributes to the overall levels of poorer male attendance.

Research into women MEPs during the 1980s suggested that women MEPs were more diligent than male counterparts (Vallance and Davies 1986, 64). This view was reflected in the attitudes of a few women peers. One woman peer reasoned that women were more likely to be present and active in the House of Lords because women had a more acute sense of duty. Linking with finding that male peers were more likely to be ‘defaulters’, this peer suggested that ‘duty’ was not felt as keenly by men:

Our attendance rate is higher. It’s classic really, when women take something on, we try and do it properly. We’re a pretty conscientious lot. You develop a sense of duty (Crossbench)

Similarly, another woman peer linked perceived poorer levels of male attendance to the propensity for some male peers to take on directorships in addition to their peerage so they played only a part-time role in the Lords:

Lord Jay of Ewelme, he was a former head of the Foreign Office. I cannot tell you how many directorships of things he has got. The fact is he would not have time to come in here. He’s here when he needs to be, speaks. But his life is outside. Baroness D’Souza is the convenor of the crossbench peers. She probably now feels that her life is inside and that may be due to a gender difference. (Conservative)

The suggestion that male peers are more likely to have directorships, which in turn affects their presence in the House of Lords can be empirically tested by looking at the Lords’ Register of Interests. As part of the Code of Conduct, peers must be open and accountable in their parliamentary and public duties and all relevant interests must be registered, including all remunerated directorships. A dataset was constructed including all peers from the 2008/2009 Parliamentary Session.³³ The variable ‘directorship’ was created to indicate whether the peer had one or more paid directorships. In addition the number of directorships each peer held was logged because some peers held more than one.

The results in Table 6.4 demonstrate that over one third of peers have one or more directorships. When this is disaggregated by sex, 39.6% of male peers have at least one remunerated directorship in contrast to 27.4% of women peers. This 12.2% difference

³³ This data takes into account all peers, excluding the two peers suspended in 2009, the Lords Spiritual. As peers on an official Leave of Absence do not feature in the Register they are not considered in this dataset. This analysis was undertaken in June 2009.

between male and female peers is significant and the assertion that male peers are more likely to have a paid directorship is supported by this data. However it is important to highlight that directorships are not solely a male preserve; over one quarter of female peers have a paid directorship.

Table 6.4. Peers and Remunerated Directorships by Sex

	No Directorships	One or More Directorships
Male	60.4% (n=333)	39.6% (n=218)
Female	72.6% (n=106)	27.4% (n=40)
Total	63.0% (n=439)	37.0% (n=258)

Significant at the 0.01 level ($p=.007$ using chi-square test)

Source: Hansard; Register of Lords' Interests

As some peers held more than one paid directorship it was necessary to consider the mean number of directorships held by peers by sex (Table 6.5). Women peers have on average 0.48 directorships compared to men having 1.15 directorships thus on average, male peers have 2.4 times more directorships than women peers, a significant sex difference. When the dataset was reduced to only consider those peers who had one or more directorships (the bottom two rows in Table 6.5) women peers had on average 1.75 directorships; in contrast male peers had 2.91 directorships, another significant difference. This provides clear evidence that male peers are more likely to take on paid directorships; moreover male peers take on increased numbers of directorships compared to their female counterparts.

Table 6.5 Peers and Mean Number of Remunerated Directorships by Sex

	Mean Number of Directorships	n
All Male Peers	1.1506	551
All Female Peers	0.4795	146
Male Peers with 1 or more directorships	2.9083	218
Female Peers with 1 or more directorships	1.7500	40

Significant at the 0.00 level (independent samples t-test)

Source: Hansard; Register of Lords' Interests

Table 6.6 explores whether political affiliation influences the take-up of paid directorships for male and female peers. There are no sex differences to be found amongst Labour and

Liberal Democrat peers, although in both cases male peers have on average an increased number of directorships compared to their respective female cohort. However, there were detectable sex differences for Conservative and Crossbench peers. Conservative male peers have the highest mean number at 1.65, compared to just 0.56 for Conservative women peers. That Conservative women peers have a lower take-up of directorships than Labour women peers (0.8750) is slightly surprising because of their higher likelihood to have a business or financial background as established in chapter 5. However this could also be influenced by the older age-profile of Conservative women peers (again explored in chapter 5). This section now turns to consider whether directorships influences attendance at the House of Lords.

Table 6.6. Paid Directorships by Sex and Party

Party	Male	Female
Conservatives*	1.6460 (n=161)	0.5588 (n=34)
Labour	0.8750 (n=160)	0.6852 (n=54)
Liberal Democrats	0.8269 (n=52)	0.3000 (n=20)
Crossbench*	1.0976 (n=164)	0.2286 (n=35)

* Significant at 0.000 level (t-test)

Source: Hansard; Register of Lords' Interests

The following combines data on directorships and attendance at the Lords. At the time of writing, the latest complete data on attendance was for the 2006-2007 parliamentary session whereas the data relating to directorships comes from June 2009. Thus, the following takes into account peers present in the 2006-2007 and who also appear on the 2008-09 register of interests. Peers on the 2006-2007 attendance register who are no longer alive have been removed from data analysis. Moreover, those peers who were on a leave of absence in the 2006-2007 or the 2008-2009 session have not been considered. Finally, the two peers suspended from the House in 2009 and the Lords Spiritual have been disregarded from this analysis.

Notably there is a negative relationship between rate of attendance in the 2006-2007 parliamentary session and take-up of directorships for all peers (Table 6.7). When the data considered only male peers this significant relationship was maintained; which was not true for only women. This exploratory analysis suggests that the propensity for male peers to take on paid directorships negatively influences their attendance at the House of Lords, and

is more significant for male peers with directorships. However, the caveat attached to this finding is the diminutive nature of this negative association and mode of inquiry.

Table 6.7. The Influence of Directorships Upon Attendance at the House of Lords

	Correlation	Significance	n
Male Peers	-.093	*	541
Female Peers	-.029	n/s	141
All Peers	-.105	**	682

* Significant at .05 Level; ** Significant at the .01 Level

Source: House of Lords Information Office; House of Lords Register of Interests

Written and Starred Questions

A further way to measure the activism of a peer is to consider the amount of questions they ask. This sub-section considers whether the participation of peers across sexes and amongst women differs in terms of asking written and starred questions, as well as asking supplementary questions on other peers' starred questions.

Table 6.8. Asking Written Questions in the 1999-2000 session by Sex

Parliamentary Session	Male Mean	(n)	Female Mean	(n)
1999/2000	6.19	599	7.86	115

Source: Hansard; Table is not significant

There is no discernable difference in the use of written questions by male and female peers. In the 1999-00 session women peers on average asked 7.86 written questions compared to 6.19 written questions for male peers, although this was not a significant difference.

Table 6.9. Asking Starred Questions in the 2004/05 Session by Sex

	Asked one Starred Question or more	Did not ask an Starred Question	Total
Male Peers	15.9% (93)	84.1% (492)	100.0% (585)
Female Peers	27.0% (34)	73.0% (92)	100.0% (126)
Total	17.9% (127)	82.1% (584)	100.0% (711)

Source: Hansard; P=.003

Turning to starred questions in the 2004/05 session women peers were significantly more likely to ask a starred question than their male counterparts (Table 6.9). Whereas just 16% of male peers asked at least one starred question in the 2004/2005 Parliamentary Session,

27% of women peers asked a starred question, a significant difference of 11%. However the greater tendency for women peers to have asked a starred question in this session could be attributable to women's higher rate of attendance, as explored earlier in this chapter.

Table 6.10. Women Peers' Participation in Starred Questions by Party, 2004-05 Session

	Asked one Starred Question or more	Did not ask an Starred Question	Total
Conservative	31.2% (10)	68.8% (22)	100.0% (32)
Labour	23.4% (11)	76.6% (36)	100.0% (47)
Liberal Democrat	50.0% (9)	50.0% (9)	100.0% (18)
Crossbench	15.4% (4)	84.6% (22)	100.0% (26)
Other	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)	100.0% (3)
Total	27% (34)	73.0% (92)	100.0% (126)

Source: Hansard; Table is not significant

When the data was reduced to consider patterns amongst women peers it was evident that 'political' peers (Conservative, Labour and the Liberal Democrats) were more likely to ask a starred question (Table 6.10). Half of Liberal Democrat women peers asked at least one starred question in this session just less than a third of Conservative women peers (31.2%), almost one quarter of Labour women peers (23.4%) and just 15% of crossbench women peers. The greater propensity for questions to be asked by Conservative and Liberal Democrat women peers is most likely attributable to their status as opposition peers.

As chapter 4 identified, when a peer asks a starred question it often precipitates a mini-debate in the chamber. The peer who asks the original question is permitted to ask one supplementary question. After this point any peer is eligible to ask a supplementary question, which is now the focus of analysis for the 2004-05 session (Table 6.11). Just over one third (34.4%) of all male peers asked a supplementary question at question time compared to half (50.8%) of all women peers, which is a significant difference in the participation of male and female peers. This could be perceived positively for the symbolic representation of women because it demonstrates that women are more active than their male counterparts.

Table 6.11. The Use of Supplementary Questions by Peers in the 2004-05 Session by Sex

	Intervened in Starred Questions at least once	Did not intervene in Starred Questions	Total
Male Peers	34.4% (201)	65.6% (384)	100.0% (585)
Female Peers	50.8% (64)	49.2% (62)	100.0% (126)
Total	37.3% (265)	62.7% (446)	100.0 (711)

Source: Hansard; P=.000

Thus women peers are more likely to ask a supplementary question at question time, and Table 6.12 shows that on average women peers asked 2.25 supplementary questions compared to 1.44 questions for male peers, which was a significant difference. This could be explained by the poorer male presence in the House of Lords as highlighted in this chapter. However when the dataset was reduced to consider only those peers who had asked one or more supplementary questions there were no discernable sex differences between peers.

Table 6.12. The Mean Number of Supplementary Questions asked by Peers in the 2004-05 Session by Sex

	Mean Number of Supplementary Questions Asked	N	Significance
All Male Peers	1.44	585	*
All Female Peers	2.25	126	*
Male Peers who intervened at least once	4.20	201	N/S
Female Peers who intervened at least once	4.42	64	N/S

Source: Hansard; * = .03;

Finally when patterns of asking supplementary questions amongst women peers were explored (Table 6.13) it was revealed that there were considerable differences according to affiliation. Almost three quarters (72.2%) of all Liberal Democrat women peers asked at least one supplementary, compared to nearly two thirds (62.5%) of Conservative women peers, half (50.0%) of all Crossbench women peers and just 38.3% of Labour women peers. Once again this could be explained by the opposition status of Liberal Democrat and Conservative women peers as a factor that increases their activism.

Table 6.13. Women Peers and Supplementary Questions by Party

	Asked one or more supplementary question	Did not ask any supplementary questions	Total
Conservative	62.5% (20)	37.5% (12)	100.0% (32)
Labour	38.3% (18)	61.7% (29)	100.0% (47)
Liberal Democrat	72.2% (13)	27.8% (5)	100.0% (18)
Crossbench	50.0% (13)	50.0% (13)	100.0% (26)
Other	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)	100.0% (3)
Total	50.8% (64)	49.2% (62)	100.0% (126)

Source: Hansard

Table is not significant

This section has established that women peers are on average more likely to attend the House of Lords than their male counterparts. Whilst there is no discernable sex difference in the use of written questions by peers in the House of Lords, it has been found that women peers are more likely to ask starred questions and supplementary questions at question time. Amongst women, peers from the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Party were more likely to participate in asking starred questions and supplementary questions, which is most likely attributable to their status as opposition peers in the timeframe under scrutiny. These behaviours may have changed since the onset of the Coalition Government in May 2010, which would be a valid future research inquiry. This chapter now turns to consider how women peers experience the culture and working practices of the House of Lords.

The Culture of the House of Lords and a Women's Style of Politics

Understanding how a political institution functions as a workplace is important because 'the way of doing politics' (Dahlerup, 1988, 289) across different sites is not uniform and contingent upon the specific political institution. Moreover feminist political scientists have pointed out that 'gender plays out differently in different political institutions' (Chappell 2010, 185) meaning that there are different expectations about the performance and behaviours of male and female representatives across different sites. As women are purported to favour an approach to politics that is consensual and co-operative, in contrast to the male norm of politics that is aggressive and adversarial (Randall 1991; Acker 1992; Phillips 1995; Lovenduski 1998; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002) it is pertinent to consider

whether and how the culture and working practices of the House of Lords affects how women peers act in the House of Lords. This section unfolds to consider how women peers experience the culture and norms of the House of Lords, questions whether women peers have a distinct political style and explores whether the House of Lords is amenable to women peers as a place of work using data attained from interviews.

The Culture and Norms of the House of Lords

The overriding culture of the House of Lords has been emphasised as one of courtesy (see chapter 4). In interview women peers were keen to emphasise the immediate support received from other peers when first admitted to the Lords which the following extract crystallises: 'It's quite an informal and unpretentious House. You're instantly on first name terms and people are instantly friendly to newcomers. They're very hospitable so you don't feel like the new girl' (Crossbench). Moreover women peers were also quick to emphasise that the polite culture transcended party lines: 'It was more friendly here than I had expected. People from across all parties are quite friendly and supportive of each other' (Liberal Democrat).

As chapter 4 showed some peers are appointed to the House of Lords because they bring expertise and are at the top of their particular field. Some women peers highlighted how the compositional bases of membership contributed to the acquiescent atmosphere in the House of Lords because by and large ambition was redundant: 'I mean in here it is much gentler. We've got no further career prospects. I'm not here for a preferment' (Crossbench). Moreover, having a membership whereby some individuals have been pioneers in their particular field means that there is deference amongst peers.

In terms of political peers the House of Lords is usually a destination for politicians following a seasoned career in politics or public life; it is not generally the place where political careers start:

There is generally speaking an atmosphere of good manners and politeness. I guess here we're not scrambling up the greasy pole or trying to throw each other out of the way (Labour)

The Commons is highly competitive. People can get rivalries. The Lords isn't like that. No one has got anything to prove (Labour)

It's not at all competitive and anyone who was in here who was ambitious would mildly amuse us. What would be the point of ambition in this kind of atmosphere? (Labour)

This means that ambition is not generally manifest in the House of Lords which contributed to make the culture of the Lords less adversarial and more collegiate.

Moreover the polite culture of the Lords was reasoned by one peer to better suit older individuals: 'I like the Lords at this stage in my life. I wouldn't want to have been in here when I was much younger, I liked the Commons' (Crossbench). As chapter 5 emphasised, the age-profile of members of the House of Lords is considerably older than the average MP. This was also deemed to contribute to the atmosphere of the House of Lords: 'Many peers are in a time of their life when all passion is spent as it were but you still have egos in play and the rest. But it isn't as difficult to manage as the Commons' (Liberal Democrat). Thus the different features of membership for the House of Lords in terms of expertise, achievement and maturity reinforce its collegiate and collaborative culture.

Some women peers illustrated that there was a distinction between the way politics played out in the House of Lords and the House of Commons: 'It is very political but it is not adversarial politics as the Commons is. There's more consensual politics here' (Liberal Democrat) and 'The Lords is more collegiate. You are able to make cross-party alliances and follow cross-party interests in a way the Commons doesn't do' (Liberal Democrat). The politics in the Lords was regarded as attenuated in contrast to the antagonistic House of Commons, and these institutional norms were deemed to be a more constructive way to do politics by a large number of women peers.

The Culture of the House of Lords and Women's Style of Politics

Notably the culture of courtesy evident in the Lords was reasoned by some women peers to fit well with more feminine styles of politics. Thus, it was highlighted by some women peers that the polite nature of the House of Lords made the site of the House of Lords a preferable site for women representatives to operate in:

I think women have a different way of doing politics. I mean to some extent the Lords is a bit more an epitome of some of that because it's not as aggressive and it's not confrontational as the Commons is for example. So that makes it in a sense easier to work in. (Labour)

In many ways this place (the Lords) with the gentler approach as to how it does its business is more conducive all around. I think a lot of women find that too. That's not to say people don't get passionate and people are not critical, they are, they're just a bit more civilised about how they do it. (Liberal Democrat)

I find the style of politics here suits me. I do find the consensual way of working and the respectful way of working here very much to my taste.
(Liberal Democrat)

These extracts provide some evidence that the culture of the House of Lords is perceived favourably by women peers, and this was in direct contrast to research that suggested that politics plays out in a 'masculinised style' in the House of Commons (Childs 2004b, 182).

Some women peers supported these contentions by suggesting that women peers 'tended to be more polite' (Crossbench); 'Women in politics work differently from men' (Liberal Democrat); 'They're (women) more consensual. They're more prepared to listen and respect other people's opinions' (Liberal Democrat) and 'I do hate to generalise but most women are more sympathetic' (Labour). Indeed the suggestion that women prefer politics to be conducted in a consensual and co-operative manner (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2002) appeared to be borne out in a majority of interviews with women peers who clearly emphasised how the second chamber facilitated this approach. These particular contentions from women peers reflect earlier findings from a study of New Labour women MPs which established that there was clear recognition that they engaged with a 'different, feminized style of politics' (Childs, 2004, 191). Underlying these sentiments is the idea that women tended to have a different approach to politics and this was a style that could be easily assimilated and valued in the House of Lords.

Lovenduski (2005, 3) notes that 'to perform effectively women politicians are expected to conform to the rules of the game.' A number of women MPs felt that 'the dominant masculinised style of the House was not conducive to women acting in feminized way' and at times this brought into question their utility as political representatives (Childs, 2004, 187-8). In contrast most women peers interviewed felt that feminine styles of politics dovetail with the embedded norms of behaviour for the House of Lords, which is positive for their symbolic representation of women. However, as the House of Lords is the second chamber and receives less public attention the utility of these examples is brought into question.

Some women peers emphasised that some of the everyday practices of the House of Lords, such as debates and question-time, were amenable to a women's style of politics. It was felt that the way debates and question time played out in the House of Lords was befitting to

women's style of politics. The conventions of the House of Lords that reinforced the polite culture, as explored in chapter 4, were said to make it easier to participate. Moreover this perception was borne out in the earlier analysis of women's participation in questions in the previous section for example:

The few times I've been in the Commons for debates I'm amazed at the rowdiness. It wouldn't happen here. It wouldn't be allowed. And we prefer it like that here, especially women. (Labour)

I think some of the women in the House of Commons, particularly that big intake in 1997, a lot of women were intimidated by the men because of the yah-boo that goes on in there frankly. But I don't think they're intimidated by the House of Lords because it's a much gentler place to work. (Crossbench)

Many women find that the House of Lords is a lot less-testosterone fuelled. It's less confrontational. They find it a more considered environment in which to operate, which I think makes the atmosphere one in which women thrive. (Labour)

Certainly, these women peers give the impression that the polite conduct also permeates through to some working practices because conventions are institutionally embedded and adhered to by the membership of the Lords. Notably these extracts came from peers who had been MPs therefore were able to differentiate between the conduct of debates in both chambers of Westminster and reiterate how the Lords' practices tended to be compatible with a women's style of politics. Moreover the final statement also highlights the culture and norms of the House of Lords are positive for the symbolic representation of women because they were active and accomplished at undertaking politics in this manner.

However not all women peers accorded with the view that the culture, norms and working practices of the House of Lords were favourable to women. A few women peers characterised question time and debates as particularly masculinised features of the House of Lords that challenged the politesse of the House of Lords. It was emphasised that there was a tendency for some male peers to be aggressive and belligerent in debates within the Chamber: 'Some roles in this House are clearly based on machismo. And I detest that. It's not efficient or the polite way to run things. But I do think women's presence does make men behave better' (Crossbench). At Parliamentary Questions if two or more peers get up to speak the Speaker does not intervene and peers must give way of their own accord: 'Sometimes you can see people jostle for position, and I really think this is an indicator of the maleness of the House coming out at these times' (Crossbench); 'Generally men tend

to leap up and shout in debates' (Crossbench). Notably these comments came from crossbench peers who had not experienced Westminster politics. Such comments suggest that a focus upon the masculinity of the House of Lords and how it plays out, as advocated by Randall (2009, 149), would be a useful and cogent future research trajectory.

One Liberal Democrat peer did recognise that Parliamentary Questions and Debates did at times reflect the adversarial practices of the Commons which sometimes advantaged male peers and reciprocally hindered (some) women:

The way our system works where you are not called by the Speaker but you stand and tough it out until you get the attention of the House. That itself works to the advantage of the male who can boom out "My Lords..." and assert themselves. So yes at question time sometimes women do find it more difficult to get called (Liberal Democrat)

These assertions attest how those attributes of the Lords business most closely aligned with the House of Commons such as starred questions and debates could manifest to disadvantage some women who may prefer not to engage with the more masculinised practices of the House of Lords. Male peers are advantaged due to their physical presence and louder, deeper voices. However, even though this is the perception of women peers on the whole this did not affect their overall participation in asking starred questions and supplementary questions as explored in the initial section of this chapter, although this could perhaps account for the lower levels of participation amongst crossbench women peers.

