

Women Representatives Acting for Women: Sex and the Signing of Early Day Motions in the 1997 Parliament

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Appendix: Coding

Stage 1 Coding

To test whether women were more likely than men to sign ‘women’s’ early day motions (EDMs), it is necessary to distinguish between ‘women’s’ and ‘non-women’s’ EDMs. To be classified as ‘women’s’ an EDM has to have as its ‘primary subject matter’ women and/or their concerns (Reingold, 2000, pp. 166–7). ‘Women’s concerns’ refer to ‘issues that bear on women’ (Cockburn, 1996, pp. 14–15) for either ‘biological’ or ‘social’ reasons (Lovenduski, 1997, p. 708). In addition, and bearing in mind the ‘difficulties in assigning EDMs to unique classifications’, we argue that ‘women’s’ EDMs do not have to *solely* be about ‘women’s concerns’ (Nason, 2001, p. 2). For example, EDM 631 (00/01), which considers infertility, might be coded as ‘women’s’, ‘men’s’ and/or ‘parental’; all that matters here is that can be coded as ‘women’s’. Furthermore, because our analysis is interested in distinguishing between ‘women’s’ and ‘non-women’s’, all EDMs are treated in the same way irrespective of whether they are congratulatory, substantive, all-party EDMs, amendments to EDMs or prayers against statutory instruments. Consequently, an EDM congratulating the Arsenal Ladies Football team (EDM 616 98/99) is treated in the same way as one that offers support to the ‘women of Afghanistan’ (EDM 339 98/99).

In the first stage, coding was deliberately inclusive. Illustrative examples of EDMs coded as ‘women’s’ include:

EDM 1689 (97/98)

That this House is horrified that tobacco companies are aggressively targeting women and children in the Third World with marketing tactics which are being banned in the Europe; is concerned that the projected number of deaths from smoking related diseases in the Third World will rise from one million per year to seven million per year by the year 2030; notes the European Union directive banning tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion; and believes that the Government should include a firm commitment to global standards on the marketing of tobacco in the forthcoming White Paper on Tobacco so that the same basic rules apply to tobacco companies wherever they operate.

EDM 657 (00/01)

That this Houses welcomes National Cot Death Awareness Week, 7th to 13th May, and acknowledges the work of the Foundation for the Study of Infant Death and the Scottish Cot Death Trust; notes that cot death remains the biggest single cause of death in children, often in the first week of life and that on average almost eight babies die every week in the UK; and calls upon her Majesty's Government to work with the FSID and the SCDT to fund research, support families whose babies have died suddenly and raise parents' awareness of the risks of cot death.

EDMs that named individual women were also coded as 'women's'. For example:

EDM 385 (97/98)

That this House notes the work done by Mother Theresa with the poor and needy during her lifetime; notes that she maintained the work into her final years despite often delicate health; notes that her actions came from a desire to emulate the example of Christ; acknowledges her care and compassion for the poor, the sick, the needy and children both born and unborn; and applauds the continuing work done by her Order, the Missionaries of Charity, in the streets of Calcutta and worldwide, including the United Kingdom.

EDM 888 (99/00)

That this House congratulates Ellen MacArthur on becoming the youngest person to win the Europe 1 New Man Star single-handed trans-Atlantic race and the first Briton to score an overall win in the race since 1968; commends Ms MacArthur, her project Manager Mark Turner and their team for securing such a brilliant victory; and looks forward to similar success for Ellen and her boat 'Kingfisher' in the Verde's Globe in November.

The initial coding also included EDMs that were less clearly about women and/or their concerns. For example:

EDM 632 (98/99)

That this House deplores the sexually abusive insult directed at the Paymaster General [Dawn Primarolo] by the honourable Member for Guildford during the Finance Bill Committee.

Coding of prayers against statutory instruments relied upon specific mention being made of women and/or their concerns in the EDM itself; reference was not made to the statutory instrument.

