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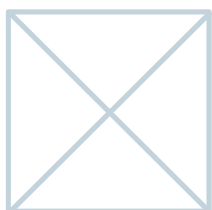
Option Anglais

**"What is our duty?": Gender,
patriotism, and mobilisation in
The Suffragette/Britannia in
First World War Britain**

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Introduction

When Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel, leaders of the Women's Political and Social Union (WSPU) decided to stop militancy for equal suffrage after the First World War had started, to give full support to the British nation and its involvement in the war, many were left surprised by this radical change. This transformation in their militancy was much more noticeable in their main organ, the newspaper entitled *The Suffragette*, until October 1915 when it was ultimately changed for *Britannia*. To understand the importance and the influence of the newspaper in the Suffragettes' feminist movement whether before or during the war, it is first important to know why it was created and what it stood for. Before being known as *The Suffragette* or *Britannia*, the newspaper of the WSPU was in fact named *Votes for Women* and was edited with the help of the Pethick-Lawrences in 1907. It was the first time that a suffrage organisation had created a newspaper entirely devoted to their cause, and *Votes for Women* was considered to be the reason why suffrage press became so popular in the following years¹. The main purpose of the newspaper was, of course, to promote equal suffrage in Britain, but in a way that had not already been done before by other suffrage societies. The Pankhursts also hoped to raise awareness by developing a better and less negative press coverage². Mainstream press was either against suffrage for women or against the militancy of the WSPU; therefore, with their own newspaper, the WSPU could easily counterattack the negative representations from mainstream press. However, the themes tackled in *Votes for Women* or even *The Suffragette* in its early years were limited as they solely focused on two aspects: suffrage and militancy; their title also limited the type of readers who could be interested³. It indeed gave the impression that the newspaper was only devoted to one gender-specific audience: women. Nonetheless, it did not prevent the newspaper from being considered of great importance in the militancy of the WSPU. Not only did the newspaper help to counter the anti-suffragist or anti-militancy arguments of the mainstream press, but it also acted as a platform to recollect their different militant actions. Even though many members participated in the numerous actions the WSPU organised, the problem still was that only registered members and participants would know about them. The newspaper was thus a way to extend their audience: not only could the subscribed members have access to it, but distribution was also organised by newsagents⁴ in order to reach the most persons possible outside of the WSPU's inner circle. The platform built by the newspaper also aimed to last over the long term and be later used as a model for future militants. As a matter of fact, while the WSPU's militancy and actions undertaken transformed over the years between 1907 and 1918, one thing remained: the newspaper. It indeed changed its name and some of its strategy transformed during the First World War, but it still remained an important platform for the WSPU regardless of what the Pankhursts wanted to convey. The newspaper gave the WSPU a means to tell their own version of the suffrage movement, a vision which would naturally not be negative towards Suffragettes but

¹ Mercer, John. "Making the News: Votes for Women and the mainstream press", *Media History*, 2004, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁴ *Ibid.*

written in a way which would be enough to trigger reactions among readers. Of course, they hoped that this reaction would be directed against the British government refusing to grant the vote and would re-establish what they saw as the truthful version of their militancy. Admittedly, their articles could be considered as informative as they still informed its readers of current events, but these events were written in a biased way, with the usual argumentation of the WSPU.

Ultimately, in 1912, *The Suffragette* replaced *Votes for Women* as the main organ of the WSPU because the Pethick-Lawrences disagreed with the radical path the WSPU was taking⁵. *The Suffragette* followed the same purposes of *Votes for Women*: intimidating, punishing, triggering reactions, and expanding militancy and support. Indeed, the actions undertaken by the WSPU could go from hunger striking, window-smashing to bombing and arson. In fact, they were considered as "terrorists"⁶ – not in the sense we could assign to the word today – but in the way that they used violent methods to coerce the government and the society into accepting the right to vote for women. Even in the choice of the title, the WSPU tried to trigger a reaction and stand against anti-suffragists. The term "Suffragette" was in fact a pejorative name given to militants and yet the WSPU turned it into a name which meant "independence, courage, public spirit"⁷. By choosing to embody this term, the WSPU counterattacked the press which had been using it in a negative way; thus, once the WSPU chose it, the press lost all the impact they had while using it. Right from the first issue of the newly founded newspaper, the Pankhursts set the tone of their militancy: one which would stand for the enfranchisement of women at all costs. As their militancy was to intimidate and punish, especially the British government, the WSPU told "news stories"⁸, the aim of which was to demonstrate the treatment Suffragettes received from the British government. Indeed, several measures were taken by the latter which were highly controversial: forcible feeding and the Cat and Mouse Act passed in 1913 was to "catch" all Suffragettes – the mice – who had decided to hunger-strike to protest for the vote. Forcible feeding was extremely violent and perceived as an act of torture as depicted in *The Suffragette*. Indeed, numerous accounts were made of Suffragettes being forcibly fed: the newspaper issue of the 7th August 1914 had various pages on forcible feeding, a double page is even devoted to statements of still imprisoned or released Suffragettes. A letter describing in full details what Mary Richardson and other Suffragettes experienced in Holloway was even published, so that the WSPU could make as many copies as possible, so readers could spread it and show to the whole country the "atrocities perpetrated by the Government"⁹. Whether before or during the war, the WSPU had always given detailed descriptions in its newspaper in order to trigger a reaction among the population: they thought that by giving a truthful, uncensored account of the reality of some actions, they would convince people to join efforts and stand against violent perpetrators. From 1912 to 1914, that is what *The Suffragette* represented and was meant to do according to the WSPU still making the most of *Votes for Women*'s popularity and originality. It is important to take all of that past history into account in order to understand why the First World War was certainly the most

⁵ Mercer, John. "Making the News: Votes for Women and the mainstream press", *Media History*, 2004, p. 196.

⁶ Bearman, C. J. "An Examination of Suffragette Violence", *English Historical Review*, 2005, p. 393.

⁷ "Foreword", *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, front cover.

⁸ Mercer, John. "Making the News: Votes for Women and the mainstream press", *Media History*, 2004, p. 193

⁹ "The Inferno in Holloway", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 302.

interesting period for the newspaper - and to a larger extent, the WSPU. Indeed, it is interesting to understand how the newspaper was still of great importance for the WSPU, women and the British nation, in a period where Suffragettes and enfranchisement were not the main issues anymore. There is no denying that before the war, the WSPU's newspaper played a key role in establishing strong support – at least among women, fellow suffragists and militants because of their way of portraying information: everything was written so that Suffragettes were perceived as victims and even martyrs of an especially evil enemy. Of course, truth was that both sides were guilty in one way or another of the actions they committed: both undertook radical ways of dealing with each other and had the same purposes: intimidating and punishing. The WSPU's objective had always been suffrage but also better conditions for women in their involvement in society. So, the gender aspect in the newspaper had always been there: women were still the primary beneficiaries in the militancy and the measures promoted by the WSPU.

When the First World War broke out, the WSPU first accused men – British or otherwise - of being responsible for starting it. Christabel Pankhurst, in an article titled "The War" and published in *The Suffragette*, stated that the war was the consequence of the victimisation of women throughout generations¹⁰; and the war could be only won if women and men were involved in society on an equal footing, which the vote would at least help to progressively reach¹¹. However, at the surprise of most members of the WSPU, Emmeline Pankhurst later declared that they had to stop their militancy and with that went all their hopes of being immediately granted the vote. She indeed believed that it was better for the nation to focus solely on the worldwide conflict instead of the Suffragettes, so that the war could be won; otherwise, if lost by Britain, then the opportunity to have the vote would be lost too. When one had thought that it would mean the end of the WSPU, the Pankhursts decided to come back after almost a year and *The Suffragette* was re-published. However, the newspaper did not come back as a suffrage paper as it had been before the war but as a war paper entirely devoted to the nation, its fight in the war and even more focused on the question of gender. Indeed, the Suffragettes confirmed their support for the country and did not deal with the question of suffrage until a certain point. While *The Suffragette* came back with an additional purpose, some aspects still seemed to remain in the continuity of the WSPU's pre-war militancy. Indeed, the WSPU used their pre-war experience as militants and as a paper in order to, once again, trigger strong reactions among its readers and thus influence public opinion, not on suffrage, but on their vision of the war and on the patriotic behaviour people had to adopt. *The Suffragette* became a war propaganda paper; like its pre-war version, its aim was to raise awareness with arguments which were most often exaggerated and biased in order to convince public opinion. However, it is important to notice that the basis of the propaganda techniques and arguments used by the WSPU were not exceptional as British propaganda whether by official instances or mainstream press also relied on them. They had the same purpose: trigger a reaction among soldiers, civilians or politicians¹². To do so, their propaganda was based on accounts and descriptions of Germany's barbarism; both the WSPU and the British

¹⁰ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The War", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, 1999, p. 27.

mainstream press represented Germany as "Huns"¹³ in order to strongly emphasise the inhumane, violent, and barbarous side of the enemy. This exaggerated personification helped to persuade population to support the British government and participate in war effort. Another common propaganda strategy of *The Suffragette* and the official British propaganda was their personification of "Poor Little Belgium" to stress the impact of German Atrocities¹⁴ on one's country and thus convince men to join the war. The key motivation behind propaganda was indeed to be able to gather and mobilise everyone so that the nation could use all its resources¹⁵ which would be profitable to soldiers on the front and civilians at home.

Nonetheless, even though propaganda arguments between the WSPU's main organ and the mainstream press seemed to be similar, in fact, the war propaganda of the WSPU was strongly associated with gender, and especially a celebration of femininity; as their pre-war militancy used to be. Every argument used by the WSPU was always part of a gendered rhetoric; yet it did not mean that the WSPU was still not inspired by the official discourse of British propaganda based on "honour, glory, heroism, and sacrifice"¹⁶ of soldiers on the front. However, the WSPU did widen it to women with whom they were naturally deeply associated. They did not diminish the heroism and sacrifices of British and Allied soldiers but instead of talking solely about the manliness and the bravery of soldiers on the front in their newspaper, they rather focused on women and their possible role in the war effort, which had been mostly forgotten, or at least not used as its full potential. What the WSPU wanted and promoted for was similar to the notions which defined equal suffrage: a national unity between men and women and for that to happen, Britain had to let women be more involved in a society which naturally needed the whole population to fight the war. In other words, even though militancy for suffrage was put on hold for the duration of the war – or at least it seemed to be stopped for a while, it did not prevent the Suffragettes from relying on this heritage given by their pre-war campaign. Most of their war arguments were the continuity of the representation of a conflict the WSPU had already been fighting in before the war: the conflict between masculinity and femininity. Masculinity was represented before the war by the British government which forcibly fed Suffragettes; and during the war, Germany took upon that role by subjecting women to their atrocities. In both cases, these actions led to a gendered representation of martyrdom in the newspaper through articles and religious metaphors. It aimed to demonstrate the presence and the importance of such a conflict among the population and inspire them to fight alongside Suffragettes by enlisting or participating in war effort during the war. It was similar to the pre-war purpose which was to increase militancy among Suffragettes¹⁷. The newspaper in April 1915, thus, seemed to be mostly devoted to the war cause and war effort; the gender-oriented aspect of the newspaper made it possible to shine a light on the war effort of

¹³ Sanders, Michael. L., and Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*, 1982, p. 137.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁵ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, 1999 p. 5.

¹⁶ Bingham, Adrian; and Conboy, Martin. *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present*, 2015, p. 28.

¹⁷ Mercer, John. "Media and Militancy: Propaganda in the Women's Social and Political Union's campaign", *Women's History Review*, 2005, p. 474.

women and their own duties. The concept of duty was at the centre of the war strategy of the Pankhursts; a speech republished in *The Suffragette* deals with Emmeline Pankhurst wondering "what is our duty?"¹⁸, referring to the role of women should observe in a country at war. Indeed, the WSPU believed that women had to take part actively in the war and not merely observe what unfolded. They argued that the war had started because of the lack of involvement of women in society, so their purpose was naturally to prevent that from ever happening again. By focusing on the various conventions or pre-war Suffragette-inspired duties, the WSPU, through their newspaper, established a form of patriotic propaganda which was based on the absolute necessity of a patriotic behaviour and a united mobilisation which would depend on abilities defined by gender and thus duties. In fact, the WSPU did not lose its pre-war purpose to create better social conditions for women; and to a certain extent, one might even say that the war helped in amplifying the vital role of women in society. It has indeed been said that masculinity and femininity were socially constructed ideas which helped in establishing a distinct "national identity and duty"¹⁹. While the conventional gendered roles were always challenged by the militancy of the Suffragettes, the war in fact reinforced the gap between genders²⁰ and their traditional – Victorian and Edwardian – roles²¹. Yet the gendered propaganda of the WSPU presented in their newspaper did not simply rely on the traditional roles of women, but were, instead, transformed according to the Suffragettes' vision of women so that their newly patriotic behaviour was displayed.

What is important, then, to wonder is how did gender play an important role in the patriotism of the WSPU in *The Suffragette/Britannia* during the First World War? The WSPU put the question of gender at the centre of their newspaper so that they could use it as a way to demonstrate their patriotism in time of war, but what arguments were used? How did the Suffragettes manage to create a form of patriotic propaganda around their definition of gender roles and participate actively in the war effort?

In order to answer these questions, I will particularly focus on the newspaper of the WSPU: *The Suffragette/Britannia*. As a key platform to the WSPU, the primary source which the newspaper represents allows us to have access to more authenticity and learn about historical events in a unique way which also gives room for interpretation. It is through this weekly newspaper that the WSPU would establish most of their propaganda and describe its own vision of femininity and masculinity, but it is important to keep in mind that the war challenged these roles and reinforced their integration in society. Yet the WSPU managed to build their propaganda around them while still trying to improve the situation of women in British society with or without the vote. The WSPU managed to show, through this type of war propaganda, that women were as useful to society as men. The suffrage campaign was also a way to demonstrate this argument, however, it was quickly overshadowed by the violent militancy of the Suffragettes which undermined the credibility of their wishes. The First World War seemed to have arrived at a perfect time for the WSPU: they could, this time, redefine their militant techniques and actions in order to adapt to the situation of the country while still keeping in mind their

¹⁸ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

¹⁹ Noakes, Lucy. *War and the British; gender, memory, and national identity*, 1998, p. 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²¹ Kent, Susan K. "The Politics of Sexual Difference: World War I and the Demise of British Feminism", *Journal of British Studies*, 1988, p. 250.

main purpose: reinforcing women's position in society. What is interesting to see is that the question of gender has always been perceivable in the newspaper, yet in time of war, it seemed that it was even more present and significant as the whole war propaganda of the Suffragettes relied on how the feminine gender could and would be used to participate in the development of national patriotism. Of course, the Suffragettes were inspired by traditional gender roles as they were socially constructed; yet what makes the newspaper and the WSPU different is that these roles were associated with something far less conventional: the Suffragette dogma which had already been developed before the war. The Suffragettes' behaviour, during their militancy, was one which reunited various characteristics not necessarily associated with women at first. Indeed, the WSPU had always identified their Suffragettes as having a "warrior spirit", and always ready to "answer the call" to battle²². The fact that they wanted to be able to participate actively in society, whether it was thanks to their enfranchisement or their involvement in the war effort, was at the opposite of the conventional Victorian gender roles attributed to women and men and which separated the society into two definite spheres: the public and private sphere. Yet, as I will demonstrate later, the spheres did not completely disappear from the WSPU's propaganda but instead evolved so that they could be suitable to the situation in which the British society was at that time, and to the vision the Suffragettes had of women. The transformation of these gender roles can, of course, be easily seen in the newspaper which remains the principal method of propaganda for the WSPU. Indeed, the newspaper acted as a platform gathering informative articles on war event, transcripts of speeches from the WSPU meetings, patriotic front covers or even compilation of numerous press extracts. All of these were still centred on the relationship between genders, and the role women could and would play in war effort regardless of conventions or the British government.

What I will try to demonstrate throughout the development of my argumentation is how and why the notion of gender played such a significant role in the newspaper of the WSPU during the war. While their definition of gender roles was based on a pre-war militancy experience, which was then seen as violent and controversial, during the war, the Suffragettes developed and transformed this experience into something patriotic which would be beneficial for the nation, and which would emphasise the morality and the importance of the feminine gender in British society; something that had been lost in their pre-war suffrage campaign overshadowed by their violent deeds. First of all, I will deal with the gendered representation of the countries involved in the war found in various issues of *The Suffragette* and *Britannia*. This interpretation from the WSPU is based on a dichotomy of gender, masculinity, perceived as the enemy, on one side, and on the other, femininity – viewed as superior. It was common to personify countries in war propaganda; British official propaganda also portrayed Germany as the barbarous country, but the WSPU, as always, associated it with a deeper meaning related to gender and the conflict between masculinity and femininity. While Germany was described as the masculine, barbarous, violent country; at the opposite of it were the Allied countries for which the Pankhursts and fellow Suffragettes were full of admiration. For instance, France was represented in *The Suffragette/Britannia* as having all the qualities and characteristics cherished by the WSPU, identified as the mother of democracy²³, and was perceived as the feminine model every country should follow. On the other hand, Belgium was also

²² Pankhurst, Christabel. "The Policy of the WSPU", *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 6.

