

# Practical, everyday feminism: mothers, politicians, and Mumsnet.

PEDERSEN, S.

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Practical, everyday feminism: mothers, politicians, and Mumsnet

Sarah Pedersen, Robert Gordon University

### Abstract

This Viewpoint positions the contemporary UK parenting website Mumsnet within the wider history of mothers' organisations' interactions with politics and politicians over the last 100 years. While the politicisation of motherhood is nothing new, and Mumsnet follows its predecessors in insisting on an apolitical stance, Mumsnet users are unusual in their willingness to embrace an identity as feminists and to engage in debate on controversial contemporary issues. Mumsnet has been attacked by some for allowing such conversations to happen, and praised by others for its commitment to a policy of freedom of speech. In this way, it has continued the historical role of the media in the creation and support of organised women's voices on contemporary political issues.

### Bio

Sarah Pedersen is Professor of Communication and Media in the School of Creative and Cultural Business, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK. She is author of *The Scottish Suffragettes and the Press* (Palgrave 2017) and *The Politicization of Mumsnet* (Emerald 2020). Correspondence to: Professor Sarah Pedersen, School of Creative and Cultural Business, Robert Gordon University, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen AB10 7QE, UK.

Email: [s.pedersen@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:s.pedersen@rgu.ac.uk)

Throughout the twentieth century, women shared their experiences of motherhood with other women, and united to form groups that articulated demands for change. Sometimes they campaigned for state intervention, such as the introduction of a family allowance, and sometimes they demanded the reduction of state involvement in the lives of women, for example the campaign for the de-medicalisation of childbirth. Whether they were members of the Mothers' Union, the National Housewives' Register or the National Childbirth Trust, women worked together both to support each other but also on campaigns related to their wider position in the world. In this way, they introduced issues such as childbirth and breastfeeding, which were once relegated to the private, domestic, sphere, into public debate.

This essay aims to position a contemporary organisation – the parenting website Mumsnet – within the wider history of mothers’ interactions with politics over the last 100 years. It argues that the politicisation of motherhood is nothing new: politicians have attempted to ‘woo’ female voters since women in the UK achieved the right to vote in the first half of the twentieth century. However, mothers have also organised to parlay their influence with politicians into concrete changes, particularly in relation to infant and maternal welfare.

It is clear that, for many women during the twentieth century, organisations focused on the home and motherhood offered a space for the raising of a political consciousness and an understanding of themselves as citizens.<sup>1</sup> They could also be a place where collective action was planned and initiated. I argue that Mumsnet offers a modern continuum of this type of ‘do-it-yourself’ action around issues such as maternity care and infant well-being. In this I build on the work of Caitriona Beaumont, whose letter to *The Guardian* in September 2013 pointed out that ‘the success of online sites such as Mumsnet in articulating the views of mothers is nothing new. The history of housewives’ organisations... demonstrates that mothers have long been able to campaign on a range of issues important to them.’<sup>2</sup>

However, unlike some twentieth-century mothers’ organisations, Mumsnetters, as the site’s users refer to themselves, are also willing to be involved in the discussion of contentious contemporary issues and to embrace the identity of feminists. To a certain extent this is because feminism itself is having a ‘moment’ where it is embraced by the wider culture.<sup>3</sup> But it is also important to note the role anonymity plays in allowing women to voice unpopular opinions and criticisms of government policy. For some women, Mumsnet offers a space for the anonymous articulation of a feeling of political homelessness and anger, and the site has become part of a wider resurgence of women’s rights organisations in the UK in recent years. Thus it has stepped away from its original position as a parenting website and continues the historical role of the media in the creation and support of organised women’s voices on contemporary political issues.

### Mothers’ campaigns in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Even before women won the Parliamentary vote, they made good use of contemporary media to engage in public debate, for example using letters to the local and national press to raise questions relating to government and society. Frequently these letter-writers used pen names that emphasised their motherhood to justify their entry into the world of politics, whether

their letters related to the price of milk, the state of the roads or – for some – the question of women's suffrage. During the First World War, female correspondents to newspapers continued to make use of pen names that emphasised their maternal role to underline their own sacrifice for the war effort. Pen names such as 'Soldier's Mother' or 'Widowed Mother of an Only Son lying ill in France' justified these women's entry into the public sphere and the criticisms of the government or the army they were making in their letters, while also offering the cover of anonymity to their complaints.<sup>4</sup>