Stage 2 Coding

In the second stage, all the 'women's' EDMs were re-examined. A number of rules were devised. EDMs that were re-coded as 'non-women's' included those that:

- were, on reflection, considered not to have women or their concerns as their 'primary subject matter'
- discussed an aspect of women's health but did so only in passing

- named an individual woman or women's organisations but did not go on to address women's concerns and/or congratulate the woman or organisation *for* or *as* women
- were concerned with nursing and nurses, but did not praise *women* nurses or nurses for actions *regarding* women
- cited widows *in place of* their dead husbands
- addressed issues of sexuality and gay rights but did not directly discuss women

All EDMs dealing with the issue of lone-parent benefit (EDMs 337, 337, 514, 702, 769, 964, 1110 97/98) remained coded as 'women's'. Although some lone parents are men, this issue dominated the first session of the 1997 parliament and was accompanied by a widespread expectation that Labour's women MPs should have acted for women by rebelling over this issue (Cowley and Childs, 2003).

Similarly, all EDMs concerned with the boxer and convicted rapist Mike Tyson were coded as 'women's', because his proposed fight in Scotland became an issue around which women's groups actively mobilised.

A small number of EDMs discussed eating disorders – a condition that is often regarded as a 'women's' concern. These were re-coded as 'non-women's' if they made no explicit reference to the issue impacting specifically on women nor discussed the disorder in gendered terms.

EDMs that addressed sexuality and gay rights but that failed to consider the issue of sexuality and women directly were also re-coded.

A handful of EDMs were re-coded as 'non-women's' because, although they mentioned women's concerns, they were arguably more concerned with partisan politics. For example, both EDM 208 (97/98) and EDM 208A1 (97/98) discussed the cost of nursery vouchers but their main point was to highlight, in a partisan way, the previous governments' behaviour rather than constituting a discussion of the advantages or otherwise of nursery vouchers.

Three EDMs were removed from the dataset because of difficulties in coding them. The authors could not agree over EDM 293 (98/99), which noted the use of Agent Orange by the American military in the Vietnam War and included a statement that discussed the impact of Agent Orange on women's reproductive health – miscarriages, natural abortions and stillbirths. However, it was concerned more with the impact of chemical weapons and their long-term effects. EDM 605 (00/01) was felt to be impossible to code. It made reference to a 'near assault' of the female winner of the London Marathon, but it was not clear whether this was because of the runner's sex. EDM 1247A3 (97/98), though an amendment to EDM 1247A2 (97/98), concerned with abortion, was phrased in such a way – 'leave out from 'it' to end' – that its meaning was unclear.

Stage 3 Coding

In the third stage, the 'women's' EDMs were coded for direction – whether the motion was feminist, anti-feminist or neutral (Reingold, 2002, pp. 138, 166–7). This addresses concerns that two EDMs 'falling into a particular category could well propose diametrically opposed views' (Nason, 2001). There could be

feminist ‘non-women’s’ EDMs – for example, men’s right to paternity leave – but our focus is only on ‘women’s’ EDMs.

A minimal, liberal, definition of feminism is employed here, informed by Bell Hook’s (1984) definition of feminism as the movement to end sexist oppression. In simple terms, any EDM that seeks to expand women’s opportunities is coded as feminist. This follows the convention set by Swers (2002, p. 11), who considers feminist bills to be those that seek to achieve ‘role equity’ or ‘role change’ for women. Thus, EDMs that discussed women’s equal opportunities and rights, or were in favour of expanding the provision of contraception and abortion (or at least maintaining current provision), and those that highlighted and sought to end male violence against women, are all coded as feminist. Consequently, EDM 805 (97/98), which welcomed ‘the Secretary of State for Defence’s determination to create equal opportunities throughout the armed forces’, EDM 339 (98/99), which ‘offers support for the women of Afghanistan who have been stripped or rights taken for granted in this country’, and EDM 1053 (99/00), which ‘congratulates Bexley Women’s Aid on its 25th Anniversary’, are all coded as feminist.