However, there is a danger in essentialising the notion of a women's style of politics. For example some scholars have identified that some women do adopt a masculinised and adversarial style of politics. This was evident for women in the Liberal Democrats who aspired to the House of Commons and 'actively tried to cultivate an image commonly associated with young aggressive male politicians in order to get selected' (Evans 2008, 600). Indeed not all women peers agreed with the contention that women per se were ineffective in the more combative features of the House of Lords work. It was suggested that younger women would be more attuned to take on and adopt masculinised modes of behaviour: 'I guess, were there more younger women in here they would perhaps be more up for the rough and tumble' (Crossbench). Interestingly, this woman peer associated younger women as more likely to take on masculinised types of behaviours and participate in starred questions and debates in contrast to the more mature woman peer who was

typical of the current membership, although as chapter 5 highlighted women peers tended to be older than women in the House of Commons.

One woman peer recognised that whilst historically some women had adopted a masculinised approach to politics, this had shifted in recent times: 'Women have had to stop being queen bees and behaving like men in order to succeed' (Labour). This suggests that in the House of Lords at least women's experiences and roles *as women* have been incorporated into political life. However this ongoing process does not necessarily include all women in their approach to politics in the Lords and in the wider context of the UK polity.

Other research on a feminised/women's style of politics suggests that (some) women prefer to operate behind-the scenes. New Labour women MPs suggested that rather than appear publicly disloyal to the Labour Party, they were acting behind the scenes to alter policy in the political process (Childs 2004b, 160-162). Notably some Labour women peers supported this contention as it was felt this was a more effective way of doing politics and that women were more likely to employ this kind of behaviour:

A lot of the politics here which I find a lot easier to work in is about sitting down and talking to the Minister, talking to the opposition parties, getting a consensus, so it's about negotiating, understanding the issues, and it's not about waving votes and shouting. Women have a different sort of politics and a different sort of style and I think that the men should learn to copy us. (Labour)

Sometimes if you want the answer to something, the most silly thing is to get on your feet and ask a question because what you'll do is put a colleague in the corner. So if you actually go and see them, or ring them up, and doing it behind the scenes works much better. Actually women are more likely to do that than men. (Labour)

A lot has been achieved because women talked to ministers. They sat down with them and said look there's a reality here that you're not aware of. And I think that's the way a lot of women do their politics. (Labour)

I would not dream of putting down a written question. It would be a foolish thing to do. It's much easier to get in touch with the Minister's office (Labour).

These particular responses all came from Labour women peers, and it is important to consider that in addition to gender, political affiliation may also influence behaviour and the complexion of the Government is an important consideration. Labour women peers are allied to the governing party, meaning that party loyalty may have a higher cost than for

opposition peers. Thus belonging to the party of government, even within the second chamber where party-lines have been argued to be less relevant, could be more important for shaping behaviour than sex or gender.

It was suggested that women peers had a higher activity level compared to their male counterpart: 'It feels that proportionally women participate more than men do. I mean you never look round the chamber and think *Ob my god, the chamber is full of men*' (Labour); 'Although there are less of us, we do all have a lot to say. If you look at the average male and the average woman member, the women participate more' (Labour). Whilst the extracts used point to generalised assertions about the behaviour of peers by sex, some peers gave tangible examples of types of work they believed women peers were more involved with:

The leader of the Lib Dems said to me they had a new peer coming in, and it's great particularly as she's a woman, because women do all the work. He said it frivolously, but I have to say, it is the women who beaver away at legislation. (Crossbench)

I wonder too whether there is a tendency to appoint women, particularly to committee work. I mean it's arduous work. You get piles to read. But it's basically women who put in a huge amount of work. (Crossbench)

However this notion was not shared by all women peers. A further Labour peer was not aware of any obvious divergence in activity by sex: 'I think we work pretty equally in here. Some people (men and women) are very active. Some people (men and women) are not' (Labour).

The Changing Culture of the House of Lords

It was evident that the House of Lords Act 1999 had implications upon the House of Lords as a working institution. Whereas the House of Lords was deemed 'sleepy' (Liberal Democrat) during the Thatcher and Major years by one peer, academic scholarship has suggested that the Lords views itself as more legitimate because the majority of hereditary peers have been removed (Russell and Sciara 2006; Russell and Sciara 2007a). This was suggested to have contributed to the transformation of the institution: 'The culture of the House has changed a lot. It's a lot more serious than it was' (Liberal Democrat). A separate peer's statements supported this idea that there had been a shift in terms of how the House of Lords viewed itself: 'Because we were partly reformed the House felt it had a legitimacy which it perhaps felt it hadn't had previously so it became more assertive' (Liberal Democrat). Moreover it is important to lay emphasis on Blair's rebalancing of the House in

terms of creating more Labour, Liberal Democrat and Crossbench peers which brought new personnel to the House. As the Lord Speaker noted the House changed ‘from an aristocratic culture to a meritocratic culture’ (Hayman 2007). Some women peers who had been appointed to the House prior to 1999 also stressed how the removal of hereditary peers coupled with the appointment of additional working peers contributed to the greater legitimacy and effectiveness of the Lords:

What you have now is a chamber full of people who want to be active. Whereas previously quite a lot of the old hereditaries who came in would have their cocktail and their lunch, stay for question time and then they’d bugger off!
(Liberal Democrat)

Other peers reflected these feelings and characterised the House before 1999 as a ‘private member’s club’ (Labour) or a ‘gentlemen’s club’ (Liberal Democrat) when hereditary male peers made up the majority of members. Some longstanding women peers recounted how some hereditary peers used the House of Lords primarily for social means rather than to contribute to its working practices which may have been off putting to women:

There was a group of guys who used to sit in the bar all day long. They’d come in after lunch and drink whiskey and sit there smoking cigars all afternoon. After lunch you couldn’t go in there at all because it was just dreadful. I really did stay away. I think there’s a lot less of that kind of thing going on now.
(Conservative)

When the hereditaries were here, there were certain parts of the Lords I didn’t enter because it was male-dominated. They were smoking cigars you know. And I think it changed with the hereditaries going and it vastly improved it by bringing in non-smoking. I guess it’s modernisation also, but that gender thing, it’s still clearly important. (Labour)

Clearly this had the effect that some women avoided certain areas of the House of Lords because of the behaviour of male hereditary peers. In addition a separate woman peer emphasised that the attitudes of some male hereditary peers could be discriminatory at times, especially during the 1980s. She recalled an anecdote that a fellow woman peer had experienced:

Early in the 1980s, as she walked through the Royal Gallery someone pinched her bottom! She never knew who. She said some men would come up to her and tell her it was nice to have a woman with a figure in the Lords for once. That was the old hereditary view and I think that’s an insight into how women were perceived in the House at the time. (Conservative)

Thus it is evident some portions of the hereditary membership had prejudiced attitudes towards women peers in the past which had gradually been overturned as the composition

of the House of Lords changed, as chapters 4 and 5 overviewed. This was reinforced by one woman peer:

The culture of the House has changed, not just because the hereditary peers went, though that did change a lot of the culture in a sense because we became a lot less male dominated. I also think there has been a new intake since then, and that has been much more diverse – more women, more ethnic minorities, younger people. So the whole nature of the House has changed quite dramatically. (Labour)

This is not to say that women peers have changed the House of Lords, rather that the type of people appointed to the House of Lords across the Labour and Liberal Democrat benches and the Crossbenches (which includes increased numbers of women) has helped contribute to a greater professionalism in the Lords, which was lacking when the House of Lords was dominated by hereditary peers.

The 'hereditary' view of women in politics is not perceived to be a regular part of the contemporary transitional House of Lords. One woman peer linked isolated occurrences of discrimination with one or two individuals, and argued that women's place in the Lords was uncontroversial: 'I honestly think the Lords feels like a place where criticisms are made by individuals – there's rarely criticism of people because of their gender. You might get an individual who is stupid or has a stupid point of view. Maybe I'm making it out to be more ideal than it actually is, but it doesn't feel like that.' (Liberal Democrat). Similarly another woman peer emphasised the courtesy and friendliness of everyone in the House adding: 'I've never met any hostilities towards women' (Labour).

However as Crewe warns 'peers' primary identity is lordly....Characteristics like race and sex are supposed to be subordinate' (Crewe 2005, 128). The implication of this means there may be reluctance for some peers to speak out when they suffer discriminatory treatment. In a newspaper interview, Baroness Young of Hornsey did reveal that 'Inside the Lords, you find that there's a kind of "politesse" that doesn't allow for overt sexist or racist comments to surface in an obvious way' (Young 2008). The use of 'obvious' in this extract hints that there may be unintended discrimination at times. Certainly the presentation of the House of Lords as a relatively women friendly chamber is in contrast to the House of Commons where instances of sexual harassment have been reported (Childs 2004b, 181; Childs, Lovenduski et al. 2005, 70-71; Sones 2005).

However the presentation of the transitional House of Lords as discrimination free was questioned by a few women peers who suggested that at times implied or unconscious discrimination was evident in the House of Lords:

I don't think I've suffered any sex discrimination. I know other women have though, and there is still that odd occasion when you get the feeling that people think 'Oh, she's only a woman'. (Labour)

I have experienced resistance from some from men in here once or twice. Not from men I didn't know, but from men I knew before I came into the House. Some of them find it a little bit difficult because they were higher up in the trade union movement than I was and now we're level pegging. It's very rare, and overall no. (Labour)

Some women peers also drew attention to other instances of discrimination where it was raised that women from minority backgrounds may have suffered incidences of discrimination, although it was stressed that these were mostly thought to be indirect:

I'm sure there is discrimination. I think it'd be really interesting to talk to one of the black women peers. I think one woman said it's just beneath the surface and that it could come up at anytime. Probably unconsciously, but it's still there. I mean for her it's a double whammy really. (Crossbench)

Other women peers had made similar observations regarding some of the more high profile women peers from minority ethnic backgrounds which also suggest that the culture of the House of Lords is not necessarily totally modernised:

The leader of the House, Valerie Amos is a black woman and we had Patricia Scotland, Minister for the Home Office, a black woman. There were occasions when people got them mixed up. Now whether it was because they were women, or because they were black women....we'll leave it at that. (Labour)

The House is changing. I'm sure that people like Valerie Amos probably did put up with a lot of stick when they came in and unintentionally suffered discrimination; thoughtless, rather than hurtful. But it has changed I think. (Liberal Democrat)

Whilst there may be some antiquated views towards black and minority ethnic women in particular, it is suggested that the overriding courtesy of the House buffers against instances of overt discrimination.

However, four women peers identified the libraries in the House of Lords as particularly male spaces. One woman peer confided that it was quite common in the afternoons to find men in the library: 'asleep and snoring in the large leather armchairs. Women could not do this. People would talk; people would disapprove' (Labour). Another peer gave a similar

example: 'If you go into the library you are still more likely to find most of the armchairs with men sprawling having an afternoon snooze' (Liberal Democrat). This meant that such areas were avoided by some women at times. Thus a legacy left by the (male) hereditary peers in the House of Lords has ascribed some practices in some spaces as acceptable for male peers, which would not be appropriate for women peers. Although this could also be attributable to the older age profile of male peers on average, this presents an alternative perspective of certain everyday proceedings in the House of Lords. Moreover, a different woman peer drew attention to some of the furniture in the House of Lords Library which also served to characterise the previous male monopoly of the House that made it unsuitable for women peers: 'The chairs in the library are solid leather chairs, I can't sit on them comfortably and work because they are made for men. I would say the furniture of the House has not been feminised (Labour)'.

The Attitudes of Women Peers towards the Symbolic Representation of Women

The final section of this chapter explores the attitudes of women peers on normative ideas of symbolic representation, as well as considering whether they offer a positive role-model example to other women.

Attitudes Towards the Symbolic Representation of Women in Politics

It was clear when discussing the symbolic representation of women that some women peers directly engaged with feminist interpretations of the concept that were reviewed in chapter 2. They were able to illustrate that the presence of women in politics was important for symbolic reasons: 'It seemed to me to be crucial that people, women, identified more with their elected representatives and you know more women in politics contributes to that. For us in Labour, because we do have women everywhere, that is enhanced' (Labour). The idea of women 'identifying' with women politicians by virtue of their presence demonstrates a clear understanding of the symbolic representation of women discussed in chapter 2.

Separately a Labour woman peer highlighted that the principle of equality between the sexes was a clear reason why women's presence was important: 'Women's representation is so very important to me. I was one of the first to argue for all women shortlists. I've championed it from the word go because it felt right in terms of women's equality. But also because women were not going to vote for us because they didn't identify with us because we were led by so many men.' This resonates with feminist interpretations of

representation in terms of the justice argument (Phillips, 1995, 65). Yet this woman peer developed her argument further by highlighting the pragmatic importance of women's identification with political representatives which could reward political parties electorally. However, one woman peer questioned whether the symbolic presence of women in politics was always profitable using the example of the UK's only female Prime Minister: 'I don't think Mrs Thatcher was particularly woman friendly or symbolic. Maybe she did encourage women within the Conservative Party so I shouldn't belittle it' (Liberal Democrat). The idea that women politicians would deliver symbolic benefits universally to all women was disputed. However, this peer did qualify her assertion by suggesting that specifically within the Conservative Party Thatcher's presence could have had symbolic benefits. This example highlights how different aspects of women's representation may be conditioned by factors such as the political party of the representative. Moreover, this extract can also be used to support arguments in favour of a diversity of female political representatives across political parties, which is important because chapters 1 and 5 demonstrated women's presence is uneven across Westminster.

Attitudes towards the Symbolic Representation of Women in the House of Lords

The presence of women in the site of the House of Lords was argued to be important by some women peers. A Liberal Democrat woman referred directly to the symbolic representation of women in the House of Lords: 'I suppose that given that the House of Lords is a great symbol of tradition, then having women in it is doubly powerful' (Liberal Democrat). This extract lends support to Sawer's idea that women's presence could create 'institutional legitimacy' (2002, 6) and illustrates how symbolic representation could potentially confer positive benefits for political parties or political institutions. In this case the presence of women in the House of Lords brought into question entrenched, masculinised cultural norms by challenging directly gender based stereotypes which emanated simply from the name of the institution and the historical exclusion of women. Thus the greater (but not yet fair) presence of women within a political institution alongside male politicians would legitimise the institution in the eyes of female citizens, clearly linking women's descriptive and symbolic representation (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Thus because women were denied a place in the House of Lords until 1958, women's presence is even more critical.

These sentiments were echoed in an interview with a Labour woman peer who argued that symbolic representation did matter and was relevant to the Lords because there was a

linkage between the membership of the House of Lords and citizens despite the House of Lords not being popularly elected:

We may be appointed but we're still there in a sense as representatives of the people. We're still here to do a job of work for the electorate as a whole. We're not just here to be self-serving. It's important the electorate look at us whether we're elected or appointed and think we are in some way acting on their behalf. And if it's a bunch of crusty old men I doubt they would think that! (Labour)

A number of women peers emphasised that the site of the House of Lords in particular offered positive examples for the symbolic representation of women. One interviewee noted that there was: 'A lot of visibility of women in the House of Lords' (Conservative). A separate peer also remarked that: 'In the Lords a lot of women hold responsible positions such as Ministers' (Conservative). Therefore because women were incorporated in visible and noteworthy roles within the Lords this chamber presented positive example of the symbolic representation of women:

What we've had now are three women leaders since Labour have been in power; the Conservatives have had a woman Chief Whip; and the Lib Dems had Shirley Williams as their leader at one point. So I think having those women in those leadership positions, like in any part of society, whether it's a school or local authority or whatever, if you've got women at the front, fronting up, along with the men, I think it does affect attitudes. (Labour)³⁴

As this example shows some women peers had attitudes that accorded with feminist interpretations that argued that women's presence in political institutions would demonstrate 'the equal role that women can and should play in the politics of a representative democracy' (Leader 1977, 266).

Other women stressed that the numerical feminisation of the Lords over the past decade, as explored in chapter 5, had also contributed to women's symbolic representation: 'When I first came in there were no women on the Front Bench. Now, Cathy Ashton has just moved onto Europe. I think that's important because it sends out the message that women aren't here just to make up the numbers' (Labour). The integration of women throughout the hierarchy of the Lords challenged the notion that women's appointment to the Lords was tokenistic. Just as it was highlighted earlier in this chapter by an interviewee that women peers 'thrived' in the House of Lords, a separate peer emphasised that the presence of women peers throughout the House of Lords was a great example of the symbolic

³⁴ This interview was conducted prior to Baroness Royall of Blaisdon becoming the fourth Labour woman Leader of the Lords since 1997 following Baroness Ashton's appointment to the European Commission.

representation of women, which also linked to the greater attendance of women peers explored initially: 'Women dominate the House. We dominate the frontbenches, a third are women, and people would think there are actually more of us than we actually are. We punch above our weight without a doubt!' (Labour).

However not all women believed that the chamber of the House of Lords was a shining example of women's symbolic representation. One woman peer articulated the view that the under-representation of women peers in the Lords was not positive for women's symbolic representation: 'I think we need more women visible in here, then it would look more like a working chamber. I think this chamber is still looked upon by outsiders as a grace and favour place' (Labour). Yet this peer's attitude did substantiate feminist claims that the presence of women in politics could administer symbolic benefits by legitimising and validating a political institution, however brought into question the extent to which the House of Lords offered such an optimistic example of women's symbolic representation.

Likewise the extent of symbolic influence that women's presence can confer was contested for the House of Lords. For example one woman peer highlighted her own lack of knowledge of the second chamber: 'I had no idea what happened in this place. I think I thought like most ordinary folk out there. I thought it was a place where rich old men sat and slept all day. I had no idea there were so many women here' (Labour). This example crystallises ignorance about the House of Lords which casts doubt upon the purported positive example of the women's presence in the House of Lords that some women peers raised. Other women peers pointed this out: 'The House of Lords is not very visible to the media generally' (Conservative) and 'We don't receive publicity here' (Liberal Democrat). The media is an important conduit for symbolic representation, therefore despite the House of Lords offering (some) positive examples of the symbolic representation of women, in reality these are unlikely to be publicly known. The pertinence of feminist interpretations of symbolic representation for the site of the House of Lords is clearly disputable. The presence of women in particular positions in the Lords will now be considered in terms of the (Labour) Leader of the House of Lords, the Crossbench Convenor and the Lord Speaker.

The Leader of the House of Lords

The Leader of the Lords is a Government Minister and member of the Cabinet. This was an all male role until Margaret Thatcher appointed Baroness Young to the role in

September 1981 until 1983 when she was replaced by William Whitelaw. The position of Leader of the Lords has been noticeably feminised by Labour since 1997. Women have comprised two-thirds of Leaders of the Lords, a contrast in terms of their overall presence on the Labour benches in the House of Lords at less than thirty percent. The leaders of the Lords since 1997 up until the onset of the Coalition Government are included in Table 6.14. As one Labour woman peer stated: ‘It’s a joke but we say a man can never take that job anymore. It’s a woman’s job.’ (Labour)

Table 6.14. Leaders of the House of Lords 1997-2010

Peer	Time as Leader of the Lords
Lord Richard	03/05/1997 to 27/07/1998
Baroness Jay of Paddington	27/07/1998 to 23/06/2001
Lord Williams of Mostyn	23/06/2001 to 20/09/2003
Baroness Amos	29/11/2003 to 28/06/2007
Baroness Ashton of Upholland	28/06/2007 to 02/10/2008
Baroness Royall of Blaisdon	02/10/2008 to 11/05/2010

The importance of women’s presence within the power structures of a political institution has clear symbolic benefits. The visibility of women in leading positions disrupts and challenges dominant cultural norms. The normalisation of women peers within leading roles, as the position of Leader illustrates and legitimises women’s presence. Moreover the Leader of the House of Lords is a full cabinet member, the trend for women to be appointed as Leader of the Lords improves the number of women present in Cabinet. The only leader of the Conservative Party in the Lords was Baroness Young. Since the Liberal Democrats were established in 1988 there have been four Liberal Democrat leaders in the House of Lords, of which Shirley Williams is the sole female occupant from 13/06/2001 to 22/06/2004.

The Convenor of the Crossbench Peers

Whilst the crossbenchers sit as individuals, the post of Crossbench Convenor has been in existence since 1968. The Convenor is elected to act on behalf of the Crossbench Peers: to call their weekly meetings, attend other meetings on their behalf and provide information. Baroness Hylton-Foster was first female Convenor of the Crossbench peers from 1974-1995 (Shell 2007, 75). Baroness D’Souza was elected to the post in 2007, after having been persuaded to put herself forward by the outgoing convenor Lord Williamson, as she explained:

I put myself forward with some trepidation. I thought I could do it. I thought it would be good to have a woman convenor. The Lord Speaker is a woman.

The Chief Whips. The front benches are filled with women. The attorney general is a woman. You've got several women Ministers.

In this case the physical presence of women in other roles within the Lords influenced D'Souza's decision to stand as Convenor of the Crossbench peers, demonstrating why women's presence throughout the structure of political institutions is important for symbolic (and substantive) reasons.