As soon as some women over the age of 30 and with a property qualification had achieved the vote in 1918, politicians and their agents took to the newspapers and magazines of the day to woo the new female voter, claiming to listen to her opinions on political matters. At the same time, ex-suffrage campaigners urged women to consider their own needs and use their vote wisely.<sup>5</sup> All political parties developed policy programmes aimed at women because there was an initial belief that women would vote as a block and were concerned about different issues to men. However, once it became clear that women did not act this way, the stream of 'women-friendly' policies disappeared.<sup>6</sup>

Once the vote was won, women's demands in the interwar years were articulated through a variety of organisations, including temperance movements, housewives' associations, and religious groups. The campaigns of such organisations were not only for particular policies, such as maternity hospitals and a family allowance, but also, more widely, for a greater recognition of the value of mothering.<sup>7</sup> While women were equal to men and now had rights as equal citizens, they were perceived by these women's organisations to have different needs, which the state needed to support. Beaumont's work on organisations such as the Mothers' Union, National Federation of Townswomen's Guilds and Catholic Women's League, which represented hundreds of thousands of women during the interwar years, demonstrates how they worked to promote the ideal of the 'citizen housewife' who had a duty to contribute to the local community and public life.<sup>8</sup> They also sought to promote women's domestic work as a skilled profession that should be valued by the nation. While these organisations did not consider themselves to be political and did not seek to challenge the gender division of labour in society, they did consider it to be important that their members made full use of their citizenship. They also worked together with other women's organisations to pressure governments – for example in 1944 to ensure that the new family allowance was paid directly to mothers, not fathers.<sup>9</sup> Again, their engagement with political

debate included letters to the newspapers. Beaumont points out that, while women's organisations were able to work together on issues such as the campaign for a family allowance and demands for better housing, those built around religious identities, such as the Mothers' Union and Catholic Women's League, parted ways with other groups on issues such as divorce, birth control and abortion-law reform. She also notes that the official policy of organisations such as the YWCA, Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds was not to discuss or campaign on these issues in order to protect the unanimity of the membership.<sup>10</sup>

While the campaigners of the first half of the century demanded more state support and intervention into the lives of women, particularly in relation to birth and the welfare of infants and mothers, during the 1950s and 1960s women's campaigns relating to these subjects coalesced around issues of breastfeeding and natural, rather than medicalised, birthing practices.<sup>11</sup> Now the campaigns were for less state intervention, rather than more. Investigating such campaigns in Australia, Kerreen Reiger argues that mothers carved out a new form of politics, transforming their personal experiences into issues of public concern and pushing private-sphere issues onto the public agenda. Again, the media played an important role in these campaigns, with letters to the press, articles in magazines and interviews on radio and television getting the message out, not just to pregnant women but also their partners and families. However, both Reiger and Lynn Abrams suggest that organisations such as the National Childbirth Trust and the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia rarely feature in either feminist history or political theorist analyses of the new social movements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> They argue that this was a result both of these organisations' refusal to see themselves as 'political' and what could be perceived to be an anti-motherhood position within the women's liberation movement, which led to these organisations being regarded as not sufficiently critical of gender relations to be considered part of the post-war feminist narrative.<sup>13</sup>

In 1960, journalist Betty Jerman wrote a piece for *The Guardian's* women's page in which she shared her boredom at living in the suburbs with her family. While her husband commuted into the city, Jerman found herself 'bored witless' – particularly with the lack of stimulating conversation. She blamed the women around her: 'Home and childminding can have a blunting effect on a woman's mind'.<sup>14</sup> Letters poured in from women responding to the piece. One respondent, Maureen Nicol, suggested that housebound wives with liberal interests and a desire to remain individuals could form a national register. She was