Anti-feminist EDMs were those that sought to restrict women’s opportunities or ‘inhibit role change’ (Swers, 2002, p. 11). In practice, apart from EDMs 1556A1 (97/98) and 1556A1A1 (97/98), which were unsympathetic towards the establishment of a crèche in the House of Commons, anti-feminist EDMs sought to restrict women’s access to abortion and/or contraception. For example, EDM 83A1 (97/98) ‘observes that abortion has ... done nothing to liberate women ... and calls upon her Majesty’s Government to promote instead practical alternatives to abortion, including adoption to help women under stress’.

Many of the neutral EDMs were those associated with women’s health and were straightforward to code – for example, EDM 351 (00/01) ‘recognises the anguish caused by infertility’ and EDM 329 (98/99) notes that ‘breast cancer is the commonest form of cancer affecting UK women’. Others were more difficult to code. Some discussed issues about which there is feminist debate – for example, EDM 116 (97/98) ‘welcomes the Government’s announcement of a review into the use of silicone breast implants’. Even though breast implants might be considered to be against the interests of individual women (for health reasons) or women in general (because of the way in which it pressurises women into conforming to a particular norm of beauty), it was felt that to code such EDMs as feminist was too subjective. Others – such as EDM 635 (97/98), which noted ‘with regret the decision of BBC Radio Four to move production of Women’s Hour from Manchester and other regional broadcasting centres’ – called for action that was difficult to interpret as either feminist or non-feminist.

EDMs that discussed women’s imprisonment were also coded as neutral. Although many of the EDMs implied that women’s treatment in prison, particularly the extent to which they were prescribed drugs, was unacceptable, it was impossible to say whether the intent of the motion was to suggest that women were systematically being prescribed such drugs *because* they were women (and, crudely, therefore a patriarchal act). For this reason, it was decided that these should not be coded as feminist. For illustrative purposes, EDM 1677 (97/98) is clearly more strongly worded than EDM 1768 (97/98) but still lacks an explicit feminist criticism:

EDM 1677 (97/98)

That this House is gravely concerned at evidence of the over prescription of damaging and addictive medicinal drugs in women's prisons; believes that powerful medicinal drugs prescribed to the late Emma Humphries and one other woman may have caused their premature deaths; is alarmed by the claims made by a distinguished author that neuroleptic drugs are routinely prescribed to young women prisoners who mutilate themselves, and that medicinal drugs are used as pacifiers which move prisoners from non-addictive illegal drug use to highly addictive medicinal drug use; and calls for a full inquiry into all drug use in women's prisons.

EDM 1768 (97/98)

That this House is horrified at further evidence of the over-use of medicinal drugs in women's prisons revealed at the inquest of the late Josie O'Dwyer; notes that on the day of her death on 26th October at Bullwood Prison Ms O'Dwyer had taken Promazine 200 mg, Dothiepin 150 mg nocte, Chloral Hydrate 3 gms nocte, Voltarol 50 mgs, Diazepam 10 mgs TDS, Phenytoin 200 mgs BD, Clonazepam 2 mgs nocte, Tegretol Retard 400 mgs mane/800 mgs nocte and Co-Codamol TDS; further notes that the toxicologist also found a probably lethal dose of 80 mg/l of tricholethanol in her blood; and calls for an inquiry into the misuse of drugs in women's prisons as sedatives and pacifiers.

Prayers against statutory instruments were excluded from 'direction' coding, because it was impossible to establish direction from the wording of the EDMs themselves.

The final stage of the coding process was to exclude from our analysis all 'women's' EDMs signed by four or fewer MPs. Although previous research excluded those signed by less than ten MPs, we felt that setting our cut-off at five was a better measure (Finer *et al.*, 1961; Berrington, 1973). This is because we are interested in seeing whether concerns, said to be marginal to the political agenda and unlikely, therefore, to garner mass support, are being addressed through EDMs. Moreover, women MPs still number only 120 out of 659 MPs.