²³ "Mrs Pankhurst at Hull", *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915, p. 126.

depicted as feminine, but its gendered interpretation was especially used to draw more intensely the division with the masculine Germany. As we will see, Belgium will more specifically be associated with the figure of the feminine religious martyr which was also one of the key arguments of the pre-war suffrage campaign of the WSPU. While countries such as France, Belgium or Russia are interpreted as purely feminine countries and Germany as a strictly masculine, on the other hand, the WSPU is more mixed on their own interpretation of Britain which traits are both feminine and masculine. The WSPU establishes a portrayal of their country through a feminine and powerful figure, Queen Elisabeth I and yet, the WSPU also criticised the British government in itself and especially the Prime Minister H. H. Asquith whose conflict with the Suffragettes dates back before the war. But what would be important to notice here is that the Suffragettes, in fact, distinguished the British country, the feminine nation for which they showed full devotion and patriotism, from what they perceived as a masculine British government, an enemy from the inside and with which the WSPU had always been in conflict before the war – it was of course, difficult for the Suffragettes to forgive what had been done to their fellow imprisoned members. Yet, the WSPU is not entirely devoid of similarities with the British government especially when the British Empire is at stake.

The first part will establish the basis of the gendered interpretation used by the WSPU in their patriotic newspaper. By focusing on how entire countries were perceived and identified in the gendered vision of the Suffragettes, one is enabled to perceive the importance of such arguments in their propaganda. It helped them to settle among their readers and the British public opinion a dichotomy of gender and turn around their real meaning so that the WSPU could once again emphasise the importance of women. Secondly, I will focus more specifically in what consisted the patriotism of the Suffragettes and especially on which arguments the WSPU decided to establish a form of patriotic and gendered propaganda for the sake of war effort and the nation. In order to understand the gendered patriotism of the WSPU, it is first important to have a look at what inspired them: the conventional gender roles of society. It is, indeed, significant to understand that naturally, the members of the WSPU were not the only women to take part in war effort; numerous civilians also decided to participate to support the nation based on conventional roles; the WSPU only transformed what was traditionally expected for women into something which fitted their way of thinking and doing. With the First World War, gendered roles were reinforced; their fulfilment, of course, differed from what they were used to do in everyday life, but they were still deeply rooted in traditions. Men were on the front to protect the nation, and women were at home using their traditional characteristics to improve life in their private sphere. The latter consisted of their private home, yet in time of war, their home extended to the whole country, which needed protection, especially after becoming a Front itself. While the conventional roles of women based on their own gendered characteristics still had a major place in the war, *The Suffragette/Britannia*, in fact, participated in establishing them to the vision they had of gendered duties; the WSPU portrayed in their own newspaper an evolved version of conventional feminine roles. Indeed, the gendered patriotism of the WSPU was, in fact, a combination of traditional roles at “Home” and the Suffragette spirit which aimed for a more active role in society. They believed that it was their duty as women and as British people; the purpose was to naturally rally people. More than defining their patriotic actions as part of their own feminine duty, the Suffragettes also believed that they would help in reuniting the whole nation. In separating gendered roles – which were to be transformed – they believed they would find unity. If each person had a precise role in war effort and if each person fulfilled their patriotic duty, then the society could be improved, and the war won. Even though the pre-

war WSPU had clearly wanted equality between sexes, this equality could still be achieved according to their vision; they could have separate roles but still be both involved on the same level in society; or at least have the same opportunities as men.

After tackling the more theoretical aspect of gender in the newspaper and in the WSPU's war militancy in itself, I will, in a third part, deal with the patriotic mobilisation the WSPU organised during the war and mostly depicted in their own newspaper. These actions were not only the fulfilment of the Suffragettes' motto, but it also represented the achievement of their patriotic and gendered propaganda portrayed in *The Suffragette/Britannia*. The various activities established by the WSPU as part of their campaign were indeed the physical representation of what they had been promoting in their newspaper. Recruiting meetings and munitions factories were certainly the most important actions to demonstrate the patriotism of women as well as their ability to participate actively in war effort. Perceived as the national duty of women, the WSPU strongly campaigned during the war in order to be able to have access to munitions factories. The newspaper naturally had a significant place in the establishment of the WSPU's war campaign as it created a platform on which the Pankhursts could easily spread their ideas and opinions on the war effort and associated them with the gendered ideas already published, thanks to articles relating, for instance, speeches at recruitment meetings or accounts of the efficiency of women in munitions factories. Most of the WSPU's war campaign was naturally based on a slight change in traditional gender roles, and while munitions factories and recruitment meetings were the most important part of the WSPU's gendered patriotism and mobilisation, other professional areas which were traditionally filled by men were also part of their campaign. While the duty of men was considered to be the enlistment, women felt that their duty was to protect their home which now represented the whole nation, and in order to do so, they had to be involved in professional jobs which were economically required for the society. By taking men's place in some professions, they would thus free them, so they can enlist, and both men and women will have fulfilled their duty.

If one takes into account all the efforts made by the WSPU in order to demonstrate their patriotism and usefulness in society, it actually makes one wonder if their war campaign was not a strategy to achieve what the Suffragettes had been wanting long before the war. While it is true that their war campaign had certainly proven real patriotic feelings towards the British nation, the fact that they wanted to demonstrate the power of women and that their involvement could participate in improving the unity of the country still makes us wonder whether the question of suffrage was not completely forgotten within the WSPU. Indeed, even though suffrage is not fully mentioned during the first years of the war, all the actions taken by the Suffragettes and portrayed in the newspaper were still deeply associated with it: their successful outcome will prove that the WSPU had developed a better campaign than their pre-war militancy viewed as violent and lacking in credibility. As a matter of fact, the war helped women to gain some sort of respect – at least enough to be taken into consideration and listened to – which helped them in gaining supporters for their suffrage campaign and later on their own political party. While the true reasons behind the enfranchisement of women are still debatable, there is no denying that the war campaign of the WSPU centred on gendered patriotism, as presented in the newspaper, had a tremendous impact on the question of gender in British society.

I- The Sex War: the male country against the feminine countries

Once the war broke out in August 1914, the WSPU's newspaper, *The Suffragette*, started to define this conflict as one based on gender. This gendered representation of the war set up an opposition between Germany, the enemy, as a male country and, the Allies, represented as feminine countries²⁴. This dichotomy was of course used as a form of propaganda driven by the Suffragettes; it was a way for them to show to their readers the "ongoing 'sex war'" ²⁵. The image they gave of countries involved in the war helped them in representing the battle they fought for many years before the war: a battle between oppressive and dominating masculinity and femininity. But how was this battle between genders embodied within the newspaper? First, it is important to show and understand why Germany was considered to be a male country while the Allies were seen as feminine and which characteristics defined their gender in the war. However, within this opposition between the enemy and the allies of Britain, it is also crucial to notice that Britain was not clearly part of one side or the other. The country in itself was considered to be – by the newspaper – feminine and yet ruled by representatives of masculinity.

1. Germany: the barbarian, and violent male country

1.1. Male violence and Germany

First of all, to understand why Germany was represented as masculine, it is important to take into account the outlook *The Suffragette* newspaper had towards male gender and masculinity in general. Indeed, for the WSPU, men were considered to be violent, brutal, and uncivilised whereas women were considered as being the complete opposite: delicate, intelligent, and educated. This distinct division between genders was intensified by the First World War as the newspaper explained that the war was the result of "a man-made civilisation"²⁶. In other words, Christabel Pankhurst clarified that the conflict Britain was put into was one which appeared as a consequence of the violent masculinity oppressing the other gender. Indeed, Pankhurst described the society as "hideous and cruel", "savage", "predatory" and "destructive"²⁷ because of the fact that it was ruled by men; and therefore, it was not a surprise to her that a war had broken out. It was even an opportunity, according to her, for women to finally achieve the place they wanted in society. She thought so because she believed that men and the British government would finally notice the importance of women in

²⁴ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One", in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield. *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, 1994, p.78.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.82.

²⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The War", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

society and in politics, and that nothing of that would have happened if women had not been dominated and subjected to men. So, *The Suffragette* considered men as the culprit in starting the war. This gendered opposition between men and women had always been a long fight within the Suffragette's campaign: men were considered to be more suitable than women as they were always accused of being too violent while demanding the right to vote. But when the war broke out, the Suffragettes saw it as an opportunity to show the rest of Britain that men were actually acting with a violence worse than anything ever seen before. The front cover of *The Suffragette* issue of the 7th August 1914 depicts this idea (see Figure 1). The powerful image of soldiers killing each other is a way for Suffragettes to compare their violent militancy with what actually truly matters: a violence between men and caused by men. The image is not clear enough to identify the two camps fighting in the war, Germany and the Allies but it is enough to understand the WSPU's idea that the violence with which men were fighting was worse than the Suffragette's campaign and certainly worse than anything the WSPU was accused of.

The fact that we cannot clearly distinguish the two camps fighting in the picture might also be a way for the Suffragettes to prove that all men are responsible of the war: not only German but also the British soldiers. One also has to consider that this image was issued in 1914. At that time, the Suffragettes had still not clearly showed their support to the British government in the war, and more generally to men. At that time, no one thought the war would be so long and the Suffragettes certainly did not think, at first, about stopping their fight against men both to have the vote and to improve women's role and place in society. Christabel Pankhurst agreed with the war: it was for her inevitable²⁸ to ultimately reach the breaking point between masculinity and femininity. Yet, after a break of nearly a year from *The Suffragette*, the way masculinity was portrayed by the WSPU changed. There was now a distinction within their own definition of masculinity: on one side was the masculine aspect they always criticized – the violent and brutal one – represented by Germany and on the other side the other kind of masculinity – one which is patriotic – symbolised by the British soldiers. In other words: the enemy was now defined as Germany and German soldiers, while male soldiers from Britain and other allied countries whose masculinity could, in fact, be defined as male virility were associated with heroism²⁹. Indeed, the Pankhursts were against any oppressive masculinity but it would have been hard to support their own nation if they would have considered the men fighting for it on the same level as the country they viewed as the enemy. The point of their gendered distinction was not to stand against the British nation but more to make people perceive "the infectious forces corrupting the nation"³⁰. Now, Germany was the symbol of what they first criticized in 1914 and therefore it seemed logical to represent it as a male country in their newspaper propaganda.

²⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 288.

²⁹ Grayzel, Susan R. "Women and Men" in John Horne. *A Companion to World War I*, 2010, p. 264.

³⁰ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One" in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield. *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1915*, 1994, p. 80.

So, Germany was described with all the masculine vices defined by *The Suffragette*: violence, brutality, and cruelty and thus the country was seen as "the glorification of masculinity"³¹. German soldiers were perceived as the persons who started the war by invading Belgium – seen as a feminine country – and the acts they committed were used as propaganda in *The Suffragette* newspaper. All of these were more than enough for them to justify their gendered interpretation of their enemy. Indeed, Germany was not well depicted in the WSPU's organ. Their main theme of propaganda was to give accounts of German's actions on the front, not only against soldiers but also against civilians. Indeed, describing what was happening on the land of the Allies helped in justifying even more British intervention³² in the war but also helped in emphasising *The Suffragette's* arguments about the violence of man. However, the problem with *The Suffragette's* propaganda and criticism of German actions is that they made a generalisation regarding the culprits. Indeed, the acts were committed on the front or during an invasion, so by German soldiers but the WSPU in fact accused the whole German population³³. Through many newspaper articles of the WSPU, the common enemy of Britain and the Allies are not German soldiers but more specifically Germany pictured as the perfect example of masculinity as its worst. Germans and violence became intricately associated by the newspaper which even made this association a stereotype. In an article of May 21, 1915 titled "The Germans in England: What an Invasion would mean", the author generalises and denounces the "German Atrocities"³⁴. The use of capital letters makes us think as if the Germans were the only ones to commit atrocities in time of war; as if the atrocities committed belonged only to them. Furthermore, the newspaper gives the readers a list of what Germans soldiers have done such as the mutilation and rape of women or even the killing of civilians (women and children)³⁵. Adding to the list, the unknown author of the article also gives us testimonies from witnesses of the violence committed on Belgian civilians by the Germans. These testimonies are full of detailed descriptions making them easier to believe. Besides, it is important to notice that most of the violent acts depicted by the newspaper are the ones perpetrated on women. Indeed, we must not forget that *The Suffragette* was, after all, a newspaper intended for women: the first main reason of its publication was for the women's suffrage campaign. It later turned towards a more patriotic stance but the gendered opposition from the beginning of the militancy was still topical during the First World War. Once again, Germany was depicted as a violent male whose victims were innocent women. In the same article, women are said to be the main targets of German officers³⁶. According to the W.S.P.U, the victims were not chosen by chance, they thought that there was some "perverted form of sexual instinct"³⁷ from the German soldiers and especially rape which was seen as the epitome of male violence³⁸.

³¹ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One" in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield. *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1915*, 1994, p. 79.

³² Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities: 1914, A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 185.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

³⁴ "The Germans in England: What an Invasion would mean", *The Suffragette*, 21 May 1915, p. 92.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Indeed, rape was considered to be the peak of the problematic relationship between gender³⁹: not only did it intensify this view of German soldiers as violent, it also reinforced the fact that women were the greatest victims of the war. This is what Christabel Pankhurst stated: "The price of the war as of all tragedy is mainly paid by women"⁴⁰ already in 1914. Yet on the other hand, *The Suffragette* was still a propaganda newspaper at that time; the accounts were certainly true, but it would be unfair not to say that they certainly exaggerated some of these accounts – or at least they generalised them. The problem with these testimonies was that they were most often from eye-witnesses or known through word of mouth; that is to say: unreliable⁴¹ but enough to fuel a negative image of German, and even if people did not entirely believe what they read in the newspaper, it was still the only source of information they could have on what was happening in Allied countries whether it was by reading *The Suffragette* or any other newspaper from the mainstream press which also resorted to propaganda. Besides, these testimonies, unreliable or not, still spread fear among the British and Allied population. And as always feelings of fear or powerlessness against the enemy were the chief principles to spread a vision of terror⁴².

The WSPU did not make a difference between soldiers and the German population, but it is important to know that emphasising the gender distinctions and discrimination was part of the Suffragettes' propaganda as their purpose was to trigger a reaction. It was a way for the newspaper to justify the intervention of their country in the war⁴³ but also the violent, thus, masculine side and interpretation of Germany. In other words, the WSPU hoped for raising support for the war but also discrediting all of German military actions. Indeed, by doing so, the German soldiers were not only represented as violent, but they were also represented as barbarians and uncivilised people whose only way to win the war was by violent means.

³⁸ Moyd Michelle. "Gender and Violence" in Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor. *Gender and the Great War*, 2017, p. 190.

³⁹ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities: 1914, A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 199

⁴⁰ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The War", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

⁴¹ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 90.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 179. Horne and Kramer also explain this idea that German atrocities could also be justified by the German fear of the franc-tireur myth (p. 184.). This myth goes back to the 1870 Franco-Prussian War where civilians resisted the enemy and took revenge in a violent way (p. 95.). German soldiers were afraid of any civilians – as the franc-tireur myth is mostly based on the invisibility of the assailants (p. 96.) – and even more of women and children as they were the less expected revengers (p. 109.) In other words, Germans had extreme fear of any rebellious civilians and for them, it justified the way they acted with such as a violence, especially in Belgium. Paradoxically, Germans justified their violent actions as a repression of any resistance and a revenge for the German victims; but the Allied saw them as a way to justify their own actions against Germany and saw the "franc-tireur"'s violence as self-defence. See more Horne and Kramer, "Chapter 4: Memories, mentalities, and the German response to the franc-tireur war", *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, 2001, pp. 140-161.

⁴³ Gullace, Nicoletta F. "Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War", *The American Historical Review*, June 1997, p. 714.