The Lord Speaker

The Lord Chancellor was the Speaker of the House of Lords prior to 2006 (Shell 1992; Gay 2003). However the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 altered the role of the Lord Chancellor by rescinding the ex-officio Speaker duties in the Lords. It was decided that a new role would be created in the House of Lords – the 'Lord' Speaker. The naming of the role Lord Speaker emphasises assumptions made about the maleness of political representatives and conveys a meaning that the occupation of the role ought to be exclusively male. The predecessor role of Lord Chancellor (which is now a position in the House of Commons) was and is an all male preserve.

The House of Lords voted to elect its own Lord Speaker in June 2006 using an alternative vote method. All members of the House of Lords were eligible to vote, a population of 702 at the time. There were nine candidates who stood for election as Lord Speaker, including three women; Baroness Fookes, Baroness Hayman and the Countess of Mar. After first preference votes were cast, although women comprised only one third of candidates, they gained 46% of first preference votes. Baroness Hayman was ultimately elected as the Lord Speaker. She gained the majority of votes after first preference, and after each of the seven transfers of votes occurred. Certainly the successful election of a woman into this role creates a disjuncture and challenges the male notion of a 'Lord' Speaker. In a speech marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Life Peerages Act and the admittance of women to the House of Lords, the Lord Speaker remarked:

In six centuries there was never a female Lord Chancellor (though one still may appear, perhaps in the Commons), as far as my own position is concerned it gives me some quiet satisfaction that, should a man break through the glass ceiling to succeed me, he will be known as the first male Lord Speaker (Hayman 2007).

A vast majority of interviewees paid tribute to the Lord Speaker as an excellent example of the symbolic representation of women. Moreover, the Lord Speaker has also initiated an Outreach Programme, where peers visit schools and branches of the Women's Institute

and the Rotary Club in order to demystify the House of Lords and its members to the general public. It was quite often remarked that this engagement was positive and a large number of women peers did take part in this scheme.

Interestingly women peers are clearly visible in certain roles in the House which has benefits for the symbolic representation of women, albeit operating at a subterranean or opaque level. However it is also important to consider that women who occupy these roles have procedural power, which brings into question the extent to which they may be able to influence policy for example, which will be considered in the following chapter. Moreover it is important to highlight that the appointment of women to visible roles in the House of Lords may occur because it is a second chamber and is not the main powerhouse of Westminster politics therefore it is more acceptable for women to be appointed into these roles than it would be for the House of Commons.

Women Peers and The Role-Model Effect

According to Phillips women politicians could precipitate a role-model effect which is purported to 'raise women's self esteem, encourage others to follow in their footsteps, and dislodge deep-rooted assumptions about what is appropriate to women and men' (Phillips 1995, 63). Thus, the presence of women politicians is suggested to be one factor that could catalyse advances in women's numerical presence, which was an idea that some women peers identified with. One woman peer stressed that: 'I would perhaps hope that my experience gives hope to other people, to women especially' (Labour). This example demonstrates that on an individual level she believed her presence could potentially invoke aspirations amongst women. Other women peers provided similar examples, however they also stressed that a diversity of women into politics would offer positive benefits to women generally: 'I've always thought the position of women would change when ordinary women who made you think "Yes, I could be like her" were in these positions'. These interpretations of the role-model effect suggest that when a wider cross-section of women became political representatives there would be greater engagement with the public and women in the general population.

A separate Labour woman peer used her own individual experience as one example of symbolic representation: 'I like to think other women would look at me and think, she's not so brilliant, I could do it. I wouldn't want to think of myself as put on a pedestal but I'd like to be seen as someone who has done it, so that women know they too can do it.' This

woman was clearly uncomfortable with any sanctification of her own experiences, and believed that her particular example demonstrated to 'normal' women that they could follow in her footsteps. However, when this is considered in conjunction with a role in the House of Lords where membership may be predicated upon high personal achievement and expertise, symbolic representation arguments lose some purchase. Whilst the perceptions of women citizens towards women's presence in the House of Lords is beyond the remit of this study, exploring whether women identify with women peers and how women peers are perceived would be a useful research trajectory to pursue in the future.

The utility of the symbolic representation argument is again brought into question by this woman peer who focused upon women politicians at elite levels who were most recognisable:

In the times of Barbara Castle, Eleanor Rathbone and Margaret Thatcher, most women who got into politics, because of the way it was organised, had to be the Queen Bees of this world. The queen bee is unique. You cannot be like her, so she isn't a role-model. You look at her and think I could never be like her. (Labour)

This woman peer suggests that the high achievements of some women may not necessarily proffer any benefits and may even have a reverse effect. When this is considered in terms of the House of Lords where some women have been appointed for significant professional achievements the positive symbolic dimension of women's representation in the House of Lords is clearly under challenge.

Dahlerup's 1988 study of women politicians in five Scandinavian countries found that women acted to deliberately recruit and encourage other women into politics (Dahlerup 1988, 296). Childs (2004b, 65) also suggested that research ought to consider and identify whether women enhance their role-model effect by actively empowering and encouraging women. Thus when examining the role model effect it is important to consider that women can either be passive or active role-models. Women can be 'passive' role-models simply by being present and stirring aspirations in women. On the other hand, a woman politician could take on a dynamic approach to encouraging women's participation in politics.

Women peers from across the political and crossbenches gave examples when they had explicitly made attempts to actively help other women progress in politics, ranging from merely 'engaging with people, most often women' (Crossbench); 'talking to young women

about possibilities, and their futures and their contributions' (Labour) and 'encouraging other women to get involved in their union or a political party or an organisation' (Labour). A Conservative peer was also supportive to any women who approached her for help and would aim to 'encourage' them. In addition, she would also attempt to help them with particular aspects that were deemed important for aspirant candidates such as 'improving their public speaking or learning about parliament'. She would actively invite them to Parliament and 'show them anything' (Conservative).

One woman peer who was formerly an MP recounted when she had used her position to raise women's engagement with politics: 'When I was much younger I tried to encourage women to come into the Commons, or at local level, be it council or county council, or even an interest in politics. I do think that's important' (Crossbench). Some women peers proposed that it was necessary for other women in politics to help others because they recognised that women may be less likely to put themselves forward as previous chapters established (see chapters 2 and 5) and provided further examples of their commitment to help women progress in politics:

I was talking to one woman today, encouraging her to apply (to HOLAC). I am quite often saying to women, 'Come on, go for it!'Men don't need it, by and large. They don't seek it from me. (Crossbench)

I tend to work with individual young women who come and ask advice about what they should do. I do get approached by men and I wouldn't necessarily turn them away. But I probably go more out of my way to help women. (Liberal Democrat)

I'm involved in all sorts of things outside the Lords and I always try and take the glamour out of it and make people realise that ordinary women can aspire and achieve. If you can get that message across to people I think it makes it a bit more possible for women to aspire to. (Labour)

These extracts demonstrate that women peers used their role at times to help other women. The supposition that the mere presence of women in visible and prominent political roles influences women's behaviour is apparent. However, women peers in the House of Lords do play an important role that goes beyond the arbitrary symbol that Pitkin discussed.

Moreover two women peers from different parties stressed that they believed it was an important role for women representatives to be involved in: 'I think it's incumbent on all women to make it easy for women to feel they can follow in their footsteps. I've got two

women I'm mentoring to try and help them to become MPs and I volunteered for that. It's just women I help; I wouldn't do it for a man' (Labour); 'At all levels of the Party, it is required for women to help women. I'm currently supporting somebody trying to get into the Lords. I do have a particular focus on trying to assist women (Liberal Democrat). These women peers actively used their roles to encourage and support women.

However women peers were not unanimously supportive of the idea that it should be contingent upon women politicians to help other women into politics. Two interviewees in particular highlighted that whilst they had assisted other women to get the Lords, this was not a necessary requirement for all women politicians:

I am not a party politician and do not see encouraging other women into politics as part of my role in the Lords. On the other hand I have an acquaintance who would, I believe, make an excellent people's peer and have encouraged her to apply. (Crossbench)

I supported Molly Meacher, who is a crossbench peer, because I knew her and I was very keen for her to get in but I would never ever support anyone just because they were a woman. (Conservative)

Clearly these two women peers did not feel that it was required for them to help other women *because* they were women. Interestingly the excerpts come from a Conservative peer and a crossbench hereditary woman peer, where it has been highlighted in the previous chapter that women's presence is poorer in comparison to other benches of the House of Lords and types of peers. Yet both women provided examples of how they were actively encouraging women into the House of Lords meaning they went beyond being passive role-models. Thus even though these women peers do not perceive acting as an active role-model as a requisite part of their role, their actions suggest otherwise.

Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter centred upon examining the behaviour of women peers in the House of Lords, whether the culture of the institution was gendered and how women peers understood ideas based on the symbolic representation of women. The chapter was divided into three main sections and examined the attendance and participation, the culture and working practices of the Lords and finally women peers' attitudes towards ideas of symbolic representation and the role-model effect.

The initial section of this chapter established that overall women's rate of attendance to the House of Lords exceeds that of male peers. Amongst women peers attached to the three main political parties' rates of attendance are fairly even, although crossbench women peers have the lowest rate of attendance, although this is significantly higher than their male cohort. Notably, although women peers do take on directorships, it was found that the greater propensity for male peers to take on paid directorships significantly affected their attendance to the House of Lords. In terms of activity there were differences in rates of asking written questions amongst male and female peers. In contrast a higher proportion of women peers ask starred questions compared to male peers, although this is likely explained by the higher rates of attendance for women peers. Moreover, women peers were also more likely to ask supplementary questions on starred questions. It seemed that attachment to opposition parties enhanced levels of participation for these functions of Government scrutiny and deliberation, although this could differ since the onset of the Coalition in May 2010. Evidently, these findings could feature as an aspect of debate when future reform to the House of Lords re-emerges on the political agenda.

The overriding culture of courtesy in the House of Lords that was emphasised by women peers meant that the institutional norms and working functions of the chamber were not strongly masculinised, especially in contrast to the way the House of Commons has been portrayed by women MPs as adversarial. As some women peers suggested that women do have a particular style and approach towards politics, it is argued that this meant the culture of the House of Lords was befitting for women peers and more feminised styles of politics. This finding suggests that portrayals of women peers may be positive for the symbolic representation of women because their efficacy, style of politics and participation was suited to how a peer ought to act. However some crossbench women peers did highlight that certain functions of the Lords such as questions were more masculinised, and this may have negatively impacted upon their contributions. The House of Lords Act did advance some changes to the House of Lords meaning that it was less akin to a gentlemen's club, although it was evident that in the contemporary House of Lords some (male) practices were embedded which would not be deemed appropriate for women peers to replicate.

It was established that many women peers recognised symbolic benefits to the presence of women in politics and the House of Lords. Whilst some women peers drew attention to

the second chamber as a good example of the symbolic representation of women, evidenced through the visible and important procedural roles that women peers took on in the House of Lords. However not all women peers concurred with this view, pointing out that women were still under-represented in this site. Women peers from across all parts of the House of Lords had sought to encourage and support the pathways of other women into politics, even though this practice was not deemed to be an obligatory function for women to fulfil by some women peers.

However whilst the symbolic representation of women in the Lords has been identified as positive, this may be because the House of Lords is a second chamber. Thus are women permitted to take on visible roles in the House of Lords because it is the second chamber of British politics and has less power than the House of Commons? Moreover the visible roles that women take on in the Lords could be considered to be procedural roles that may not necessarily influence the legislative process or the policy agenda. In addition the subterranean nature of the activities of the Lords means that any positive interpretation of women's symbolic representation in how women act as peers is ultimately diluted. If women peers find the atmosphere of the Lords welcoming, can women peers represent women effectively in the House of Lords? If so, how is the substantive representation of women articulated, especially in the second chamber? The following chapter addresses the substantive representation of women in the Lords in terms of the political agenda and legislation.

7. Do Women Peers Represent Women? The Substantive Representation of Women in the House of Lords

The substantive representation of women relates to the expression and representation of women's issues in the political process. Calls for an increased presence of women in politics are often premised upon a speculated relationship between the descriptive and the substantive representation of women based upon a contention that once in power women will seek act for women (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Childs 2000). Thus the central concern of this chapter is to consider whether women peers seek to represent women and to what extent the substantive representation of women can be accomplished in the House of Lords. Whilst the House of Lords is the second chamber of Westminster, it is still part of the wider democratic process for UK politics, and thus a site of consideration as the substantive representation of women could potentially occur here. As chapter 4 emphasised, the House of Lords has legislative functions, scrutinises the actions of the government, as well as being a forum of expertise. Examining if, when and how women peers represent women through the work of the House of Lords is one way to test whether feminist interpretations of representation explored in chapter 2 are applicable for the House of Lords.

Exploring the substantive representation of women in the Lords will be developed in three distinct directions. Firstly, this chapter gauges the extent of interest amongst women peers into women's interests and explores if, when and how women peers have substantively represented women by raising issues onto the parliamentary agenda. The second section seeks to determine whether and how the legislative functions of the House of Lords are used by women peers to substantively represent women. Finally the attitudes of women peers are explored towards the notion of substantive representation. Quantitative data has been gathered to analyse political interests of peers and the extent to which the substantive representation of women features in the deliberative and legislative work of the House of Lords, alongside the use of qualitative data attained from interviews with women peers.

The Substantive Representation of Women and the Parliamentary Agenda

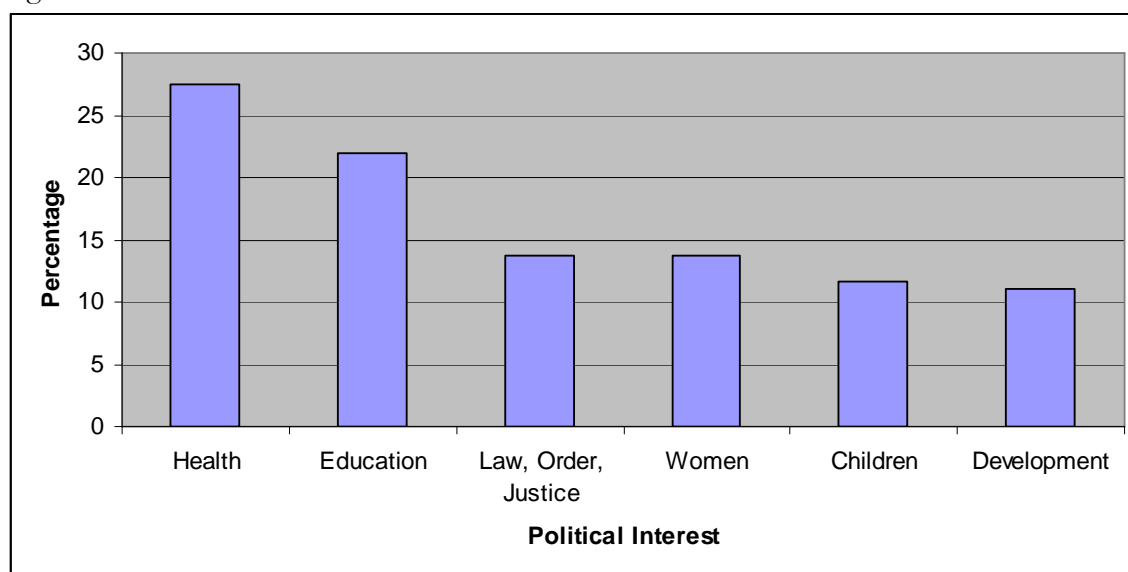
This section considers whether women peers prioritise and raise women's interests onto the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords through the analysis of stated political interests, starred questions and particular non-legislative debates in the House of Lords. Data has been gathered from the House of Lords Biographies and Hansard and

quantitatively analysed to test feminist theories of representation that purport women are more likely to represent women. This chapter also incorporates accounts from women peers and extracts of correspondence from selected male peers.

Women Peers and Political Interests

Lovenduski defines women's issues as those that 'mainly affect women, either for biological reasons, (for example, breast cancer screening, reproductive rights), or for social reasons (for example, sex equality or childcare policy)' (Lovenduski, 1997, 708). This understanding informs how questions have been coded as being 'women's'. Peers are invited to list their political interests in their online entry on parliament.uk, a practice that most but not all peers undertake. This offers one way to gauge the potential priority that peers attribute to women's interests. Although this process is not ideal because some peers have no listed political interests, this approach was suited to the scope of this thesis (see chapter 3).

Figure 7.1. The Main Political Interests of Women Peers³⁵



Source: House of Lords Biographies, available through <http://www.parliament.uk>

First of all Figure 7.1 displays a graphic illustrating the six most highly ranked political interests of women peers for the 2007-08 session. It is evident that health was ranked as the most important issue amongst women peers, followed by education, law, order and justice, women and finally children. As chapter 5 established, health and education backgrounds were common amongst women peers which appears to influence their

³⁵ Peers list plural interests, therefore percentages do not equal 100%.

political interests, most likely linked to the basis of representation for the House of Lords. Thus it is perhaps unsurprising that health and education have been cited most frequently as political interests by women peers. Women was the fourth most frequently cited political interest amongst women peers, although stating a political interest does not necessarily mean that a peer will seek to act upon it which will be explored in later sections of this chapter.

Table 7.1. Peers with Women as a Political Interest

	Yes	No	Total
Male Peers	0.5% (1)	99.5% (187)	100.0% (188)
Female Peers	13.7% (20)	86.3% (126)	100.0% (146)
Total	6.3% (21)	93.7% (313)	100.0% (334)

Using chi-square test $p=.000$

Source: House of Lords Biographies'

In comparison to a sample of male peers ($n=188$) it was established that 13.7% of women peers had women listed as a political interest compared to just 0.5% of the sampled male peers (Table 7.1), a significant difference that provides some support to the contention explored in chapter 2 that women in politics are more attuned to women's interests.

Table 7.2. Women Peers with 'Women' listed as a political interest

	Yes	No	Total
Conservative	14.7% (5)	85.3% (29)	100.0% (34)
Labour	20.4% (11)	79.6% (43)	100.0% (54)
Liberal Democrat	5.0% (1)	95.0% (19)	100.0% (20)
Crossbench	8.6% (3)	91.4% (32)	100.0% (35)
Other	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)	100.0% (3)
Total	13.7% (20)	86.3% (126)	100.0% (146)

Table is not significant

Source: House of Lords Biographies'

The data was disaggregated to consider the support for women's issues amongst women peers by party (Table 7.2). Notably over one fifth (20.4%) of Labour women peers had listed women as one of their main political interests compared to just over one seventh (14.7%) of Conservative women peers and one tenth (8.6%) of Crossbench women peers. Just 5% of Liberal Democrat women peers had listed women as a political interest.

Evidently, across all the main parts of the House of Lords there is support for women's issues, although as it has already been underlined this does not necessarily mean that women will seek to raise women's interests onto the parliamentary agenda or act for women by seeking to introduce or change policy in the chamber. The following part of this section turns to consider whether women peers articulate women's interests through the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords.

The Substantive Representation of Women and Starred Questions

This sub-section investigates whether starred questions in the 2004-05 session were used by women peers to substantively represent women. In order to do this, all starred questions were coded as to whether the question addressed women's issues and a more detailed breakdown of the method used is contained in chapter 3. In this session there were 230 starred questions asked, of which there were six 'women's' starred questions constituting 2.6% of all starred questions that session (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3. 'Women's' Starred Questions in the 2004/05 Session

	Asked a Starred Question coded as 'Women's'	Asked a Starred Question not coded as 'Women's'	Total
Male Peers	0.6% (1)	99.4% (169)	100.0% (170)
Female Peers	8.3% (5)	91.7% (55)	100.0% (60)
Total	2.6% (6)	97.4% (224)	100.0 (230)

P=.005; Source: Hansard

In order to test the assumption that women peers would be more inclined to raise women's issues onto the parliamentary agenda the data was disaggregated to consider the sex of the peer who asked the starred question. Evidently, women peers were far more likely to ask starred questions: 8.3% of starred questions asked by women concerned women's issues compared to 0.6% of starred questions asked by men. Women peers were almost 14 times more likely than male peers to raise women's issues onto the parliamentary agenda, which using the chi-square goodness of fit test represents a significant difference.

Of the five 'women's' starred questions asked by women three questions were posed by Labour peers, with the remaining two starred questions posed by a Conservative peer and a Liberal Democrat peer. Thus Labour women peers were more likely to use starred questions in order to address women's issues even though it was established in chapter 6

that Labour women peers are less likely to ask starred questions. This resonates with a suggestion in chapter 2 that political affiliation is an important factor for advancing the substantive representation of women.

Table 7.4. Supplementary Questions on ‘Women’s’ Starred Questions in the 2004/05 Session³⁶

	Asked a Supplementary Question on ‘Women’s’ Starred Question	Did not ask a Supplementary Question on ‘Women’s’ Starred Question	Total
All Male Peers	2.7% (16)	97.3% (569)	100.0% (585)
All Female Peers	9.5% (12)	90.5% (114)	100.0% (126)
Total	3.9% (28)	97.4% (683)	100.0 (711)

P=.001; Source: Hansard

In the House of Lords, once a peer has asked a starred question and received a government response they are permitted to ask a supplementary question which again receives a government response. At this point a mini-debate may occur as any peer is then free to ask a supplementary question on the issue, although the debate is time limited to a maximum of eight minutes. Thus a further way to test whether women peers are more likely to represent women is to look who asks supplementary questions (Table 7.4). It is clear that almost 10% of women peers asked a supplementary question on a women’s starred question compared to 2.7% of male peers, another significant difference, although there were numerically more supplementary questions asked by male peers (16) compared to women peers (12).