In the analysis of individual EDMs, a further twenty-four were excluded from the analysis, as they suffered from small cell counts.

The Categories and Subcategories of 'Women's' EDMs

Contraception and abortion

1. Anti-contraception
2. Anti-emergency contraception
3. Pro-abortion
4. Anti-abortion
5. Pro-contraception
6. Pro-emergency contraception

Health

7. Cancer
8. Breast cancer
9. Cervical cancer
10. Health
11. Infertility
12. Ovarian cancer

Violence

13. Violence against women
14. Domestic violence
15. Rape
16. Women's safety
17. Sexual harassment
18. Tyson

Equal opportunities and rights

19. Equal opportunities
20. Equal rights
21. International women's rights

Others

22. Congratulatory
23. House of Commons crèche
24. Lone parent
25. Ellen Macarthur
26. Midwives
27. Women's concerns as mothers
28. Prison
29. VAT sanitary products
30. Widows
31. WW2

Illustrative Examples

Feminist 'Women's' EDMs

EDM 828 (97/98)

That this House welcomes the majority vote decision of MCC members but is disappointed that this decision still excludes women from membership of the MCC; and calls on the Committee of the MCC to bring forward proposals for equality at all levels of the MCC as soon as possible and no later than 12 months from today.

EDM 80 (98/99)

That this House supports the action of Boots The Chemist in Glasgow in setting up a pilot project between themselves and Greater Glasgow NHS Trust to run a twice weekly 'drop in' birth control and sexual health clinic; notes the high rate of teenage and unwanted pregnancies in the UK; and calls for similar clinics to be established with easier access to counselling and advice, all forms of contraception including emergency contraception, and better sex education for all young people.

EDM 229A1 (99/00)

After 'country', insert 'and in particular congratulates those who are brave enough to defy the dress code for women and to campaign for fairer laws concerning women's health, education, civil rights and custody of children'.

EDM 373 (00/01)

That this House welcomes the publication of the report of the Equal Opportunities Commission's employer led Equal Pay Taskforce; recognises that 30 years after the Equal Pay Act 1970 there remains a substantial pay gap between women and men, currently at 18 per cent; and calls upon Government, trade unions and employers to support the Equal Opportunities Commission's 'Valuing Women' campaign to eliminate the gender pay gap.

Anti-feminist 'Women's' EDMs

EDM 1247A2 (97/98)

'leave out from 'effect' to end and add 'expresses, yet again, serious concern at the manner at which abortion virtually on demand is practised under the present law contrary to the promises of its sponsors; notes that two successive Gallup polls among gynaecologists have shown that about 72 per cent stated that NHS hospitals in which they work or had worked practised abortion on demand thus creating 'inequalities' through doctors flouting the law; notes that complaints about inequalities in the NHS have been persistently used by private abortion clinics to justify the enormous numbers of abortions carried out by their doctors practising abortion on demand; recalls the motion passed by a recent BMA junior doctors conference condemning the harassment of junior doctors exercising the legal right not to be involved in abortion and asking for action to protect them; further notes that as the Social Services Select Committee reported in 1991 many young doctors have had their careers in gynaecology destroyed as a result of their objections to abortion – particularly on demand; and condemns the call for it to be mandatory for all doctors with a conscientious objection to abortion to register thus strengthening the legal framework for a witch-hunt against those opposed to abortion in principle as well as against those doctors who would accept some abortions, but acting responsibly, would object in other cases, such as

where the operation could cause damage to the physical or mental health of their patients.’

EDM 172 (98/99)

That this House expresses its sadness and regret at the tragic death of 16 year old Caroline Bacon, who died after 11 months’ paralysis following a stroke; notes that her condition arose as a medical complication arising from her taking the contraceptive pill from the age of fourteen and a half years; further notes that inadequate medical checks were undertaken at the time she was prescribed that oral contraception; believes that powerful oral contraceptives should only be prescribed to patients after proper counselling, advice upon attendant risks, and following due medical investigation; extends its deep sympathy to Mr and Mrs Bacon on the death of their daughter; sympathises with their anger and frustration that such contraceptives had been prescribed for Caroline without their knowledge; believes that all parents have a right to be informed that contraceptives have been prescribed to their children aged under 16 years; and invites her Majesty’s Government urgently to review the law and the guidelines issued to medical practitioners in this area.