1.2. Male barbarism and German Kultur

The first thing we notice in *The Suffragette* about the association of Germans with barbarism is the use of pejorative terms to define and justify it. Indeed, one of the terms used is the "Huns"⁴⁴. It directly refers to the Huns of Attila who are known to be savage, barbarous, and to have destroyed numerous cities⁴⁵. By comparing the Germans to the Huns, the WSPU, and more generally the British propaganda, wanted to emphasise the uncivilised side of the German soldiers, justifying once again their representation as a male country. Moreover, the fact that the newspaper identifies them with the Huns shows that for them, the Germans represent a regression from civilisation. Compared to other countries of the world, Germans are considered by the WSPU to be separated from any development or progress in their society. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst talks about them by employing "degenerate"⁴⁶ as if Germans and their violence associated with the vices of masculinity was to be considered as a genetic problem. Not only is Germany's own civilisation believed to be under-developed and even inexistent, but its population is too. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst explains that the German uncivilised aspect has to do with science, defining it as "scientific barbarism"⁴⁷. In other words, as with the word "degenerate", she thinks that the issue is deeper than a problem about officers ordering to spare no civilians but more of a psychological and even physical problem profoundly settled within the German nature⁴⁸. Indeed, in an article of *The Suffragette* on a review of a book by Mr Ford Madox Hueffer titled "When Blood is their Argument: an analysis of Prussian Culture"⁴⁹, the unknown reviewer selected extracts from the books which he found useful. Analysing other books in link with their own ideas was a common feature of the newspaper; it helped in showing that the newspaper was, first, not the only one to think that way; secondly, it gave credit to their arguments and thirdly it gave enough content to reinforce them. Indeed, the article on this particular book starts by stating that the book was written well before some atrocious acts by German soldiers. By doing so, the author wants to show the reader that what he will later state was true even before the war and accentuate the fact that the male barbarous nature of Germans was already established long before the worldwide conflict. The author wants to explain that German's nature was not the result of a particular event in German history. Later on, the unknown author of the article is using other passages from Hueffer's Book emphasising the genetic problem of the Germans. Indeed, he notes that "the lunacy rate and the death rates from tuberculosis, diphtheria and other zymotic diseases" are doubled and even tripled in big German cities unlike British cities⁵⁰. By publishing such a review, the WSPU directly agrees with what stated: the uncivilised German society led to the spread of diseases which led at his turn deaths and degenerate births and barbarous behaviours.

⁴⁴ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 62.

⁴⁵ "Wilhelm the Murderer: An American Indictment of the Kaiser", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 175.

⁴⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. "How the win the War", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 198.

⁴⁷ Pankhurst, Christabel. "What a German Victory would Mean", *The Suffragette*, 27 August 1915, p. 290.

⁴⁸ "The German Peril", *Britannia*, 14 April 1916, p. 164.

⁴⁹ "All about Kultur", *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915, p. 122.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Moreover, *The Suffragette* explains that this retrogression of the German person and more specifically, the German man can also be the cause of this distinction between men and women. Indeed, the newspaper explains in an article that the German men are very misogynistic towards women as a result of their masculine nature⁵¹: even the way in which they are using words is creating this gender distinction and oppression. The unknown author of the article explains that there is a word to define something as feminine "*weiblich*" and that this word is often used in a pejorative way to qualify something which could only be fit for a woman (i.e. "*Weibliches Wetter* (weather fit only for one's wife to be out.))"⁵².

The fact that German used misogynistic vocabulary was used by the WSPU as a way to stress the uncivilized and barbarous Germany. Indeed, the newspaper did not only accuse their enemy of physical and psychological problems resulting in their nature, but they also criticised German culture or "Kultur". The newspaper made a difference between culture and "Kultur". The latter represented the German culture as the cause of the war and the many barbarous actions German soldiers committed⁵³, and "culture" simply represented culture as a whole as the WSPU could define French or British culture. However, even though, the newspaper viewed Germans as barbarous and uncivilised, it did not mean that Germans did not try to find a way to be civilised. Indeed, a series of articles titled "The Franco-British People" written by Jean Finot which explains the close relationship between Britain and France also has one specific issue which helps in explaining how Germany had once tried to be civilised. This statement from Finot contrasts the British and French cultures viewed as civilised and the German one⁵⁴. By doing so, he creates once again a gendered interpretation of the countries involved in the war opposing on one side the barbarous male country and on the other, the civilised, cultural, and feminine allies. Finot explains that German culture has been influenced by those of Britain and France: from the literature of Shakespeare or Milton to the philosophy of Voltaire, Diderot, or Rousseau⁵⁵. And yet, Germany failed to achieve the same level of culture and only achieved what Finot took from a certain M. Boutroux, "learned barbarism"⁵⁶. In other words, Germany failed to be civilised because they did not properly

⁵¹ "German contempt for Women", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 203.

⁵² *Ibid.* Besides what is interesting in this article is that the term "*weibliches*" is opposed to the term "*herrlich*" which according to the WSPU means manly and is used in a positive way to qualify things by Germans. However, the term "*herrlich*" truly means fantastic in German and has nothing to do with masculinity. Here, I believe, was a mistake from the author who thought that "*herrlich*" came from "*herr*" meaning "sir" when it actually comes from "*hehr*" derived from sublime or noble (see "*herrlich*", *Duden, Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, edited by Dudenredaktion, 2007 and "*herrlich*" in Kluge, Friedrich; Bürgisser, Max; Gregor, Bernd and Seebold, Elmar's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 1989, p. 307.). This misunderstanding is interesting because it discredits the comparison the newspaper tried to show. "*Weibliches*" was possibly used as a pejorative word yet it was not put into contrast with another more masculine word.

⁵³ "Kultur the enemy! And Kultur is the Creation of the German People as a Whole", *Britannia*, 20 July 1917, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Finot, Jean, "The Franco-British People", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

learn how not to be barbarous from other civilised cultures: they did not manage to get over their own nature. So, because they could not copy other civilised cultures, they decided to make their own: the German Kultur (written like that in a mocking manner for propaganda purposes⁵⁷) which was directly associated with barbarism. For *The Suffragette*, this "Kultur" was deeply anchored in German society (it went from the education in universities to the religion in churches⁵⁸) and was put above all other cultures. One thing they accused German of was to use their "Kultur" to influence others and make "[their] Kultur, thy Kultur"⁵⁹. This phenomenon was identified by the WSPU as Prussianisation. To put it differently, the Suffragettes were afraid of being influenced by the barbarous Germans and of seeing their own British culture disappear. Indeed, it was a common fear in Britain to think that a German victory would signify the end of Britain as a whole including population, economy, politics or even culture. For Emmeline Pankhurst, Prussianisation once again meant masculinity which "was carried to a point of enormity and obscenity"⁶⁰. Letting Germany win would mean letting masculinity and what the WPSU had been fighting against since the beginning of the war win, and the end of British civilisation. Indeed, since Prussianisation symbolised Germany, it was obviously linked with this idea of gendered distinction and interpretation: on one side the "over-sexuality⁶¹" of men and on the other side the British delicate and feminine culture. But how would Prussianisation have happened? Any signs of a culture other than the German one would have been destroyed, including the historic monuments. Such an act was considered by many as one of the greatest forms of barbarism⁶². Then, they would have taken over the politics, the economy, or the education system⁶³ in order to spread their own cultural values.

2. The Allies: the feminine and superior countries

As opposed to Germany, the Allies were represented by the feminine gender: pronouns symbolising this gender were used such as "she" or "her" and they are also personified through feminine names, "Britannia" for Britain and "Mother of the European Democracy"⁶⁴ for France. While their pronouns and alternative names were feminine, Germany, in the newspaper was identified differently. The pronoun used was the neutral one, "it" and thus was not personified through gender; *The Suffragette* also tends to talk about Germany by directly referring

⁵⁷ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 217.

⁵⁸ "Kultur the enemy! And Kultur is the Creation of the German People as a Whole", *The Suffragette*, 20 July 1917, p. 54

⁵⁹ "Under the thumb of Germany", taken from "The Pan-Germanist in Alsace" by Jules Froelich and Hani, *The Suffragette*, 20 August 1915, p. 279.

⁶⁰ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Awaiting the Call to Action", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 165.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 218.

⁶³ Pankhurst, Christabel. Extracts from a speech: "Russia, ourselves and the war", *The Suffragette*, 22 June 1917, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty? – continued", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

to Germans in general or the "Huns"⁶⁵. Furthermore, the vocabulary used to distinguish Allies from German, is also representing once again the gendered interpretation of *The Suffragette*: Allies are praised for their feminine qualities associated with passion⁶⁶, self-sacrifice and devotion⁶⁷ – which were considered to be strong feminine qualities for the WSPU. And meanwhile Germany is being criticised for its masculinity linked with barbarism by the WSPU. Not only does the WSPU use positive vocabulary to praise the Allies and represent them in a good light, but the organisation also takes the time to give detailed accounts on each Allied country's fight in the war. Indeed, some articles are made for the reader to follow the events on the front. Moreover, numerous articles have also been made to oppose Germany and the Allies, and therefore to reinforce this gendered representation of femininity being better than masculinity for society; an argument the newspaper had always tried to defend.

2.1. France, the feminine model per excellence

France was one of the first allies to be considered as a representation of the femininity *The Suffragette* praised. Indeed, France had a prominent place within the newspaper during the First World War. Many articles were written to justify its involvement in the war and its gendered representation as a feminine country. One of the main arguments was about its culture. Indeed, on the same level German "Kultur" was blamed for being the symbol of barbarism, the French culture was instead praised for shaping a civilised country and world. For instance, France was viewed as the "Mother of European Democracy"⁶⁸. France was to be a model in terms of civilisation for the other countries in Europe but also in the world. Once again, Emmeline Pankhurst praised France and its ideals and instead criticized "the over-sexed [...] over-masculine country of Germany"⁶⁹. Moreover, by following the same example with Germany, *The Suffragette* is using past history to justify and spread their arguments. Germany's barbarism was – according to the newspaper – deeply rooted within German culture and "in their very nature, in their blood"⁷⁰ so their role in the war was *de facto* associated with and justified by their own past. Thus, the same goes for France and its past and present actions are defined because of its very own nature. Indeed, according to *The Suffragette*, the fact that France has such a significant role in the war as an Ally and becomes a symbol of femininity is due to its past history. One of the most famous French historical events is, of course, the French Revolution of 1789 and it had not escaped to the WSPU that

⁶⁵ Moreover, it is important to know that unlike Britain or France which were defined as "motherland", Germany instead named itself as a "fatherland" ("Das Vaterland"), long before the Suffragettes' gendered representation. Yet, the WSPU still used it as a way to prove and emphasise their gendered arguments. For instance, *The Suffragette* relied on a reproduction of Onno Klopp's "Who is the Real Enemy of Germany?" which already called Germany, a fatherland in 1868. See "A Dynasty of Fraud and Force", *The Suffragette*, 13 August 1915, p. 265.

⁶⁶ Tuohy, Ferdinand. "German Defied: the Polish Women have preserved their nation's life" in "The Failure of Germany", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 29.

⁶⁷ "France's day – Mrs Pankhurst's Tribute", *Britannia*, 4 October 1918, p. 147.

⁶⁸ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ "The German Peril", *Britannia*, 14 April 1916, p. 164.

this event: first of all, represented the very essence of French democracy, but it also had consequences on French culture and civilisation; consequences which, in turn, had also had an impact on the way France is viewed. "The fruits" of this Great Revolution⁷¹ are indeed what the Suffragettes have been fighting for since the beginning of their militancy: freedom from a barbarous male ruler and the establishment of a democracy at the complete opposite of what Germany was considered to be.

France's culture and civilisation are so important to the WSPU because they have in fact influenced Britain's own culture and civilisation. In Jean Finot's series of articles in *The Suffragette*, readers can have a better view on the influence France had on Britain and why "Britain owes to France"⁷². For instance, Finot explains that, at first, Britain and France should be enemies because of their origins: Britain is viewed as closer to Germany than to France; but in the end civilisation took the upper hand making Britain and France united⁷³. So, both countries had actually a lot in common: English literature is said to have been influenced by France⁷⁴ and on a more important note it is through France's own democratic values that Britain "came to realize its civilising mission"⁷⁵. In other words, the WSPU is admitting that Britain gained civilisation thanks to the influence of France, but, more than an influence, France, in fact, became a model to follow for the Suffragettes and the other allies. Indeed, among the many articles of *The Suffragette* praising French civilisation making it a feminine country, one can notice that French culture is not only present through series of articles such as Finot's, but it is also deeply present within the WSPU militancy of the First World War. For instance, the French Hymn "La Marseillaise" was sung at a Weekly War Service Meeting organised by the WSPU⁷⁶. The fact that a French hymn is sung at a British meeting clearly shows the impact France had on the Suffragettes during the war: France became the role model everyone had to follow because of its qualities, culture and civilisation which symbolised the femininity the WSPU was searching for and praising. In order to follow it, they had to understand and adopt all the characteristics defined as feminine which would make them a better civilised society. Furthermore, France was not only a model for its civilisation but also for its patriotism in time of war. Indeed, most of the W.S.P.U campaign during the First World War was based on patriotic feelings to arouse the population's involvement in the fight against the barbarous Germany. And to back up their arguments, it was easier to rely on a model, in this case France. Even Christabel Pankhurst explains that the patriotism she saw in France has inspired her to do the same in her own nation⁷⁷. France served as an example of how civilisation changed one's country. That might be another reason the French hymn was sung at a war rally meeting: not only does it set France as the superior feminine country and model; it also conveys a very patriotic feeling. Indeed, the lyrics of the hymn deal with people fighting for liberty against any tyrants who might put in danger freedom and putting back the country at a state of barbarism. This hymn is a cry for gathering people to stand

⁷¹ Finot, Jean. "The Franco-British People", *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915, p. 125.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Finot, Jean. "The Franco-British People", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 71.

⁷⁴ Finot, Jean. "The Franco-British People", *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915, p. 125.

⁷⁵ Finot, Jean. "Franco British People: What Britain owes to France", *The Suffragette*, 21 May 1915, p. 91.

⁷⁶ Awaiting the Call to Action, *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 165.

⁷⁷ "We will not see Freedom sacrificed!", *The Suffragette*, 2 July 1915, p. 185.

up to what it is unfair and that is why the WSPU found useful to put a translation of the "Marseillaise"⁷⁸ in their newspaper or sing it at meetings; not only France was a model no one could refute but its hymn was still very much as topical as ever during the First World War for the Suffragettes.

Another key element to stress their gendered interpretation of France was to, of course, use a feminine model: Joan of Arc. Before entering the details on how Joan of Arc was described, it is first crucial to understand the significant place feminine role models had in the newspaper and in its war campaign. First of all, they were used to be put in opposition with the uncivilised enemy and diminish its actions⁷⁹ but also because it helped in establishing all of the masculine qualities (here, the masculinity found in British soldiers and not in German ones) worthy and needed in time of war within a feminine body⁸⁰ and therefore find a balance between the gendered roles of each individual instead of having a clear dichotomy. Even though the WSPU's purpose was to emphasise women and their feminine characteristics as worthy of a better involvement in society, there is no denying that the characteristics distinguishing a Suffragette from another woman are still quite masculine inspired. So, Joan of Arc is seen as the symbol of France's gendered interpretation as a female country, but she is in fact more than that for the Suffragettes. Indeed, she is not only the feminine figure per excellence of France, but she is also one of the models the Suffragettes used for their militancy not only for arousing patriotism but also for their own suffrage campaign. Christabel Pankhurst explains in her autobiography that the Suffragettes are "the spiritual descendants" of Joan of Arc⁸¹. In other words, all the qualities of Joan of Arc can apparently be found within the Suffragettes. The fact that they are using Joan of Arc helps in supporting that femininity must triumph over the tyrannical masculine qualities of the enemy. No one can deny what Joan of Arc achieved as a woman, and therefore, she is considered by the WSPU as a "the genius of patriotism"⁸² with all the feminine qualities praised by the newspaper: "common sense", "gentleness", "unselfishness" and "courage"⁸³. But she is not only represented as the patriot per excellence, she is also considered to be a religious symbol driven by God. Indeed, she is always represented in the newspaper with a "white armour"⁸⁴: it stresses her purity as a woman and the religious aspect of her fight. She is also said to be guided by God himself⁸⁵. The fact that the Suffragettes emphasised the religious aspect of Joan of Arc is important to take into account because it raised once again the fact that the war but also the suffrage campaign was seen as a religious mission. Indeed, the WSPU thought that their very own fight to get the vote was an "outcome of

⁷⁸ "Liberty, Beloved Liberty, Fight with thy Defenders", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1911, p. 24.

⁷⁹ Fell, Alison S. "Remembering French and British First World War Heroines", in Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger and Birgitta Zaar. *Gender and the First World War*, 2014, p. 108.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 282.

⁸² Pankhurst, Christabel. "Joan of Arc as Patriot", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 70.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ "Joan of Arc marches at the Head of the Army to Raise the Siege of Orleans", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 72.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Christianity" and even a "awakening"⁸⁶. It was seen as a mission to achieve at all costs. This religious vision of the suffrage movement also appeared before the war. It was in fact common for the WSPU to convey their messages by using a religious language in order to convince people to join them⁸⁷. According to Kabi Hartman, suffragettes identified themselves as both the Christ and his "pilgrims"⁸⁸. On one side, suffragettes perceived the process to get the vote as some sort of mission they had to carry out and which was emphasised by the use of religious metaphors; they could thus be considered, to a certain extent, as pilgrims preaching their calling to as many persons as possible– except it was done through their newspaper but also controversial militant actions. And on the other side, they could also be associated with the Christ as the WSPU compared themselves to martyrs: especially before the war when the suffragettes had been subjected to violent force-feeding which could be compared to crucifixion⁸⁹. Moreover, during the war, martyrdom was linked with the WSPU's idea that the war started because of the mistreatment of women by society as well as the violence to which women were subjected in invaded countries. It was thus not the first time that religion had been used as an argument in the WSPU's war campaign. In fact, war was considered to be a result of God's vengeance against men, their masculine vices, and the way they oppressed women⁹⁰. Their mission was to stop the war by helping women to get more involved in society and by spreading what they thought was the right message like any religious missionary. Besides, Joan of Arc was used as a physical representation and metaphor of the fight the Suffragettes have been fighting years before the war; the worldwide conflict actually helped in stressing this image but also linking with France, the mother superior of feminine countries.

