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THE SELF AND SELF-HELP:
WOMEN PURSUING AUTONOMY IN POST-WAR BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT: In the history of postwar womanhood in Britain, women's self-help organisations are credited with little significance save for 'helping mothers to do *their* work more happily'. This paper suggests that the do-it-yourself impetus of the 1960s and 1970s should be regarded as integral to understanding how millions of women negotiated a route towards personal growth and autonomy. Organisations like the National Housewives' Register, the National Childbirth Trust and the Pre-School Playgroups Association emerged from the grass roots in response to the conundrum faced by women who experienced dissatisfaction and frustration in their domestic role. I argue that these organisations offered thousands of women the opportunity for self-development, self-confidence and independence and that far from being insufficiently critical of dominant models of care, women's self-help operating at the level of the everyday was to be one of the foundations of what would become, by the 1970s, the widespread feminist transformation of women's lives. By interrogating the confluence of the personal with the social in the context of self-help, what we currently understand as women's liberation, encompassing the interrogation of personal life as well as advancing interpretations of inequality and working to implement change across a diverse range of issues, might be seen as merely one form of response to the question of how a woman was to live.

I Introduction

In 1960 the minutes of an area organisers' meeting of the National Childbirth Trust (NCT), founded four years earlier to promote natural childbirth, announced the birth to 'C. Macdonald (Weston-S-Mare) 3rd, a boy, 9 lbs 4 oz. She had amazed her doctor who had kept exclaiming "Look at that CONTROL! Astonishing!"'¹ Macdonald had subscribed to the methods of the NCT which promoted the philosophy and methods of natural childbirth advocate Grantly Dick-Read via antenatal classes organised by its local branches, countering the medicalization they experienced in hospital. 'I went to classes, not so much because I had yet become apprehensive about having my child, but because I very much wanted to enjoy the experience as fully as possible, *and to feel in control* of the situation – to have my own child rather than be half-doped and dull while others "had it" for me' explained

¹ Wellcome Trust Archives: NCT PP/GDR/F/12: Box 64. Minutes of the area organiser/helpers meeting 1 Nov 1960, London.

Viscountess Enfield upon the opening of the London headquarters in 1964.² The Trust sought to empower women with the confidence to take ownership of their own birth plans and to consign to history the experience of being treated ‘like a machine’ in hospital.³ ‘Until the women of this country who have experienced the NCT get up and do something about it’, commented an NCT activist, ‘you may be sure nothing will be done and the old fashioned system of castor oil, drugs, forceps and stitches will continue to be the fashion.’⁴

Do-it yourself women’s organisations have so far been largely neglected in the emerging history of postwar womanhood in the United Kingdom and yet they offered millions of women the opportunity for self-development, self-confidence and independence.⁵ They were numerous and varied in their objectives. The NCT was one of several so-called self-help organisations founded in the 1950s and 60s, many of them with the help of the *Manchester Guardian* newspaper.⁶ The 1960s was, as *Guardian* women’s page editor Mary Stott termed it, the ‘do-it-yourself decade’.⁷ Through giving space to women’s issues, the *Guardian* was instrumental in helping to launch a number of other organisations including the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents, Mothercare for Children in Hospital and more significant in respect of longevity, membership numbers and geographical spread, the National Housewives Register (NHR) and The Pre-School Playgroups Association (PPA).⁸ All emerged at a pivotal moment in Britain when women of the so-called ‘transition generation’ (those who grew to maturity in the postwar decades) began to discover the gap between their expectations and the realities of their lives and took it upon themselves to fill that gap with autonomous activity which met their needs rather than looking to existing organisations

² Wellcome Trust Archives: NCT SA/NCT/A/1/1/2: NCT Official Opening of Headquarters 1 Dec. 1964. Opening address by Viscountess Enfield.

³ Wellcome Trust Archives: NCT SA/NCT/A/1/1/2: Parents’ Group Bulletin Vol11 no.3 1956.

⁴ Wellcome Trust: NCT SA/NCT/A/1/1/2: Handwritten script of a talk or speech (no name or date) to accompany the showing of the film (undated).

⁵ These organisations do appear in more popular and journalistic treatments of women in postwar Britain, for instance Mary Ingham, *Now We Are Thirty: Women of the Breakthrough Generation* (1981) and Suzanne Lowry, *The Guilt Cage: Housewives and a Decade of Liberation* (1980). The NCT and PPA have been discussed by Angela Davis in relation to the modern histories of motherhood and child care: Davis, *Modern Motherhood: Women and the Family in England 1945-2000* (Manchester, 2012) and *Pre-School Childcare in England 1939-2010* (Manchester, 2015). The NHR features in Ali Haggett, *Desperate Housewives, Neuroses and the Domestic Environment 1945–1970* (2012).

⁶ Although NCT was launched via *The Times* newspaper.

⁷ *Women Talking: An Anthology from the Guardian Women’s Page 1922–35 1957–71*, ed. Mary Stott (1987), 225. Stott edited the page from 1957 to 1972.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 225–33.

or the state to act on their behalf.⁹ The historiographical neglect of these groups has been symptomatic of a failure of perception. It is in part a hangover from the condescension of those who have regarded such organisations as not being sufficiently critical of gender relations and thus not sufficiently radical to be considered part of the postwar feminist narrative.¹⁰ Self help initiatives which addressed concerns around childbirth, motherhood, child care and the isolation of housewives have been seen as reinforcing rather than overturning the subordination of women and thus not integral to dominant contemporary and historical narratives of postwar womanhood and especially of feminism. The result is that organisations that sought to address the tension between women's maternal and domestic roles and self-expression and self-development have, so far, not been integrated into interpretations of postwar change. Rather, the key interpretive frameworks for understanding women's experience in this period are firstly the dual role – the model whereby women engaged in the labour force before marriage and motherhood and then re-entered the workforce when the children were school-age or older - and second, the emergence of women's liberation.¹¹

In what follows it is argued that these nationwide organisations were a grass-roots response to the postwar reconfiguring of women's life cycles.¹² By conceptualising the self-help organisations in this way we can see how they allowed women to negotiate a route towards personal growth to meet their needs which, in most cases, consisted of conjoining family and motherhood with self-development outside the home. For many, mainly educated women, self-help voluntarist organisations were not merely a stop gap before picking up their career again. Rather, active involvement could be a springboard to a new career and a new identity. This was to be one of the foundations of what would become by the 1970s the widespread feminist transformation of women's lives.