bombarded with letters from women wishing to join and so set up the Housebound Wives' Register, which soon had 2000 members. In 1966, the Register changed its name to the National Housewives' Register (NHR) and the National Women's Register in 1987. The organisation became a home for educated, mostly liberal women, who wanted to meet up to discuss things that were not related to their children or housework. Local groups were formed and meetings took place in members' homes. There was a ban on the discussion of domestic trivia, and topics for discussion, including classical art, eugenics and transcendental meditation, were led by a member who had been tasked to research the subject.<sup>15</sup> Abrams argues that these organisations emerged at a pivotal moment in the UK where women who had grown to maturity in the post-war years discovered the gap between their expectations and the realities of their lives. Importantly, rather than looking to existing organisations or the state to act of their behalf, they formed new self-help initiatives focused on childbirth, motherhood and the isolation of housewives. She notes the importance of the *Manchester Guardian* in the foundation of not just the NHR but other 'do-it-yourself' women's organisations of the period such as the National Childbirth Trust and Pre-Schools Playground Association. Advertisements for meetings of local NHR groups were carefully placed in the 'right' publications, such as *She* and *Nova*, since adverts in *Woman* attracted 'un-register like' women.<sup>16</sup>

Ali Haggett argues that the NHR was not a pressure group – it existed to put like-minded women in contact with each other and to provide a 'safety valve' while their children were small.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, Abrams suggests that active involvement in such self-help initiatives could lead to a new career and a new identity, and that such organisations contributed to the 'practical, everyday feminism of modern Britain'.<sup>18</sup> The organisation of the NHR involved hundreds of women as area organisers and national committee members, and some of them used this experience as a stepping-stone to further education or careers in the voluntary sector. Abrams also notes that some groups did involve themselves in political issues. For example, in 1966 a third of groups had taken action on issues such as cervical smear tests, abortion law and primary school overcrowding.

Motherhood re-emerged as an important theme in US politics during the 1980s and 90s, as women voters became important players in presidential elections.<sup>19</sup> Political parties started to compete for the support of groups of women identified, for example, as Security Moms, Waitress Moms and Hockey Moms, and there was a particular emphasis on 'family values'

during Reagan's presidency. Similarly, in the UK in the early 1990s, a moral panic over single mothers was fanned by tabloid reporting and the statements of Conservative politicians such as John Redwood and Peter Lilley, who condemned single mothers as 'benefit driven' and 'undeserving'.<sup>20</sup> By the late 1990s, however, David Cameron's leadership of the party had led to a modernisation of the party message and a new discourse, which redefined lone parents as the chief targets of government aid. At the same time, a key to the Labour party's success in the 1990s was described as 'Worcester Woman' – a young, professional woman from middle England who was attracted to the party by Tony Blair. In 2010, the general election was frequently described in the press as the 'Mumsnet election' as all party leaders appeared on the website to woo middle-class women – a key floating voter demographic.<sup>21</sup>

Discussion of the role of motherhood in the lives of women became increasingly prominent in the media, with discussions about 'women who try to have it all' and the 'Mommy wars' between women who worked out of the house and homemakers. Deason *et al* note that the internet became an important site for the exchange of political ideas between mothers and has 'expanded the circle of mother-activists to include a more diverse group of women and a wider variety of issue positions'.<sup>22</sup>

We thus have a history throughout the twentieth century of women using organisations aimed at mothers to undertake collective action to pressure politicians into engaging with issues that were previously considered to belong to the private sphere, particularly in reference to the welfare of mothers and children. These organisations mostly did not consider themselves to be political, and many were also nervous of embracing the badge of feminism. However, they desired to raise awareness of the importance of the family, and particularly mothers' role within it, and encouraged their members to fully embrace their role as citizens. They did this in a number of ways, including engagement with the media of the day. At the same time, politicians used these organisations and the media to attempt to influence women to support their policies, particularly those related to so-called 'family values'.

### The politicisation of Mumsnet

The UK parenting website Mumsnet celebrated its twentieth birthday in 2020. What started as a website for parents to share recommendations of products and services has grown into an influential forum that holds an important role in the formation of British middle-class

motherhood. Its influence is seen in both the advertising revenue it can now raise and its pull with politicians.

The stated aim of the site is ‘To make parents’ lives easier by pooling knowledge, advice and support’.<sup>23</sup> It is the largest parenting website in the UK and claims ten million unique visitors a month. In November 2019 its talk boards reached one billion page views. While the website states that it is aimed at parents, less than 5% of its active users are fathers. However, the site does not only attract mothers: the wide range of topics tackled on the talk boards – echoing the National Housewives’ Register – from women’s rights to style and beauty, cars to careers, mean that many of its female users are neither mothers nor looking to conceive.