EDM 274 (99/00)

That this House notes that the morning-after pill works by preventing the embryo from successfully implanting in the lining of the womb, and therefore is not a contraceptive; further notes that medical and scientific opinion is that life begins at fertilization, and that the morning-after pill is therefore an abortifacient; notes with concern the health-risks associated with the morning-after pill, which include nausea, vomiting, thrombosis and ectopic pregnancy and that, if a woman in the early weeks of pregnancy takes a morning-after pill, her baby’s brain could be malformed and/or the child could develop abnormalities such as heart-defects; further notes the provisions of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, as cited by Dr John Keown of Queen’s College, Cambridge, in a letter to the Daily Telegraph of 30th November 1999 and elsewhere, protect nascent life before implantation; further notes that the World Medical Association’s 1948 Declaration of Geneva states ‘I will have the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception; even under threat, I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity’; further notes that, whether or not the morning-after pill interrupts pregnancy as defined by the law, it does interrupt pregnancy as defined by medical science, and that those who are not registered medical practitioners should consequently not be expected to take responsibility for providing such treatment; and calls upon the Secretary of State for Health to restrict the availability of the morning-after pill as a matter of urgency and not to widen access thereto.

EDM 92 (00/01)

That this House notes with profound concern the announcement by health ministers that they intend to make the abortifacient ‘morning after’ pill available over the counter, thus undermining still further respect for both

human life and for the institution of marriage; observes with regret that the present Government also opposes attempts to amend the law to prevent euthanasia; deeply regrets also its lowering to 16 years of age at which buggery is permitted for both boys and girls, and that it remains committed to removing the ban on the promotion of homosexuality in schools; observes with sadness the continuing widespread promotion of contraceptives to teenagers; further regrets the Government's active support for the creation and use of human clones for scientific research; denounces this systematic assault upon the dignity of human life, the institution of marriage, and the traditional moral ethos of our nation; and calls upon the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and other faith communities of the United Kingdom to speak now before all in which they believe is destroyed.

Neutral 'Women's' EDMs

EDM 1313 (97/98)

That this House congratulates the Government on its efforts to encourage women aged 65 and over to request breast cancer screening; notes that these efforts have resulted in about one per cent of women in that age group being screened each year, while 70 per cent of women aged 50 to 64, to whom individual invitations are sent, attend for screening; notes that the incidence of breast cancer increases with age; and calls on the government to remove the age limit of 64 so that older women will also receive individual invitations.

EDM 616 (98/99)

That this House congratulates Arsenal ladies' team on once again winning the FA Women's Cup and all back up staff and supporters for their success; and looks forward to greater coverage of women's football by the media in the future.

EDM 996 (99/00)

That this House notes the Report by Sir John Mortimer's Advisory Group on the The Future of the Vacant Plinth in Trafalgar Square; notes that a statue to commemorate the role women played in World War II was the second choice of the members of the general public; notes the conclusion of the report regarding use of the plinth for a rotating exhibition of modern sculpture; notes also the conclusion that the Advisory Group felt that there should be such a tribute, but that Trafalgar Square is not the best place for it; and that it should be in a park or a more open space where it could be more easily enjoyed; and requests the Government to provide such a statue to commemorate the role women played in World War II either in Trafalgar Square or elsewhere in a prominent position.

EDM 243 (00/01)

That this House is delighted to learn of Ellen MacArthur's current progress in her boat 'Kingfisher' in the Vendee Globe; pays tribute to her

fantastic achievement as the youngest skipper in this single-handed around the world race; and sends its best wishes for what it hopes will be a stunning victory for a remarkable young woman.