The perception problem at the root of the feminist narrative hitherto has been a mistaken need to distinguish feminist women's organisations of the 'second wave' from non-feminist organisations of the preceding generation. Women's activity of the early 1960s to the late 1970s has been cast as a

⁹ Ingham, *Now We Are Thirty*.

¹⁰ This approach is adopted by Elizabeth Wilson in *Only Half Way to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain: 1945–68* (1980) and Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet Freedom. The Struggle for Women's Liberation* (1982).

¹¹ See Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles* (1956) and for a recent analysis of the legacy of this interpretive model see Helen McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment in Postwar Britain', *Past & Present* 233 (2016), 269–305. Organised feminism and women's liberation, whilst still awaiting a comprehensive history, functions as a magnetic pole for analyses of women's position in postwar Britain.

¹² Examples of the former would include Hannah Gavron, *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers* (Harmondsworth, 1966), Pearl Jephcott with Nancy Seear and John H. Smith, *Married Women Working* (1962). V. Klein, Britain's Married Women Workers. See McCarthy, 'Social Science' and Jane Lewis, 'From Equality to Liberation: Contextualizing the Emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement', in *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge of the Arts in the 1960s*, ed. B. Moore-Gilbert and John Seed (1992), 96–117.

necessary corrective to earlier initiatives characterised as self-satisfied and uncritical of the structures that framed their dilemmas. Historians of women's voluntary organisations such as the Townswomen's Guild, Women's Citizens' Associations and the National Council of Women have been at pains to portray inter-war women's activism as bridging the gap from first to second wave movements by recasting the work of these groups as 'democratic citizenship'.¹³ But early historians of the women's liberation movement have rarely been so generous, contrasting the women's liberation movement's analysis of women's oppression in the home and campaigns such as Wages for Housework with the position of organisations like the PPA which did not question the 'burden of care' and according to one interpretation were 'primarily oriented towards helping mothers to do *their* work more happily'.¹⁴ Others have struck a middle way, arguing that the frustration and disenchantment experienced by so many women in the late 50s and early 60s was channelled into activity that departed from the positions of feminist social researchers who were obsessed with the issue of the dual role and which developed new organisational models to enable women to achieve a new kind of equality on their own terms.¹⁵ The fact that they did this through organisations that attended to what might be considered 'domestic' concerns – motherhood, childcare, housework and so on – should not detract from the critical interventions they made, both practical and analytical. Indeed, recent contributions have argued that whilst second wave feminism questioned many post-war assumptions about appropriate models of mothering, women formulated a multitude of individual and collective responses to the challenges posed by the new postwar contract, both practical and political.¹⁶ Moreover, at the level of individual women, these organisations were often integral to them retaining or reframing a sense of self and autonomy at a life stage when that self so often became buried and even lost in the identity imposed on them of housewife and mother.

There is also a larger point here about the way we write the history of western women in the postwar period. In interpretations of change in women's lives, such has been the gravitational pull felt by feminist historians towards the feminist movement and the liberation narrative that historians have tended to ascribe the movement of the 1970s pivotal significance. The wave analogy has been

¹³ Catriona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England, 1928–64* (Manchester, 2013); Sue Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Inter-war period: the Edinburgh Women's Citizens' Association', *Women's History Review* 13:4 (2004), 621–48.

¹⁴ See Sarah Stoller, 'Forging a Politics of Care: Theorizing Household Work in the British Women's Liberation Movement', *History Workshop Journal* 85 (2018), 95–119; Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise*, 184.

¹⁵ Jane Lewis, 'From Equality to Liberation: Contextualising the Emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement', in *Cultural Revolution?*, ed. Moore-Gilbert and Seed, 96–117.

¹⁶ See Carla Pascoe, 'From the Little Wife to the Supermum? Maternographies of Feminism and Mothering in Australia since 1945', *Feminist Studies* (forthcoming); Lynne Marks, "'A Job that should be Respected": Contested Visions of Motherhood and English Canada's Second Wave Women's Movements, 1970–1990', *Women's History Review* 25:5 (2016), 771–790; Stoller, 'Forging a Politics of Care'.

robustly critiqued, but what has begun to take its place is a feminist continuum narrative in which historians have sought to bridge the more distinct phases of feminist activism, or they have identified precursors to or inheritors of particular campaigns and moments.¹⁷ The result is a myopia to other forms of women's actions, an episodic narrative of feminism, and a lack of inclusivity for women who did much to construct the practical, everyday feminism of modern Britain. Rather than bridging the waves, I suggest our scholarship should turn to perceive the causeway through the decades across which women's organisations traversed. Causeways are grounded links; they facilitate movement in both directions through, rather than over, turbulent and shifting waters. This approach might encompass a very wide range of organisations and positions, from the political activism of CND to the self-care of keep-fit.¹⁸ Indeed, it might be more profitable to broaden the perspective so that the women's liberation movement is regarded as a minority sport albeit one with significance greater than its size would suggest. Let us start to see the Women's Liberation Movement as one of many social movements and organisations which emerged as a female response to a broad and complex trajectory of social change since the 1940s encompassing women's education and work, increasing rejection of religious morality, decline in family size and control of fertility, social and geographical mobility and the growth of self-therapies and therapeutic practices.¹⁹ Within such a picture, what we understand as women's liberation, encompassing the interrogation of personal life as well as advancing interpretations of inequality and working to implement change across a diverse range of issues, might be seen as merely one form of response to the question of how a woman was to live.

The self-help or do-it-yourself women's groups of the 1960s and 70s are the focus here. I argue that these were potentially transformative spaces which enabled women to develop the social relationships, largely amongst other women, that are integral to the realisation of female autonomy or self-determination. Here the concept of relational autonomy developed by feminist philosophers is helpful. It holds that female selves are inherently social, can only be constituted by social relations

¹⁷ See for example: Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens*; Beaumont, 'Housewives, Workers and Citizens: Voluntary Women's Organisations and the Campaign for Women's Rights in England and Wales during the Postwar Period', in *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non State Actors in Society and Politics since 1945* ed. N. Crowson *et al* (Basingstoke, 2009), 59-76; Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship'.