Over the years Mumsnet has become a frequently used space where members of the government and opposition parties try to connect with female voters to explain and gather support for policies, particularly those relating to families and children. Politicians have undertaken webchats on the site with a view to wooing floating women voters – and it is clear that this has been successful enough since David Cameron undertook the first webchat in 2006 for over 100 political webchats to have happened since that time. As noted above, the general election of 2010 was named the ‘Mumsnet election’ because of the frequency of appearances of party leaders and others on the site. Outside general elections, the site has played host to politicians debating the Scottish independence referendum, London mayoral elections and Brexit, plus a host of ministers attempting to gain support for particular policies, mostly relating to what are seen as ‘women’s issues’ such as childbirth, education, maternal health, and childcare. However, while politicians may arrive on Mumsnet expecting to focus on their pet policy, Mumsnetters expect the conversation to embrace wider political debate. Justine Roberts, the founder and now Chief Executive of Mumsnet, describes Gordon Brown, for example, arriving at Mumsnet headquarters for a webchat, ‘obsessed with the idea that the only thing women could care about was his child tax credits and that women only focused on children’.<sup>24</sup> Mumsnetters were frustrated by his refusal to engage with their other questions on a variety of political topics.

Much of the media coverage of these Mumsnet webchats is in a jovial tone, which echoes newspaper coverage of political hustings in the first years of the twentieth century when ‘the suffrage question’ would be put to candidates at the end of a meeting and was often covered in press reports as a bit of light relief. Thus newspapers unfailingly report a politician’s



answer to the Mumsnet question about choice of favourite biscuit while ignoring many of the other, detailed and politically-charged questions levelled by Mumsnetters.

Like its predecessors, Mumsnet has attempted to present itself as apolitical. Justine Roberts emphasises in press interviews that Mumsnet tries to stay politically impartial and aims to give airtime to a variety of political opinions. Politicians who have undertaken webchats run the gamut from the Green party and SNP to UKIP (although Nigel Farage did not go down well with Mumsnetters and his time at Mumsnet headquarters was described by Roberts as ‘uncomfortable. Just the idea of being surrounded by women seemed to be very difficult for him’).<sup>25</sup> In 2011 Mumsnet rebuffed a suggestion made by Labour leader Ed Miliband that it could become a registered consultant to the party, attending conferences and helping define policy. Roberts stated: ‘Given we have users of Left, Right and somewhere in the middle persuasions, we would be unlikely to find consensus around any set of policies that were too closely identified with one party’.<sup>26</sup>

### Mumsnet campaigns

Mumsnet has been able to parlay its perceived influence with politicians and women, particularly middle-class women, into a role as a mouthpiece of women’s concerns. Its campaigns have sometimes been what might be expected of a forum ostensibly focused on parenting. Many have been stimulated by the sharing of women’s experience on the site, such as the 2011 campaign to improve miscarriage care, which culminated in the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) releasing the first-ever NHS guidelines dealing with miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy in 2012. In 2010 the Mumsnet ‘Let Girls be Girls’ campaign focused on the imposition of adult sexuality on young girls, particularly through clothing. The campaign was launched during the 2010 General Election campaign and therefore received support from many of the politicians who appeared on the site at this time, including Conservatives David Cameron and Michael Gove and the-then Prime Minister Gordon Brown. This led to wide media coverage of the campaign, including a *Sun* campaign against ‘paedo-bikinis’ (padded bikini tops for seven year-olds), which stimulated Tesco and Asda to sign up to a Mumsnet code of practice relating to sexualised clothing.

Other Mumsnet campaigns, both official and unofficial, have been products of a growing feminist discussion that has taken place on the site, which led in 2010 to the establishment of a Feminism and Women’s Rights topic on the discussion boards. Unlike some of the

mothers' organisations discussed above, the users of Mumsnet have no issue with embracing an explicitly feminist identity. In 2013, a site survey asked respondents to consider how much Mumsnet had influenced their perspective on everyday issues, how well informed they felt about feminist perspectives and how comfortable they were in expressing feminist viewpoints. Of the 2,034 Mumsnetters who responded to the survey, 59% stated that they considered themselves to be feminist – and 47% had considered themselves to be feminist before they started using the site. Rebecca Wray compares these findings to a similar survey on Mumsnet's rival UK parenting site Netmums, conducted in 2012. Only one in seven of the users of Netmums saw themselves as feminist.<sup>27</sup>

While many of the official Mumsnet campaigns have focused on issues relating to maternal and child welfare, albeit with a feminist twist, over the past five years what had been a small but influential gender-critical feminist voice on the site has led to Mumsnet becoming a crucial and central part of the 'co-operative constellation'<sup>28</sup> of a resurgent women's rights movement in the UK. Gender-critical feminism can be connected to radical feminism, and is sceptical of the concept of the innateness of gender. Its adherents see the inequalities that women are subjected to in the world as a direct result of their biological sex, arguing that sex – just like class and race – acts as a major axis of oppression. It is perhaps not surprising to find gender-critical feminists on a site that is centred on the material realities of birth and motherhood.