The WSPU wanted to take France as a model for all the characteristics it represented in terms of culture, civilisation, or feminine role models, but also because the organisation of the Pankhursts felt a duty to do so. Indeed, France was viewed as the superior feminine country because of all the sacrifices the soldiers and the country made during the war. For instance, France is used as an example by Christabel Pankhurst in an article she wrote for the "New York Tribune" to convince the American government to send soldiers to the front: she talks about "her heroism and self-sacrifice"⁹¹ and how it is now time to help France and its soldiers who have been fighting Germany for so long. So, France was also used not only as a model for democracy but also as an argument in order to involve other countries in the fight against Germany. Therefore, France played a crucial role in the war propaganda of *The Suffragette*: as a civilised country, it was always put in opposition with the barbarous Germany and that is why it felt like a duty to protect France and French soldiers. Because, the country represented a role model to follow, it had to be protected otherwise the whole interpretation and

⁸⁶ Waller, Margaret J. Speech of July 2, 1914. "A Woman Doctor's View", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 297.

⁸⁷ Hartman, Kabi. "'What made me a suffragette': the new woman and the new (?) conversion narrative", *Women's History Review*, 2003, p. 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹⁰ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The War", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

⁹¹ Pankhurst, Christabel. "France's terrible sacrifice", Reprinted from the "New York Tribune" (24 May 1917), *Britannia*, 22 June 1917, p. 21.

representation of France as femininity triumphing over masculinity would fall apart. Moreover, not only was France a role model for the Suffragettes, but the newspaper also considered it a model for humanity in itself; meaning that without this country, the whole civilisation of the world would fall apart⁹².

The gendered representation of France as a feminine country by the WSPU was not a coincidence. It was all a part of their war propaganda within the newspaper which contributed to spread a metaphorical representation of the Suffragettes' fight against masculinity and to portray the sacrifices not only of France, but also the sacrifices of women made during and for the war.

2.2. Belgium, the victim of German masculine violence

France was not the only country to represent the sacrifices of women. Belgium was in fact a good example of a feminine victim being attacked by masculinity symbolised by German soldiers. Indeed, Belgium was depicted by *The Suffragette* as the true victim of a masculine war⁹³. German soldiers were accused of horrific actions towards the Belgian population and particularly against Belgian women who were raped. The rapes were not only physical, they were also symbolical. Indeed, the rape of Belgian women was also associated with the rape of Belgium as a whole country⁹⁴. Rape is perceived as the invasion of one's intimacy and safety against one's will, and by invading Belgium which had wished to remain neutral, Germany also raped Belgian's wish to remain excluded from this war and invade the country by spreading violence everywhere the soldiers went. Once again, the fact that the Suffragettes chose to represent Belgium as a feminine country accentuates this definition of invasion as rape and gives the reader a metaphoric representation of the violence and barbarism of German soldiers. Moreover, by stressing the fact that Belgium as a whole has been raped, the newspaper wants to show the consequences of the war on one's country which could also happen to Britain if they do not get involved – men and women – in the war; not only their safety as women would be put at risk but also the safety of their own nation.

Another reason why the W.S.P.U used this gendered interpretation of Belgium is because of the religious aspect of it. Naturally, religion had an important place within *The Suffragette's* propaganda: it was represented through France and the religious fight of Joan of Arc, as well as through the symbolisation of the suffrage campaign as a religious mission, and Suffragettes as martyrs. So, it is not a coincidence to see once again the argument of religion this time through the gendered interpretation of Belgium. First of all, Belgium as a country was considered to be "a sacred ground"⁹⁵, in other words, a protected and religious land; and yet by invading it, Germany profaned it with their barbarism and their masculinity. Not only did they invade and "rape" a neutral land, but they also took the civilisation out of it by introducing this same land to war. Indeed, it was a common image to see Belgium represented as a pastoral landscape with "rich pastures", "towns and villages"

⁹² Brioux, Eugene. "France and the War". Extracts from an Address to the American People, *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 21.

⁹³ Kent, Susan Kingsley. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 22.

⁹⁴ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities: 1914, A History of Denial?*, p. 302.

⁹⁵ De Wiart, Carton. A Nation's Sacrifice and Faith, Speech of the Belgian Minister of Justice, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 202.

and “rustic” buildings⁹⁶. It conveyed an atmosphere of innocence, of purity both of the land and its inhabitants. It also carries a sort of mythical aspect of Belgium: a peaceful and green countryside as it was still untouched by the problems other societies were facing with masculinity. Yet, this beautiful nature was soon destroyed and faced the consequences of the war: “bombs, shrapnel and shells” were found on the soil of this sacred land⁹⁷. This vision of nature against the war is not without reminding us of the fight between femininity and masculinity: the nature represents the feminine side, pure and civilised, and the war represents the consequences of masculinity over society, the vengeance of God over the uncivilised, barbarian people – as viewed by the WSPU. In other words, by representing metaphorically Belgium as a little religious Garden of Eden and Germany as “the snake⁹⁸” which corrupted it and violated it, *The Suffragette* is giving another symbolical and gendered interpretation of the constant fight between women and men; femininity and masculinity; democracy and tyranny.

This vision of a religious Belgium does not stop to the association to a mythical Garden. Indeed, Belgium – on the same level as Joan of Arc – was also seen as a martyr of the war. It was common to identify any victim of German soldiers as a martyr⁹⁹. It was used as a symbol of the consequences of masculinity on femininity by using religion which also helped in emphasising the common vision of the German profanity on Belgium. The main image used to represent Belgium as a religious feminine martyr was the Madonna¹⁰⁰: a representation of Mary, mother of Jesus. In this particular article, she is described as being pierced through with swords each representing a sin committed by the symbol of masculinity according to the newspaper: “grief”, “perjury”, “massacre”, “pillage”, “treachery” and “calumny”¹⁰¹. Belgium experiences all of these actions by being invaded by Germany and yet the newspaper states that Belgium will manage to survive all of these and become stronger than ever like Mary because of the fact that Justice will always triumph over Force¹⁰². Indeed, not only was Belgium viewed as a martyr of the war and of masculinity, but it was also represented as being a symbol of patriotism because of its martyrdom. As well as France, Belgium was viewed as a model of patriotism for all the other countries involved in the First World War. Thanks to the war and the German

⁹⁶ De Wiart, Carton. A Nation’s Sacrifice and Faith, Speech of the Belgian Minister of Justice, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 202. Depicting pastoral landscapes of one’s country was a common propaganda strategy during the war. It created a feeling of nostalgia among soldiers who will thus undoubtedly defend their beautiful, pastoral country against the horrors of the war. Even after the war, the consequences of the conflict produced a necessity of going back to an older version of one’s country, one which is still innocent and untouched by the war and the consequences it resulted on society.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, p. 311.

¹⁰⁰ De Wiart, Carton. “A Nation’s Sacrifice and Faith”. Speech from the Belgian Minister of Justice, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 202.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² De Wiart, Carton. “A Nation’s Sacrifice and Faith”. Speech from the Belgian Minister of Justice, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 202.

invasion, Belgium developed a patriotic sense which helped in uniting the country, they became "one single soul"¹⁰³ towards the same purpose: defeat German soldiers. As with other countries, Germany tried with Belgium to undermine its civilisation and yet according to the WSPU, it failed, thanks to "the spirit of national freedom"¹⁰⁴, in other words thanks to the patriotism of Belgians and their sense of humanity which gathered every individual against the same enemy. Not only was Belgium considered as a martyr, but it was also perceived as a heroine¹⁰⁵ who resisted through a patriotic sacrifice to the German invasion. As the Madonna suggests, even though Germany tried to destroy Belgian civilisation, nature and population, Belgium managed to resist the enemy and to retain all of its qualities which made it perceived as a feminine country by the newspaper propaganda. Indeed, this status of "national victimhood"¹⁰⁶ allowed the WSPU to take Belgium as an example of German Atrocities and help rally British people under the symbol of patriotism but also femininity – which needed protection – to fight against the violence of an uncivilised and masculine Germany.

Belgium's gendered interpretation as feminine helped in reinforcing the WSPU's representation of their constant clash with masculinity and Germany. Yet, instead of France which is represented as a feminine warrior and the epitome of democracy and civilisation, Belgium is rather represented as a victim and martyr subjected to German atrocities. Both interpretations are similar to the image *The Suffragette* wants to give to its readers: women are certainly the victims of male actions, but they can be and also are fighters who will try everything to win.

2.3. Russian women on the war front: the physical interpretation of the feminine fight against masculinity

Through France and Belgium's experience in the war, the WSPU expected the readers of their main propaganda organ to understand why it was so crucial to help the Allies: France was to be assisted because of their true civilising, democratic virtues, and Belgium's situation made it a martyr and symbolical representation of what women, victims of German Atrocities, had had to go through during the war. Yet, they are not the only Allies to have been described as the epitome of femininity constantly fighting against masculinity. Indeed, it was common to see in the newspaper articles describing Russian women on the battlefield. While the WSPU was trying to get British women more involved in war effort and convince the British government to let them do so, Russia had already created battalions entirely constituted of voluntary and strong-willed women. The significant feminine figure behind this idea was named Botchkareva. An entire article in *Britannia* is dedicated to her life and the reasons which drove her to create such an army¹⁰⁷. Even before that, Botchkareva was already

¹⁰³ De Wiart, Carton. "A Nation's Sacrifice and Faith". Speech from the Belgian Minister of Justice, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 202.

¹⁰⁴ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Bernard Shaw Answered", *The Suffragette*, 28 May 1915, p. 110.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Horne, John and Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial?*, 2001, p. 315

¹⁰⁷ Kenney, Jessie. "The Story of Botchkareva, The Women Soldier of Russia who has Formed the Battalion of Women in Petrograd", *Britannia*, 27 July 1917, p. 60.

concerned with the war as she had lost her husband, who had gone to the front, and after some years as a soldier for the Russian Army she decided to create her own regiment uniquely made up of women¹⁰⁸. The creation of this battalion named "The Women's Death Battalion"¹⁰⁹ coincided with the Russian Revolution during which soldiers were quite discouraged with the war in itself¹¹⁰, and therefore Botchkareva decided to take things in hand and recruit as many women as possible in order to fight for their own Russian nation¹¹¹. Her famous battalion was soon formed of three hundred women¹¹². It is simple to see why it was so significant for the WSPU to depict Botchkareva's battalion's achievements as they represented indeed all the qualities the Suffragettes had been advocating for years: bravery, the fighting-spirit, selflessness, enduring sacrifices and most importantly patriotism and the desire to put your nation before your own life. All of these characteristics represented "the newly defined feminine ideals"¹¹³ according to the Suffragettes and the world context. The fact that such a battalion existed was of great importance for both the newspaper and the WSPU: it gave credibility to their demands to the British government but also to their persistent feminine image of someone able to fight as good as men and alongside them¹¹⁴; something which would be both beneficial to society – as it gave more manpower to armies – and to their role as women (by being soldiers they could be fully considered as citizens). Moreover, it also gave inspiration to the Suffragettes who wished to do the same in Britain – and they would manage to achieve that by creating several military branches entirely composed of women¹¹⁵. Like France, Russia appears to be the feminine model to follow in time of war. But if France is mostly described in the newspaper as a spiritual model and feminine fighter against masculinity, Russia is more of the physical symbol of this fight as the true representatives of femininity took arms. The admiration for these women was such that Emmeline Pankhurst herself decided to meet Botchkareva and her regiment while visiting Russia¹¹⁶. Her visit

¹⁰⁸ Kenney, Jessie. "The Story of Botchkareva, The Women Soldier of Russia who has Formed the Battalion of Women in Petrograd", *Britannia*, 27 July 1917, p. 60.

¹⁰⁹ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 54.

¹¹⁰ See document 12 of Susan R. Grayzel. *Women and the First World War*, pp. 136-139. This document is composed of extracts from the British nurse Florence Farmborough's letters compiled in *With the Armies of the Tsar: A Nurse at the Russian Front in War and Revolution, 1914-1918*. One letter from 11 May 1917 explains that soldiers in Russia now "lacked the spark of loyalty, of devotion to God and their mother country" because of the situation of their country. (Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 137.)

¹¹¹ Kenney, Jessie. "The Story of Botchkareva, The Women Soldier of Russia who has Formed the Battalion of Women in Petrograd", *Britannia*, 27 July 1917, p. 60.

¹¹² Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 55.

¹¹³ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One", in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield, *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, 1994, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 55.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹¹⁶ Extract from the newspaper *Rietch*, "Mrs. Pankhurst in Russia: extracts from the Russian Press", *Britannia*, 20 July 1917, p. 55.

was in fact to spread the Patriotic Mission in Russia¹¹⁷. Indeed, even though some women were still voluntarily going on the front thanks to Botchkareva's battalion, it was also important to convince men to fight as well. The Russian Revolution was getting increased attention from Russian soldiers and social committees who wished Russia to stop fighting in the war¹¹⁸. Therefore, the purpose of Pankhurst's visit in Russia was to convince soldiers to keep fighting because it will otherwise signify the end "of civilisation and freedom"¹¹⁹ but also the end of Russia and the other allies. Most of the speeches by Emmeline Pankhurst in Russia deal again with this fear of Germanisation or Prussianization of Russia not only because of the Revolution but also because of their pacifist decision which would eventually lead to the deaths of many allies – according to her¹²⁰. In other words, the WSPU could not understand why people would voluntarily decide to advantage Germany in the war by withdrawing from the war, especially when its main purpose is to do the complete opposite. The newspaper also put the emphasis, as with other allies, that Russia's purpose in the worldwide conflict was to "de-Germanise" the country which had been influenced by Germany for decades before the war¹²¹.

To sum up, Russia in itself was perceived as a true feminine country in which women were more than just observers of the conflict but actually took part in it thanks to feminine figures such as Botchkareva. While, these women were used by the newspaper as models and pure symbols of the WSPU's way of thinking and propaganda, Russia in itself became in the later years of the war a concern for the women of the WSPU as the Revolution led to divisions on the usefulness of the war and if it was worth it to keep on fighting. Emmeline Pankhurst even went as far as visiting government officials in Russia¹²² in order to discuss this decision and to prevent Russia from being the next victim and martyr in the war but also to a larger extent, Pankhurst wanted to prevent femininity – both physically and spiritually – from being wiped out by masculinity.

3. Britain: a feminine country surrounded by masculinity

The gendered interpretation and representation of the countries by *The Suffragette* helped in understanding their fight opposing femininity and masculinity. However, this perception of the enemy being absolutely masculine and the Allies such as France or Belgium being strictly feminine is quite black and white. But how is Britain represented by the WSPU? Is it purely feminine as one might think? Actually, the WSPU

¹¹⁷ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Mrs. Pankhurst's mission to Russia: Mrs. Pankhurst's Letter to Mr. Lloyd George", *Britannia*, 6 June 1917, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ "The Allies and Russia: Extracts from Mrs. Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall on November 7.", *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 187.

¹¹⁹ "Mrs Pankhurst in Russia", extracts from the Russian Press, *Britannia*, 13 July 1917, p. 44.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ "Russia's War of Liberation", *The Suffragette*, 16 July 1915, p. 217.

¹²² "Mrs Pankhurst in Russia", *Britannia*, 13 July 1917, p. 44. See also "Mrs Pankhurst in Russia", *Britannia*, 20 July 1917, p. 55.

makes a strong difference between Britain as the nation and the British government. This is based on this distinction that the newspaper gives a gendered interpretation of its own country. Indeed, on one side, Britain as a nation fighting in the war is considered as feminine mostly through a role model, and on the other side, the British government is considered to be a symbol of masculinity, trying to undermine the country at time of war and dealing with their own Empire issues in a way that is perceived as just as masculine as Germany during the First World War.