¹⁸ Examples here include: Jill Liddington, *The Road to Greenham Common: Feminism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (New York, 1991); Eilidh Macrae, *Exercise in the Female Life-Cycle in Britain, 1930–1970* (Basingstoke, 2016).

¹⁹ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularisation in Canada, Ireland, UK and USA since the 1960s* (2012); Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918–1963* (Cambridge, 2010). We await a serious study of the 'expressive revolution' as it was experienced by women via therapeutic practice but see Haggett, *Desperate Housewives* for a discussion of female 'neurosis'.

and that an autonomous life depends upon healthy relations with others.²⁰ This is in contrast to the liberal, individualist, rationalistic concept of autonomy associated with free-acting men. However, while historians have written about the self-actualising currents of the ‘expressive revolution’ of the 1960s when the liberationist movements of that era, including feminism, offered women and men the space to self-fashion taking in everything from sexual choices to clothing and music, these are generally understood as separate from ‘traditional’ roles and structures such as the heterosexual family and motherhood and are achieved through oppositional behaviour or self-examination (consciousness-raising for instance or psychotherapy).²¹ This interpretive framework is too rigid. It does not allow space for self-actualising behaviour, particularly amongst women, alongside marriage and childcare. Whilst this cohort of predominantly middle-class women who lived through the era of near universal marriage and the opening up of further and higher education and the employment market experienced acute conflicts between the roles expected of them, they nevertheless did find practical ways of pursuing autonomy which intersected with their everyday lives. This was, as often as not, an autonomy that was dependent upon mutually constitutive social connections, especially with other women. And autonomy with these qualities was nurtured by many women in self-help organisations relating to children, education and the home.

II Do-it-yourself

In February 1960 Maureen Nicol, a young mother, had a letter published on *The Guardian*’s ‘Mainly for Women’ page in which she suggested that ‘housebound wives with liberal interests and a desire to remain individuals could form a national register.’ Maureen, who had recently moved with her husband to a new area, was responding to an article in the same column by *Guardian* journalist Betty Jerman in which she railed against suburbia and its dulling effects in the style of Betty Friedan except Jerman challenged women to do something about it. ‘They stay here all day. They set the tone. Many

²⁰ See M. Freedman, ‘Autonomy and Social Relationships: Rethinking the Feminist Critique’ in D. Teitjens Meyers ed., *Feminists Rethink the Self* (Boulder, Co., 1997), 40–61, and C. Mackenzie and N. Stoljar eds., *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency and the Social Self* (Oxford, 2000).

²¹ B. Martin, *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change* (Oxford, 1981). For a discussion of how this impacted on women’s narratives of the period see Lynn Abrams, ‘Heroes of their own life stories: narrating the female self in the feminist age’, *Cultural and Social History* forthcoming 2019. For an exception to the tendency to see women’s autonomy and self-expression as mutually dependent see Dolly Smith Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker: the Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain’, *Twentieth Century British History* 17:2 (2006), 206–229 which argues that working women responded to the denigration of working mothers by demanding part-time work and demonstrating that a woman who worked benefited her family.

of them look back with regret to the days when they worked in an office. Their work kept them alert. Home and child-minding can have a blunting effect on a woman's mind. But only she can sharpen it.'²² The result of Jerman's goading and Nicol's practical suggestion was the formation of the National Housewives Register, literally a national register of local groups of women initially run from Maureen's kitchen table. Within 10 years there were 8000 members and groups in every county. Nicol described the NHR as 'a great groundswell of lively-minded, reasonably educated mothers, torn from family and friends by mobile husbands ... largely solving their feelings of mental stagnation and loneliness by getting together and expanding their own lives.'²³ A few months later in 1961 Belle Tutaev, a former teacher with pre-school children in London, wrote to the same Woman's page on the subject of 'Do-it-Yourself Nurseries'. Responding to the absence of pre-school provision Belle started a campaign – the campaign for Nursery Education – but when this failed to have an impact she set up her own playgroup in Marylebone. Her letter was a call to arms to 'mothers and teachers who would like to create their own solutions to their problems.'²⁴

The National Housewives Register – originally the Housebound Wives Register, and much later renamed the National Women's Register – occupied a place in British society somewhere between the Women's Institute and Women's Liberation. It was set up in response to the crying need from young mothers for somewhere to engage in 'mental exercise', to 'escape from cabbage syndrome' with like-minded women, many of whom had tertiary or higher education and who were isolated, bored at home, and in desperate need of stimulation. In its earliest incarnation the NHR was run from Maureen Nicol's kitchen table as she established a 'register' of names of women across the country who wrote in response to her *Guardian* letter. Quickly regional organisers were identified who maintained the register in their area and facilitated meetings of local groups. Meetings took place in members' homes, babies and toddlers were minded on a rota system, 'competitive' baking was not permitted, and most importantly, there was a 'no domestic trivia' rule.²⁵ What were described as 'mind-stretching chat sessions' characterised most meetings; topics for discussion, often led by a member who had been tasked to do the research in the local library, ranged widely from classical art to eugenics, transcendental meditation to homosexuality. The Worthing, Lancing and Littlehampton group was typical with topics including comprehensive schools, what to do in the event of a nuclear attack and the pill.²⁶ 'I feel personally that it will ensure that my brain does not "seize up" during the

²² Betty Jerman, 'Squeezed in like sardines in suburbia', *The Guardian* 19 Feb. 1960.

²³ Maureen Nicol cited in Betty Jerman, *The Lively-Minded Women. The First Twenty-Five Years of the National Housewives Register* (1981) 29.

²⁴ *The Guardian*, August 1961.

²⁵ Jerman *Lively-Minded Women*, 10.