When the dataset was reduced and only included those peers who had asked at least one supplementary question (n=266), almost one fifth (18.5%) of women peers asked a supplementary question on a ‘women’s’ starred question, compared to less than one tenth of male peers (8.0%), as shown in Table 7.5. Thus whilst women’s issues are not prioritised by male peers they are also not disregarded either.

³⁶ This includes all peers.

Table 7.5. Supplementary Questions on ‘Women’s’ Starred Questions in the 2004/2005 Parliament Session³⁷

	Intervened an Starred Question coded as ‘Women’s’	Did not intervene in an Starred Question not coded as ‘Women’s’	Total
Male Peers	8.0% (16)	92.0% (185)	100.0% (201)
Female Peers	18.5% (12)	81.5% (53)	100.0% (65)
Total	10.5% (28)	89.5% (238)	100.0 (266)

P=.019; Source: Hansard

It was established earlier that Labour women peers were more likely to pose women’s starred questions, however Table 7.6 illustrates that women peers from across the political benches asked supplementary questions on women’s questions. Indeed, one quarter of Conservative and 23.1% of Crossbench women peers asked a supplementary question on a women’s starred question. Notably this figure was reduced for Liberal Democrat and Labour women peers at 15.4% and 10.5%. That Labour women peers are less likely to intervene on a women’s starred question could be explained by the convention that speakers from different parties or parts of the House take turns to contribute (Clerk of the Parliaments 2010, para 4.25). Moreover the greater frequency of supplementary questions from Conservative and Crossbench women peers could demonstrate their tendency to ‘react’ to issues raised upon the agenda rather than place issues on the agenda themselves.

Table 7.6. Women Peers & Supplementary Questions on ‘Women’s’ Questions by Party³⁸

	Asked a Supplementary on Women’s Question	Did not ask a Supplementary on Women’s Question	Total
Conservative	25.0% (5)	75.0% (15)	100.0% (20)
Labour	10.5% (2)	89.5% (17)	100.0% (19)
Liberal Democrat	15.4% (2)	84.6% (11)	100.0% (13)
Crossbench	23.1% (3)	76.9% (10)	100.0% (13)
Total	18.5% (12)	81.5% (53)	100.0% (65)

Source: Hansard

³⁷ This table only considers the 266 peers who had asked at least one starred question during the 2004-2005 parliamentary session.

³⁸ This table only takes into account women peers who asked at least one supplementary question.

Finally peers may use supplementary questions to raise women’s interests on non-women’s starred questions, constituting a feminisation of a starred question. One woman peer referred to this in interview: ‘Very frequently on someone else’s questions I will get up and say ‘Do they know what number of women are doing this?’’ (Conservative). On average 3.4% of supplementary questions asked on non-women’s starred questions concerned women (Table 7.7). Of those peers who asked at least one supplementary question, 3% of male peers feminised a starred question compared to 4.6% of women peers, although there is no significant difference.

Table 7.7. Using Supplementary Questions to Feminise Starred Questions, 2004-05 Session³⁹

	Feminised a Starred Question Through a Supplementary Question	Did not feminised a Starred Question Through a Supplementary Question	Total
Male Peers	3.0% (6)	97.0% (195)	100.0% (201)
Female Peers	4.6% (3)	95.4% (62)	100.0% (65)
Total	3.4% (9)	96.6% (257)	100.0 (266)

Source: Hansard
Table is not significant

Evidently women peers are more likely to ask starred questions focused upon women and subsequently the majority of supplementary questions on these questions therefore women are more likely to raise women’s interests on the parliamentary agenda through starred questions although this constitutes only a small proportion of the business of the House. However male peers are just as likely as women peers to raise women’s interests on non-women’s starred questions in this parliamentary session. Admittedly this analysis refers to an individual therefore it is difficult to ascertain whether the raising of women’s interests onto the parliamentary agenda has increased, stagnated or decreased, although this would be a worthwhile future research trajectory. This section now considers whether women have sought to raise women’s interests onto the parliamentary agenda through analysis of particular non-legislative debates.

The Substantive Representation of Women and Non-Legislative Debates

Peers are able to use non-legislative debates as a means to raise specific issues onto the parliamentary agenda (see chapter 4). The following considers how Baroness Gould of

³⁹ This table only considers the 266 peers who had intervened in starred questions at least once during the 2004-2005 parliamentary session.

Potternewton used non-legislative debates to place women's issues onto the political agenda. The analysis takes into account six debates that occurred annually from the 2002-03 session to the 2007/08 session and incorporates data on participation, evidence from interviews conducted with (mainly) women peers, excerpts from the debates themselves and extracts from correspondence with male peers who partook in these debates.

The first 'Women's' Debate occurred on 6th March 2003 and was motioned by Baroness Gould of Potternewton, a Labour peer. The debate was secured in order to draw attention to women, and timed to coincide with International Women's Day (8th March, annually). According to Baroness Gould securing the debate was simply a process of procedure: 'You put down for debate and argue very strongly about when you want it. Sometimes you get away with it and sometimes you don't.'

Gould was appointed to the House of Lords in 1993 and in that time had become an active and well-respected peer, having held various roles for Labour within the House of Lords therefore she was well-accustomed to the 'institutional structures, norms and folkways' (Beckwith 2007, 43) of the chamber.⁴⁰ This meant she was able to successfully advocate for the first debate on women to occur, subsequently featuring annually on the agenda of the House of Lords. Moreover, this successful 'feminisation' of the parliamentary agenda is likely to have also been facilitated because of the complexion of the government. As the governing party, Labour has made 'bold claims' (Annesley and Gains 2007, 3) about its commitment to represent women. Therefore as the content of this debate chimed with elements of the government's programme it is likely to have been sympathetic to the subject matter of this debate

Feminist scholars contend that the enhanced numerical presence of women in political institutions facilitates the prioritisation of women's issues as areas of concern (Phillips, 1995). This was an idea that resonated with Baroness Gould: 'It wouldn't have happened if we hadn't had a considerable women's presence.' Thus Baroness Gould perceived that the physical presence of women peers contributed to the procurement of the initial debate and its annual fixture on the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords thereafter. There has been an increase in time given over to these debates since 2003. As Baroness Dean highlighted in the 2007 debate: 'We have come a long way from a one-hour supper break

⁴⁰ Baroness Gould was Opposition Whip from 1994-1997; Opposition Spokesperson for Women 1996-1997; Government Whip, 1997; Deputy Chair of Committees and Deputy Speaker from 2002.

to a five hour prime business debate in the House of Lords' (HL Hansard, 8 March 2007, col. 386). The debates have also attracted peers from across all parts of the House of Lords, although this has only happened gradually, with the two later debates under consideration having at least one male and female speaker from the main political parties and the crossbenches, and even a bishop in the 2007-08 debate.

Table 7.8. Participation in Women's Debates by Group and Sex

Parliamentary Session	Lab ⁴¹		Con.		L.D.		Cross		Bps.		Other		Total		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	All
2002-03	5	2	1	0	1	1	3	0	n/a	0	0	0	10 (76.9%)	3 (30.1%)	13
2003-04	8	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	n/a	0	0	0	11 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11
2004-05	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	9 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9
2005-06	8	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	n/a	0	0	0	11 (91.7%)	1 (8.3%)	12
2006-07	16	4	3	1	2	5	3	1	n/a	0	0	1	24 (66.7%)	12 (31.6%)	36
2007-08	9	4	1	1	2	3	3	1	n/a	1	0	0	15 (60.0%)	10 (40.0%)	25

Source: Hansard

It is notable that there are particular trends in participation in the Women's Debates (Table 7.8). First of all it is evident that women peers have comprised the majority of speakers in these debates in every session between 2002-03 and 2007-08 ranging from three quarters of participants at the first debate through to all speakers for the next two debates until women comprised 60% of participants in the 2007-08 debate. In terms of women's participation, women peers from the three main political parties and the crossbenches have spoken in all debates, the only exception being the 2004-05 debate where there was no female participation from the crossbenches. Labour women peers were the most frequent speakers in the debates for each session they have taken place, ranging from five speakers in the first debate to sixteen in the 2006-07 debate. It should be highlighted that the total Labour women speakers incorporates the contribution of Baroness Gould who has motioned all of the debates as well as the contribution made on behalf of the Government, which for every debate under scrutiny was a Labour woman peer. The following paragraphs seek to establish why there has been differential participation in the House of Lords 'women's debates' amongst women, as well as between female and male peers using evidence from

⁴¹ Data used in table includes the peer (Minister) giving Government response which was a Labour woman peer in every session under scrutiny.

the debates themselves, interview extracts from women peers as well as correspondence from some of the male peers who participated in the debates.

As highlighted, in all of the debates under scrutiny there has been at least one woman peer speaking from the three main political parties, although for some years that has been a single contribution from a Conservative and Liberal Democrat woman peer. In interview, two women peers from these parties suggested that their participation demonstrated how women peers supported each other in the House of Lords: 'Once a year we have the debates on women and it's amazing to see the cross party support that comes during that debate' (Liberal Democrat). Similarly, a Conservative woman peer emphasised that by speaking in the debate she considered she was backing up and supporting her female colleagues: 'I think I saw it on the Whip and thought I really ought to and could do, so I did. By speaking in this debate, I felt I could support my fellow women peers.'

However this perception of cross party collaboration amongst women peers was contested by some Labour women peers. In interview a Labour woman peer brought into question the participations made by Conservative and Liberal Democrat women peers: 'I have to say the Tory women, whenever we have the debates, none of them take part. Although the Liberals are very good, they rarely take part either.' Moreover during the 2006 debate Baroness Dean (Labour) highlighted the lack of contributions made by Conservative women peers both in terms of participation and physical presence in the chamber:

Very little changes, in some respects, in the make up of the House for these debates. I in no way challenge the commitment of both noble Baronesses on the Conservative front bench, but I would not feel too lonely if I were them because, regrettably, it is the usual format (HL Hansard, 16 March 2006, Col. 1364).

As Table 7.8 demonstrates there has only been a single woman speaker for the Conservatives in every debate, apart from in the 2006/2007 debate when there were three speakers. Likewise, there was only one Liberal Democrat woman speaker in the first four debates although this increased to two speakers in the latter two debates. These small numbers bring into question the idea that all women seek to represent women and shows that party affiliation may have an influence on the propensity to raise women's interests, a factor that was highlighted in chapter 2. However this also demonstrates how contrary to earlier assertions that 'party lines are drawn less tightly in the Lords' (Drewry and Brock 1983, 3) political affiliation appears important in influencing who participates in these

debates. The higher frequency of Labour women speakers indicates support from Baroness Gould's female cohort in her party, which could also explain the lower levels of participation amongst opposition women peers.

It has already been highlighted that for every debate under consideration in this subsection women peers have constituted the majority of speakers. Although in the first debate three male peers participated constituting 30% of all speakers, the next two debates were entirely free from any male contributions and the debate in the 2005-06 session attracted just one male speaker. In the 2004 debate, giving her closing remarks, Baroness Gould of Potternewton stated that she: 'would have appreciated some views from our male colleagues' (HL Hansard, 9 March 2004, Col 1189). Gould reinforced this point in 2006: 'Sometimes our male colleagues come to listen and afterwards they say "that was very good", but I wish that they would take part' (HL Hansard, 16 March 2006, Col. 1387).

However in the final two debates there were numerically and proportionally more male speakers with twelve in 2006-07 session (32% of speakers) and ten in 2007-08 session (40% of speakers). One reason for the marked increase in male contributors to the debates related to the actions of Baroness Gould who actively recruited male peers to take part: 'I do my own bit on the Labour side to get men. And you know, talking to the right women, they will do their bit in their particular grouping to get men.' Improving the participation of male peers in these debates was seen to be critically important for the substantive representation of women: 'If they [male peers] understand the problems, then that makes a big difference towards being successful, instead of women having to fight all the time and explain why these things are important.' Moreover this shows the co-operation amongst women peers across party lines, although it does not necessarily lead to an active participation.

The increased participation of male peers in the women's debates was perceived positively by women peers. One interview with a Labour woman peer revealed: 'I'm told it only used to be the women who spoke on it and now there are some men who get up and speak, and that's great. It shows there is a change.' Explaining why male contributions were important appeared to hinge upon recognition that women's issues had often been trivialised or peripheral in politics. The greater input of male peers indicated to some women that women's issues were not being sidelined or ghettoised, rather they were mainstreamed.

Indeed, in the 2007 debate many women peers drew attention to the male peers who took part in the debate:

Last year, the noble lord, Lord Giddens, made a brilliant contribution and brought to the debate a most welcome male perspective. It is good to see that he has company today (HL Hansard, 8 March 2007, Col. 396) Baroness Morris of Bolton, Conservative

We are making real headway in some fields, and perhaps it is true that the fact that a third of the speakers today are male, compared with the one male speaker a couple of years ago, is an indication of that. (HL Hansard, 8 Mar 2007, Col. 365) Baroness Howe of Idlicote, Crossbench

The speeches from the noble Lords shows that discussion based on examining the role of women in society is not merely a women's issue; it affects us all. (HL Hansard, 8 March 2007, Col. 406) Baroness Gould of Potternewton, Labour

Each statement raises a different benefit to the importance of male presence and participation in the debates. First of all the Conservative peer Baroness Morris of Bolton approved of the introduction of male perspectives to the debate, which offshoots from the feminist argument it was important for women's perspectives to be heard through the policy-making process (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002). Baroness Howe, a former deputy chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and crossbench peer, emphasised how the increased participation of male peers indicated that women's interests were being taken seriously and appeared to be less marginalised which was the main theme evident in Baroness Gould's remarks, once again reflecting the arguments discussed in normative section of chapter 2.

The paucity of male contributions in these debates could arguably be linked to the institutional norms and conventions of the chamber. As chapter 4 explored 'A professional pride ensures most peers take great care over their speeches..... only speaking when they feel they have something very worthwhile to say' (Shell, 2007, 112). Thus some male peers may feel it would be inappropriate to participate if they do not have requisite 'expertise' upon a subject, demonstrating how the norms of the chamber may guard against facilitating the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords to be feminised. Lord Addington crystallized this potential constraint in the 2007-08 debate:

You feel like you are treading on someone else's territory. However, I realise I should not feel like that. When I was dealing with disability issues, I was always glad when someone from outside joined in and we were not just talking to

ourselves. I hope that my contribution can be seen in that light. (H.L. Hansard, 6 March 2008, Column 263)

Indeed, Lord Addington draws attention the potential danger of ghettoising women's issues to female representatives. If female peers were simply debating amongst themselves it is unlikely that their contributions or perspectives would be heard by the male composition of the Lords which would not help to modify any change in attitudes. However the presence and participation of male peers in these debates manifests the greater articulation of women's issues and perspectives in the business of the House of Lords.

The participation of male peers in the Women's Debates is mediated by political party as it is for female peers. Of the 12 male speakers in the 2006-07 debate four were attached to Labour, five to the Liberal Democrats and there was one male peer from the Conservative benches, one from the Crossbenches and one affiliated as 'other'. In the 2007-08 debate four Labour male peers made speeches, with three Liberal Democrat male peers peaking, and one male peer from the Conservatives and the Crossbenches respectively. In addition a Bishop also made a speech. Notably male peers from Labour and the Liberal Democrats were more likely to participate in these debates. Involvement from Labour peers can be explained by this debate being motioned by a Labour peer as raised for women. Moreover, the involvement of Labour and Liberal Democrat male peers in sum also demonstrates that the substantive representation of women is more compatible to representatives located on the left or centre left of the political spectrum as highlighted in chapter 2.

Notably, the male leaders of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in the Lords, Lord Strathclyde and Lord McNally, replied to Baroness Gould's opening speech in the two later debates under scrutiny. Some women peers felt that the presence of particular male peers in the House of Lords also helped to demonstrate the greater significance that women's issues had in the House of Lords. However a Labour peer suggested that the participation of the male leaders was partly as a result of pressure from women peers:

I can remember we have had for a number of years now a debate as close to International Women's Day as we can. The first time this happened there was not one man in the chamber. One or two of us commented on this. This last year the Lib Dems Lead Speaker was their leader Tom McNally, the Conservatives' leader Tom Strathclyde was sat in the chamber when the debate was taking place. So they've more or less been shamed into it by us women!

Critically this indicates that women still play an important primary role in facilitating the substantive representation of women on the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords, and could suggest tokenistic and symbolic participation by male peers rather than a commitment to act upon the issues. The following paragraphs consider why male peers were motivated to speak in the women's debates and draws upon personal correspondence by e-mail and letter to individual male peers.

Some male peers spoke in the women's debates because the subject matter of women's place in society was a personal interest. A Labour male peer emphasised that the 'importance of gender equality' influenced his contribution. Similarly, a separate male Labour peer suggested that the subject of the debate was: 'An important topic'. This reason was also cited by a Liberal Democrat peer who was a 'long time supporter/advocate of women's equality and spoke of his own 'volition in the debate unprompted and unasked by any pressure group or other association' (Liberal Democrat). In addition a bishop spoke in the 2008 debate who had been on duty that week: 'I have a personal interest in the place of women in society. The fact that women cannot be Bishops at present adds a natural dimension of relevance' (Bishop). These examples demonstrate that amongst some male peers there is support for women's interests indicating that the substantive representation of women in the Lords may not necessarily be wholly contingent on women peers.

Male peers also thought that their contributions were important in order to ensure that women's issues were not marginalised as the following extracts illustrate:

I do think that other male peers should contribute. It is important because otherwise such a debate easily tends to subvert itself - to become a sort of 'ghetto' of its own. (Labour)

It is for all of us, irrespective of our gender to speak up. The more we do the better it is. (Liberal Democrat)

Unless men do take part in debates on women's issues and the reverse it becomes incredibly easy to pigeonhole certain subjects as being exclusively for one or other sex which means they can be dismissed as side issues from the mainstream so women need to get involved as normal contributors to such areas as sport and defence and men get more involved in issues such as child care and caring. (Liberal Democrat)

Clearly underlying these statements is a sentiment that in order to successfully accomplish the substantive representation of women there is a need for a wide variety of actors, irrespective of party and/or gender, to be on board which chimes with the contemporary

turn in the feminist literature on the substantive representation of women discussed in chapter 2.

Finally two Liberal Democrat male peers suggested that their participation in the debates was important as it helped to broaden the policy spectrum related to women's interests:

Too many women speakers disregard "glass ceiling" issues and prefer to concentrate on the plight of single parent mums and the low pay of women at the bottom end of the employment spectrum. While, of course, these are very important concerns that must be aired, it is amazing how little -if anything- they have to say about the recruitment, promotion and retention of bright women and their under-representation on the Boards of publicly quoted companies. If you look up my speeches on the passage of the recent Banking Bill, you'll see I've consistently raised the examples of both Norway and Spain who have passed laws requiring a ratio of at least 40% women directors on the Boards of major corporations and asked why the Labour government has not emulated them. (Liberal Democrat)

The reason I took part was to simply draw to the attention of the house and indeed the women's lobby that sport has a benefit for women as well as men. Effectively the wonder drug that is exercise is something that women are missing out on far more than men and as the benefits are not only to health and also to social interaction and supportive networks it should not be denied, and I felt it was a good opportunity to raise it. (Liberal Democrat)

In essence both male peers felt that the scope of women's issues addressed by women peers was not extensive enough which turns the normative feminist idea that more women in politics would broaden the policy spectrum on its head (Philips, 1995). However, it could be legitimately raised that if women were fairly represented in the House of Lords (and indeed other political institutions) it is likely that women would come from a greater variety of backgrounds as chapter 5 explored which could broaden the issues women would raise.

The 'Women's' debates provide one example whereby women's interests have been firmly placed onto the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords on an annual basis and show how women peers from across (most) party lines have been supportive of this development. The debates of course comprise only one example of the workings of the House of Lords and it is difficult to determine whether and how the debates influence government policy, which could be a future research trajectory. This chapter now turns to consider how, when and why women peers act for women using the legislative functions of the House of Lords.

The Substantive Representation of Women and Legislation

This section looks into the capacity of women peers to change or introduce policy concerned with the substantively represent women. It focuses upon whether and how women peers have raised amendments and/or introduced private members' bills in the House of Lords as a means to represent women.

The Substantive Representation of Women and Amendments

In considering whether, why and how women peers seek to substantively represent women, this section concentrates upon the movement of amendments on Government bills. The main focal point here is an amendment moved on the Pensions Bill in the 2006/2007 Parliamentary Session by Baroness Hollis of Heigham. The background to the introduction of the amendment will be discussed, followed by an analysis of the extent of support for the amendment, how the Government responded to this amendment and why it was ultimately successful. Subsequently there will be an example of an unsuccessful amendment as a means to illuminate the institutional constraints of the House of Lords.

Following the release of a Green Paper *Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement* (Cm 5677) in December 2002, the Turner Commission, an independent pensions' commission, was set up to make recommendations on modifying the provision of pensions in the UK. The Commission delivered three main reports, one of which formed the basis of the Pensions Bill 2006/2007. Following its passage through the House of Commons, the Pensions Bill was introduced in the House of Lords on the 19th April 2007 and received its second reading on 14th May 2007, the point at which the House of Lords debates the principles of the Bill.