3.1. Queen Elizabeth I: the feminine role model of the W.S.P.U

As seen previously, the use of a feminine role model was indeed crucial for the newspaper propaganda as it embodied both all the qualities the WSPU praised and a new way to represent femininity with qualities that were at first supposed to describe men on the front¹²³. For instance, Joan of Arc was used as a symbol of France's fight by the newspaper and Belgium was associated with Mary, Mother of Jesus. In order to represent the British nation in time of war, it was Queen Elizabeth I who was used in *The Suffragette*. Once again, the newspaper put the emphasis on the past history of the nation by bringing into their arguments an emblematic feminine figure of British history. By using Elizabeth I, the WSPU gave a model to follow to numerous groups of people within British society; the first group being the government in itself. Indeed, it was still part of the constant battle of the WSPU to get women more involved in the society and in government, and what would be better to convince a male government by using a feminine figure which cannot be brought into disrepute as she was once the ruler of the nation? Not only did *The Suffragette* bring Elizabeth I as an undeniable model as a whole, but it also brought facts that what she did for her country is the procedure to follow by the Government if Britain wants to win the war. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst defines her as "a Great Queen" who managed to protect her country in a situation which looked very much like the one Britain was at the time of the article: at war¹²⁴. Parallels were also drawn between Britain in the Elizabethan period and during the First World War as *The Suffragette* had been printing extracts from a history book which was published during the reign of Elisabeth I: William Harrison's *Description of England*. For instance, an entire article was devoted to extracts on "Men and Munitions in Elizabeth's Time"¹²⁵. By doing so, the WSPU tackled the issue the British government had during the First World War with munitions: they did not want women to be involved in munitions factories – at first – and therefore many "heroes were sacrificed needlessly because of the shortage of British munitions"¹²⁶. Here, the British government appears as the masculine figure the Suffragettes despised and is taken for responsible for the deaths of innocent British soldiers but also Allied soldiers which were viewed by the Suffragettes as admirable persons they needed to protect. And yet, during a time where the nation was ruled by a woman, the country was not missing any munitions as much as that the enemies could not understand

¹²³ Fell, Alison S. "Remembering French and British First World War Heroines" in Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger and Birgitta Zaar. *Gender and the First World War*, 2014, p. 108.

¹²⁴ Pankhurst, Christabel. "A Few Words to British Men", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 166.

¹²⁵ "Men and Munitions in Elizabeth's Time". Taken from Harrison's "Description of England", *The Suffragette*, 20 August 1915, p. 280.

¹²⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. "A Few Words to British Men", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 166.

how “any such provision [could] be made.”¹²⁷. It was a way to show the British Government that women could easily rule a country and actually be better than men; they wanted to show that there was no shame in following a feminine model. The newspaper does not stop there, and the WSPU also drew a parallel between soldiers under Elizabeth I and soldiers during the First World War. Even though, *The Suffragette* made a difference between the masculinity of the British soldiers and the masculinity of German soldiers (or at least emphasised that the WSPU still supported British soldiers and considered their sacrifice), it still criticised the fact that the army was based on voluntary troops. Some men did not wish to go to war and were not forced too which according to the W.S.P.U reduced considerably the probability to win as the troops were reduced and yet, during the Elizabethan period, so many men fought that a “third part” of them were left “unbilled and uncalled”¹²⁸ as they were in fact not needed.

The second group of the population *The Suffragette* wanted to reach by using Elizabeth I as a symbol was women. It is of course not a coincidence that a woman was chosen as a model in a newspaper dedicated to the suffrage campaign and the fight against masculinity. But another battle of the newspaper during the First World War was to have women be more involved in the worldwide conflict – both at home and on the front. So, the WSPU organised war service procession in order to convince both women but also the British government that they could have a crucial place in war effort and help British soldiers. On the front cover of *The Suffragette*’s issue of the 9th July 1915 (Figure 2), it is written in bold letters that a war service procession would happen on the 17th July and right under it, is a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I and a quote addressing “the women of to-day”: “I saved our country once – it is for you to save it now”¹²⁹. With nothing but the quote we can clearly understand the message the W.S.P.U wants to convey to its audience: they should get involved in war effort otherwise the country could not be saved and Elizabeth I’s victory over the Spanish Armada and its invasion would not have mattered. Indeed, Britain was in the same position as during the Elizabethan time: fearing an invasion of the enemy. Here, the Queen is used as a superior figure, as a representative of all British women who need to follow her lead. Her portrait also uses nearly half of the space on the front cover and therefore it also conveys a feeling of superiority: she looks strict and looks directly the reader as if she was watching if they did the right thing and decide to go to the war service procession. Moreover, the quote the WSPU assigned to Queen Elizabeth I is in fact not true but with the portray it feels just like it was: it just conveys this idea that the superior feminine model directly asks women to save their country as it is the nation of both men and women.

The Queen is also represented as a symbol of the patriotism not only for women in general but more specifically for the Suffragettes. Indeed, just like Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I symbolised this balance between femininity and the spirit of a warrior. Representing women as such has always had a major place in the newspaper propaganda. That is why on the front cover of *Britannia*’s issue of the 12nd October 1917, there is an extract of the speech the Queen Elizabeth I delivered to the troops at Tilbury. This speech is the perfect

¹²⁷ “Men and Munitions in Elizabeth’s Time”. Taken from Harrison’s “Description of England”, *The Suffragette*, 20 August 1915, p. 280.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915.

representation of the WSPU's vision of the woman: an excellent balance between femininity and the mind of a fighter. Indeed, what Elizabeth I stated in his speech is that she had "the body of a weak and feeble woman" but the "heart of a King"¹³⁰. She is making a difference between the body and the mind: stating that the physical appearance or gender of someone should not define what the person spiritually is. In other words, women could also the best of the masculine qualities: those used to also describe British soldiers on the front: heroism, patriotism and loyal to the nation. Furthermore, Queen Elizabeth I also states that she will herself "take up arms"¹³¹; and the fact that the newspaper has selected this part of the speech is just another representation of their will to fight in the war: they want women to participate in the war effort and they are using Queen Elizabeth I as an example to show that women are ready to fight and more importantly they can fight as their own feminine physical appearance does not define their willingness. The WSPU often used Elizabeth I's image as a woman standing on her own against the enemy; as the epitome of feminine fighter against pure barbarous masculinity¹³². In the end, it is now discernible why the WSPU decided to use Elizabeth I as the British role model to follow: she is the gendered interpretation of the physical war the Suffragettes are fighting (the First World War and the conflict with the British government over war effort and women as well as over the suffrage campaign) but she also symbolises the spiritual fight over femininity and masculinity.

3.2. The masculine enemy from inside

The conflict between the WSPU, the Suffragettes and the British government had already started years before the worldwide war in 1914. The suffrage campaign of the WSPU and its propaganda was in fact much based on this struggle with British political parties as one can understand in the first ever front cover of *The Suffragette* on the 18 October 1912's issue (see Figure 3). The cartoon is indeed a clear representation of all of the WSPU's ideas but also interpretation of their campaign. On one side, a young woman is wearing a sash on which it is written WSPU, and on the other side, a three-headed giant representing the government is facing her. With only this brief description, one can already deduce what message the newspaper wants to convey; moreover, this clear gender distinction– an innocent woman standing against a bulky male figure – is not without reminding us of the gender interpretation made by the same women's organisation a few years later for war propaganda. Now, a lot of thoughts have been put into this cartoon; if we analyse it in more depth, we can distinguish that the three heads of the giant are the three leaders of a coalition born after the 1910 General election: John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary, is on the left; Herbert H. Asquith, the Liberal Party Leader is in the middle and on the right is Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labour Party. All three parties decided on a coalition in order for the Liberals to have the majority in the House of Commons against the Conservative Party led at the time by Arthur Balfour. They are holding a club on which it is written "coercion"

¹³⁰ Front Cover, *Britannia*, 12 October 1917.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Smith, Angela K. "The Pankhursts and the war: suffrage magazines and first world war propaganda", *Women's History Review*, 2003, p. 109.

and they are also carrying a sword on which it is transcribed "forcible feeding"¹³³. Furthermore they are standing in a lake in which it is written "broken pledges" whereas the woman representing Suffragettes is standing on a rock named militancy; one can also observe the path of rocks behind her, certainly alluding to the fact that militancy had built itself little by little and it is the actions of the Suffragettes which made it possible to stand against the government itself. As a whole, the cartoon is not without reminding us of the biblical myth of David and Goliath in which two opponents of unequal forces and in the end it is the one deemed weak that won: David whom the WSPU represents. All of these details create a distinct visual interpretation of the conflict between the Suffragettes and the government and gives a summary of all the things the WSPU reproached the government for. Indeed, the three-headed Goliath is carrying elements suggesting the violence with which the government tried to deal with the suffrage campaign such as coercion and forcible-feeding. The latter was especially criticised and represented one of the most crucial arguments against the measures of the British government and the suffrage campaign propaganda¹³⁴. It was indeed considered by the WSPU as one of the most barbarous methods used against the Suffragettes but more generally against women¹³⁵; used as a tool of torture against Suffragettes performing a hunger strike. What one can perceive through the WSPU's articles on the matter is the fact that the same arguments are used a few years later to discredit the violent actions of German soldiers. Identifying these actions as uncivilised, inhuman, cruel, and assimilating them to masculine behaviour was therefore a common aspect of the newspaper's propaganda whether the time period or the accused.

That is why it is even more unforeseen that the WSPU chose to ally itself with the British government once the First World War was declared. After all these years trying to undermine and degrade any British policies against the votes for women, the WSPU decided to become patriotic and support their own nation in time of war. Besides, the government had also agreed to release any Suffragette prisoners and therefore the government could not be criticized as a whole or as much as they would have before¹³⁶, the Suffragettes had to find another person to accuse of all the issues happening at the time in Britain whether it was the First World War, the Irish Home Rule issue or the suffrage campaign, and this person was named Herbert H. Asquith. He was not unknown to the pre-war Suffragettes because as Prime Minister, he was in fact strongly opposed to the votes for women and seen as the masculine barbarous character behind force-feeding and the cruel imprisonment of the Suffragettes¹³⁷. Even Christabel Pankhurst, in her autobiography, explains that the WSPU needed to fight on two different wars: one with the government, here symbolised, to a certain extent, by Asquith, and the First World War¹³⁸, both representing what they considered to be the extreme and perfect

¹³³ Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912.

¹³⁴ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 22.

¹³⁵ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Forcing the Pass", *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 300.

¹³⁶ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One", in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield, *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, 1994, p. 76.

¹³⁷ Harrison, Brian. *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain*, 2016, p. 19.

¹³⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 286.

incarnation of masculinity. One of the first criticism made against Asquith was on his leadership qualities in a country at war. Indeed, *The Suffragette/Britannia* liked to add his name, "Wait-and-See"¹³⁹ referring to his lack of spirit while taking his decisions. Of course, the WSPU put into contrast, "the lack of fighting spirit"¹⁴⁰ of Asquith with the warrior spirit of women and specifically the Suffragettes – a spirit which has always been represented in the newspaper¹⁴¹ – in order to emphasise on the fact that Asquith was not a suitable war leader¹⁴² for Britain and the British government and therefore his decisions were questionable. Moreover, his wait-and-see policy was perceived by the WSPU as a pro-German behaviour which reinforced his appointment as the British enemy of the Suffragettes' propaganda organ. He is first associated to German figures such as King Constantine, a spiritual German of whom the Suffragettes told the story in one of their articles: it is explained that the main characteristic of this King was to give his position up, wait a while and come back as Asquith did and was accused of trying¹⁴³. In the same article, Asquith is put on the same level as Germans who Lloyd George has to get rid of¹⁴⁴. The WSPU thought that they were fighting two wars (one against Asquith and one against Germany) but they soon put them on the same foot: even though the actions put in place were different in each case and the extent to which the war had an impact on British society, the WSPU still fought against the same enemy or at least against some similar characteristics: a masculine power trying to undermine the feminine British country and society with their policies and opinions – except that the difference for Asquith was that he was already inside the nation while it was still trying to prevent Germany from entering¹⁴⁵.

¹³⁹ "Asquithism and other matters: Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Aeolian Hall, October 23, 1917", *Britannia*, 26 October 1917, p. 167.

¹⁴⁰ "Asquithian Manoeuvres: Extracts from a speech by Miss Christabel Pankhurst at the Aeolian Hall, on October 16th, 1917", *Britannia*, 19 October 1917, p. 159.

¹⁴¹ Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912.

¹⁴² Not only had the Suffragettes perceived Asquith as such but it was also seen as one of the reasons for the fall of the Liberal Party and Asquith's own fall after the First World War during which his lack of energy and leadership led to a decline in popularity both in public opinion and in his own party. See Ball, Stuart R. "Asquith's Decline and the General Election of 1918", *The Scottish Historical Review*, 1982, p. 58.

¹⁴³ "The Civilian's Duty: Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech, Aeolian Hall, June 26th", *Britannia*, 29 June 1917, p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ In fact, the WSPU was quite concerned about the enemy being inside their own country. One of the major concerns was the British-Germans who had the double-nationality. The WSPU could not believe that these people could support British society and fight for it as much as other British soldiers, and therefore they asked for a purification of the country in order to get rid of any persons with German blood within the British government and who could have had access to any pieces of information useful for winning the war. See Pankhurst, Christabel. "How to Win the War", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 198. They still made a distinction between British soldiers whom they considered heroes and British soldiers with German blood whom they viewed as spies or future traitors.

3.3. The WSPU, the British Empire and the question of Ireland

The First World War not only threatened civilisation, femininity, and the European society as a whole, but it was also seen as a threat to the powerful, influential, and crucial British Empire. Indeed, Britain had to deal with the growing German Empire, with saving Europe from turning into this propaganda-driven image of the violent and barbarous German-like figure; but Britain also had to deal with conflicts within its own Empire such as the independence of Ireland. Before going into details of the WSPU's opinion on the question as well as the way it was portrayed in the newspaper, it is important to give a brief summary of what the WSPU criticized Germany for. Indeed, throughout the war, *The Suffragette* and the propaganda in general had always considered Germany to be the perfect representation of masculine values: violent, barbarian, uncivilised, all of which were put into practice through crimes against civilians but also through invasion, coercion and control of the population. On the other hand, Belgium was perceived as the martyr of the war because the country went through all of these "Atrocities". However, Germany was not the sole country to coerce others, as the British Empire was also based on it. Indeed, the relationship between Ireland and Britain was regarded as being "a history of extreme coercion"¹⁴⁶ on the population but also on the economy of the country. Eamon de Valera, an important figure of the Irish independence and later Taoiseach and President of Ireland, explained in a speech on India that Ireland was stripped of its capitals and people by Britain¹⁴⁷. Britain was also considered to be violent, barbarous, and uncivilised by the Irish population when the British government ordered to execute leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising aiming to gain independence for Ireland¹⁴⁸. In other words, the British Empire and Britain itself was seen by Ireland and certainly other countries part of the Empire as not being any better than Germany during the war. So, if we follow the logic of the WSPU and its propaganda which strongly condemned this kind of behaviour from Germans, it would also condemn British government and supports Irish independence from apparently another coercive and therefore masculine country. And yet, the complete opposite happened: the WSPU took sides with Britain and its government. *The Suffragette* was in fact quite imperialistic as the newspaper explains all the reasons why it would not benefit them in any way to give Ireland its independence. Once again, the WSPU showed its patriotic stance towards their own country in time of war as they felt the need to help strengthen the British Empire by taking control of every part of this empire¹⁴⁹. Irish independence for them was indeed another threat to Britain and its population; if their independence was granted, Ireland would face Germany on its own, would fail and would become a German base to attack Britain¹⁵⁰. The fact that Ireland could not protect itself and would fall "to Germany within a day"¹⁵¹ also

¹⁴⁶ Jones, Heather. "Commemorating the Rising history, democracy, and violence in Ireland", *Juncture*, 2016, pp. 261-262.

¹⁴⁷ Ohlmeyer, Jane. "Ireland, India and the British Empire", *Studies in People's History*, p. 174.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁴⁹ Pankhurst, Emmeline, et al. "The Women's Party: The Women's Programme for the War and After. Victory, National Security, and Progress", *Britannia*, 15 March 1918, pp. 375-376.

¹⁵⁰ "Ireland and the German Peril, extract from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall on July 26, 1917", *Britannia*, 21 September 1917, p. 128.

reinforces the coercion Britain put on Irish population, making it therefore impossible to survive in case of a separation.

The dissolution of these two countries was also another way for *The Suffragette* to reinforce once again their masculine interpretation of Germany as they warned Ireland that a separation would unquestionably mean the end of Europe and the beginning of a "materialistic barbarism"-based Empire¹⁵². Furthermore, the WSPU in fact thought that the idea of a partition between Ireland and Britain was a plan from their enemy, Germany in order to weaken Britain and therefore win the war¹⁵³. They did take this matter seriously but they strongly thought that the wish for an Irish independence was only asked by German spies who wished to undermine Britain's power and so to avoid a separation and save the British Empire, governments needed to do a "moral cleansing"¹⁵⁴ of both countries. Another argument to stand against the Irish independence is the fact that it would betray the Allies¹⁵⁵. As seen before, the Allies were considered to be the superior countries of society: feminine, civilised, patriotic but also victims, martyrs and representations of the consequences of "German Atrocities"; they had to be protected and they had to have all the countries and soldiers available to fight along them. Indeed, the WSPU had always explained that one of the reasons Britain entered the war was to defend the martyr, Belgium, and the mother of democracy and civilisation, France¹⁵⁶. By letting Ireland be independent, the Allies were not the only one which were considered to be betrayed. The WSPU also tried to appeal to the empathy of the Irish population towards their own soldiers who fought in the war and tragically sacrificed themselves for their nation: 210 000 Irishmen fought in the First World War under the British flag¹⁵⁷. Separating Ireland from the British Empire would have meant the end of the latter¹⁵⁸ and letting another

¹⁵¹ "Ireland and the German Peril, extract from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall on July 26, 1917", *Britannia*, 21 September 1917, p. 128.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ "The 'International' Danger: extracts from a Speech by Miss Christabel Pankhurst at the Aeolian Hall, October 9, 1917", *Britannia*, 12 October 1917, p. 151.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ "Ireland and the German Peril, extract from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall on July 26, 1917", *Britannia*, 21 September 1917, p. 128.