Stimulated by proposals by the governments in Westminster and Holyrood to reform the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA), and in particular to allow achievement of a Gender Recognition Certificate through self-identification alone, gender-critical, and mostly left-wing women formed grassroots organisations to raise their concerns about potential impacts on women's rights and to lobby the government and other stakeholders. These organisations, such as Fair Play for Women, FiLiA and Woman's Place UK, have a symbiotic relationship with the Mumsnet Feminism discussion boards. Information, surveys and social-media posts from these groups are shared on the site and live reports given from the organisations' events by Mumsnetters who are attending. Mumsnet has thus acted as a space where gender-critical women have been able to meet to discuss and debate online, to educate each other, and to formulate practical action both on and off the internet.<sup>29</sup> In this, it has differed from many other parts of the Internet, such as Twitter and Reddit, where gender-critical women have found themselves banned for their opinions. On Twitter, for example, women such as the

Canadian writer and founder of *Feminist Current*, Megan Murphy, found themselves censored and then banned.

While Mumsnet has provided a space for women to discuss women's concerns about reforms of the GRA, it has also been a springboard for direct action, demonstrating that some Mumsnetters at least follow the suffragette mantra of 'Deeds not Words'. In 2018, two Mumsnetters 'self-identified' as men for the day in order to challenge Swim England's new guidelines that suggested that people who self-identified as a different gender should be allowed to use the facilities of whichever sex they felt was appropriate, whether or not they had a Gender Recognition Certificate or had had reassignment surgery. The two women duly appeared at Dulwich swimming pool for a men-only swimming session wearing men's swimming trunks. Media sensation followed. A few months later a larger group of Mumsnetters again identified as men to gain access to the men-only swimming pond at Hampstead Heath. This time the police were called. Swim England has since withdrawn its guidance on the subject and states that it is 'under review'.<sup>30</sup> In September 2020, the UK government announced that it had dropped plans to allow people to change gender without a medical diagnosis.<sup>31</sup>

One of the reasons Mumsnet has become a space for the articulation of gender-critical feminism is because its users use pen names rather than their own names, as elsewhere on the Internet such as Twitter and Facebook. Just as the use of a pen name helped give anonymity to an Edwardian mother writing in complaint about the treatment of her soldier son or in support of the suffrage campaign, the use of pen names of Mumsnet ensures that women can share their opinions on a fraught and controversial topic such as the GRA without fearing for the consequences. And just as the pen names of Edwardian letter-writers, such as 'Prisoner's Mother', underlined the message within the letter, Mumsnetters' pen names can also add to the user's identity: 'GCAcademic' or 'YesItsADebate'.

The reference to the suffragettes above is stimulated in part by a claim to be following in their footsteps by Mumsnetters themselves. Mumsnetters who engage in discussion on the subject of GRA reform often identify with the women's rights campaigners of previous centuries, particularly the suffragettes. 'I take strength from the suffragettes right now' wrote one poster, who was worried that her gender-critical views might lead to dismissal from her place of work. Another poster in February 2020 urged others: 'Whatever the outcome we

keep going. The suffragettes originally were pushed back. Put in prison. Force fed. Be strong.’ In her analysis of the everyday ways in which memories of the suffrage campaign circulate, Red Chidgey suggests that the feminist memories of the suffragettes can be performatively invoked by contemporary groups to help shape political agendas and actions.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Krista Cowman’s analysis of the discussion of first-wave feminism in the second-wave publication *Spare Rib* demonstrates how *Spare Rib* writers positioned contemporary campaigns for women’s rights in a linear relationship to suffrage and encouraged readers to assess the effectiveness of militant methods.<sup>33</sup>