It was here that Baroness Hollis raised a concern that that the Bill failed to 'engage fully with women's lives' (HL Debates, 14/05/2007)⁴². Hollis highlighted that in its current form the legislation did not recognise differential life trajectories for men and women in that women tended to have career breaks for raising children, took on the majority of family caring responsibilities and were more often employed on a part-time basis which would impinge upon their pension contributions and therefore future claims. This intervention represented a clear attempt to raise women's issues onto the parliamentary agenda within the House of Lords. However Baroness Hollis went beyond merely raising women's issues onto the agenda and sought to catalyse policy change through an amendment.

⁴² There was no complete reference available on Hansard online.

At the Report stage of the Pension Bill in July 2007 Baroness Hollis moved an amendment that sought to make it permissible for citizens to be able to buy additional qualifying years (to a maximum of nine) for their pension for any period of their working life when they had missed making the necessary contributions. At retirement individuals would be allowed to top-up their qualifying years if they had been economically inactive and had not reached the requisite number of qualifying years to qualify for a state pension (HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1028). As 90% of men retire with a full basic state pension compared to only 25% of women, this amendment was explicitly targeted to help women with gaps in their employment record. As chapter 4 highlighted all amendments put down by peers are considered in the House of Lords (which is not the case in the House of Commons), meaning that there is opportunity for all peers to raise issues onto the parliamentary agenda. Moreover amendments may be subject to a division in the chamber which was the case with Baroness Hollis's amendment. An analysis of this division and the extent of support for the amendment is now presented.

Table 7.9. Analysis of Division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/2007 by Sex, All Peers

	Content (Supported amendment)	Not Content (Did not support amendment)	Total who voted on Amendment	Did not Vote on Amendment	Total
Male Peers	21.4% (128)	11.9% (71)	33.2% (199)	66.8% (400)	100.0% (599)
Female Peers	34.7% (51)	10.2% (15)	44.9% (66)	55.1% (81)	100.0% (147)
Total	24.0% (179)	11.5% (86)	35.5% (265)	64.7% (483)	100.0% (746)

Source: Hansard HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1048
P=.003; Does not include peers on a leave of absence.

The amendment put down by Baroness Hollis was discussed in the House of Lords on the 4th July 2007 and was division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill. As Table 7.9 demonstrates over one third (35.5%) of the House of Lords membership turned out to vote upon this amendment (see the shaded columns). Although a higher proportion of women turned out to vote on this amendment (44.9% compared to 33.2%) this is most likely explained by the propensity for greater proportions of women peers to attend the House of Lords as explored in chapter 6.

This division represented the third highest Government defeat in the 2006/2007 Parliamentary Session with 179 content compared to 86 not content (a difference of 93 votes). The contention that women are more likely to represent women can be explored using data from Table 7.9 above. This table shows that over one third (34.7%) of all

women peers in the House of Lords supported the Hollis amendment compared to just one fifth (21.4%) of all male peers, a significant difference (13.3%) that appropriates feminist contentions cited in chapter 2. In contrast, the proportion of peers who voted against the amendment (in favour of the government) was broadly even for both the sexes at 12% for male peers and 10% for female peers.

Table 7.10. Analysis of Votes on Division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/2007 by Sex

	Content (Supported amendment)	Not Content (Did not support amendment)	Total
Male Peers	64.3% (128)	35.7% (71)	100.0% (199)
Female Peers	77.3% (51)	22.7% (15)	100.0% (66)
Total	67.5% (179)	32.5% (86)	100.0% (265)

Source: Hansard HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1048
P=.03

When the analysis takes into account the 265 peers who voted on the amendment (Table 7.10) it is clear that a significantly higher proportion of women peers supported the Hollis amendment than their male counterparts (77.3% compared to 64.3%). However, this is not to say that the amendment was unsupported by male peers, on the contrary almost two thirds of male peers voted in support of the Hollis amendment. However during interviews one woman peer suggested that women peers from across the House of Lords did play an important role in supporting this substantive representation of women: ‘One of my colleagues has been pursuing an issue about women’s pensions doggedly. Although there have been men that have supported her, the vast majority of people who have supported her have been women, not just on the Labour benches but on the opposition benches too’ (Labour).

Turning to gauge the extent of support for the amendment in the House of Lords, Table 7.11 illustrates that the Hollis amendment garnered widespread support across all benches of the House of Lords. Indeed, all Bishops, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Crossbench and ‘Other’ peers who voted in this division did so in unanimous support for the amendment. The Hollis amendment was backed by 60% of Liberal Democrat peers and approximately one quarter of all Crossbench and Conservative peers. In contrast only 12% of Labour peers supported the Hollis amendment, which even though it was moved by a

Labour peer, in effect constituted a ‘rebellion’ by the 26 Labour peers who voted to back it. Indeed almost 40% of Labour peers voted against the Hollis amendment with just less than half of all Labour peers failing to vote on this division.

Table 7.11. Analysis of Votes on Division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/2007 by Party

Affiliation	Content with Amendment	Not Content with Amendment	Did Not Vote	Total
Bishops	11.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	88.5% (23)	100.0% (26)
Conservatives	24.3% (49)	0.0% (0)	75.7% (153)	100.0% (202)
Liberal Democrats	60.3% (47)	0.0% (0)	39.7% (31)	100.0% (78)
Crossbench	24.8% (52)	0.0% (0)	75.2% (158)	100.0% (210)
Labour	12.0% (26)	39.6% (86)	48.4% (105)	100.0% (217)
Other	15.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	84.6% (11)	100.0% (13)

Source: Hansard HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1048

The data is disaggregated further in Table 7.12 in order to tease out the differential support for the Hollis amendment by sex and party affiliation. Whilst there was found to be overall a significant difference in that women were more likely to support the amendment, there was only significant difference between the sexes amongst Labour peers whereby the proportion of Labour women peers who supported the Hollis amendment (23.6%) was nearly three times greater than for male peers (8.0%).

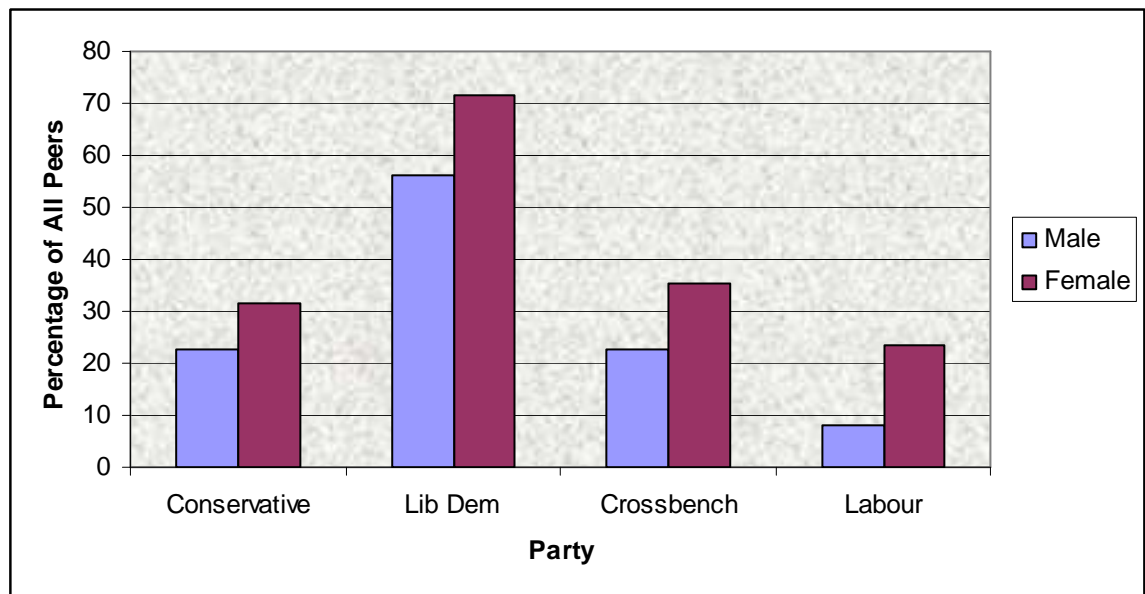
Table 7.12 Analysis of Votes on Division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/2007 by Party and Sex

Affiliation	Sex	Content with Amendment	Not Content with Amendment	Did Not Vote	Total	Significance
Conservatives	Male Peers	22.8% (38)	0.0% (0)	77.2% (129)	100.0% (167)	N/S
	Women Peers	31.4% (11)	0.0% (0)	68.6% (24)	100.0% (35)	
Liberal Democrats	Male Peers	56.1% (32)	0.0% (0)	43.9% 25	100.0% (55)	N/S
	Women Peers	71.4% (15)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (6)	100.0% (21)	
Crossbench	Male Peers	22.7% (40)	0.0% (0)	77.3% (136)	100.0% (176)	N/S
	Women Peers	35.3% (12)	0.0% (0)	64.7% (22)	100.0% (34)	
Labour	Male Peers	8.0% (13)	43.8% (71)	48.1% (78)	100.0% (162)	.004
	Women Peers	23.6% (13)	27.3% (15)	49.1% (27)	100.0% (55)	

Source: Hansard HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1048

Indeed Figure 7.2 illustrates that across the main political benches and the crossbenches in the House of Lords increased proportions of women peers supported the Hollis amendment in comparison to their male counterpart, one example that women peers are more likely to represent women. Over two thirds of Liberal Democrat women peers supported the Hollis amendment, compared to approximately one third of Conservative and Crossbench women peers whilst just under one-quarter of Labour women peers voted for the amendment.

Figure 7.2. Analysis of Content Votes on Division No. 1 on the Pensions Bill 2006/2007



Source: Hansard HL Debates, 4 July 2007, Col. 1048

That support for the amendment was lowest amongst Labour women peers may be surprising considering the previous findings that Labour women peers were more likely to raise women’s issues onto the parliamentary agenda through starred questions and non-legislative debates and prioritise women’s issues, although voting in support of this amendment would have constituted a rebellion for Labour peers as they would have been voting against the government. Approximately half of all Labour women peers did not register a vote in this division. Amongst the non-voting Labour women peers were a number of women with feminist backgrounds and political interests that would otherwise suggest their support. The absence of particular Labour women peers from the roll-call could be partly explained by the contention made by Labour women peers in chapter 6 that they chose to influence behind the scenes rather than publicly voting against their party when it was clear there was enough support for the amendment across the opposition benches and the crossbenches. Thus, this division demonstrates how the different contexts and (un)politicised cultures of political chambers play out in that some Labour women

peers did seek to vote against their party in order to represent women. Moreover, almost one quarter of women peers who voted on this amendment voted with the government and thus failed to act for women which casts doubt upon the idea that (all) women seek to represent women at all times. This demonstrates how systems of party discipline can constrain opportunities, even in the House of Lords where party-lines have been reasoned to be less relevant (Drewry and Brock, 1983).

It can also be noted that a higher proportion of Liberal Democrat male peers were in support of the amendment (56.1%) than women peers from the Conservatives (31.4%), the Crossbenches (35.3%) and Labour (23.6%), although when this amendment was returned to the Commons the Liberal Democrats were the only Party supportive of this amendment as chimed with the Liberal Democrat commitment to a citizen's pension. This challenges the simple notion that women are always more likely to represent women and demonstrates why it is necessary to consider other variables such as political affiliation alongside sex in the analysis of votes. Moreover, this observation also supports the recommendation of feminist scholars to focus beyond women (Celis, Childs et al. 2008)

Support for an amendment moved in the House of Lords does not necessarily mean it will be accepted by the House of Commons, although the majority of amendments made by the House of Lords are accepted (Norton 2003). When the Hollis amendment reached the Commons the Minister for Pensions Reform stated that the Government required more time to explore the intricacies of the issue: 'The Government will commit themselves to looking at the range of options in the coming weeks, including the option to buy additional years as proposed in the amendment' (HC Deb. 17 July 2007, col. 239). Thus at division the Hollis amendment was rejected by the House of Commons 312 votes to 68.⁴³

When the amendment was returned to the House of Lords the following week, Lord McKenzie of Luton stated that the Hollis amendment had been rejected in the Commons 'because it would involve charges on public funds' (HL Deb. 24 July 2007 Col. 694) and that the amendment had been withdrawn with Baroness Hollis's consent so that more time could be given over to exploring the issues it raised as a further Pensions Bill would be introduced in the following parliamentary session. Thus the Pensions Act 2007 received Royal Assent on 26th July 2007 without including the Hollis Amendment but a promise that

⁴³ The 68 votes in support of the Hollis amendment were Liberal Democrat MPs.

the Government would use their 'best endeavours to deliver the principles of her amendment' (HC Deb. 17 July 2007, col. 240) in the future.

Six months later, Baroness Hollis asked a starred question to the Government on 17 December 2007 inquiring into the government promise. It was stated that after looking at a range of options there would be no changes made to allow citizens to buy additional qualifying years (HL Deb. 17 Dec 2007, Col. 467). Clearly this aroused dissatisfaction amongst the House of Lords as there was 'no coherent explanation of the change of heart' (Ashley 2007) on this issue.

However following a sustained campaign of pressure that occurred both behind the scenes of the House of Lords, and in the press by the Daily Mail and the Guardian it was announced in October 2008 that an amendment proposed by the government on the Pensions Bill 2007/2008 would allow individuals to buy back six further years of contributions, accepting the thrust of Baroness Hollis's original argument, even though this was slightly reduced from nine years to six years. On 29 October the amendment was moved in the House of Lords by Lord Mackenzie of Luton. Baroness Hollis spoke that she was 'so very glad to support this amendment' but was 'never quite sure this day would arrive' (HL Debates, 29 Oct. 2008, Col. 1590), demonstrating how the substantive representation of women can occur through the motion of amendments by women peers. The reasons why Hollis was successful will now be considered.

Crewe suggests that 'to gain the support necessary to move amendments or hold the government to account reputation is everything' (Crewe 2006, 87). This was definitely the case with Baroness Hollis where it is clear that the political agency and efficacy of Baroness Hollis was fundamentally important in ensuring that this amendment eventually came to be accepted by the Government. The issue of improving women's pensions' rights has been a longstanding concern for Baroness Hollis, and she had prior 'form' on successfully changing pension legislation that benefited women through amendments in the 1992-1997 Parliament. Moreover, Hollis had been a longstanding member of the House of Lords (since 1990) therefore was well accustomed with the formalities and institutional norms of the House of Lords. Hollis had been a minister up until 2005/2006 building up good points of contact within the House. Thus it is clear that she had garnered respect amongst her Labour peers and peers from across the House of Lords therefore had an agency to act upon this issue.

There were other important facilitators to the Hollis amendment. The core executive is clearly a place where ‘attention should be given for identifying and assessing the process of policy change’ (Annesley and Gains 2010). Thus the support of a sympathetic and strategically placed minister can be a crucial aid to an amendment’s success. Baroness Hollis emphasised that James Purnell, Secretary of State for Pensions between January 2008 and June 2009, had provided help being a ‘true friend for women’ (HL Debates, 29 Oct 2008, Col. 1590). Moreover Hollis was also backed by sections of the press such as the Daily Mail and the Guardian, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, an advisory NDPB to the Government and many pressure groups including Age Concern, Help the Aged and Carers. Indeed by raising the issue onto the parliamentary agenda Hollis was able to keep influencing Government through allies located at different points across the political architecture of the UK.

It is also clear that the issue of women’s pensions was well supported throughout the House of Lords. By delivering the third largest Government defeat in the 2006/2007 session, it is evident that ‘the number and quality of supporters that Baroness Hollis’s amendment attracted persuaded ministers to think again’ (Ashley, 2007, 23). Indeed Baroness Hollis expressed great thanks to the support she had received across the House of Lords stating that ‘without your Lordships, it would not have happened. Indeed, I rather doubt that it could have happened in the other place at all’ (HL Debates, 29 Oct 2008, Col. 1590).⁴⁴ Thus, Hollis herself suggested that the particular site of the House of Lords helped to ensure the acceptance of this amendment, hinting that a similar attempt in the Commons would have been likely to have failed due to its (stricter) party discipline, overall Labour majority and adversarial nature in contrast to the Lords. Thus, the House of Lords can raise issues onto the agenda, it can keep them there, it can deliver government defeats as no party has an overall majority, and it can, on occasions, make the government think again. The Government does not necessarily have to be steered by the House of Lords, however in this case even though the Government stalled on this matter Baroness Hollis was able to combine her own agency with the widespread support of the House of Lords, press and pressure groups in order to get the principle of her amendment accepted, even against the wishes of her own party.

⁴⁴ The ‘other place’ is a euphemism that may be used by a member of a chamber in a bicameral parliament to indirectly refer to the alternative chamber. When said in the House of Lords, as in this example, it refers to the House of Commons.

The Hollis Amendment clearly demonstrates one instance of a woman peer being able to successfully represent women through one of the legislative functions of the House of Lords. Yet some feminist writers suggest that documenting ‘unsuccessful attempts’ to represent women are also valuable in better understanding the processes of achieving the substantive representation of women (Celis, Childs et al. 2008). The following considers how one attempt to substantively represent women through an amendment was thwarted, as well as suggesting that at times the House of Lords is not necessarily always the best place for *particular* women’s issues to be advanced.

During interview, one peer recounted when she had, along with some Labour colleagues, considered introducing an amendment to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill in the 2007/2008 parliamentary session in order to improve women’s access to abortion and modernise the procedures. Following consultation with other peers in the House of Lords in order to gauge the breadth of support for such an amendment it was decided that an amendment would not be moved in the House of Lords. Moving an amendment on abortion, on an already controversial bill, was deemed inadvisable and the peer should ‘leave it to the Commons’ as the elected chamber.

This demonstrates how it is important for peers to gauge the extent of support within the House of Lords as well as to consider the extent to which an issue may already be on the parliamentary agenda. Whereas Baroness Hollis’s amendment on women’s pensions had widespread cross-party support and gained momentum as an important theme of the pensions’ bills over time, this was not so for the proposed abortion amendment. The issue of pro-choice abortion would not garner the majority support of the House akin to the Hollis amendment, nor had the issue been raised upon the parliamentary agenda. Thus, there was no further action taken by this peer on advancing her pro-choice agenda.

However the pro-choice lobby was forced to manoeuvre against the pro-life lobby in the same bill when Baroness Masham moved an amendment that sought to restrict abortion in cases of foetal abnormality, although this was opposed and defeated in the House of Lords. These examples suggest that the success of amendments may be contingent upon a combination of factors including the agency of the individual, the issue at hand, the depth and breadth of support in the House of Lords, a sympathetic minister, support beyond Westminster including pressure groups and the media, and overall timing. This section now

turns to consider whether private members' bills are used by peers to substantively represent women.

The Substantive Representation of Women and Private Members' Bills

When a peer attempts to introduce a private members' bill, they are bringing an item or issue of interest onto the political agenda, as well as committing themselves to changing the law in some way or advancing a particular policy. Therefore private members' bills are a potential tool that could be used to substantively represent women. Investigation into the use of private members' bills by women peers in the 1970s by Drewry and Brock (1983) found no evidence to suggest that women peers sought to introduce 'women's' private members' bills. Conversely some work focused upon the House of Commons found that women MPs did use them in the House of Commons to represent women's concerns (Vallance, 1979, 107). Moreover as explored in chapter 4, private members' bills introduced by peers have a very low success rate and they have little likelihood of being enacted into law. This section now turns to consider whether private members' bills have been used by peers to substantively represent women, using data provided by the House of Lords Information Office between the 2001/2002 parliamentary session and the 2008/2009 parliamentary session.

Table 7.13. The Substantive Representation of Women through Private Members' Bills 2001-2009

Parliamentary Session	PMB coded as seeking to represent women	PMB not coded as seeking to represent women	Total
2001/2002	2	15	17
2002/2003	1	15	16
2003/2004	0	12	12
2004/2005	2	5	7
2005/2006	1	17	18
2006/2007	1	21	22
2007/2008	1	14	15
2008/2009	1	16	17
Total	9 (7.3%)	115 (92.7%)	124 (100.0%)

In coding a private members' bill as one that sought to substantively represent women, the title had to explicitly address women or it had to be clear that the bill sought to represent women. As Table 7.13 shows, in total nine bills out of a total of 124 private members' bills have been coded as 'women's' private members' bills, constituting just over seven percent of private members' bills over this time period. Notably, of those private members' bills

that sought to substantively represent women just one was introduced by a woman peer. Thus of the seventeen private members' bills introduced by women, only one sought to represent women (5.9%) whereas male peers introduced eight 'women's' private members' bills out of one hundred and seven private members' bills (7.5%). Thus in this case male peers were slightly more likely to represent women through the introduction of private members' bills, a finding that is problematic for the feminist contention that women are more likely to represent women, although it should be kept in mind that male peers introduced 86.3% of private members' bills overall compared to 13.7% introduced by women.