¹⁵⁶ "Mrs Pankhurst at Hull", *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915, p. 126.

¹⁵⁷ Jones, Heather. "Commemorating the Rising history, democracy and violence in Ireland", *Juncture*, 2016, p. 262.

¹⁵⁸ The end of the British Empire was also linked with this fear of losing a civilised country which would have drastic consequences on soldiers. Indeed, it was thought that the war had in fact brutalised soldiers who returning home became exactly like the propaganda interpretation of German soldiers. So, having an empire like the British one standing strong and peaceful would have helped the soldiers to return to their previous state as civilised people whereas the disappearance of the British Empire would have only reinforced their barbarous characteristics. See Jon Lawrence. "Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain", *The Journal of Modern History*, 2000, pp. 557-563.

empire, the German one, took over the population and therefore let happen what Britain and the WSPU were most afraid of: Prussianize another nation.

To put it differently, the WSPU was against any kind of separation between Ireland and the British Empire as they felt that it would mean the end for both countries. The fact that the WSPU is supporting the British government on this matter is not as unexpected as it should be because it is simply a continuation of the patriotic stance they decided to have at the beginning of the First World War. However what is more surprising is their contradictory position on the question of Ireland: on one side, they blamed Germany for being a uncivilised country, subjecting and controlling people – all of which, which were according to the newspaper to a pejorative masculine interpretation – but, on the other side, they are demanding Britain to not according independence to a country which is also being subjected and controlled by the British Empire. It obviously goes against any feminine characteristics the WSPU praised at the same time in their main propaganda organ. However, it is also important to know that not separating Ireland and Britain was something the WSPU wished long before the war and the threatening enemy. Indeed, even during the pre-war vote campaign, the WSPU was in conflict with the IFWL¹⁵⁹ (the Irish Women's Franchise League) as the WSPU was only concerned with British women's suffrage¹⁶⁰ instead than helping Irish assert their own "independent nationhood" and identity as Irish women¹⁶¹. As a matter of fact, the WSPU had already been involved in Ireland in Belfast through the leadership of Dorothy Evans¹⁶². They believed that if the vote was granted in Ireland, then it will also be the case for Britain¹⁶³ because they treated "Ireland as an extension of Britain"¹⁶⁴ as their position on the Home Rule during the war also suggests: if something happened in Ireland, then it will also have consequences on Britain and to a larger extent what the WSPU had been trying to achieve. That is why, on these matters, the Suffragettes did not see beyond their own interests as a British nation.

¹⁵⁹ Ward, Margaret. "Conflicting Interests: the British and Irish Suffrage Movements", *Feminist Review*, 1995, p. 130.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁶² Urquhart, Diane. "An Articulate and definite cry for political freedom': The Ulster Suffrage Movement", *Women's History Review*, 2002, p. 283.

¹⁶³ Ward, Margaret. "Conflicting Interests: the British and Irish Suffrage Movements", *Feminist Review*, 1995, p. 132.

¹⁶⁴ Ryan, Louise. "A Question of Loyalty: War, Nation, and Feminism in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1997, p. 26.

II- “A Gendered Patriotism”: The National Duty of the Suffragettes and Women

Gender roles during the First World War played an important part in how patriotism was conveyed and represented by propaganda organs. *The Suffragette/Britannia* is of course no exception: most of their arguments were based on how to use gender as an effective way to show national support. Even their representation of countries at war was characterised through gendered interpretation placing femininity as the superior gender. But, masculine and feminine genders were not only used as mere representations of countries, they were also used as legitimate justifications on how and why men and women portrayed patriotism differently. Indeed, patriotism during the war had to do with the duties of both sexes which differed from for one gender to another. These duties were based on traditional interpretations of each gender's roles, which still had an impact during the war. To put it differently, gendered patriotism means that the way patriotism is interpreted, symbolised, and put into action is solely based on gender roles of society. Men and women would thus enjoy different means to convey patriotism according to their traditional status in society. Women, indeed, were still very much influenced by their traditional domestic duties which explain how most of their patriotic feelings and arguments were oriented towards their home or their family. Even though, one might think that the WSPU tried to distance themselves from traditional gender roles, they in fact aspired to embrace it by developing it into something that could serve their cause. What was defined as a “National Duty” by the Suffragettes put the question of gender roles at the very centre of patriotism and brought light to an evolution of these traditional feminine roles. That is why it is important to first understand how these traditional roles were represented through the war and through patriotism before analysing how the Suffragettes used them to fit their own arguments and changed them as part of their own gendered patriotism.

1. Women's traditional domestic duties and the war

Women have always had specific roles given to them by society in relation to their gender. The Victorian society distinguished men and women roles between spheres: the public one and the private one. The latter was represented by women whose main space had to be the house. As well as a separation of social spheres, women were also associated with the idea of a family life as they symbolised motherhood. With the Victorian Era not as far behind, the First World War in fact contributed to heightening these gendered roles and reinforcing them as traditional duties of women¹⁶⁵.

1.1. From “the home” to “Home”: a space in need of protection

At first, war did not disrupt the gender distinctions of space: women were still staying at home with their family and as part of their masculine-gendered roles, men were to go on the front in order to fight for

¹⁶⁵ Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, 2000, p. 12.

their country¹⁶⁶. In other words, it was considered their duty to go on the front and participate in the war in order to protect those they loved at home. There was therefore a clear distinction between the battlefield, seen as extremely violent and "home" seen as a peaceful and quiet space¹⁶⁷. However, as time passed, the threat on the home and on the British territory became progressively plausible and visible, and the private space of the home was soon considered as a dangerous one. That is when women became more aware of their duty in a nation at war. If men were to go on the battlefield, away from their own nation, then who should protect the nation in itself? In this case, women should. Indeed, it became obvious for many women that they were to be a part in the war effort, not on the battlefield where men were but on home ground, in their private home but also on a more general domestic space shared by all - their nation. Of course, this duty was gendered and was still based on pre-war traditional gender roles where women ought to stay at home; but in a sense they still were at home, only the latter now extended to the whole nation.

The necessity to protect their home while men were gone became even more fundamental and urgent as now this space was put at risk by direct attacks on British territory and on civilians¹⁶⁸. Between 1915 and 1918, about six thousand civilians had been either injured or killed in air raids conducted by German soldiers¹⁶⁹. Air raids were shockingly horrifying because it meant that Germany had the required technology to attack any nation on its own territory, and thus war was not just a remote fight anymore during which civilians supported their soldiers but one which now reached home¹⁷⁰. As a matter of fact, women developed a psychological condition named "air raid shock" which was similar to the "shell shock" experienced by soldiers on the war front¹⁷¹. The fact that even women who were staying at home experienced the war the same way men did can account for the atrocity of the situation. That is why, because of the continual threat of air raids, the space of home was radically transformed and became progressively identified as a Home Front¹⁷². Defining a space, which was allegedly a safe one, with a word which was first only fit for where all the violence took place emphasised the reality of the situation and blurred the lines between what was traditionally believed¹⁷³.

¹⁶⁶ Robert, Krisztina. "Construction of "Home", "Front" and Women's Military Employment in First-World-War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation", *History and Theory*, 2013, p. 315.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹⁶⁸ Grayzel, Susan R. *At home and under fire: Air raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, 2012, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ Marwick, Arthur. *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 1979, p. 198.

¹⁷⁰ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, 1999, p. 45.

¹⁷¹ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 59.

¹⁷² Grayzel, Susan R. *At home and under fire: Air raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, 2012, p. 3.

¹⁷³ Grayzel, Susan R. "The Baby in the Gas Mask: Motherhood, Wartime Technology and the Gendered Division between the Fronts during and after the First World War" in Hämmerle, Christa and eds. *Gender and the First World War*, p. 140.

Because it was happening on the “very threshold of the home”¹⁷⁴, women developed and reinforced their own traditional gender-based duties: as representatives of home, they acknowledged that their role gave them an acceptable justification to become more involved in the war – not on the same terms as men on the front but on terms associated with their own duties. As guardians of their own private space, women joined efforts in order to protect what they saw as their duty: the nation which symbolised the most important home of all to protect. Without the nation or the “Home”, they would have been no homes into which women and children were supposed to be protected and to which soldiers would come back to at the end of the war – if they ever did so. While men’s traditional duty was more oriented on the protection of their family – women and children¹⁷⁵ – which they fulfilled directly on the battlefield by fighting the enemy in other countries also in need of protection; they could not paradoxically prevent any damages or risks in their own nation, Britain. Thus, women took charge of this instead by extending their duty to the one and only Home of all which became on the same level as the war front a place of fight and survival from German aerial raids bringing “the war” home¹⁷⁶. Both genders thus participated in the war effort on their own levels and on their own gendered distinctions and duties¹⁷⁷.

The fact that the nation became also a front helped in emphasising its need of protection and involvement of women. Indeed, what people were fearing as a consequence of the war was to lose civilisation and let it be replaced by German “Kultur” and barbarism. The War front was most of the time associated with this idea; one of the representations used to symbolise this is that the battlefield was nothing but deserted with villages or towns in ruins and most of the population thought that no home meant no possible civilisation¹⁷⁸ and the loss of everything which constituted the essence of a nation and a home. However, this image which was at first located far from British homes – and therefore not as threatening as it might be perceived – became a reality or at the very least could become a reality. Barbarism and violence were on the British territory because of modern technologies which threatened the very space women were protecting¹⁷⁹. On the same level as rape and mutilation, air raids or bombs were considered to be German Atrocities and thus

¹⁷⁴ Gullace, Nicoletta F. “Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during First World War”, *The American Historical Review*, June 1997, pp. 725-726.

¹⁷⁵ Gregory, Adrian. “Gender, Citizenship and Entitlement”. Review of Nicoletta F. Gullace, *“The Blood of Our Sons”: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War*, and Deborah Cohen, *The War Came Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany*. *Journal of British Studies*, 2004, p. 410.

¹⁷⁶ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 58.

¹⁷⁷ Moyd, Michelle. “Gender and Violence” in Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor, *Gender and the Great War*, 2017, p. 189.

¹⁷⁸ Robert, Krisztina. “Constructions of “Home”, “Front” and Women’s military employment in First-World-War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation”, *History and Theory*, 2013 p. 327.

¹⁷⁹ Grayzel, Susan R. “Chapter 8: The Baby in the Gas Mask: Motherhood, Wartime Technology and the Gendered Division Between the Fronts during and after the First World War” in Christa Hämmerle and eds. *Gender and the First World War*, 2014, p. 127.

displays of barbarism¹⁸⁰. However, what differed air raids from other forms of violence on the traditional war front such as rapes was that the latter was in fact directed to a certain category of people: women; whereas air raids could not and had not targeted any specific class of civilians¹⁸¹. With barbarism arriving directly at home and harming women and children, the purity of the country and the private spaces were therefore put at stake. Moreover, like soldiers, women were facing the enemy in a place which is directly associated with their gendered duties. They had to deal with violent and barbarous attacks which tried to compromise the civilisation of the nation directly at its roots.

Air raids and attacks in Britain did not only undermine the safety of the nation and civilians as a whole, but it also undermined the way of living of civilians which always drastically changes during war time. Here again, women played an important role as part of their traditional duty to protect their home. Indeed, it was common to think that women had the responsibility of their family. Even though, men were considered as the main protectors of their family for which they felt the duty to go to war, they were maybe more represented as physical protectors whereas women also had to protect their family within their own private sphere by properly managing it¹⁸². However, this became increasingly difficult during the war as many social problems related to the conflict began to emerge. One of the major problems the Home Front and therefore women were facing was about food resources and rationings. Indeed, women were expected to know how to control their personal resources in order to keep their home and their family safe¹⁸³. As housewives, it was their duty – a traditional, stereotypical, and gendered one – to feed and manage their family – even when men were the ones expected to earn money in order for women to fulfil their duties. British propaganda focused on the way women could manage their home and food by preventing wasting or developing new techniques of food production in order to prevent a shortage¹⁸⁴. By doing so, the British government hoped to make public opinion react on the fact that women were more than able to take care of their home and therefore the nation could with no regrets let men fight on the battlefield. Indeed, the emphasis was always put on the threats and the risks the nation, women and children were subjected to; the idea was that the war had to finish as soon as possible, and in order to do so men had to enlist. In other words, women's gendered patriotism's role was to enlist as many men as they could¹⁸⁵ by relating mostly to the idea that their homes and the "Home" were in danger because of air raids or food shortages. Before more active actions (supported in part by the WSPU), women's main patriotic role was to appeal to men in order to favour enlistment and win the war as soon as possible.

¹⁸⁰ Grayzel, Susan R. *At home and under fire: Air raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, 2012, p. 25.

¹⁸¹ Grayzel, Susan R. "Chapter 8: The Baby in the Gas Mask: Motherhood, Wartime Technology and the Gendered Division Between the Fronts during and after the First World War" in Christa Hämmerle and eds. *Gender and the First World War*, 2014, p. 131.

¹⁸² Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 49.

¹⁸³ Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1999*, 2000, p. 12.

¹⁸⁴ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

1.2. Family and war: “patriotic motherhood”

Protecting the Home was not the only traditional and gendered duty of women to have been used during the war as propaganda to enlist men, to display patriotism or to justify women’s involvement in the worldwide conflict. Indeed, another role of women which was deeply settled in British society (and in other societies as well) was the one describing the importance of motherhood or wifehood. Before going into details about how patriotism was linked with this traditional role of women and mothers, it is first important to take into account the symbolism behind the figure of a mother in society and why it was so important in time of war. First of all, motherhood was perceived as the symbol of femininity according to the society of the time¹⁸⁶: women were constantly associated with being a mother as it was perceived as one of their major roles and purposes in their life. Once again, during the war, the position of women in society reflected the importance of their status at home as they represented the heart of the nation¹⁸⁷. Men’s duties were to protect their family – including their wives or their children and if the protection of both homes was viewed as a justification to enlist, then the protection of motherhood was also perceived as one of their duties. Thus, this is on that particular characteristic that women based their patriotism during the war – a patriotism largely inspired of a gendered interpretation and representation of their social role. Indeed, women’s main purpose of patriotism was to appeal to men in order for them to enlist and win the war. In order to do so, British propaganda and women decided to put the emphasis on the atrocities to which women were subjected during the war. One of the crucial elements of war propaganda on the Allied side was the fact that women on the battlefield were being raped by the barbarous and violent enemy. Many organs used this image, as well as the WSPU. Depicting the rape of innocent women thus helped in, first, symbolising the reason why the war was to be won and fought to prevent the end of civilisation, and secondly, in convincing men that the violence happening on Belgian women, for instance, could as well be happening to their own mothers¹⁸⁸ in the future if German soldiers invade Britain. Thence, propaganda convinced men to enlist as they felt compelled to do so in order to protect their own mothers¹⁸⁹, the representatives of the purity of the home and family. Women were often perceived as true victims of the war even though they were not directly on the front, yet mothers were represented as double victims of the conflict. Indeed, they were perceived as active victims of the war as they felt the consequences of the conflict coming into their own homes with air raids, or as targeted victims of rapes on invaded territories, but they were also in fact considered in some instances as passive victims¹⁹⁰. In other words, as victims who

¹⁸⁶ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women’s identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, 1999 p. 87.

¹⁸⁷ Kent, Susan K. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 20.

¹⁸⁸ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women’s Identities at War Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, p. 50.

¹⁸⁹ Kent, Susan K. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 26

¹⁹⁰ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women’s Identities at War Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, 1999, p. 85.

were not precisely physically affected by the war but still felt the psychological consequences of it through the deaths of their sons.

Because of their feminine role as symbols of motherhood, women managed to develop a gendered patriotism around this. Indeed, they organised what was known as "patriotic motherhood" or in other words, sacrificing willingly their sons and husbands¹⁹¹ for the common interest of the British nation and soldiers. Their primary patriotic duty was still to convince men to go to war¹⁹² even if they were from their own family and could possibly lose their life on the front. On the same level as propaganda for soldiers put the emphasis on motherhood and the fact that their own mothers could possibly be victims of German Atrocities, British propaganda also underlined the sacrifice women and especially mothers were making for the sake of patriotism, their nation, their home – all of that according to the traditional roles and duties assigned to them by society. For instance, posters were made depicting a mother with her children looking afar while soldiers are preparing to go to the battlefield; the title "Women of Britain say – "Go!"¹⁹³ emphasises the vital role women played (see Figure 4). The poster underlines the idea that even mothers or wives understand what the nation asked of men and they could go on fighting to save other mothers or wives on the front while their own mothers or wives were taking care of home which in the poster is represented as a pastoral, countryside home, far from the reality of the atrocities happening during the conflict.