'Violence' EDMs

EDM 1149 (99/00)

That this House welcomes the greater attention being paid by the police to the problem of domestic violence following the representations in the 1980s to the Metropolitan Police by the late Jo Richardson MP, initially in the face of mockery; and calls upon the Home Secretary to establish a national coalition of relevant agencies to identify the extent of domestic violence, provide an updated assessment of the measures taken so far by each police force and develop amendments to the civil and criminal law, which will finally reflect the seriousness of domestic violence and its impact on the family.

EDM 1381 (97/98)

That this House deplores the unacceptable level of violence towards the abuse of women and believes that a thorough review of civil and criminal law is needed to ensure that violent men are prevented from tracing their former partners and then assaulting and killing them; believes that this should include a strengthening of police powers and court sanctions when injunctions are broken, and that there should be a robust policy for arrest and prosecution under the criminal law, an end to the routine bailing of men for breach of the peace, and an end to the downgrading of charges through plea bargaining; supports the implementation of domestic violence awareness training for all those working within the justice system, including family law solicitors and the judiciary; recognises the need to restrict access by violent partners to information about the location of women through court proceedings and the provision of the Children Act 1989; and accepts that men who abuse women forego their right to access.

EDM 101 (97/98)

That this House believes that there should be a change towards the law concerning rape and a better understanding of the needs of rape victims; urges the removal of the defendant's right to cross examine the victim; requests the restriction of multiple cross-examination of the victim in cases where there is more than one defendant; requests that ID parades be conducted behind mirror glass; urges more consistent sentencing and help for rape victims to re-enter society; urges charges to be brought against people who falsely claim to have been raped; requests that victims be represented in court by their own barrister; and urges that British people who have been raped by British people while overseas should be able to turn to the British legal system for justice.

An EDM Coded as 'Equal Opportunity'

EDM 93 (00/01)

That this House considers that following the passage of the Local Government Act 2000, there should be a drive to make local government more inclusive; urges that more be done to encourage the involvement of more young people, women and those from different ethnic groups; and congratulates the National Association of Councillors on the recent launch of the 'Restoring the Balance' campaign which strives towards achieving greater community participation and more representative democracy in local government.

An EDM Coded as 'Equal Rights'

EDM 1582 (97/98)

That this House welcomes the publication of the Government's draft Pensions Sharing on Divorce Bill designed to end women's pension inequality, but notes that inequality and discrimination remain in other areas of the United Kingdom pensions system, particularly discriminating against unmarried partners of members of statutory public service schemes such as those for the police, fire service, health workers and teachers, leading to unjust, unfair discriminatory practice which is out of touch with the best practice as highlighted by evidence from the NAPF, which also shows that increasing numbers of private sector occupational pension schemes are making changes, by denying common law and gay and lesbian partners of public service scheme members a survivor's pension, forcing many into financial hardship following their partner's death despite paying the same level of contributions as married scheme members; therefore believes the time is now right for a legal change to require all such schemes to pay partner's pensions regardless of marital status or sexual orientation; and calls on the Secretary of State to rectify this anomaly.

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Table A1: Early Day Motions (EDMs) with Pro-Women Significant Sex Differences (10 per cent)

<i>Session</i>	<i>EDM no.</i>	<i>Title</i>	χ^2 <i>P-value</i>	<i>Total men signed</i>	<i>Total women signed</i>
97/98	EDM 1556	Childcare in the Palace of Westminster	0.059	47	21
97/98	EDM 635	BBC Women's Hour	0.086	43	19
97/98	EDM 809	Parliamentary Childcare Provision	0.060	89	34
97/98	EDM 83	A Woman's Right to Choose	0.080	23	12
98/99	EDM 329	Breast Cancer	0.078	77	30
99/00	EDM 850	Vat on Contraception Products	0.058	56	24
99/00	EDM 89	Vat on Sanitary Products	0.090	125	43
<i>Total who could have signed</i>				172	51