Of the nine private members' bills introduced by peers that concerned the substantive representation of women (Table 7.14), four were concerned with the issue of granting women rights to 'Borough' Freedom and rights to become Freeman, which were currently barred in some boroughs according the principle of primogeniture whereby such rights pass from father to son and the freedom of some cities or towns can only be legally granted to men in some areas. However thus far all attempts have been unsuccessful which explains why these bills have been introduced in different parliamentary sessions.

Table 7.14. Private Members' Bills Addressing Women's Issues, 2001-2009

Parliamentary Session	Bill Title	Introduced by:	m/f	Party
2001/2002	Borough Freedom (Family Succession) Bill	Lord Mustill	m	Crossbench
2001/2002	Sex Discrimination (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill	Lord Faulkner of Worcester	m	Labour
2002/2003	Equality Bill	Lord Lester of Herne Hill	m	Liberal Democrat
2004/2005	Borough Freedom (Family Succession) Bill	Lord Graham of Edmonton	m	Labour
2004/2005	Succession to the Crown Bill	Lord Dubs	m	Labour
2005/2006	Borough Freedom (Family Succession) Bill	Lord Graham of Edmonton	m	Labour
2006/2007	Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill	Lord Lester of Herne Hill	m	Liberal Democrat
2007/2008	Borough Freedom (No. 2) Bill	Lord Graham of Edmonton	m	Labour
2008/2009	Equal Pay and Flexible Working Bill	Baroness Morris of Bolton	f	Conservative

The Sex Discrimination (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill introduced by Lord Faulkner of Worcester sought to amend the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and make it unlawful for a private members' club to discriminate against a woman or man in its terms of membership. Even though its passage in the House of Lords was well supported the bill 'died a death in the other place' (HL Deb. 21 Jan 2004, Col. 1095). Likewise the Equality Bill 2002-03,

introduced by Lord Lester in order to enact a single equality act, progressed through the House of Lords only to be stalled in the House of Commons. However the Equality Act was passed in 2010 as government legislation which demonstrates how the introduction of private members' bills by peers can spur a government into action, as it had been a prior manifesto commitment of Labour. One of the aspects of the Succession to the Crown Bill 2004-05 sought to end the practice of male primogeniture in the Royal Family which gives preference to sons over daughters, although it was following debate at second reading in the Lords that the bill was withdrawn as it was revealed during the debate the Government had 'no immediate plans to legislate in this area' (HL Debs, 14 Jan 2005: Column 512).

The only private members' bill introduced by a female peer that sought to represent women was done so by Baroness Morris of Bolton, a Conservative Peer. The Equal Pay and Flexible Working Bill was introduced by Baroness Morris following research by the Conservative Women's Policy Group and aimed to address equal pay and flexible working to ensure social justice for all women. When speaking at the second reading, Baroness Morris stated that 'Theresa May wrote to Harriet Harman to say that these are such important issues that we would be happy for them to be included in the forthcoming Equalities Bill. Although the Government are undoubtedly sympathetic, our offer was declined so I decided to introduce a private members' bill to bring this debate to your Lordships' House (HL Debates 23 Jan 2009: Column 1875-1876). The Government response from Baroness Morgan of Huyton welcomed the Bill however underlined that aspects of these issues would be covered by the forthcoming Equalities Bill (HL Debates, 23 Jan 2009, Col. 1900). Even though the Bill was not withdrawn by Baroness Morris and was committed to committee there was no further action taken on the bill beyond its second reading in the House of Lords. Thus this private members' bill represented an opportunity for the Conservative Party (the Opposition at the time) to place these issues onto the parliamentary agenda.

Only one of the nine private members' bills that represented women received royal assent, Lord Lester's Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill in the 2006-07 session. This bill sought to 'combat and remedy ... the forcing of children and young adults to marry against their will' (HL Deb, 26th January 2007, Col. 1319). Notably, women comprise the majority of victims of forced marriage (approximately 85%) and prior to the enactment of this legislation there were no legal remedies for this issue. As scholars are now advocating a turn in the study of the substantive representation of women that incorporates a broader

framework of study (Celis, Childs et al. 2008) the introduction of this private members' bill by a male peer demonstrates Lord Lester's status as a critical actor who 'act(s) individually or collectively to bring about women friendly policy change' (Childs and Krook 2009, 127). Certainly this brings into question the notion that women are more likely to represent women as chapter 2 discussed. However, whilst the feminist scholars advocate such a turn it is notable that there remains ambivalence amongst peers as to who is best placed to advance women's interests (see section on women's debates and later section on attitudes in this chapter). Indeed, at the Committee Stage on this bill Lord Lester doubted his personal validity to speak on the issue of forced marriage an issue that largely affects women from minority ethnic backgrounds: 'I am a white man, the least qualified person to make judgments' (HL Debates, 13 June 2007, 6.35pm). Thus by raising that he himself may not have personal authority due to his descriptive features really does bring into question the extent to which other (male) political representatives will seek to act on women's issues.

As has been highlighted in this chapter and chapter 4, very few private members' bills go on to be enacted into law – therefore why was this attempt to represent women by Lord Lester successful? Whilst the private members' bill came about as a result of Lester's own volition to seek to protect individuals from the threat or practice of forced marriage, he had consulted with and was supported by a number of voluntary organisations such as the Southall Black Sisters who co-authored the Bill. However, this issue had been raised upon the parliamentary agenda previously in the House of Commons therefore there was some policy momentum. For example Ann Cryer led an adjournment debate in the House of Commons in 1999 on this issue and a working group was set up in 1999, reporting the following year. This precipitated an official government response, and ultimately the development of the Forced Marriage Unit in 2005, a joint venture between the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Critically, the original bill introduced by Lord Lester was in effect transformed by the Government when it went through the chambers of Parliament, which was crucial for its success in coming to the statute books. As Lord Lester declared at the Committee Stage of the Bill in the House of Lords: 'Although this is in form my Bill, a Private Members' Bill, I am glad to say that in substance it has become not my property but that of the House and is really a Ministry of Justice Bill' (HL Debates, 13 June 2007). Moreover, the legislation may not have advanced as it did without the support of key government figures such as

Baroness Ashton (now on leave of absence from the House of Lords as EU Commissioner for Trade) who has been signposted as a key supporting figure to the legislation. The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 gained Royal Assent in 2007, becoming enforceable through the courts in 2008.

Finally, it is worthwhile to note that the agency and professional background of Lord Lester may also have played a part in the progression of the bill. Lord Lester is a renowned human rights lawyer who was the architect of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976. Moreover Lord Lester is a longstanding member of the House of Lords since 1993 therefore is knowledgeable as to the processes and procedures of the House of Lords and commands wide ranging respect across the House of Lords.

This section now turns to consider briefly an unsuccessful attempt made by a woman peer to substantively represent women. In interview a Labour woman peer disclosed that early into her appointment as a peer she was contacted by a pressure group regarding abortion legislation within the UK. The Abortion Act 1967 does not extend to Northern Ireland and thus exists as one form of discrimination amongst women within the UK: 'The very first thing I was approached on was by young women in Northern Ireland to see if I would take a private members' bill through on the Abortion Act.' Clearly this constitutes an attempt to equalise the law throughout the UK and permit all women from the UK equal reproductive rights.

This peer then decided to consult some parliamentary colleagues and receive advice on pursuing this attempt to represent women through a private members' bill. The peer was dissuaded to go forward with such a bill as this account reveals: 'I went to speak to a few other people and they advised me not to because in this House you have to build up respect and coalitions. They also said not to do it because if you fall at the first hurdle, that's what you'll be remembered for. You need to build up a few wins before you go down that road.' Notably the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords, the 'newness' of this peer, as well as the contentiousness of the issue interacted to obstruct this attempt to equalise women's reproductive rights across the UK.

Beckwith (2007) contends that the newness of a legislator (in an elected political institution) is one factor that may constrain women's attempts to influence legislation that seeks to substantively represent women. In this case, in a chamber where 'reputation is all' (Crewe,

2005, 35) introducing such legislation would have been deemed inadvisable in part due to her new status as a peer and the issue at hand. It was accepted by this peer that she had to accord to the institutional norms of the House of Lords by gaining the respect of her fellow peers before she could attempt to introduce a private members' bill on this issue. This does not mean that 'new' peers cannot act for women; rather their capacity to act is narrower in the earlier stages. However learning the traditions and conventions of the House of Lords, as well as building alliances and cross-party support offers a potential for new peers to act at some point in the future, albeit dependent upon garnering substantial backing across the benches of the House of Lords on the issue at hand.

Generally House of Lords private members' bills succeed because they are an uncontroversial subject matter. In this case the issue of the proposed private members' bill was contentious (as discussed in the amendments section). This proposed bill would not have received broad support within the Lords as there are clear pro-choice and pro-life lobbies. This is in contrast to the Hollis amendment on women's pensions which successfully garnered cross-party support. Moreover, a private members' bill is also more likely to pass if it concerns an issue that the Government is willing to legislate on and is not far removed from government policy or feeling (Borthwick, 1993) as was the case with Lord Lester's private members' bill. In sum, the new status of the peer, the nature of the issue and that the issue was not centrally located upon the Government's agenda thwarted this private members' bill before it was even introduced. This chapter now turns to consider how women peers think about normative ideas of the substantive representation of women in order to discern the nuanced nature of this dimension of women's representation.

Women Peers' Attitudes towards Women's Issues and the Substantive Representation of Women

The section explores the attitudes of women peers towards the concept of women's issues and gauges whether women peers support feminist interpretations of substantive representation in order to explore the complexities of representation. If women peers purport to support feminist ideas on substantive representation then they may be more inclined and more likely to represent women in the work of the House of Lords although this is not necessarily a direct relationship.

Women Peers and Women's Interests

When examining the substantive representation of women it is crucial to consider the spectrum of issues that women peers consider as important, as well as how these are framed in order to be able to understand how the substantive representation of women may be configured within the political agenda and the legislative functions of the House of Lords. Some women peers framed their understanding of women's issues in purely biological terms: 'I locate the idea of women's and men's interests in terms of health matters. For example breast cancer for women and prostate cancer for men' (Liberal Democrat Woman Peer). A Conservative woman peer had a similar outlook: 'There are specific issues on women's health, but there are on men's health too.' Interestingly, both women peers considered women's issues in terms of health differences between the sexes. The raising of women's issues in this manner is not surprising when almost one-fifth of women peers have been previously employed in the health sector, as chapter 5 established. However, this does not necessarily constitute an example of women seeking to act for women. Rather this could be an example of women seeking to highlight health issues in which they have expertise.

Women peers also framed women's issues in terms of the status of women in society, in particular through caring roles and specifically those related to women's status as child-bearers: 'Putting it really bluntly, it's women who have a uterus. It is women who have childbirth and pregnancy, physiological changes and all the changes that go with that. It is different to men and that alters the whole of their life course;' 'I think there are some women's issues. Men cannot bear children. Then this feeds into the upbringing of children. The upbringing of small children is a clear women's issue.' Here women's issues were considered in biological terms but also linked these to societal issues whereby women predominantly took on the burden of caring for children or older relatives. This was due to the 'different patterns in women's lives' (Labour) and 'because they were more likely to be responsible for elderly parents and children' (Labour).

Thus it was argued that gendered life trajectories meant that there were clear areas in which women were more likely to be interested. These included: 'issues about childcare, about work flexibility; issues like that' (Labour); 'family issues' and 'time off to look after children and things like that are really important to women' (Labour). In this way, because women were more likely to be responsible for caring responsibilities, caring issues could be constituted as a women's issue. However it was stressed that it was important not to

assume that all women were interested in the same issues, or that all women would have caring issues ‘as their top priority’ (Labour). By highlighting this, the peer recognised the danger of essentialising women reflecting the feminist ideas discussed in chapter 2 relating to the heterogeneity of women’s lives.

Interestingly Conservative women peers considered women’s issues situated around employment and career advancement for example: ‘Women getting on’ (Conservative) and ‘that women don’t always get to the level they ought to’ (Conservative). This could reflect their greater propensity to have backgrounds in business as chapter 5 demonstrated, which suggests that political affiliation may influence how women’s issues understood and framed by women peers, as well as the type of women’s issues raised.

However not all women peers coalesced around the idea of distinct women’s issues. Some women peers did not term issues in this way, and preferred to use the label of equality issues: ‘When considering items such as treatment at the workplace and pay, rather than seeing this as a distinctly women’s issue, I prefer for this to be seen and discussed in terms of issues of general equality.’ (Liberal Democrat) This was reaffirmed with a separate Liberal Democrat woman who did not support the view that there were distinct women’s issues: ‘I don’t think that there are any exclusive issues anymore’ (Liberal Democrat). This could link to the earlier finding in this chapter whereby only 5% of Liberal Democrat women peers cited women as a political interest. Other women peers also disputed the notion of distinct women’s issues, preferring to frame them in a gender neutral way in terms of equality or human rights issues as the following examples illustrate:

If you take domestic violence, that’s a civil/human rights issue. Also forced marriage – of course it is a women’s issue but it’s a human rights concern. It’s a human rights issue. (Crossbench)

I’m so against this actually, the idea that there are women’s issues, it’s a matter which affects society. (Crossbench)

These are population issues, not just men’s or women’s issues. (Crossbench)

I mean what is a women’s issue? Pregnancy? Abortion? Well that is part of life. Everybody’s lives. Women *and* men. (Conservative)

These extracts illustrate that some women peers not affiliated to Labour preferred to think about issues in terms of equality. Importantly, this rejection of distinct women’s issues may be mediated by political affiliation. Notably a greater proportion of women peers from the

Labour Party were more inclined to support the traditional idea of women's issues, as evidenced earlier in this chapter whereby 20% of Labour women peers cited women as a political interest, which may be explained by the alignment between the feminist movement and leftwing politics from the 1960s onwards. Interestingly these women peers were all aligned with the Labour Party, which has been suggested by some academics as an important influence upon the linkage between women's descriptive and substantive representation in that there is some evidence that political representatives from Labour are more likely to want to substantively represent women than the other political parties (Childs, 2004, 99). Individual women peers from the Liberal Democrats, the Conservative Party and the Crossbenches preferred to talk about the idea of equality issues. This section now turns to consider whether women peers prioritise women's issues in their work in the House of Lords.

During interviews all women peers were asked to identify the main political interests they pursued in the House of Lords, of which five Labour women peers acknowledged women's concerns as one of their primary political issues without prompting. This is important because it hints that some women peers may be predisposed to represent women. However this is not to say that women peers from other parties or the crossbenches are not interested in women's issues or will not act to represent women, rather that they do not necessarily choose to prioritise women's issues in the first place. Feminist interpretations of women's representation suggest that women representatives are more likely to raise women's issues and that some women would take on a responsibility for speaking for women (Phillips, 1995, 168). This contention was supported in some interviews when women peers were quizzed about their prioritised political interests.

Moreover, the Labour peers who declared women as one of their primary political interests in interview had backgrounds in acting for women. For example one peer's credentials had been focused upon women which clearly influenced how she prioritised her political interests: 'If I had any particular goals I'd spent a great deal of my life on women's issues, and so women's issues were still to the forefront.' Similarly other peers expressed similar sentiments: 'the whole business of women's equality that was always my main beef' (Labour) and 'I have particular interests and my main interests are equality issues mainly for women in politic and public life' (Labour). These examples all emphasise the importance in accounting for a peer's prior occupations because 'expertise inevitably goes hand in hand

with a propensity to take an active interest in relevant debates' (Drewry and Brock, 1983, 24) and also highlights how prior backgrounds are important for shaping interests which appears to be critically important in the House of Lords because peers have a capacity to raise issues onto the agenda that may not necessarily be as unconstrained for MPs for example.

The Attitudes of Women Peers Towards Substantive Representation

A small number of women peers interviewed recognised the linkage between the descriptive and substantive representation of women and provided statements that consolidated feminist interpretations of representations discussed in chapter 2:

Women are better able to represent women. I don't like it. It goes against the grain to say yes actually, but I suppose talking about it rationally you have to say yes. Women understand the problems of women. (Labour)

I would say that perhaps we have more of an understanding because very often we have experienced what women have across the board what women are experiencing. Because we have experienced things that women are living through now we do have that extra perspective. (Labour)

Notably these extracts express a perspective that women representatives are more inclined to represent women because women may have some shared experiences through their life course (such as childbirth) meaning they would be more attuned to the needs of the women.

Another woman peer articulated similar sentiments, yet further consolidated the contention raised by Phillips (1995, 44) that women are better able to point out, crystallise and act upon particular women's interests in the political process:

Whichever way you look at, society is gendered and segregated. This means women do have by and large different experiences to men. And so if we've had personal experience or close family experience on whatever the issue is we can speak from the heart and people then listen. In this way women can give other peers an insight into these issues affecting women, whatever they may be. So from this point of view, yes, women are better placed to represent women. (Liberal Democrat)

Thus because women may have some shared experiences distinct from men, it is argued that women representatives are more likely to have an intuitive understanding of women's issues. This understanding also gives their perspective greater authority when deliberating amongst fellow legislators. Clearly this female peer expressed an attitude that related to Mansbridge's (1999) idea of improving (horizontal) communication between political

representatives discussed in chapter 2. Such ideas also resonated with another peer who emphasised that shared experiences meant that women peers could deliver greater advocacy in the deliberative processes of the Lords: 'When you speak from the heart and from your own experience then it has a potency whatever you're talking about'.

Other women peers provided an alternative perspective that linked the descriptive and substantive representation of women by highlighting that it was important for a diversity of women representatives to be present within a legislature so that a broader range of interests would be raised. This was crystallised by one woman peer who suggested that it was crucial for 'single women,' 'women who are in stable relationships' and 'women who have got children' to be included within the policy-making process because it is recognised these different 'types' of women represent distinct and 'different aspects' of womanhood'. Underlying this statement is a qualification that adequate representation of women requires diversity amongst women representatives.

Linked to the idea of diversity, one woman peer suggested that representing women's heterogeneous interests in the House Lords was not necessarily straightforward and illustrated this through the likely differential needs of a 'middle class African woman' as compared to a 'middle class white woman'. This perspective challenges the simple idea that women representatives are always better able to represent women per se. She emphasised that her personal experiences and identity meant she could not seek to act for all women: 'I wouldn't always necessarily think of an issue that is of interest to a Bangladeshi woman for example because I don't have background.' Whilst this peer is basing her argument upon identity arguments this is not to say that other peers (who may not be women) would be similarly unable to represent, especially if they had professional backgrounds in aid and development for example. Indeed, it was raised separately by three women peers that Baroness Rendell, a Labour peer, has campaigned and been active on the issue of female genital mutilation, which was put forward as a good example of how women could represent the diversity of women and women's experiences: 'Ruth Rendell has campaigned for many years on the issue of Female Genital Mutilation. Periodically she asks questions and it could be possible to see it as some sort of minority women's issue but actually the whole House takes it very seriously. So I think women's presence is useful' (Liberal Democrat).

Yet the relationship between women's numerical and substantive representation was brought into question by some women peers. They made reference to their own status as a legislator, and maintained that just because they were women, this did not mean they felt committed to represent women in a personal capacity: 'So far as my life is concerned, I've never been a bra-burning liberator. I want women to come forward, but from my own personal point of view there is nothing that needs addressing in that sense' (Crossbench). Notably women peers from across the House of Lords underlined that being female did not mean they sought to act for or represent women and should not prescribe their behaviour or be a contingent role for women representatives to take on:

My role is to represent whoever I choose as a peer, and sometimes that happens to be women. But I certainly don't seek them out, and I don't feel compelled to by any means. Neither should any woman. (Conservative)

I happen to care about the housing issues, issues about family tenancies and homelessness. As it happens women are particularly vulnerable to these things. But I don't think, I'm a woman, I must raise that because it's a woman's issue. (Labour)

I don't think sex matters. You should have something to offer here, not based on whether you're male or female. (Crossbench)

As these statements put forward, some women peers problematised the linkage between women's descriptive and substantive representation.

One woman peer raised that there ought to be less of an expectation on women peers to represent women than for women MPs because of the distinct basis of representation for a peer that is individual, held for life and does not require approval from local party members, selectors or the electorate as distinct from an elected MP who represents a geographical area. A Labour woman peer emphasised this by juxtaposing the role of an MP against that of a peer. Whilst she contended that MPs would have to respond to women constituents peers do not have this duty: 'In one sense we don't represent, and so having to have a required understanding of women's problems isn't so necessary, and so as peers we can do whatever it is we think we should do.' Therefore whilst women MPs represent women who reside in their constituency, women peers are not subject to this because they are appointed for lifetime terms of office. This point of view is also contrary to some of the attitudes overviewed in chapter 5 who reasoned that representation in the House of Lords could be related to descriptive arguments.

It was recognised by a small number of women peers that not all women sought to represent women in the workings of the House of Lords: ‘I know what I try to do for women, and other women will take other ways. And other women are not particularly interested in that line anyway. Not all women are keen to get equality for women. Their issues are somewhere else’ (Labour). One woman peer also highlighted a similar point by linking the greater diversity and presence of women to the representation of women’s interests: ‘I’ve always believed that it’s very important to get a critical mass in so that individual women did not feel the responsibility to speak out women’s issues if they had no interest about them....we certainly felt that responsibility (to speak on women’s issues) in the Commons in the 1970s.’ This example suggests that once women’s presence has got beyond a tokenistic nature, it frees women representatives from feeling obliged to talk about women’s issues, which may be even more relevant for the House of Lords due to the basis of representation. In this way there is little support amongst women peers for the idea put forward by Dovi (as discussed in chapter 2) that a representative should maintain and develop a strong reciprocal affiliation with the subgroup from whence they are drawn.