Besides, women's sacrifices were considered to be necessary and acceptable because it belonged to what was expected to them as patriotic citizens of Britain¹⁹⁴. Motherhood once again played an important part for soldiers as it was believed that their bravery and all qualities necessary to fight against the enemy came in fact from their mothers¹⁹⁵. In other words, motherhood was placed at the heart of nation because of the qualities it conveyed to men who were defending their nation to protect it. It might have even placed motherhood as the superior quality of women who through this gendered role helped the nation and participated in war effort. In fact, the superiority of mothers was not only an argument used in wartime; the WSPU had indeed also identified it as one of the most important roles of women before the war even started. Yet, during the war, the significance of this role transformed to adapt itself to the specific context and helped in emphasising the sacrifices women made for patriotism without putting at risks – or at least not as much as one would have thought – their traditional gendered roles.

Most of women managed to use their traditional roles based on their gender abilities – which were defined by society – in order to create a patriotism around it which was at first quite passive and relying more on newspaper or visual propaganda rather than physical actions. One of their principle duties was to help in

¹⁹¹ Smith, Harold L. *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928* (2nd edition), 2010, p. 82

¹⁹² Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 20.

¹⁹³ Poster by E. Kealy (Britain), Imperial War Museum, London. Document 1 in Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 124.

¹⁹⁴ Vellacott, Jo. "Feminist Consciousness and the First World War", *History Workshop*, Spring 1987, p. 88.

¹⁹⁵ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's Identities at War, Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, 1999, p. 212.

enlisting men and to do so they had resorted to the protection of home and motherhood – two concepts symbolised by women and femininity and which were both to be protected from the enemy. However, even though these traditional roles helped in emphasising the need of women in war effort, it also reinforced the idea that the war had consequences not only on soldiers but also on civilians. Women were unsafe in their own home where they could be easily attacked because of wartime technologies and mothers willingly sent their own sons certainly wondering if they would ever come back alive. Yet, it is because of these consequences that a gendered patriotism could be and was established during the First World War. It helped in seeing that women could also have a crucial place in war effort – yet they were at the beginning mostly passive and even though their participation was still useful to the nation, they were still not ready to change their own traditional vision of gender roles¹⁹⁶.

2. The militancy of Suffragettes: changes and continuities

Women's traditional roles played therefore an important function in creating a gendered patriotism during the war. The WSPU and its newspaper *The Suffragette* also established a patriotism based on gendered roles throughout the duration of the conflict. One might think that the Suffragettes rejected any kind of traditional aspect of society since their suffrage campaign was against the conventional interpretation that the political sphere belonged to men. Much of their suffrage campaign was based on characteristics typical from pre-war Suffragettes and for which they had been criticised for, such as their fighting spirit. Moreover, their whole argumentation was also inspired by a gendered dichotomy between men and women; putting women as the superior being of society. However, all of these characteristics did not mean that the traditional roles of women were put aside by the WSPU. Instead, they used them as part of their justification to be more involved in war effort and in fact try to make these traditional feminine roles evolve in a war and propaganda campaign inevitably resting on a gendered patriotism. Feminine roles such as the protection of the home or the importance of motherhood are both displayed in the newspaper before and during the First World War making us wonder if the gendered patriotism is a continuity of the arguments also used during the pre-war suffrage campaign. However, the continuity of some arguments does not exclude the transformation of others: going from a hatred of men and British government to demanding a united front is also one of the feminine duties the WSPU on which their gendered patriotism relied on.

2.1. An evolution of the traditional role of women

One of the most important conventional feminine roles during the war was the protection of the home. The WSPU is no exception and also mentions it in its main organ. Indeed, they first explain that the role and duty of women in time of war lies at home. In a speech delivered in April 1915, Mrs Pankhurst points out that home should be and is the priority of every woman – Suffragettes or not – because they ought to protect "those

¹⁹⁶ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's Identities at War, Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, 1999, p. 119.

nearest to us"¹⁹⁷. The main idea behind this speech was to explain in what consisted the duty of women and therefore convince the latter, but also men and the British government to let the WSPU take charge of recruiting as many soldiers as they possibly could. And that's why traditional gendered roles were mentioned: on the one hand, it gave the possibility for men to see that women and the WSPU would not completely change what they knew of society into a strictly feminine one by reducing men's roles; and on the other hand it also gave the WSPU the opportunity to appeal to the enlistment of soldiers by reinforcing the fact that their role was to fight on the front abroad. Moreover, this speech also emphasises that the WSPU was not ready, at first, to be completely involved in the war effort¹⁹⁸. What I mean by that is that the newspaper first did not put the emphasis on going on the war front but instead focused on what could be done at home with what they had as traditional gendered roles. Inevitably, this conventional role had to evolve from a passive one to a more active one symbolised by the Suffragette's actions of patriotism. The reason behind this can be found within the newspaper's pages. Indeed, the WSPU explains that these traditional roles were built and developed in time of peace and while women first agreed to stay at home and "be content with knitting socks"¹⁹⁹ while men went to war, they could not pretend to wait peacefully at home anymore. Home was not at peace anymore with the threat of German air raids, food rationing, the accumulating losses of sons and husband; and therefore, the feminine role of domestic protection was also not at peace anymore. Indeed, the WSPU wanted to be more involved in the war effort within the domestic sphere: staying at home was not enough anymore to show one's national support and patriotism and to win the war. In other words, the construction and definition of their traditional gendered role of domestic protection became obsolete in time of war because it was built in a peaceful context and therefore did not prepare women for the war effort at all. It is one of the reasons why it had to be modified: without any changes, women would have become certainly useless to war effort and would have prevented men from fulfilling their own gendered duty to go on the front. The WSPU perfectly knew that a change in the conventional feminine roles would lead to sacrifices on both sides but it was also their duty to not interrupt the nation within the realms of possible²⁰⁰.

Another traditional gendered duty mentioned within the newspaper is the way women were symbolized by motherhood. During the war, motherhood was deeply associated with the notion of sacrifice as mothers were sending their sons on the battlefield. Their role as mothers was therefore part of this gendered patriotism also conveyed by the WSPU during the war. However, it is important to notice that the question of motherhood and femininity was in fact portrayed in the newspaper before the war as part of the suffrage campaign of the WSPU. Indeed, in June 1913 was published a speech explaining that motherhood was the woman's mission and how it represented "the very essence of femininity"²⁰¹. Women were considered as superior beings because they could

¹⁹⁷ Pankhurst Emmeline. "What is our duty?". A Speech delivered in the Sun Hall, Liverpool, *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 25.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Graham, Stephen. "Russian Women and the War", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 5.

²⁰⁰ "Awaiting the call to action". *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 165.

²⁰¹ Gilman, Perkins. "The Primal Power". Speech delivered at the London Pavilion on the 19th May 1913, *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913, p. 563.

give life to the future of the society. Christabel Pankhurst herself mentions this idea in *The Great Scourge and How to End it*, in which she explains how to cure the British male society; the only solution being the enfranchisement of women. Motherhood is seen by her as the most important confirmation that women are more than worthy to have a better role in society and especially in the political sphere²⁰². So, the pre-war idea that motherhood is the superior role of women, the one which defines true femininity was emphasised by Suffragettes during the war. Because of their exceptional status as mothers, they had to be involved in war effort and in patriotic campaigns. Another point made by the WSPU is that the traditional duty and role as mother was not in fact as conventional as one might think. Indeed, even though the Suffragettes defined it as the symbol and essence of femininity, they also considered that it was not a given. It was, according to them, something that they had to learn²⁰³. By presenting one of the most important and respected feminine duty as something learnable, the WSPU wanted to show that everything could be learnt and therefore they could learn how to work as men did before the war in order to keep the industries of the nation going and enable men to enlist instead. As motherhood became a traditional feature of femininity, women working in industries on the same terms as men could also become a traditional feature of society, developing the importance and role of women in British patriotism, if only they were given the opportunity to train and learn. The war therefore appeared and might be considered as a "formative force"²⁰⁴ which made the traditional gendered roles and duties of women evolved into something less traditional and more representative of the Suffragettes' way of thinking about gender and patriotism²⁰⁵.

Not only did the Suffragettes symbolise their national duty and duty as women through their traditional feminine roles of mothers or protectors of home, they also add their own element taken from pre-war suffrage campaign: the fighting spirit. It was a characteristic for which they were criticized for years before the war because it was not conventional but in wartime that characteristic was proven to be useful to spread patriotism around the country. Indeed, the Suffragettes were so associated with a fighting spirit that it was defined as the

²⁰² Pankhurst, Christabel. "The Great Scourge and How to End it" in Jane Marcus' *Suffrage and The Pankhursts*, 2001, pp. 196; 225.

²⁰³ "Awaiting the call to action". *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 172.

²⁰⁴ Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's movement in Britain*, 2000, p. 3.

²⁰⁵ One of the actions put into place by the WSPU which shows the importance of motherhood in war effort and national support is the campaign for war babies. They were babies born during the war, and more specifically a baby fathered by a soldier (Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 66). The WSPU therefore tried to raise money in order to help these babies certainly orphans following the war because of the masculine enemy ("Universal Obligatory War Service Demanded". Letter of Lady Mackworth, *The Suffragette*, 11 June 1915, p. 186). They therefore tried to appeal women with patriotic motherhood and the conventional role of women as mothers in order to intensify national support and their actions of patriotism based on gendered duties. It was also perceived as one of the missions of *The Suffragette* which aimed to raise awareness on the necessity of "rearing and educating the illegitimate child" (See Pankhurst, Emmeline. "A Message from Mrs Pankhurst", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

"Pankhurst dogma"²⁰⁶, determining characteristics such as bravery, sacrifice, martyrdom or combativity as the true and fundamental qualities of the WSPU and its members. Emmeline Pankhurst even identified this spirit as the reason why the country and the nation was not already lost to masculinity and barbarism²⁰⁷. She, in fact, criticized the fact that men did not have the fighting spirit women had developed and kept during the pre-war period. By doing so, she establishes the warrior-spirit as something particularly feminine admittedly away from the traditional gendered characteristics of women but inevitably useful and effective in time of war. What the WSPU wanted was indeed to strengthen the traditional feminine duties and make them appropriate to a nation in a destructive conflict. They saw the pre-war characteristics of a Suffragette as something which could help the nation emerge victorious from the war later on. These pre-war characteristics were based on traditional qualities at the essence of femininity and could be found in pre-war and war propaganda. During the war, however, these features were not directed to the same purpose: the pre-war one was to win the vote for women whereas during the First World War, its main purpose was to improve displays of patriotism and the enlistment of men. Furthermore, playing on gendered qualities helped the Suffragettes to reinforce their main argument which stipulates that masculinity symbolized by the enemy and the persistence of the government to keep the traditional dichotomy of social roles and duties would lead to losing the war and bring the nation into an uncivilised, barbarous state.

In a sense, by putting the emphasis on the duties of women in time of the war the Suffragettes tried to praise as they used to, before the conflict, the identification of femininity as a gender as worthy as, if not worthier than masculinity. By asserting gendered roles, the WSPU created a patriotism bigger and greater than did, not only, rely on the traditional gendered roles of women but also pointed out the importance of the Suffragettes' way of thinking on these conventional roles as the most important part of their patriotism. In other words, they stressed the role of womanhood in general, wanting to celebrate and develop the bases of it instead of getting rid of it completely²⁰⁸. Indeed, it was common to see in *The Suffragette* the way the WSPU wanted to represent femininity as something that should be praised and not condemned. That is why the WSPU appeared as a model to follow during the war for its gendered patriotic stance, which was embodied within their newspaper and propaganda but also through their leader, Emmeline Pankhurst who appeared as the "embodiment of British patriotic motherhood"²⁰⁹. The WSPU's main purpose was once again to attract women in defending their own nation from any forces which might take over it²¹⁰ and shatter what was little by little

²⁰⁶ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 26.

²⁰⁷ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Our National Duty". Speech delivered in the Park Hall, Cardiff on September 22nd, 1915, *The Suffragette*, 1 October 1915, p. 354.

²⁰⁸ Smith, Angela K. "The Pankhursts and the war: suffrage magazines and First World War propaganda", *Women's History Review*, 2003, p. 105.

²⁰⁹ Purvis, June. « The Pankhursts and the Great War" in Alison S. Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds.) *The Women's Movement in Wartime: international perspectives, 1914-1919*, 2017, p. 148.

²¹⁰ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One" in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield, *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, 1994, p. 82.

achieved by the WSPU and the British government. It was their duty as women to protect the nation because of their conventional gendered roles as mothers or protectors of the home but it was also their duty as women in general. Indeed, the WSPU thought that their patriotism came from the fact that as women they had been subjected by a superior masculine being and therefore they should protect anyone from living that too²¹¹.

In other words what gendered patriotism coming from the WSPU based on articles from their newspaper, meant was that their patriotic arguments were solely relying on feminine characteristics. It is not surprising because it was in fact a continuity of their pre-war suffrage campaign only the target and the purpose of it was slightly different: they were not campaigning for suffrage directly but instead for a better enlistment of men and a better involvement of women in showing patriotism and war effort. They used in a sense the same concepts used before the war: they emphasised the traditional feminine virtues such as motherhood or home by adding their own suffragette characteristic, an active fighting spirit – far from the passivity of traditional feminine roles. They thought that it was their duty as both Suffragettes and women to show support to soldiers and the nation as part of their conventional roles; but these roles did not mean that they had to stay at home while looking at men go on the battlefield. Mixed with the Suffragettes' fervour, persistence, diligence, and warrior-like spirit – which people had witnessed before the war –, the traditional duties of women might have become more convenient and efficient to war effort and patriotism. Women became more involved, but their duties and roles were still being as a whole adapted to their specific gendered characteristics defined by society and their new suffragette-inspired qualities which were certainly more easily accepted because they were set within a war context during which national support was imperative and fundamental.

2.2. From a “Woman’s duty” to “Briton’s duty”

Nonetheless, the gendered patriotism of the WSPU was not always based on a continuity of the characteristics of their pre-war suffrage campaign. One of the changes one can witness through the newspaper is the fact that the Suffragettes were asking for an alliance with British government and British men. Before the war, the Suffragettes were known to despise the British masculine government because of their violent actions such as force-feeding against women campaigning and in fact put in place an anti-male policy which was at the origin of the newspaper²¹². And later even declared that the war was brought because of masculinity, lumping every man – British or German – together. However, when the war was seen to be longer than what they expected, the WSPU decided to change its strategy and opt for the unity of the nation.

A national unity was indeed needed in time of war and the Suffragettes decided to make it their own duty. First of all, creating a unity with your former enemy was not an easy task for both the WSPU and the government. They both had to find compromises in order to win the war: one side had to end their anti-male policy and the other side had to learn how to involve women in a society at war. British government therefore

²¹¹ “We will not see Freedom sacrificed”, *The Suffragette*, 2 July 1915, p. 184. See also Sophia A. Van Wingerden *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928*, 1999, p. 162.

²¹² Smith, Harold L. *The British Women’s Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928* (2nd edition), 2010, p. 54.

asked for a truce between both sides in order to solely focus on the war²¹³ which was certainly more important as it involved the nation as a whole and not a part of it only. Unity meant to involve both men and women in war effort; something that the British government found hard to put in place at the beginning of the war. They did stop acting violently against Suffragettes, but they did not, at first, assist in including women in effort other than related to their long-established feminine and passive roles. On the side of the WSPU, the main issue with a united national front was to forgive what happened to them before the war under the orders of the British government. They soon got around the problem by explaining that the nation belonged to them, the people, and not to the British government²¹⁴. In other words, they instead relied on the nation as a whole, men and women, to defend their own nation as part of their duty as women and British. Once the truce was declared on both sides, the WSPU tried to appeal to the government to make their role in war effort more active. One of the arguments was that it will first strengthen the nation²¹⁵. Indeed, thanks to a busier involvement of women, the government could focus on the war only and thus avoid dividing resources and workforce on other less important and maybe less impactful issues. So instead, it could rely on more people to assure that the nation was protected from the enemy and operating well enough for both soldiers abroad and civilians at home. Furthermore, Mrs Pankhurst argued that a united nation was the sole solution to win the conflict: it would lead to a quicker victory and therefore reduce the loss of lives²¹⁶. Undoubtedly, the way the WSPU wanted women to be involved was through an evolved form of gendered roles; that is to say women had to still follow traditional roles such as domestic protection but in a more active way. They could indeed represent the alternative workforce while men were out on the battlefield and therefore preserve the economy of the nation. In other terms, women had and would replace men in industries in order to help with war resources; something that men could not do if they were at war; both genders had to be mobilized in order to win the war²¹⁷. In the end, according to the WSPU, the unity between the government and men of the nation with the Suffragettes and women could only be possible because both genders were concerned by the same problem: the loss of civilisation²¹⁸ and therefore needed to join efforts in order to stop it before a victory of the enemy.

A united front thus appeared as a duty for the WSPU – as women it was their duty to protect their nation and family – and also for men who had to leave their home and fight on the battlefield. Even though they had the same duty, a distinction based on gender was still used to portray each patriotic spirit. One of the front covers of *The Suffragette* precisely depicts this idea of a gendered representation of patriotism²¹⁹ (see Figure

²¹³ Fair, John D. "The Political Aspects of Women's Suffrage during the First World War", *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 1976, p. 278.