Not all Mumsnet users have been happy with the increasing discussion of self-ID and the Gender Recognition Act on the site’s discussion forums. Unlike organisations such as the YWCA, Women’s Institutes and Townswomen’s Guilds, who chose not to discuss or campaign on particular issues in order to protect the unanimity of the membership, Mumsnet has allowed both sides of the question to be debated on its site – just as it allows a space for all sides of political issues. However, it has been forced to limit the freedom of speech on its Feminism topic, rewriting guidelines and removing posts, and sometimes even posters, in an attempt to continue to provide a space for this debate in the teeth of complaints, many from external sources. The questions raised by the government’s plans to reform the GRA have also led to this issue dominating the politicians’ webchats that have allowed Mumsnet access to politicians and a position of influence. Some politicians have rejected invitations to appear on the site because of its recent reputation. While some media commentators have hailed Mumsnet as a bastion of free speech,<sup>34</sup> trans-rights activists have urged important advertisers to step away from any connection with Mumsnet for fear of a social media pile-on, with accusations of transphobia and hate crime.<sup>35</sup>

Like previous organisations ostensibly built around the idea of women as mothers and claiming to be apolitical, such as the Mothers’ Union or National Housewives’ Register, Mumsnet has become a place where women can work together to achieve political change. Established at a time when political parties were embracing ‘family values’ and also re-learning the value of the women’s vote, the site has been able to attract engagement with politicians on a regular basis. As politicians of the past attempted to influence the women voter via newspapers, women’s magazines, radio and television, contemporary politicians use the internet, and sites such as Mumsnet offer politicians a portal through which ten million women can be accessed and potentially persuaded to support your policies or pledge their

votes. At the same time, Mumsnet has been able to parlay its influence with politicians into active support for its own campaigns, particularly those related to issues around child and maternal well-being.

Unlike some previous women's organisations, such as Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds, Mumsnet does not shy away from discussion of either feminism or politics. These topics can be just as polarising as they were in the interwar years or the 1960s and 70s. However, Mumsnet has become a space for women to discuss many of the political issues of the day and to become involved in feminism-influenced campaigns. Reiger argues that campaigns relating to natural birth and the right to breastfeed in public spaces brought the private issues of the female, domestic sphere into debate in the public sphere. Similarly, women's concerns about what it means to be a woman in contemporary society and how government policy change might impact them has led women to use the space offered by Mumsnet to have difficult and sometimes controversial conversations. Mumsnet has been attacked by some for allowing such conversations to happen, and praised by others for its commitment to a policy of freedom of speech. In this way, it has continued the historical role of the media in the creation and support of organised women's voices on contemporary political issues. To use Lynn Abrams' phrase, Mumsnet has contributed to the 'practical, everyday feminism of modern Britain'.

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<sup>2</sup> Caitriona Beaumont, Letter to the Editor, *The Guardian*, 2 September 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Hamad and Anthea Taylor, 'Introduction: Feminism and contemporary celebrity culture', *Celebrity Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 124-127.

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<sup>5</sup> Sarah Pedersen, 'Speaking as Citizens: Women's Political Correspondence to Scottish Newspapers 1918-1928', in *Letters to the Editor*, eds. A. Cavanagh and J. Steel (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): 25-47.

<sup>6</sup> Rosie Campbell, (2016). 'Representing women voters: The role of the gender gap and the response of political parties', *Party Politics* 22, no. 5 (2016): 587-597.

<sup>7</sup> Kerreen Reiger, 'Reconceiving citizenship: The challenge of mothers as political activists', *Feminist Theory* 1, no. 3 (2000): 309-327.

<sup>8</sup> Caitriona Beaumont, 'Where to Park the Pram? Voluntary Women's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928-1945', *Women's History Review*, 22, no. 1 (2013): 75-96.

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<sup>11</sup> Reiger, Reconceiving citizenship

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- <sup>22</sup> Deason, Greenlee & Langner, *Mothers on the campaign trail*, 135.
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- <sup>33</sup> Krista Cowman, 'Carrying on a Long Tradition: Second-Wave Presentations of First-Wave Feminism in Spare Rib c. 1972—80' *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 17, no. 3 (2010): 193-210.
- <sup>34</sup> James Kirkup, 'If Mumsnet can stand up for free speech, why can't MPs?' *The Spectator*, 17 April 2018.
- <sup>35</sup> Eva Livingston, *Vice*, 6 December 2018.