²⁶ Women's Library: NHR Spring Newsletter 1966. [Consulted at the former premises of the Women's Library, London Metropolitan University where NHR newsletters were available on open shelves].

years I am away from my profession as a teacher', wrote one member. 'So much one does in the home seems to be of a trivial nature that the effort one makes towards NHR, i.e. Research, preparation of a "speech" and reading, is so refreshing.'²⁷

From the start the NHR was determined to distinguish itself and its purpose. 'Intelligent women' not 'cake-icers' summed up the demographic they were seeking to recruit.²⁸ Advertising in popular women's magazines like *Woman* attracted what were described as 'un-register like' women, a problem overcome in the Lewisham area by the area organiser obtaining the addresses to which her newsagent delivered *The Guardian* and in Northwich where a letter advertising NHR was inserted in copies of *She* and *Nova* magazines in an attempt to attract the 'right kind' of members, not those who merely wished for a mothers and toddlers club.²⁹ A 1966 survey of NHR members reported that 19 per cent of those who responded were graduates and 50 per cent had a professional training.

The majority of members are 'bound' in that they are restricted to a routine probably more confining than anything they have hitherto encountered. Intelligent women with small children under school age, who have held interesting, stimulating and responsible jobs, now find their lives centred around the home as never before. They take a pride in their homes and families, accepting the restrictions and responsibilities inherent in their situation, but they find themselves mentally frustrated with the curtailment of their personal freedom.³⁰

It is clear, however, that NHR tapped into an existential need of many women to rediscover their identity, their self-confidence and self-respect which was subsumed in the daily round of housework and child care. Sheila Hunt's cri-de-coeur in the 1966 NHR newsletter spoke for many: 'Organising children, housework etc is surely not the real difficulty. My crying need is for time to be myself, not mother or housekeeper, ten minutes to look at the newspaper when it arrives, instead of in the evening? Must one really give up oneself so much?'³¹ The sense that self and the possibilities for self-development were buried within the all-consuming banality of the everyday was acutely summed up by Sheila Partington, NHR national committee member and ex-*Guardian* journalist in a letter to the NHR national organiser purportedly to discuss some aspect of NHR business: 'Have you read the

²⁷ Cited in Jerman, *Lively-Minded Women*, 22–3.

²⁸ The term 'cake-icers' was used by NHR national organiser Lesley Moreland, to describe those women who were domestically inclined. Cited in Jerman, *Lively-Minded Women*, 35.

²⁹ Jerman, *Lively-Minded Women*, 67; LSE, Women's Library: NHR Spring newsletter 1966; Autumn Newsletter 1966.

³⁰ LSE, Women's Library: 5/NWR/1/16: Survey reports 1966–. Survey published 1967, conducted by University of Manchester Extramural Department.

³¹ LSE, Women's Library, NHR Newsletters, Autumn 1966.

Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan that someone mentioned in the newsletter? Oh dear. The gasman long-awaited has appeared: also the baker and the dustmen. Must go.’³² Women joined NHR to meet like-minded women, to get out of the house once a fortnight, to talk about something other than children and to prove to themselves and to others that ‘mother’ was not their only identity and that they had not put their ‘minds into cold-storage’.³³ ‘I seemed to belong and for these evenings at least I was not just Cliff’s wife or James’ mum. At last I could come to terms with being a housewife because I could still be me as well’ was how NHR member Chris White put it.³⁴ Responses to publicity for a new group in Cardiff in 1966 reflect just these frustrations: ‘I think I’m going round the bend/up the wall/crazy’; ‘I’m in such a rut’; ‘I’ve been in a steady decline for ages’; ‘thank god someone else feels the same’; ‘I never see a soul’; ‘I can’t seem to meet people’; ‘no-one to talk to’; and so on and so on.’³⁵

The National Housewives’ Register was one conduit for the outpouring of frustration, mainly amongst women who had formerly been employed in professional and semi-professional roles. It was primarily a social network, albeit some groups did involve themselves in political issues and unlike the Women’s Institute, they were not prevented from discussing religion or politics.³⁶ In 1966 a third of groups had taken action on issues such as cervical smear testing, abortion law reform, primary school overcrowding and pre-school provision.³⁷ But the NHRs organisational reticence at adopting a political stance concealed its role as a petri-dish facilitating intellectual and political fermentation. NHR gave women the platform and the permission to question. ‘I wonder how different maternity services would be if run by women – particularly if they have borne children?’ asked a member from Pevensey in the 1965 Newsletter.³⁸ ‘And would we not allow abortion to any women who could not face carrying any particular baby – or allow her to ‘put away’ an obviously severely defective baby?’ The following edition featured an invitation from a member in Cheshire to join her in contributing to the abortion debate.

Last night we had a talk on Abortion Law Reform, and the general feeling was that we would like to voice our opinion on this subject. The speaker suggested that we write to our MP and we later thought that we might write to Lady Phillips. After all, we are an articulate, thinking

³² LSE, Women’s Library, 5/NWR/1/15 Correspondence 1969–1972: Sheila Partington to Lesley Taylor, 1965

³³ Jerman, *Lively-Minded Women*, 48.

³⁴ LSE, Women’s Library: 5/NWR/5/3: Maureen Nicol. Letter from Chris White, 17 Feb. 1994.

³⁵ LSE, Women’s Library: NHR Spring Newsletter 1966 (Cardiff)

³⁶ See Suzanne Lowry, *The Guilt Cage. Housewives and a Decade of Liberation* (1980), 86.

³⁷ LSE, Women’s Library: 5NWR/1/16 Survey reports 1966–.

³⁸ LSE, Women’s Library: NHR Newsletter, Oct. 1965.

group of women and when we have a strong opinion on some controversial subject like this, we would like to add our weight to any movement in our direction.³⁹

Nonetheless, external perceptions of NHR tended to patronise or criticise. With the headline ‘Think Tank for Women in the Suburbs’ one regional newspaper described NHR as ‘this thriving enterprise which aims to prove that suburbia can be a ‘think zone’ by arranging mind stretching chat sessions in members’ homes.’⁴⁰ An article in the *Sunday Times* reporting on NHRs weekend gathering in Buxton by journalist Moira Keenan was critical of what she saw as the failure of NHR to use its collective voice to influence policy. She was perplexed at what she had witnessed: ‘At the very first conference in seven years their choice of subject for a talk on the second day was not on abortion or birth control, drug addiction, comprehensive schools, under fives or any other subject of concern to young parents – but about the Peak District.’ ‘This seems like a serious criticism of a large body of intelligent and energetic women’.⁴¹ Yet NHR was unabashed at accusations of lethargy and refused to become a pressure group and the publicity gave membership a fillip with more than 1000 enquiries being received following the article’s publication.⁴² The insistence on not being a feminist organisation became shriller in the 1980s as NHR increasingly positioned itself in opposition to a stereotypical representation of feminism – ‘But don’t be put off because your interests are needlework, driving, squash or macramé’ announced one Kent newspaper in 1981. ‘You will not be parading a banner, fighting a cause or demanding equal rights’.⁴³ Yet at the same time local groups were making the case for better nursery provision and raising awareness of initiatives to protect women against sexual assault to name just two campaigning issues.⁴⁴ And for individual women NHR provided a space in which they could reconnect with their former selves and an environment in which to think about the future. Kathleen, who had been a draughtswoman before she had children, described her experience thus:

There was a bit of a black hole in your life if you’d lost your work colleagues, so having sort of, you know, a meeting where you could discuss, I don’t know.....suicide, or a book group or divorce or any current issue of the day, you know....miners’ strikes, um, you know, anything,

³⁹ LSE, Women’s Library: Newsletter Spring 1966.

⁴⁰ LSE, Women’s Library: NHR 5NWR/1: unidentified press cutting (Yorkshire newspaper), undated, c.1970.

⁴¹ *Sunday Times* 1967 get full ref. Jerman discusses the article and NHRs response in *Lively-Minded Women*, 62

⁴² LSE, Women’s Library: 5/NWR/1/15 Correspondence 1969–1972.

⁴³ LSE, Women’s Library: 5/NWR/4/1 (box 14): *Sheerness Times Guardian* 28 Aug. 1981.

⁴⁴ LSE, Women’s Library: 5/NWR/4/1/28 Kent 1970–1992, *Kent and Sussex Courier*, Tunbridge Wells 6 March 1992; 5/NWR/4/1/35 Norfolk 1971–1995, *Norwich Mercury and Advertiser* 7 Oct. 1988.

it was quite interesting actually. And then later on, as NWR progressed, women of my age were then talking about going back to work, you know, further education, that sort of thing.⁴⁵

It was arguably NHRs flexibility, its ability at local level, to encompass a range of positions, that was both its weakness and its strength as Keenan had identified. As the organisation grew, its national committee and annual conferences gave some women opportunities to develop new skills or to put to use experience they had gained in the workplace. By the 1970s with a membership in the thousands, running NHR was an operation involving hundreds of women as area organisers or national committee members. And many of them used that knowledge as a stepping stone to further education (especially the Open University) and to careers in the voluntary sector.⁴⁶

The Pre-School Playgroups Association on the other hand, with which many NHR members were also involved, was more multi-faceted, providing social contact for mothers and their children but also informal and formal educational and training opportunities for women and political engagement for some with education policy, urban planning, social inequality and early years provision.⁴⁷ In this sense PPA straddled the personal and the political in more concrete ways than any of the other self-help organisations of the postwar era. Some of the same frustrations of ‘housebound mothers’ allied to the absence of pre-school nursery or playschool provision gave rise to the PPA. There was a gaping hole in any form of pre-school provision for children under five and particularly those under three, exacerbated in some areas - primarily new housing estates in urban areas - by the lack of play provision for the very young.⁴⁸ Whilst playgroups, which offered a few hours of supervised play activity, were ostensibly set up to provide pre-school children with social contact and supervised play, it was mothers who arguably gained the most from volunteering as helpers and in the case of some, becoming more involved as supervisors. In the first issue of *Playgroup News*, a PPA newsletter for parents, Moya Codling who started a playgroup with her neighbours, initially meeting in their own homes in Bracknell new town before moving to a local community hall, expressed the feelings of many women in the same boat:

⁴⁵ Interview with Kathleen (pseudonym), conducted by Lynn Abrams, 2011.

⁴⁶ For examples of this trajectory see Lynn Abrams, ‘Liberating the female self: epiphanies, conflict and coherence in the life stories of post-war British women’, *Social History* 39:1 (2014), 14–35.

⁴⁷ PPA’s founder Belle Tutaev had helped the NHR Harrow group set up a creche and helped to edit *New Forum*, produced by NHR members. See Jerman, *Lively-Minded Women*, 151–2.

⁴⁸ See Jane Lewis, ‘The Failure to Expand Childcare Provision and to Develop a Comprehensive Childcare Policy in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 24: 2 (2013), 249–27; Vicky Randall, *The Politics of Child Daycare in Britain* (Oxford, 2000)

You will know how lonely mums can be if you have ever locked the bathroom door and just sobbed. Have you ever rushed out of the house to run anywhere, just to come back again at the end of the garden path?... Have you ever thrown the sugar bowl at the piano or the nappies out of the kitchen window and two minutes later picked them up and washed them for the nine hundredth and ninety-ninth time?⁴⁹

Whereas in 1967 Brenda Crowe, the PPA's first national organiser, observed that 'it wasn't done to mention mothers' needs', just two years later she noted that supervisors and members were beginning to say, 'I'm sure that I shouldn't be saying it – but I can't help feeling that mothers need playgroups as much as the children do.'⁵⁰ Cynthia Robinson, formerly a journalist before she had three children, credited her local playgroup in Norwich with giving her back her confidence:

In the first three years as a mother it seemed as if I had lost all status and excitement from my life. I slipped into a depressed state and was prescribed the then 'wonder' pill Librium. But here in the playgroup was a new beginning. I was greeted warmly, made to feel I had something to offer the group and then applauded for my usefulness.⁵¹

Cynthia quickly became a mother helper, was elected to the committee of her local group and went on to take playgroup courses, all the while learning about child development in general and her own boys' needs in particular. For Cynthia, the playgroup movement was the stepping stone to a new career. 'Over the next decade I moved on with confidence through further courses, tutor group, and then to a national PPA committee. At home I watched our sons grow with new enthusiasm and was soon involved with Open University courses in my "spare" time. This led to a Social Services post as Playgroups and Childminding Officer covering a third of Norfolk and then an MA in Social Work.'⁵² And an anonymous contributor from Essex who became a playgroup leader wrote in similar terms. 'It has given me confidence ... I forget problems at home ... Since becoming involved my life has changed. I attend courses, talk to parents, counsellors, our MP and leave the family for the weekend to represent my group at the National PPA AGM.'⁵³

The sentiment that playgroups were for mothers as much as children was core to the PPA's *raison d'être* and from the start playgroups were dependent on an army of parent-helpers, not only

⁴⁹ UCL, Institute of Education Archive, Pre-School Playgroup Association Collection (hereafter PLA) PPA 16/1-3: Playgroup News, issue 1, 1969.