Whereas these examples above intimate that women peers pursue different interests in the House of Lords according to their expertise, which may mean that women’s issues do not feature or are not prioritised as primary concerns, other women peers suggested that political and generational factors also moulded women peers’ propensity to substantively represent women. Politically, Conservative women peers were emphasised by Labour and Liberal Democrat women as being the women least likely to provide cross-party support when efforts to substantively represent women were undertaken:

I’ve also found that the women across the Lords link up quite a lot and support each other on things. The Conservatives are not surprisingly the weakest here, because they have fewer women in the Lords, and the average age of the Conservative group is older. (Liberal Democrat)

Interestingly this woman peer made a partial linkage between the descriptive and substantive representation of women by suggesting that the small proportion of Conservative women peers in the House of Lords meant that they were not as predisposed to seek to represent women. This could also be explained by the ideological tenets of Conservatism that are less compatible with aspects of feminism than those that underpin Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Moreover this woman also identified that on average Conservative women peers tended to be older, and as chapter 5 showed, this speculation

was true, suggesting that older women would be less supportive in the substantive representation of women.

It was also apparent from interviews with women peers that there were different ways of representing women. As the previous sections have highlighted Baroness Gould and Baroness Hollis could be identified as ‘critical actors’ who have been instrumental in primarily seeking to represent women through the agenda and legislative functions of the House of Lords. During interviews some women peers stressed how they had sought to represent women through the legislative process:

In the broadcasting bill, I tried to make sure that we got more women in broadcasting – in both production and the fronting of it. We got many more women on screen. (Labour)

I took part in the Housing Bill last session. One thing that came to light was where a man and a woman are living together and they may have children, then there’s domestic violence and the woman leaves because she has to, because if she stays she’s in great danger. Yet the tenancy remains with the man. She has made herself homeless in the eyes of the law, he’s still got a tenancy, not her. The Local Authority takes the view that the woman has made herself homeless so they don’t have to help. That’s an area I get really angry about and it’s something I’ll raise when the legislation comes through (Labour).

However whilst there of course needs to be primary actors who catalyse interest in a policy issue, there also needs to be secondary support amongst the composition of legislature in order for bills or amendments to pass through the requisite stages of the House of Lords therefore it is also important to consider whether and how women peers may support the primary actions of other peers who seek to represent women. Whereas women peers who could be considered critical actors in representing women were predominantly attached to the Labour Party, it was evident that there were women peers from across the benches of the House of Lords who readily identified themselves as playing a secondary or supportive role. Rather than explicitly seeking to advance the causes of women individually, these examples show that once the substantive representation of women has been advanced in the House of Lords there are women from across political divides who may prove supportive:

I have been very supportive of Baroness Rendell, and when she has debates or questions I will try to be there and come in when I can. (Crossbench)

I've not been a primary actor representing women in the Lords. I don't think so. I've supported Baroness Hollis for example. That's been the main thing I guess. (Conservative)

I wouldn't say I attempt to represent women, but it's indirect I guess. It's not deliberate. There is this kind of undercurrent if you like. But I wouldn't say I've championed this one issue on behalf of women only. (Crossbench)

If I was sent something that was really specific to women and it needed help, then I would be willing to help. (Conservative)

The extent to which women peers play a supportive role in the House of Lords could arguably be noted to have shifted over time. The study of women in the House of Lords during the 1970s suggested that there was 'no real evidence of the women peers operating as a female lobby' (Drewry and Brock, 1983, 30). However this range of quotations suggests that for some issues women peers may indeed unite as a 'female lobby'. For example the issue of women's pensions in the form of the Hollis amendment demonstrates an example of 'strategic essentialism' whereby women (and men) may at times form across party divides on an ad-hoc basis (Hill and Chappell 2006; Annesley and Gains 2010) Critically this recognises that even though women may not agree on what constitutes a women's issue or how a policy ought to be implemented, at certain times, for certain issues, women peers from across the House of Lords do come together to support the substantive representation of women.

Finally a significant caveat was raised by a small number of women peers regarding the substantive representation of women in the House of Lords. It was highlighted that seeking to represent women exclusively was not always perceived favourably and that women representatives ought to be cautious in how they choose to prioritise women's interests:

I'm a woman who wants to be fully involved in society and want to talk about all issues. So if I say women can only represent women I can't represent men can I? (Labour)

I think one of the things as women we need to take into account and be aware of is we need to be able to talk about other things than gender so you are seen as a more rounded person, and therefore when you speak you give more weight to it. (Labour)

I define myself as a feminist but that doesn't mean to say that I bang on about women's issues. (Labour)

Interestingly these women peers stressed that there was a danger in women seeking to prioritise the representation of women, which could bring into question the representational capacities of a legislator. The basis of their argument was pragmatic in that concentration upon women's issues could challenge women's capabilities to represent men, which resonated with earlier research upon New Labour women MPs (Childs, 2004). Interestingly, the raising of this caveat by Labour women peers could perhaps partly explain why fewer women peers self-identify as seeking to represent women from the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives, which may point towards women's issues not yet being regarded as an important mainstream issue despite the suggestions and evidence throughout this chapter that women's issues are less marginalised. This section now turns to consider the perspectives of women peers upon the roles that male peers may play in seeking to substantively represent women. This is important because it has been highlighted women are under-represented in legislatures globally; therefore exploring whether male peers are perceived as capable and willing to represent women is essential and there is certainly some evidence from this chapter that illustrates male peers seeking to represent women therefore is a pertinent point of departure.

The Role of Male Peers in the Substantive Representation of Women

There were a small number of women peers who were adamant that the substantive representation of women was almost entirely advanced by women peers: 'The truth is that the only people who try and take an interest in women and women's issues are women. There is the odd man, but generally it's left to the women' (Liberal Democrat). This extract expresses a sense that women representatives are undoubtedly more likely to advance issues that would advance the substantive representation of women.

However, women peers highlighted occasions where men sought to actively represent women, although this was suggested to be in a secondary and supportive manner in response to women peers acting for women;

Often once you've pointed out what the concerns are, there are a lot of men who are as keen to take them up as women (Labour).

I've heard a number of male peers in speeches made really good thoughtful points, which they genuinely believe in and are concerned about. But if it comes to the slightly automatic, the immediate response, then probably women are better simply because it is their own experience (Labour).

In this way women's presence is purported to be an important catalyst to the substantive representation of women. Women peers emphasised that once women's issues had been raised or another woman had identified an issue as potentially important, male peers were often receptive and played a consolidatory role in the substantive representation of women. Clearly women's presence was perceived to be critical for kick-starting the substantive representation of women, although male peers were highlighted as playing a secondary, supportive role that had some importance.

Thus it was argued that women peers tended to lead the substantive representation of women in the House of Lords, although importantly male peers were often responsive and reactive to these actions: 'Women have an impact on men. I think very often when we are fighting what we would regard as a woman's issue there would be very strong men supporting us as well' (Labour). The issue of women's pensions is an example of a policy issue which crystallises the significance of having women political representatives in order to advance the substantive representation of women:

If you take an issue like pensions, you have Barbara Castle [former woman peer] and Muriel Turner [Baroness Turner of Camden] who banged on about pensions for years. Then Patricia Hollis comes along and now everybody in here understands women's pensions. Men get it. If they [Castle and Turner] had not been there, would that male understanding have come up, probably not. (Liberal Democrat)

In addition to the argument that women's presence is crucial for advancing the substantive representation of women in the first instance, the above extract also suggests that the role that women play in placing such issues on the political agenda facilitates an improved insight into an issue. This example accords with Phillips' contention that women can raise women's issues which will then be better understood by the entire composition of a political legislature (Phillips, 1995, 70).

As this chapter has identified there are some male peers who do seek to advance the substantive representation and some women peers were keen to signpost individual male peers who did seek to substantively represent women therefore the contention that women representatives are always predisposed to better represent women comes under strain:

In the Lords there are some men who are sensitive to issues, laws and practice to do with women. They will talk about them, and not just in the tearooms but in the chamber as well. (Labour)

We have got some very good men, men who are very, very supportive. Lord Harrison on rape crisis centres for example. He's very good. (Labour)

Unpacking how women peers consider the role that male peers may play in the substantive representation of women is important and helps the more complex picture of representation where other intersections come into play to be understood. This also shows that the idea of critical actors (Celis, Childs et al. 2008) is an important future tool of analysis for inquiry into the representation of women.

However it was highlighted by one Labour woman peer that some male peers were unsupportive or even hostile towards particular women's issues. This peer gave the example of opposition from some male peers that was sometimes encountered when issues related to sexual violence against women were being discussed:

I do feel a responsibility to women. When those questions come up on rape it's not easy to get up because I know the feeling of a lot of men. There was a question on false allegations – some of the men are quite hostile and are suggestive that women deserve it or ask for it in their behaviour or their demeanour. They don't actually say those words but it's implied. So I feel, I've got to get up again and ask a question and do it for all those women. (Labour)

This extract demonstrates that the attitudes of (some) male peers towards this aspect of violence against women could constrain the opportunities for this issue to be raised by women.

A dominant idea to stem from Childs' work (2004b, 90) on the substantive representation of women in the House of Lords was the role that 'new men' could play.⁴⁵ Whilst this theme was not entirely evident amongst the attitudes of women peers, most likely due to the older average age of peers in the House of Lords, it was pointed out that older generations of men in the House tended to hold quite masculinised perspectives on issues which could sometimes challenge the substantive representation of women:

I think a lot of it is to do with age, generation and background. That cuts across parties. I think there are some older guys on the Labour benches from trade unions, who take on a very 'male' perspective. Some in ours, I would say. Definitely in the Tories. I do honestly think it's a male thing. (Liberal Democrat)

⁴⁵ New men are defined as young, and of a generation and mindset where traditional gender roles are not entrenched (Childs, 2004b, 90-91).

However this is not to say that all male peers were unable to understand and promote women's issues. Some women peers argued that the greater presence of women peers over time in the House of Lords had helped to shape male attitudes and elucidate women's issues to them. Once again this plays on the theme that some women catalyse the substantive representation of women. Thus the presence of women in the House of Lords over time was argued to have gradually made some male peers accept and understand women's issues:

If we had men who understood the problems of women it wouldn't matter and some do. A lot do, and it's growing and more men understand that and that makes it better. (Labour)

Some men have got better over the years and understand it from the inside as it were. (Liberal Democrat)

The House has substantially changed. When I came in the membership of women was under 10%, now it's about 20% so it has changed in that way. It has changed in terms of the attitude of the men, not all of them of course. I mean anything to do with female sexuality or female sexual health, they'd just run a mile! I mean some of them still do, many of them, but not as much now. (Labour)

Clearly the numerical feminisation of the House of Lords explored in chapter 5 is argued to have influenced the substantive representation of women in terms of how some (but not all) male peers have increasingly understood and responded to these issues. The latter statement also suggests that it has become easier for particular women's issues to be raised and these would not necessarily be ignored or avoided by male peers as they may have been in the past.

It was argued that it was important for male peers to address women's interests in their representative roles. This builds upon the earlier section where the notion that women ought to represent women was problematised:

Every man in here has an inherent ability, if not responsibility, to take up these women's issues because everybody's got a mother! (Labour)

Other women believed it was vital for male peers to be on board so that women's issues in politics were not remain marginalised as they had been in the past:

I don't think that we should put women in the chamber just to talk about women's issues. The mission has to be that women's issues are no longer women's issues; they are mainstream issues that everybody talks about and cares about. (Labour)

The importance is that women's issues become mainstream issues. It would be really sad if on the day that women's pensions are being discussed that the only people in the chamber would be women. Our plan has to be that there are equal numbers of men and women getting up and raising it. (Labour)

I think it's important to get men to identify the problems that some women face. I mean they still make up the majority of the establishment, so if they understand the problems, then that makes a big difference towards actually getting somewhere, instead of women having to fight all the time and explain why these things are important. (Labour)

As these extracts demonstrate the diffusion of women's interests into the mindset of male peers was clearly seen as a key tool towards achieving the feminisation of politics. Getting male peers to acknowledge women's issues and act for women was perceived positively by these Labour women peers. It was also seen as strategically important for the advancement of the substantive representation of women and ensuring that issues that had once been peripheral were prioritised as central areas of concern. Notably these extracts came from women peers affiliated to Labour, a political party that has been highlighted as more likely to advance the substantive representation of women (Childs, 2004).

Other women peers believed it was more valuable for male peers to point out women's concerns as the following two extracts demonstrate:

As a matter of fact it is far more effective if men point out women's concerns. Because people think, oh well, a woman would point that out wouldn't she? And if a man says it, they think twice. And this is true for the Lords and the Commons, but some women never twig this. They like to battle on. (Conservative)

I guess if a male peer got up to speak about women and women's issues, he would be more respected than a woman. He has no vested interest does he? (Crossbench)

Underlying the statements above is a suggestion that male peers would be more effective at seeking to substantively represent women, as well as recurring theme that women peers are not necessarily taken seriously when they seek to represent women which insinuates that representing women may be seen as a negative representation pursuit for women peers in the House of Lords. Moreover, these examples exhibit divergences of attitudes amongst women peers which demonstrate the complicated nature of representation especially when political affiliation comes into play.

Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with exploring whether women peers seek to represent women and whether the House of Lords as a political institution constrains or facilitates the substantive representation of women to occur. The chapter was composed of three main sections in order to examine whether women peers have sought to feminise the agenda of the House of Lords, whether women peers have substantively represented women through some of the Lords' legislative functions and finally it has explored the predispositions of women peers towards the substantive dimension of women's representation.

In the opening section of this chapter the political interests of women peers were explored against a sample of male peers. The preponderance of women peers from health and education backgrounds mean that these were the most frequently cited political interests amongst women peers, although women was ranked in fourth place. Notably the expression of women as a political interest does not necessarily mean that a peer would choose to act upon it in the House of Lords. It was found that women peers were more likely to use starred questions to raise women's issues on the political agenda, especially Labour women peers. Women peers were also more inclined to ask supplementary questions on 'women's' starred questions, although this activity was higher for women peers from the opposition parties (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) and the crossbenches, suggesting that Labour women peers are more likely to set the agenda leading other women peers to react. Notably male peers were as likely as women peers to 'feminise' a non-women's starred question, which brings into question the role of male peers in the House of Lords. The introduction of women's issues through the onset of annual women's debates in the House of Lords as motioned by Baroness Gould also demonstrates a further way in which the parliamentary agenda of the House of Lords has been feminised, although women's participation is mediated by political party. Encouragingly more male peers have spoken in the debates over time which could suggest that women's issues are less peripheral in the House of Lords. Accordingly, the agenda setting powers of the House of Lords have been used by women peers to raise the substantive representation of women although this constitutes only a minor part of the business of the House of Lords and may not necessarily impact upon government policy or legislative output.

Turning to the legislative powers of the House of Lords, this chapter has also illustrated ways in which the House of Lords has represented women through modifying government

legislation and introducing private members' bills. The Hollis amendment shows how committed peers who seek to represent women and gain support across the House of Lords are able to manoeuvre successfully. However this does not mean that all peers who seek to represent women are successful; success is contingent upon the issue, support in the Lords and the agency of the peer. It was also found that women peers are far less likely to introduce private members' bills into the House of Lords to represent women compared to their male counterpart. As the success rate of Lords private members' bills is extremely low, women may prefer to use other means to represent women through the agenda and legislative outcomes. However, one private members' bill introduced by a male peer went on to receive royal assent. The factors that aided this bill's progression, including the agency of the peer, the issue at hand and support of the House of Lords and the government, illustrate how the substantive representation of women in the Lords can be facilitated, although this was a relatively low financial cost to the Government. Thus whilst the House of Lords has in theory wide ranging formal powers to legislate, the opportunity to successfully feminise the agenda is very much dependent upon the distinct issue and whether the issue has been crystallised on the political agenda (by the government), the agency of the peer, support across the Lords and support in the core executive are all key attributes to success, with newness and controversial issues limiting the capacity to act.

Attitudinally, women peers did not coalesce on normative ideas of the substantive representation of women. Firstly it was evident that women peers understand and frame the idea of women's issues in different ways, whereby political affiliation and/or professional background were potentially important mediating factors, even rejecting the idea of women's issues in favour of broader umbrella terms pertaining to equality. Whilst some women peers believed it was important for women to actively represent women this was not true of all women peers, a finding that could stem from the individual nature of a peerage and lack of formal ties to the general population. Notably there were some Labour women peers who acted to advance women's issues onto the political agenda, with women peers from across the Lords signalling that they would seek to support the raising of the substantive representation of women, albeit contingent upon the issue at hand. However there was a caveat raised by a few Labour women peers that seeking to act upon women issues was not necessarily indicative of a well rounded representative, suggesting that issues related to the substantive representation of women have not necessarily been subsumed positively into the work of the House of Lords despite some examples to the contrary.

Finally, it was noted that the role that male peers play in representing women is also uneven. It was apparent that male peers are most likely to play a supportive role, although evidently this chapter has shown male peers can and do lead on representing women, although there are occasions when male peers are obstructive.

8. Conclusions

This thesis set out to investigate the political representation of women in the transitional House of Lords using the presence thesis as the main theoretical framework (Phillips, 1995). This work has been motivated by a concern for the under-representation of women in UK politics, combined with a need to shed light upon an overlooked political institution currently in a state of flux. As the political representation is constituted of three main dimensions (descriptive, symbolic and substantive) the thesis asked three distinct research questions. First of all, how are women represented in the House of Lords? Second, how do women peers act in the House of Lords? Finally, do women peers represent women in the House of Lords? This chapter will begin by reviewing the rationale of study and the areas of inquiry for each research question. Subsequently the contributions of the thesis will be discussed. The main empirical findings of this thesis will be considered in terms of how this furthers existing knowledge into the political representation of women. Consequently, the contributions of the thesis will be considered in terms of what this study offers to the theoretical study of the political representation of women. In addition the use of the mixed-methods research design will be reflected upon. Beyond this, likely features of the future reform of the House of Lords will be discussed in respect of how this would influence the political representation of women according to the findings of this thesis.

The Rationale of Study and Research Questions

The main rationale of this thesis was to critically analyse the representation of women in the transitional House of Lords using contemporary feminist interpretations of representation as the main frameworks of analysis (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002). The aims of this inquiry were influenced by the understanding that the representation of women is a multi-faceted concept and practice. As such, this research was concerned with assessing how the main dimensions that constitute women's political representation play out in the context of the House of Lords. This demanded the use of a research design that traversed research approaches and utilised a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to interrogate fully women's political representation. There is a wealth of existing research that has explored women's representation in elected political institutions, as overviewed in chapter 2, although the House of Lords, an appointed second chamber, has been notably overlooked. This thesis endeavoured to fill the lacuna in the literature by exploring the descriptive, symbolic and substantive dimensions of women's representation in the House of Lords. It did this by unpacking the influences and processes

upon the different dimensions of women's political representation. The following paragraphs summarise how the thesis approached the study of the descriptive, symbolic and substantive dimensions of women's representation in the House of Lords.

The primary research question was concerned with critically analysing the descriptive representation of women and ventured to understand 'How are women represented in the House of Lords?' The numerical aspect of women's descriptive representation is a predominant concern of feminist scholars because women continue to be underrepresented as parliamentarians (Randall 2002, 114). As demonstrated in chapter 2, there are various determinants of women's presence in elected political chambers, however the composition of the House of Lords is largely appointed through a process of political patronage. Thus, the starting point for chapter 5 was to consider the main pathways of access to the House of Lords in order to determine the facilitators and structural constraints to women's representation in the House of Lords. Beyond this attention to the descriptive diversity of women peers was advanced by exploring the socio-economic characteristics, education and professional backgrounds of women peers. Lastly women peers' attitudes towards the importance of women's descriptive representation were probed. In sum these distinct, but complementary, research trajectories helped to provide a richer and nuanced analysis of the descriptive dimension of women's representation in the House of Lords.

The second research examined the symbolic aspect of women's representation in the House of Lords, as well as the gendered nature of the chamber and women's participation in the business of the Lords in order to suggest how women representatives 'act' as peers in the House of Lords. The initial section probed women's attendance and participation in the House of Lords. Thereafter the chapter also considered whether and how gender is embedded in the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords in order to assess if the second chamber is amenable to women and feminised styles of politics. Finally the predispositions of women peers towards the symbolic representation of women and the role-model effect were examined.

The thesis also set out to evaluate whether women peers substantively represent women in the workings of the House of Lords. The primary focus of this chapter established the extent of interest into women's issues and scrutinised women peers' use of the agenda

setting features of the House of Lords to raise women's issues. Similarly there was investigation into whether and how women peers substantively represented women through some of the legislative functions of the House of Lords that included the use of amendments and private members' bills. The chapter then turned to assess the viewpoints of women peers on the notion of the substantive dimension of women's representation and whether they aligned with feminist interpretations discussed in chapter 2.