⁵⁰ PLA/PPA 1/1: Comparison Report, 1967–9, p.1

⁵¹ PLA/PPA 6/1 (3): Memories of Playgroups: Cynthia Robinson

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ PLA/PPA 6/1: Memories (Anon Essex)

those who supported children's play but those who made the hall bookings, undertook fund raising, dealt with local authorities and all the other day-to-day requirements of running a community organisation. In a national survey conducted in the 1980s, the vast majority of the 459 mothers who responded said the playgroup helped them get on with their child better and 'gained confidence in themselves as mothers and individuals'.⁵⁴ This had been the mantra of Brenda Crowe who had a background in Froebel nurseries. She acknowledged the various needs of mothers, from distraction from the monotony of everyday routine at home to the opportunity to share their frustration and guilt for those who found it 'more difficult to adapt to a maternal role'.⁵⁵ Linnet McMahon, a parent co-founder of a village playgroup in 1968 who went on to become a playgroup course tutor concurred: 'What mothers were doing was, like their children, learning through play, in the sense that they were able to try things out – or try new ways of being – in an emotionally facilitating environment where it felt safe, where it was alright to make mistakes. In the process they created something new or became someone different. They were developing a sense of autonomy and identity ...'⁵⁶ And they were doing this in relation to other women. While attempts to include and involve fathers were regularly made, PPA was a women-centred and woman-led organisation.

In contrast with the National Housewives' Register which largely retained its original format and purpose as a social network for women at home and which explicitly stated its separation from women's liberation, the PPA quickly expanded in size and purpose from DIY and home-based playgroups to a national network with funding from local and national government and a structured training regime for those who wished to qualify as playgroup leaders and early years education. And it is this expansion of PPA which took it beyond its initial constituency of mainly middle-class parents and children. Whereas NHR had always been somewhat picky about its members – identifying its constituency as 'lively-minded' and distinguishing itself from the 'Tupperware scene'⁵⁷ – the PPA early on, and perhaps acknowledging that it had 'got stuck with the middle class tag', engaged with working-class communities in urban areas where the need for pre-school facilities of all kinds, from playgroups to nurseries, was more acute.⁵⁸ PPA was conscious that its mode of operation which required time, money (to hire halls and buy equipment) and connections could not be easily replicated in 'deprived' areas; they also acknowledged that playgroups were not the only solution for mothers

⁵⁴ M. Gray and L. McMahon, *Families in Playgroups. A Study of the Effect of Playgroup Experience on Families* (Reading, 1982) cited in L. McMahon, 'The significance of play for children and adults' in A. Henderson (ed.), *Insights from the Playgroup Movement: Equality and Autonomy in a Voluntary Organisation* (Stoke-on-Trent, 2011), 30.

⁵⁵ PLA/PPA/4/6: Brenda Crowe, 'Parent Involvement' in *Parents in Playgroups* (c.1971).

⁵⁶ McMahon, 'The significance of play', 32–3.

⁵⁷ LSE, Women's Library: 5/NWR/4/21/33 Merseyside 1968-1990: *The Reporter*, 19 April 1985 St Helen's.

⁵⁸ PLA/PPA 5/4: *Contact* magazine 1964.

and children in such areas. On a visit to Birmingham in 1968 Brenda Crowe observed that ‘playgroups can’t be a solution’ in deprived areas where mothers possessed less social capital and where many were in part time employment.⁵⁹ Working mothers needed day care where they could leave the children.

The difficulty of the do-it-yourself approach when it left the leafy suburbs was highlighted in Glasgow where thousands of city inhabitants had been rehoused in new council housing estates and high flats in the 1960s and 70s and where there was a shortage of suitable accommodation for a playgroup or indeed a lack of any appropriate indoor or outdoor space for pre-school children to play safely. New estates had been built quickly and plans for play parks were rarely implemented.⁶⁰ The Scottish PPA’s suggestion of building a ‘simple hutted structure on the rooftop of a multi-storey block’ was presumably not taken seriously.⁶¹ Here too mothers’ part-time working was an issue. The PPA had established a playgroup in a high flat in the city with a paid supervisor for just one term in acknowledgement of the inability of local mothers to manage it on their own. But once the supervisor was withdrawn Brenda Crowe recognised this playgroup had no future, echoing the contemporaneous observations of social researcher Pearl Jephcott who, in the 1960s was undertaking a major study of the city’s high flats and who had a particular interest in the provision for children’s play. Her research team worked with local women in one of the study areas, Royston, to establish a playgroup but soon understood that without support, the playgroup would not be sustained.⁶² The women there just did not have the capacity to maintain it given their own challenging circumstances. While the spokesperson for the Scottish Playgroups Association wrote of ‘the seeming apathy and indifference on the part of the mothers’ in some playgroups and their ‘unreliability’ for the rota of helpers, she also acknowledged that ‘the needs of mothers to talk about their problems and their lives seem equal to their children’s need to play.’⁶³ When the Scottish PPA undertook a study of playgroups in areas of need in 1977 they discovered that the majority had been initiated by outside agencies, usually social workers, and were grant aided; not surprising given the poor circumstances in which many families were living: in poor quality housing, poor economic circumstances and often unsupported by other family members. In these conditions the PPA’s philosophy of the centrality of voluntary parental

⁵⁹ PLA PPA 1-4: Crowe area report, Birmingham February 1968.

⁶⁰ V. Wright, A. Kearns, L. Abrams and B. Hazley, Planning for Play: Seventy Years of Ineffective Public Policy? The Example of Glasgow, Scotland’, *Planning Perspectives* (Early Online Publication, 2017), doi:10.1080/02665433.2017.1393627

⁶¹ PLA/PPA 2/9: Scottish PPA to Scottish Education Department, 1965.

⁶² B. Hazley, V. Wright, L. Abrams, and A. Kearns, ‘People and their homes rather than housing in the usual sense’? Locating the Tenant’s voice in Homes in High Flats’, *Women's History Review*, (published online, 2018: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2018.1472890>).

⁶³ PLA/PPA 2/28: Scottish Pre-School Playgroups Association, *Playgroups in Areas of Need* (1977), 13.

involvement (in practice this meant mothers) was seriously challenged. In the early days of these groups the mothers were reluctant to get involved, preferring to treat the playgroup as a safe space for their children to play. It took time for mothers to participate. ‘Some families have sunk so low in their self esteem that they cannot compete with the neighbours who can cope, and who despise them’ observed the report. ‘They need to come together first and gain in dignity before venturing into the wider playgroup context where the more efficient mums can easily overwhelm them.’⁶⁴

It is not easy to see how the women discussed in this report and elsewhere in the PPAs work with ‘deprived’ communities, could achieve the growth and confidence through involvement with playgroups so commonly reported by more affluent women. The autonomy achieved by middle-class women through the many relationships PPA facilitated was not easily transferable to working-class women in areas of deprivation. Many women were bringing up children in conditions of material and cultural poverty in the 1960s and 70s and isolation in high rise flats compounded their problems. It was unlikely that involvement in a playgroup once a week would lift them out of their position although it might have alleviated their isolation somewhat.⁶⁵ Women’s liberation groups recognised this, preferring to argue for 24-hour nurseries and child-care provision over playgroups which would enable women to take on paid work. The PPA, on the other hand, emphasised the need of the child for its mother in the first three years of life but as the author of an article in the *Times Educational Supplement* on playgroups for working mothers astutely remarked: ‘the logical conclusion seems to be that no mother with a child under 5 can work. Many clearly do. So where are all their children? And can it be that all the children who are excluded from playgroups – those deprived of their mothers all day – are precisely the group who need them the most?’⁶⁶ This writer was part of a wider debate about playgroups within the context of government provision of child care and early years education which acknowledged that playgroups were not the solution their advocates claimed. The voluntary principle of PPA which underpinned parental involvement was difficult to implement in working-class areas which meant that playgroups soon folded without outside support.⁶⁷ More fundamentally some were

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁵ See L. Abrams, L. Fleming, B. Hazley, V. Wright, A. Kearns, ‘Isolated and dependent: women and children in high-rise social housing in post-war Glasgow’, *Women's History Review* (published online, 2018: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2018.1472897>).

⁶⁶ PLA/PPA FAW: ‘Playgroups for Non-Working Mothers’, *Times Educational Supplement* (1971).

⁶⁷ See *Playgroups in Areas of Need* (1977) and Janet Finch, ‘The Deceit of Self Help: Preschool Playgroups and Working-Class Mothers’, *Journal of Social Policy*, 13:1, (1984), 1–20. The PPA was not blind to the problem. On a visit to Birmingham in 1968 Brenda Crowe was confronted with the realities of a ‘deprived’ area where mothers required nurseries and nursery schools with trained staff rather than playgroups. PLA/PPA 1-4, Area Report, Birmingham February 1968.

concerned that the playgroup model of provision merely entrenched the existing advantages of middle-class children and presumably the mothers too.⁶⁸

The PPA, whilst making serious efforts to expand provision to working-class areas and acknowledging that mothers' needs were often as urgent as those of their children, maintained its stance on voluntarism and the benefits to mothers of active participation. Some of its activists were more evangelical than others. Barbara Keeley, one of the founders of the movement, was outspoken in her belief that involvement with playgroups was 'an introduction to a career-like sequence of development.'⁶⁹ Indeed she suggested that women would not have realised the same potential if they had 'returned to the subordinate paid employment that they would have been expected to take' and dubbed voluntary work as 'employment-like'.⁷⁰ For Keeley child-rearing and care was equal in value to paid work – not in economic terms but in terms of personal satisfaction and growth. She cites the example of 'Carol' who left school at 16, found employment as a dental nurse and then married and had three children which precipitated a period of depression. Becoming a parent volunteer at the playgroup led to her becoming secretary of her local PPA, a tutor for playgroup courses followed by work in a private nursery and then a home visitor for a local authority-run nursery school. Carol said, 'Without the playgroup and tutoring experience I wouldn't have stood a chance – but then I wouldn't have had the confidence to apply anyhow!'⁷¹ Clearly PPA had done wonders for Carol's sense of self but what Keeley failed to consider sufficiently was the economic ramifications of a woman choosing to undertake voluntary work with a playgroup as opposed to paid work. And the PPA never engaged with the kind of thinking that made a case for valuing child care in macro-economic terms.

One might regard playgroups as the quintessential middle-class organisation run by middle-class women for themselves and their children who in turn benefited in respect of improved social contacts, access to training and for some, a track to a career in early years care and education.⁷² This might suggest that the relational autonomy model yields benefits for those who have the economic and cultural capital in the first place. Yet the picture is more nuanced. Davis' oral history research on motherhood in Oxfordshire indicates that working-class women did benefit socially from the playgroups and contemporary studies in areas of need in Southwark in London and in Scotland demonstrate that mothers were willing to participate as organisers and helpers although they were not

⁶⁸ PLA/PPA FAW: 'Social Gap and playschools', *The Guardian* 1971.

⁶⁹ PLA/PPA 4/46: Barbara Keeley, 'The Effect of Pre-School Provision on the Mothers of Young Children', MSc Cranfield Institute of Technology (1980), 70.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72–3.