Empirical Contributions of the Thesis

The thesis has made a significant and timely contribution to the empirical data on the transitional House of Lords. It has compiled wide-ranging data on the numbers of women peers, their pathways to the House, their backgrounds and their political activities in the House of Lords. Moreover data has been included on a sample of male peers. This section sets forth the main contributions that this research inquiry and its findings offer to the empirical study of women's political representation as structured around its main dimensions.

The Descriptive Representation of Women

The thesis provides rich empirical findings on the appointment of women where previously only conjecture existed. It is evident that the use of appointments facilitated the increasing numerical representation of women in the House of Lords, although this was more apparent amongst the Labour and Liberal Democrat benches and the cross benches. The idea that 'political achievement' (Russell 2000) leads to membership of second chambers plays out in a gendered way in the House of Lords. As women tend to be under-represented in the House of Commons this links to their under-representation in the House of Lords and proportionally twice as many male peers had been MPs compared to women peers. Appointments can also be used to 'correct' lower levels of women's presence in other political chambers as women peers are more likely to have been selected as a PPC but not elected to the Commons which indicates that peerages are used in compensatory way. The institutional set up of the Lords guards against improvements in women's overall presence because there are *de jure* (Bishops) and *de facto* (Hereditary Peers and Law Lords) reserved seats for men in the House of Lords. When this is coupled with life time terms of appointments, high levels of male presence is an enduring feature of the composition of the House of Lords. Despite the numbers of women peers increasing by over a third in the period of scrutiny, women's presence has only increased nominally from 16% to 20%. The findings related to the numerical aspect of women's representation in the House of Lords

suggests that future analysis could examine the use of appointments in other institutional contexts in terms of whether they are used to correct or compensate women's representation

In terms of diversity, women peers tended to be younger than their male counterparts and were slightly more ethnically diverse, although beyond these socio-economic characteristics the diversity of women peers is relatively narrow, indicating that women peers are more typical of political elites than the population at large. For instance there is only one openly gay woman peer in the House of Lords. The attainment of university education is similar amongst male and female peers with approximately three quarters of all peers having attended university, a figure that surpasses levels in the general population. However, as expertise is currently a criterion for appointment of peers, higher levels of education may be expected. Professionally women peers were most likely to have backgrounds in health, primary and secondary education and the voluntary sector, however political affiliation was an important mediating factor. For example the Conservative Party is quite often regarded as the party of business and over one fifth of Conservative women peers have prior professional experience in the business and/or finance sectors; likewise the Labour Party's historical links with trade unions means that approximately one sixth of Labour women peers have union backgrounds.

The extent (or lack) of variance amongst women peers brings into question whether the population of women peers reflects women citizens. As Mansbridge raises (1999), this could be important for the symbolic representation of women as some women may fail to identify with the 'homogenous' women representatives. Moreover this also links to substantive representation for example can the overwhelmingly hetero-centric composition of the House of Lords adequately raise and represent the full scope of issues encountered by bisexual and lesbian women. The identification of sub-groups amongst women means that the 'intersectional' nature of representation demands greater empirical attention, which is also true of theoretical ideas on women's representation.

The Symbolic Representation of Women

Analysis into the symbolic dimension of women's representation found that women peers had higher levels of attendance at the House of Lords compared to their male counterparts. Notably male peers' take-up of paid directorships negatively influences their presence at the House of Lords to a greater extent than women peers. A few women peers linked higher rates of attendance with women tending to have a more acute sense of duty for their

representational role which resonated with earlier findings on women MEPs (Vallance and Davies, 1986). Such claims could be subject to scrutiny by applying aspects of this research design towards male peers in order to gauge their attitudes and insights through interviews.

The symbolic presence of women in the House of Lords has been raised as being dyadic in terms of having both positive and negative implications. It was suggested that in terms of women's visibility and presence in the House of Lords and encouraging other women into politics, women peers helped to promote the symbolic presence of women. However, the overall under-representation of women peers brings into question the institutional legitimacy of the second chamber, and underlying this, the lack of public knowledge about the House of Lords obscures any positive examples of women's symbolic representation. A cogent research agenda to emanate from this study could explore citizen awareness of the House of Lords and its representatives.

One of the key findings of the thesis concerns the culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords that are befitting to feminised styles of politics, meaning that women 'thrive' in the House of Lords which is positive for the symbolic representation of women. However some Crossbench women peers, unaccustomed to Westminster politics, felt that question-time and debates still favoured masculinised practices. The culture of the House of Lords has changed in terms of being amenable to women. Prior to 1999 the second chamber was treated as a 'gentleman's club' by some hereditary male peers. This meant that discriminatory attitudes towards women did emanate at times. However, this has largely been ameliorated since the removal of (most) hereditary peers.

The culture and norms of the House of Lords may also be linked to its functions as a second chamber, therefore it would be fruitful to examine whether this is typical of other second chambers. Moreover the finding that women 'thrive' in the House of Lords and are visible in roles such as Lord Speaker, Crossbench Convenor and Leader of the House is arguably because the chamber is less important than the House of Commons which resonates (inversely) with the idea that 'where power is, women are not' (Vallance 1982). Therefore it would be pertinent to explore the relationship between women's presence in lower and second chambers in wider institutional contexts.

In terms of the role-model effect, women peers were not united on the view that women politicians should be active role-models by encouraging other women to take an interest or participate in politics, despite women peers from across political affiliation and peerage type recounting examples whereby they had actively encouraged other women. However underlying positive examples of the symbolic representation of women peers there is a major caveat in that the chamber operates on a subterranean level and is rarely a feature of attention for media outlets.

The Substantive Representation of Women

The thesis found that women are mainly responsible for representing women through starred-questions and non-legislative debates, although this constitutes only a small percentage of business in the chamber. However, early research into women peers in the 1970s contended that women peers did not actively seek to raise women's issues (Drewry and Brock, 1983, 38). Therefore this research identifies a shift in the work of the Lords and women peers. In the transitional House Labour women peers tended to take the lead in raising issues, which could link to their professional backgrounds and expertise, yet other women peers from across the House of Lords (Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Crossbenches) were responsive to the feminisation of the agenda and more so than male peers. A clutch of Labour women peers readily identified as inclined to represent women, but this was not universal amongst other women peers and even amongst the population of Labour women peers themselves. Indeed, it was underlined by women peers from across the House that prioritising women's issues brought into question the capacity of a peer as a representative which suggests that women's issues may still be marginalised as a feature of work and may account for the low proportion of time afforded to the issues.

The role of male peers in the substantive representation of women also featured in this thesis. Some women peers felt that the improved presence of women in the chamber had catalysed male peers into taking more of an interest in addressing women's issues in the deliberative work of the House of Lords, which supports delicately the idea of a linkage between the descriptive and substantive representation of women. Advancing the study of the substantive representation of women in other second chambers, as advocated by Celis, Childs et al (2008) would help to determine whether second chambers do similarly offer opportunities to substantively represent women.

It is not the case that women have been solely responsible for substantively representing women legislatively. There is clear evidence that male peers make greater use of private members' bills to raise women's interests, although keeping in mind the caveat that private members' bills have a limited chance of success. This gendered use of different legislative instruments of the House of Lords demands further attention within the House of Lords and other institutional settings and could offer some insights that would help to build theory upon occasions when male politicians substantively represent women. The prior expertise of male peers is an important consideration when thinking about why they represent women. Moreover, the use of private members' bills (as opposed to amendments) operates in a context where political competition may be less relevant. Thus the analysis into the substantive representation of women in this inquiry demonstrated the pertinence of recommendations to forgo woman focused studies in favour of broader attention to critical actors (Celis, Childs et al. 2008) and suggests that theories concerning how male representatives seek to represent women can be developed.

In the House of Lords achieving the substantive representation of women legislatively depends upon strategic opportunity and a number of interacting factors such as the reputation, standing and agency of the peer, the issue at hand in terms of whether it garnered a groundswell of support across the House of Lords and if the government was willing to act on an issue. It should be highlighted that the transitional period under scrutiny may have been propitious to raising the substantive representation of women through the deliberative and legislative work of the Lords due to complexion of the (leftist) New Labour government and its agenda that at times resonated with feminist concerns. Therefore the capacity to act for women in the House of Lords may narrow in contemporary times of economic hardship under the Coalition Government (with Labour in opposition). This may alter how women peers, and especially those affiliated to Labour, approach the substantive representation of women inviting focus upon how the substantive representation of women fares in the House of Lords under the Coalition Government as a viable future research project.

Theoretical Contributions of the Thesis

This section considers what the main findings of this research inquiry offer to the theoretical study of women's political representation and is structured around the descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation of women's political representation.

The Descriptive Representation of Women

The study of women's political representation in terms of its descriptive dimension put forward that it is crucial to focus upon the systemic, structural, political and individual factors that shape the composition of legislatures (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Phillips, 1995). This has proven to be cogent for women in the House of Lords. In particular this thesis has highlighted how it is crucial to look very clearly at the processes of recruitment alongside the systemic and structural compositional make-ups of an institution. In the case of the House of Lords there were both facilitators and constraints to women's presence that had to be considered in juxtaposition in order to clarify why the presence of women had only increased modestly. This demonstrates the necessity of close focus upon individual factors, political parties, institutions as well as wider contexts.

Appointments have also been suggested to benefit women's numerical representation. This finding adds a critical extra aspect to the literature focused upon women's political representation and legislative recruitment, as theorisation on the use of appointments is in short supply. Thus it is suggested here that despite appointments being counter-intuitive to democratic theory, they can be used to have a positive influence on women's representation and alleviate some democratic deficits.

Theoretical literature upon the descriptive representation could be improved by speaking to literature on intersectionality which pays attention to the interaction of crosscutting identities and experiences of segregation and subordination. When conducted empirically, this could help a more nuanced picture of women's descriptive representation to emerge.

Theories of descriptive representation are quite often based upon the criterion of reflection. In the House of Lords some women peers advocated fair gender representation in terms of mirroring how women are constituted in the citizenry, whereas some crossbench women used the distribution of women in the workforce as their basis for reflection. In contrast hereditary peeresses disregarded the pertinence of descriptive arguments for their type of peerage. The variance in opinions amongst women peers regarding the criterion of reflection for women's descriptive representation in the House of Lords certainly brings into question the applicability of descriptive arguments on women's representation for the appointed House of Lords which has no direct linkage to voters and shows how the strength of descriptive arguments may be context specific.

The Symbolic Representation of Women

Some of the empirical findings of this thesis supported feminist ideas on symbolic representation. The visibility of women peers in the House of Lords was reasoned to legitimise it, especially as its name may invoke classed and masculinised connotations. However there was discord amongst women peers who emphasised that the under-representation of women and lack of diversity may present the chamber negatively in terms of symbolic representation. Therefore ideas on women's symbolic representation ought to stress its dyadic nature as it can be positive or negative.

Ideas on symbolic representation would also do well to consider specific institutional contexts as cultures and institutional norms of political institutions may be gendered, as in the House of Lords, which affect whether women are perceived to be 'good' politicians by citizens. This could also marry with ideas into media constructs of politicians and positive and negative examples of women's symbolic representation, in terms of how these translate to influence the aspirations and attitudes of citizens.

With reference to the symbolic representation of women, this dimension was disregarded by Phillips as having little purchase on politics per se (Phillips, 1995, 63). However this thesis has suggested, on the basis of women peers' attitudes that gave (some) positive examples as related to the issue of institutional legitimacy and identifying with women citizens, there ought to be greater emphasis paid to this strand of women's political representation, not least because of its potentially transformative influence upon the descriptive and substantive representation of women. This is specifically in reference to the idea that was advanced in this thesis pertaining to the 'active' role-model. Even though women peers denied that being an active role-model ought to be a contingent role of women representatives, it was evident across the sample of women peers interviewed that it was an inherent undertaking.

The Substantive Representation of Women

Finally, this thesis broadly consolidates the contentions made by Phillips (1995) in relation to the substantive representation of women, however it also offers some insights that could help to refine feminist interpretations of representation. In support of Phillips women peers tended to be more likely to represent women, although this was most manifest through the deliberative functions. Moreover it ought to be emphasized that political affiliation conditions how this plays out in terms of the tendency for Labour women peers

to place issues primarily onto the agenda whereas Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Crossbench women peers tended to act in response.

This thesis has consolidated the idea that women would broaden the policy spectrum and has suggested that women's presence is important in catalysing women's interests onto the parliamentary agenda through the deliberative functions of the House of Lords, even though women peers may think about or prioritise women's issues differently according to their political affiliation. Interestingly a few male peers raised that women overlook some issues such as women and sport, which links to the under representation of women peers from sporting backgrounds.

The findings of this thesis suggest that the substantive representation of women can be achieved in different ways and have different outcomes. The 'newness' (Beckwith, 2007) of a representative is suggested to inhibit the capacity to act for women, an idea which found support from this thesis. This theory could be refined to incorporate additional focus upon the agency of a representative and their standing within a chamber as facilitators to legislative change.

The research agenda advanced by Celis, Childs et al (2008) that reconsiders how the substantive representation of women ought to be studied is broadly supported by this thesis in terms of focus upon critical actors rather than restricted to women representatives. The findings of this thesis show how some male peers do play a role in the substantive representation of women either through supporting attempts to represent women or being the initiator. This suggests that further theorisation is needed on the issue of men representing women that could be informed by empirical findings. Therefore focusing primarily on the roles and actions of male peers would be a recommended research inquiry that could stem from this project.

The exploration of women peers' attitudes in chapter 7 suggested that women's interests are understood differently by peers according to factors that include generation, political affiliation and professional background. Notably the feelings of women peers towards feminist ideas on the substantive dimension of women's representation did not coalesce. Whilst it was felt that women were more likely to represent women, the idea that women would be better able to represent women was problematised by women peers. Some

women peers pointed out they could represent women they did not reflect in terms of background, culture or religion for example. However other women peers brought into question the extent to which they felt they could adequately represent the diversity of women's experiences. When this is linked to the findings of chapter 5, whereby it was suggested the diversity of women peers may be narrow, the extent to which a broad spectrum of women's issues could be represented in the House of Lords is uncertain.

Methodological Contributions of the Thesis

The research design developed for this thesis produced quantitative and qualitative data which helped to facilitate a rich and nuanced picture of women's political representation in the transitional House of Lords. The use of mixed methods is entirely suited to exploring facets of representation and the research design could easily be replicated by scholars investigating women's representation in other contexts or representation more generally.

The use of quantitative analysis of some deliberative and legislative functions of the House of Lords and qualitative elite interviews with women peers enabled data to be captured that documented both successful and unsuccessful attempts to substantively represent women within the public-domain and behind the scenes. Using mixed methods could offer further insights into the study of the substantive representation of women. Moreover, the research design could be replicated more widely by scholars concerned with the legislative process in political institutions more generally.

A future research design could build upon the one developed for this thesis by incorporating data derived from a large scale questionnaire which would facilitate a greater exploration of trends, similarities and differences amongst women peers. This would enable further intra-sex analysis which may help to tease out additional distinctions amongst women peers.

Contributions of the Thesis to Debates on the Post-Transitional House of Lords

The findings of this thesis could also help to feminise the contours of debate by centralising women and gender as important aspects of future reform to the House of Lords. Any further reform of the transitional House of Lords proposed by the Coalition Government, is likely to transform the chamber into being either wholly or mainly elected, with proportional representation as the mode of composition (HM Government 2010). Chapter 2 established that proportional representation facilitates higher levels of women's

representation and the likely loss of the *de jure* and *de facto* reserved seats for men in the Lords would also aid women's presence. In sum further reform to the mode of composition may be positive for the numerical and descriptive representation of women. However the use of proportional representation may not necessarily improve the levels of women's representation as the depleting levels of women's representation in the Scottish Parliament demonstrates. Moreover it is not yet clear whether the crossbenches would be retained in a reformed chamber, which could also impact upon women's presence. Appointments made by the House of Lords Appointments Commission have transformed the crossbenches which now have the highest proportion of women peers from ethnic minority backgrounds; this could be lost in a future all-elected House with no crossbench peers. Evidently, a future reformed second chamber could have uneven consequences upon the numerical and descriptive representation of women.

Reform of the second chamber could also have implications upon its culture, as linked to the symbolic representation of women. It has been highlighted that politics in the Lords plays out in a less masculinised way than in other political chambers. The polite culture and institutional norms of the chamber are less adversarial and favour consensual and co-operative behaviours, attributes preferred by women peers and more akin to feminised styles of politics. Prior research on the Scottish Parliament suggested that new institutions may be burdened by 'past institutional legacies and by initial and ongoing interactions with already existing institutions within which they are nested and interconnected' (Mackay 2009, 16) which means that the culture and norms of the House of Lords could endure, especially as the Coalition recommends a 'grandfathering' system for existing peers which could also help to keep the norms embedded. However it should be pointed out that elections could override the consensual culture in favour of a more overtly politicised one which could be negative for women's symbolic representation. Therefore it is essential that future reform does not seek to remove these attributes so that the present polite, collaborative and consensual culture of the House of Lords which befits women politicians and feminised styles of politics is not forfeited, as this could also impact upon other dimensions of women's political representation.

Notably the introduction of elections to a reformed second chamber which created territorial ties between women citizens and representatives could improve the substantive representation of women. However just as the legacy of the House of Lords' culture could be lost within a reformed second chamber which may negate the symbolic representation

of women, opportunities to feminise the parliamentary agenda and legislative functions may also be endangered. Currently peers have an unfettered capacity to raise issues deliberatively or legislatively, although such freedoms may be curtailed which could further constrain opportunities to feminise the work of the chamber. Ensuring that future representatives in a reformed second chamber retain an unencumbered ability to raise issues deliberatively and legislatively is crucial, especially because these representatives may be subject to greater party discipline, which constrains opportunities to feminise the work of the chamber as this thesis has shown.

Conclusion

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore the political representation of women in the House of Lords and this was facilitated through the use of feminist interpretation of representation. Representation as a concept and process is complicated and the House of Lords offers a unique institutional context which both facilitates and constrains the way the different dimensions of women's political representation play out. Moreover, as this study focused upon a second chamber it offers insights into a different type of institution that could advance new research trajectories focused upon women's representation in second chambers.

This research has shown how appointments may facilitate the presence of women in political institutions and alleviate democratic deficits despite their undemocratic nature. There are also systemic features of the House of Lords that guard against radical increases in women's presence which demonstrate why legislative studies have to focus comprehensively upon factors that influence women's representation.

It is suggested that the context, culture and institutional norms of the House of Lords dovetail well with feminised styles of politics. Despite being under-represented women peers' rates of attendance and participation outstrip those of their male counterparts and women 'thrive' in the House of Lords by taking on visible roles.

The substantive representation of women is most often advanced by women peers through the deliberative functions of the House of Lords, although this study has shed light upon the legislative role that male peers may play in terms of initiating or supporting. Second chambers have also been revealed to be sites where substantive representation can take

place which offer new sites of scrutiny for scholars concerned with the substantive representation of women.

Ultimately it is vital that the contours of debate on future reform of the Lords take into account the insights revealed by this study so that, rather than be backtracked, the status of women's representation can be maintained or enhanced in a post-transitional House of Lords.

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Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Date	Affiliation	m/f	Location
11 th June 2008	Labour	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
12 th June 2008	Labour	f	Office, Millbank
12 th June 2008	Crossbench	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
13 th June 2008	Crossbench	f	Office, House of Lords
13 th June 2008	Other	f	Office, House of Lords
13 th October 2008	Conservative	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
13 th October 2008	Conservative	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
14 th October 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
14 th October 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	House of Lords Terrace
14 th October 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
15 th October 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
16 th October 2008	Crossbench	f	Office, House of Lords
17 th June 2008	Labour	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
17 th June 2008	Labour	f	Office, House of Lords
18 th June 2008	Labour	f	Office, Millbank
20 th October 2008	Crossbench	f	Office, House of Lords
21 st October 2008	Labour	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
22 nd October 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
23 rd June 2008	Conservative	f	House of Lords Terrace
24 th June 2008	Crossbench	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
24 th June 2008	Liberal Democrat	m	Office, House of Lords
25 th June 2008	Crossbench	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
25 th June 2008	Labour	f	Family Room, House of Lords
31 st October 2008	Conservative	f	Phone Interview
3 rd November 2008	Labour	f	Phone Interview
5 th November 2008	Liberal Democrat	f	Phone Interview
7 th October 2008	Labour	f	Office, House of Lords
7 th October 2008	Labour	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
8 th October 2008	Conservative	f	Peers' Guest Room, House of Lords
8 th October 2008	Crossbench	m	Office, Westminster
9 th December 2008	Crossbench	f	Royal Gallery, House of Lords
10 th December 2008	Crossbench	f	Phone Interview

Appendix 2: Datasets

Dataset	Used in Chapter(s)
Biographical Dataset of Women Peers and sample of male peers from 2007/08 session.	5
Attendance Datasets 1999-2007	6
Attendance and Directorships Dataset	6
Written Questions in 1999/00 session	6
Starred and Supplementary Questions in 2004/05 session	6 and 7
Political Interests Dataset	7
Women's Debates Dataset	7
Pensions Bill Amendment Dataset	7