⁷² Finch, 'The Deceit of Self Help'; Janet Finch, 'A First-Class Environment? Working-Class Playgroups as Pre-School Experience', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1984), 3–17.

usually the initiators of groups.⁷³ In Scotland the study of 11 playgroups by the Scottish PPA identified that mothers in deprived areas were unlikely to initiate playgroups on account of the difficulties they faced with housing, poverty, family problems and the environment in which they lived. ‘The difficulties these women face are enormous’ noted the study authors, ‘and all ... face them alone inasmuch as their families are usually unable or unwilling to provide any support and the husbands or co-habitees feel little or no obligation to the children.’⁷⁴ The mothers needed the playgroup for social chat and sharing of anxieties as much as the children needed it for play. ‘The mother’s desperate needs override those of the children’ remarked one playleader. ‘The mothers have a need to come and be calmed down.’ Some worked part time, some were ‘unreliable’ and others were reluctant to become involved, regarding the group as a social work department initiative. The study authors remained optimistic however, recommending that more emphasis in these playgroups needed to be on mothers learning alongside their children and in workshops and meetings in order to bolster the mothers’ confidence. ‘Through learning there is growth of confidence in one’s abilities, and this can then be used to take both learning and experience further.’⁷⁵ Although there is little evidence to support that optimism in the short term, the Scottish PPA report did lead to the Stepping Stones project which explicitly recognised the challenges faced by families in areas of deprivation and began to question the commitment hitherto to being a voluntary, parent-led, self-help organisation and recognised the need for paid workers as facilitators.

III Conclusions

Women’s self-help groups in this period were spaces for reconstituting female autonomy and rediscovery of the self. They facilitated a set of social relationships that were freely chosen rather than imposed and which enabled some women to pursue new directions in education, training and work. In addition, these organisations facilitated new and necessary forms of social relations in the absence, often, of extended family or community support, that enabled women to free themselves and their thinking from patriarchal frameworks. None of the self-help organisations of this era described themselves as feminist but each played a role in expanding women’s horizons and expertise, in turn underpinning women’s active engagement with social policy and social expectations. This is most evident in the case of the NCT which supported women to challenge medical professionals and to educate and train themselves to take control of the birth process. The network of NCT groups, area organisers, trainers and helpers provided support for pregnant women and new mothers but in itself

⁷³ Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, 38–9.

⁷⁴ PLA/PPA/2/28: *Playgroups in Areas of Need*, 7.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

constituted a set of often long term social relationships for the women who became part of the organisation.⁷⁶ Likewise, the National Housewives Register and Pre-School Playgroups Association created local and national social networks which provided a structure for women to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence, whether it was via organising a conference, acting as treasurer or secretary for a local branch or embarking on training courses.⁷⁷ ‘It has given me confidence ... Since becoming involved [in PPA] my life has changed’ was the assessment of one Essex-based playgroup leader. ‘I attend courses, talk to parents, councillors, our MP and leave the family for a weekend to represent my group at the National PPA AGM.’⁷⁸ And in 1966, in an article in *The Guardian* entitled ‘The sultanas of suburbia’, Betty Jerman summed up significance of NHR:

I came to regard suburban life as a heavy rice pudding with a few well-met sultanas here and there. Women have immense capacity. Most of it is unused. Enough women with confidence to chair a meeting, sit on a committee, organise action and we should not be moaning about bad schools, poor maternity services, too few nursery schools. We should be battling for our daughters’ education if we want marriage to be a partnership. We should learn to distinguish between a home and a house that looks as though a staff of servants maintain it. But mostly we can break down the tiny family units by helping each other to get out of the house to develop new or old interests simply by taking over each other’s children now and again.⁷⁹

Here the social activity engendered by NHR is critical to change on a personal level. In the case of the PPA involvement, according to one of its key activists, ‘did not just equip its beneficiaries with a few quick tips on laying out a playroom or writing a letter to the head of social services; it made them into different people’ ‘I have found myself again as a person in my own right’ remarked one activist. A Scottish volunteer put it more pithily.⁸⁰ ‘See me! I used to be deid.’⁸¹

The organisations discussed here have been subject to some critical comment by those who regard them as insufficiently challenging of the gender and social relations that underpinned women’s inequality. More benignly some have accepted their value to women who suffered isolation but note that such organisations worked within the system, rarely challenging patriarchal structures and

⁷⁶ See Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, 36–7.

⁷⁷ The PPA at national level regarded itself as a network rather than a hierarchy, ‘mutually supportive and independent’. Henderson, *Insights*, xvii.

⁷⁸ PLA/PPA 16/1: Memories (Anonymous Essex).

⁷⁹ *The Guardian* 16 Feb. 1966.

⁸⁰ Henderson, *Insights*, xv.

⁸¹ PLA/PPA 1/3: Text of speeches given at PPA conference, June 1972. Max Paterson ‘Parents Matter Most’, 21.

ideologies and ignoring social inequalities.⁸² In essence it is suggested they recognised the roots of women's subordination lay in the home and in their prime responsibility for child care but in their actions they replicated gender inequalities through their organisations. Yet, these were mass organisations involving thousands of women at every level. Testimonies from those who participated elicit life-changing narratives in which self-help organisations play a pivotal role. As historians we need to take these testimonies seriously. Feminist philosophers have argued that women's sense of self is 'enmeshed in relationality'.⁸³ This study of three women's self-help organisations of the 1960s supports the view that women lean towards the social in order to shore up their sense of self as opposed to pursuing the path of differentiation and detachment from others. The women who engaged in do-it-yourself, primarily although not exclusively educated women of the middle-classes, recognised the value of voluntaristic relational responsibilities as a means of meeting their own needs and those of others, primarily their children. They understood how cooperation and collective effort could benefit them and they believed this model could be made to work more generally. Women could assume multiple roles within these complex social networks and could use them to grow in confidence and ability. Those with the economic and social capital to do so, used the domain of the self-help organisation with its many levels and opportunities to pursue autonomy.

Do-it-yourself women's organisations were a practical response to a conundrum. That conundrum – how to maintain some semblance of autonomy and self respect whilst 'lost in the exhausting daily round' of family and child care– spurred women into action, armed with the economic and intellectual capital many had accrued prior to marriage. These organisations should not be regarded as the poor sisters of women's liberation or even a forerunner to the critical thinking and activism that avowedly feminist organisations came to espouse. Rather, women's collective voluntarism should be understood as a practical and grass-roots response to fundamental changes in women's lives in the postwar decades which endeavoured to meet both the needs of women for practical support and social and intellectual engagement and the same desires of those women to fulfil their roles as mothers and partners. Self help organisations allowed women to be in control.

⁸² E Wilson, *Halfway to Paradise*; Suzanne Lowry, *The Guilt Cage: Housewives and a Decade of Liberation* (1980), 82.

⁸³ Chodorow cited in Friedman, 'Autonomy and Social Relationships', 43.