²¹⁴ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 288.

²¹⁵ "Universal Obligatory War Service Demanded". Speech of Mrs Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, 11 June 1915, p. 137.

²¹⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 289.

²¹⁷ "Women and Munitions". Speech by Mr. Lloyd George, as Minister of Munitions on July 17, 1915. *Britannia*, 22 March 1918, p. 391.

²¹⁸ "The Great Procession". Extracts from the Leader, *Times*, July 19, *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 232.

²¹⁹ Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 4 June 1915.

5). First of all, a man, more specifically a soldier, is portrayed standing up and carrying a flag – which certainly represents the nation and conveys a sense of patriotism. He is looking afar with an air of superiority but also of bravery and determination. He knows what is waiting for him on the battlefield, but he also seems to accept that fate as he puts the needs of the nation before his own. While one hand is carrying the flag, the other is holding a feminine hand. Contrary to the man, the woman is looking down, she seems to also know what the soldier will be confronted with; while the soldier is looking up accepting what would certainly come, the woman instead seems to understand the necessary sacrifice the soldier and herself will be a part of. However, the woman is not depicted with only conventional feminine characteristics. She indeed fills in the feminine features praised by the WSPU: she is holding a sword symbolising her willingness to fight and therefore setting her apart from the criticized feminine passivity. Moreover, the fact that she can be seen barefooted and wearing a veil can remind us of how the Suffragettes were used to link femininity with religion. In other words, the feminine figure is seen represented by the WSPU as someone with all the feminine qualities of purity, innocence and selflessness (symbolised by the dress and the veil) but also with qualities which defines femininity as something greater than social conventions of the time and let us perceive the woman as a fighter also participating in the war. However, even though both patriotic figures are portrayed according to gender rules, the fact that they are holding hands create this atmosphere of unity between both sexes. More importantly, they are united under one and only one flag: they are British before being defined and divided by one gender and its characteristics. In other words, what is common to both men and women in Britain is their national identity and that is on that attribute that they should and would unite. Britishness was therefore considered as a part of the essence of each inhabitant regardless their gender. Even if a distinction is made between the gendered roles of both men and women; they can and are still united under their national identity which in return is also influenced by their gendered patriotism²²⁰. Before the war, it was inconceivable for the Suffragettes to even try to make an alliance with the government but because of the war and the necessity of organising patriotism, it was easier for the WSPU to gather everyone under the idea that a united front – permanent or temporary – of not women and men but of British people²²¹ would lead the country to victory. Within the newspaper *The Suffragette*, the main change made in order to represent this idea of an alliance relying on being British was the modification of the title of the WSPU's main organ to *Britannia*. This adjustment was first announced on the 1st October 1915 and put in place in the next issue²²². It definitely helped in transitioning the newspaper from a suffrage and more feminine newspaper to one relying more on war propaganda. The term *Britannia* did not define a specific and gendered group of people as the title *The Suffragette* did. The name still symbolised the well-liked feminine representation of Britain by the WSPU, but it defined Britain as a whole. It targeted instead a larger group of people who might be interested in war effort and national identity. Even though the newspaper still focused on

²²⁰ De Vries, Jacqueline. "Gendering Patriotism: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and World War One" in June Purvis and Sybil Oldfield *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, 1994, p. 78.

²²¹ "Further Appreciations of "The Suffragette"". Letter by Mr Cloudesley Brereton, *The Suffragette*, 30 April 1915, p. 44.

²²² "Britannia", *The Suffragette*, 1 October 1915, p. 350.

femininity and gendered patriotism, changing the name helped in thinking that everyone was encouraged to read it. Furthermore, the very meaning of *Britannia* focused on unity as it stands for liberty, nation, and duty²²³. Indeed, the main purpose of the newspaper – long before being named “Britannia” – was to develop and preserve the sense of liberty among population, however this time, it was not only women who were concerned with losing their liberty but men too²²⁴. Nation meant that “the whole people of the country”²²⁵ gathered under one and same fight and opinion regarding their past differences: saving their country from German Atrocities and barbarism. And finally, duty meant that the people of a whole nation had to unite as it was in their very nature to preserve the country; but also protect those already fighting or victims of German invasion²²⁶.

Uniting a country was not an easy task to do when a part of it was already divided before the war. The fact that the Suffragettes decided to agree with the government on an alliance was something which would not have been possible to imagine or believe before the war. In order to unite the most people possible behind the nation and improve displays of patriotism, the WSPU decided first to put the emphasis on a new kind of feminine characteristics but still rooted in conventional views of the gender. By reinforcing and improving the vision society had of women they managed to develop an alliance which was in fact rather complementary between men and women. Support coming from both sexes in British society stimulated a national militancy²²⁷ under which everyone gathered. In order to make the most of this alliance, the WSPU tried to appeal as much as possible to the British population. Indeed, society and even patriotism was already based on distinctive and dividing gendered features and the WSPU, as well as improving these characteristics, tried to find similarities between the two genders. One parallel already being Britishness, the newspaper focused on another parallel: the idea of sacrifice. Indeed, sacrifices were carried out by both the masculine and feminine genders: the first one was at risk on the battlefield and the latter had to perform “patriotic motherhood” and stand against aerial attacks. The fact that both had to cope with attacks from the enemy reinforced the fact that they indeed experienced the war in a traumatic way²²⁸ and which could help them in understanding that this experience should and could be shortened as much as possible thanks to an alliance. In fact, the WSPU explained that “bravery [was] sexless”²²⁹ which accentuates the fact that everyone whether they were women or men, were on an equal footing regarding patriotism, war experience and effort. It also conveyed the idea once again that there is more in British society at war than a pure gendered social division but in fact a new “non-gender-specific civic virtue”²³⁰ which finds its roots in the newly united British front.

²²³ “Britannia”, *The Suffragette*, 1 October 1915, p. 350.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How we Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 288.

²²⁸ Grayzel, Susan R. *At home and under fire: Air raids and culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, 2012, p. 22; 77.

²²⁹ “Winning the Right to Serve: Deputation to Mr Lloyd George”, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 201.

²³⁰ Grayzel, Susan R. *At home and under fire: Air raids and culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, 2012, p. 6.

To put it briefly, the war campaign for patriotism of women and the enlistment of men by the WSPU was in part a continuity of their pre-war suffrage campaign. Femininity was obviously highlighted by the newspaper both from a traditional point of view with motherhood and the protection of the home and a less conventional one which portrayed women as a more active figure in British society before, during and even after the war. The pre-war suffrage campaign in fact appeared to be useful in time of war as it helped to convey a patriotism which was supposedly more convenient and impactful than the conventional social feminine roles. Furthermore, it felt as a duty for the WSPU to participate in war effort as it would mean otherwise the end of their own nation as they knew it which instead would have been replaced by a long-criticized barbarous Germanic nation. That is why, after spending much time condemning the British masculine government for having abused of the Suffragettes before the war and for having started the war because of the violent and barbarous masculinity first defined as such by the WSPU at the beginning of the war; both parts agreed on an alliance which would be beneficial for the nation: the government could not afford to spend money and time on a matter perceived as less important than a worldwide conflict; and the WSPU could neither afford to lose public opinion on suffrage and especially lose the nation in which they were fighting for the right to vote. The alliance between the British government and the WSPU, between men and women was determined both according to gendered distinctions where men were to fight on the battlefield while women were to fight on the Home front – both had their duties to respect and fulfil. However, even though this type of patriotism was thus gendered, it did not prevent it from being rooted in a less divided one. Indeed, in order to make it easier to accept women into the war effort, the WSPU played on the fact that they were undeniably one people. In time of war – when unity was needed the most – they were all first British before anything else. What made them British was their participation and patriotism in the war as well as the fact that they all experienced the consequences of a destructive conflict. Bravery and sacrifice were characteristics which were to be found in both genders and were the key features of a national duty and lasting patriotism.

3. Women's National duties at risk: the threat of pacifism

Whether it was before or during the war, the WSPU had always strongly condemned pacifism. During the pre-war suffrage campaign, the Pankhursts criticized any form of pacifism from women and fellow suffragists. The Pankhursts and especially Emmeline Pankhurst argued that active effort was the key to success and finally gain the right to vote. Indeed, it was widely believed by the WSPU that no women could pretend the right to vote if they had not actively fought for it²³¹. Pacifism and pacifists were therefore deemed as a threat to the right to vote for Women and were deeply rejected by the WSPU. History repeated itself and during the First World War, the WSPU once again campaigned against any form of pacifism in society – either among politicians or civilians. Suffragettes strongly thought that patriotism was the sole appropriate reaction to the war as the

²³¹ Byles, Joan Montgomery. "Women's experience in World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 474.

nation needed to be supported rather than being ignored²³². That is why they perceived any pacifists as a threat to their own national duty which was to spread patriotism among the population thanks to a form of war propaganda relying on gendered arguments. In other words, women and Suffragettes recognized that their mission was to appeal to most of the British population – either men and women – by putting in place adapted patriotic actions and therefore making them more efficient for national effort and support. However, pacifism was in contradiction with what the Suffragettes and the WSPU praised during the First World War and it was perceived as a betrayal to the patriotic soldiers who chose to sacrifice for their nation. The latter was also being put directly at stake by pacifists who were threatening its safety and stability.

3.1. Pacifism, a betrayal of soldiers: white feathers, and the question of citizenship.

The fact that some people – either men or women decided not to fight for the nation was something inconceivable by the WSPU. Even the Suffragettes who had been enemies and victims of the British government agreed on helping the nation and therefore they could not believe that some were refusing to do the same and show their patriotic stance. But more importantly, the WSPU was very much aware of all the sacrifices British soldiers decided to do for the sake of the nation; and thus perceived pacifism as a refusal of patriotism and support of the very British soldiers who lost their life in the war in order to save their own country. Indeed, peace movements were identified as a form of weakness²³³ and were most of the time contrasted with the bravery of soldiers who died on the front. By doing so, *The Suffragette* associated pacifism with the idea that its adherents betrayed soldiers and thus the nation. According to the WSPU, the fearlessness of soldiers on the front had therefore seen its impact and influence on the nation diminished by pacifists who instead seem not to care enough about the nation. Moreover, in Mrs Pankhurst's speech "What is our Duty", it is not difficult to see that pacifists were quite unpopular in the country as the audience to which the speech was addressed to demonstrate. Indeed, loud applauses can clearly be heard (and are re-transcribed) every time that Emmeline Pankhurst mentions the cowardice of pacifists in contrary to the fearlessness of the soldiers who lost their lives on the front²³⁴. What the WSPU tried to explain is that it was unfair if, on one side, soldiers were dying on the front whereas others were staying at home. It is a way to show that patriotism needs to be even more strongly rooted in society. For the Suffragettes, surviving the war was both a necessity and a duty for women. They wanted to have more involvement in society, so they could not conceive this thought of not helping their own nation.

Furthermore, the WSPU strongly criticized pacifism because pacifists were the reason why Suffragettes but also women in general could not fulfil their national duty. As a reminder, the national duty of women was to enlist enough men to win the war. They did so through war propaganda and patriotic actions determined to appeal to most of British men. Thanks to the establishment of a "patriotic motherhood", the spread of strong

²³² Purvis, June. "A "pair of infernal queens"? a reassessment of the dominant representations of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, first wave feminists in Edwardian Britain", *Women's History Review*, 1996, p. 266.

²³³ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

descriptive images of German Atrocities on Belgian women abroad or on British women at home, the WSPU led a powerful and energetic campaign of enlistment. While Suffragettes were fulfilling their own national duty and showing strong patriotic feelings with all of these actions, on the other side, pacifists and especially British men who did not wish to go to war for personal reasons were diminishing these actions and in a sense, they thus managed to make this duty a failure. However, this failure was short-lived as women managed to find a way to shame men into enlisting and into fulfilling their own gendered duty²³⁵ which was to physically fight for Britain. The way they shamed pacifist men was a direct attack on their patriotism but also on their masculinity²³⁶. Indeed, white feathers were given to men who had not already enlisted, by women – young ones, single, married or already mothers²³⁷. These feathers symbolised inferiority and cowardice²³⁸ of men and were given publicly to men in order to force them to enlist because of the great humiliation they had experienced or would experience otherwise. This practice was conveyed by most of women who were officially supporting a gendered patriotism – such as Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. Even though, there is no mention of any White Feather Order in *The Suffragette/Britannia*, the newspaper still campaigned for any form of authority and pressure on men who did not fulfil their masculine patriotic duty in order for the WSPU and its participants to fulfil their own gendered duty²³⁹. The main reason behind white feathers was for men to understand that everyone had to do their part in war effort if they wanted the war to be done as soon as possible. Everyone was concerned by the war, pacifists or not, the war still impacted them at least on the home front. With destructive air raids, a divided government, an economy based on food rationing, the Suffragettes and other women could not fathom the fact that some people did not want to participate in war effort and do their part. The Pankhursts saw every individual participating in a way or another in war effort as people who deserved to be called British citizens, including women. In time of war, they thought that citizenship – which would in part grant them the vote – was based on merit and their involvement in a society at war²⁴⁰. The fact that women were so involved in war effort even if it was not, at first, their traditional social role while some men decided to avoid their own traditional role made it even harder to accept by women²⁴¹. The WSPU obviously recognized the fact that women were deeply involved in the British political and social sphere whereas the cowardness of pacifists and

²³⁵ Proctor, Tammy M.. "Patriotism is not enough". Women, Citizenship, and the First World War", *Journal of Women's History*, 2005, p. 174.

²³⁶ Kilday, Anne-Marie and Nash, David S. *Shame and Modernity in Britain: 1890 to the Present*, 2017, p. 24.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 27.

²³⁸ Gullace, Nicoletta F. "White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War", *Journal of British Studies*, 1997, p. 189.

²³⁹ Kilday, Anne-Marie and Nash, David S. *Shame and Modernity in Britain: 1890 to Present*, 2017, p. 24.

²⁴⁰ Proctor, Tammy M. "Patriotism is not enough": Women, Citizenship, and the First World War", *Journal of Women's History*, 2005, p. 175.

²⁴¹ Ward, Paul. "Women of Britain Say Go": Women's Patriotism in the First World War". *Twentieth Century British History*, 2001, p. 34.

their incapacity in being involved in war effort²⁴² resulted in the weakening of the nation as well as a weakening of their own masculinity which a social indicator of citizenship in the British society of the time. This idea is interesting because it would mean that pacifists were not therefore considered as citizens and were thus perceived as less than women whose status evolved after the war as a reward for their involvement – whether they were actively campaigning for the enlistment of men²⁴³, working in factories or even going on the war front. If we follow this argument from the WSPU, it would mean that any pacifists during the war should not have the right to vote as they did not involve in the war effort but also in the politics, economics, and social fields of the nation. By ignoring the needs of the nation, the WSPU thus thought that the pacifists needed to be ignored in return.

For women and the WSPU, the Home Front had to be mostly constituted of women and children for whom it was seen as normal to be at home and on the Home Front in time of war; by giving the controversial white feathers to any man who looked like he could fight for the nation, they hoped to convince him to enlist – but this time with a more drastic and more shameful action than war propaganda in newspapers²⁴⁴. In a sense, the WSPU perceived the handing out of feathers as part of their patriotic and gendered duty of enlisting men, they defined it as “a necessary war work”²⁴⁵ and as actions which show another active form of patriotism. That is why it was crucial for them to organise such campaigns to convince men to enlist because if they did not it would have meant men did not fulfil their duty, women could not fulfil their and thus the nation could not survive the war and stand against the enemy. Pacifism was thus seen as a betrayal to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation. White feathers were given to make up for a decline in enlistment and thus the fulfilment of the gendered patriotic duty of women and Suffragettes. But pacifism was also seen as a threat to another part of the National Duty of women, the one which consists in protecting the Home.

²⁴² “Pacifism and Cant”. Article appearing in the “Nottingham Guardian”, 22 January 1918, *Britannia*, 25 January 1918, p. 267.

²⁴³ Proctor, Tammy M. ““Patriotism is not enough”: Women, Citizenship, and the First World War”, *Journal of Women History*, 2005, p. 174.

²⁴⁴ It is important to take into account that this public-shaming practice of handing out white feathers was deeply controversial as women did not always make the difference between their original targets: pacifists and those who did not want to enlist at all, with those who were already wounded soldiers, those who were too young to enlist or even those who had to take care of their family, most of the time composed of infant children, before all. See *Shame and Modernity in Britain: 1890 to Present* by Kilday, Anne-Marie and Nash, David S., 2017, pp. 28-29.

²⁴⁵ Byles, John Montgomery. “Women’s experience in World War One; Suffragists, pacifists and poets”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 483.

3.2. The Home at risk: pacifism and Pro-German policies

While the war front was disrupted by violence and atrocities, it was important to keep a certain unity within the Home Front where civilians united tried to help the nation and soldiers on the front from there. However, pacifism was perceived as a disturbance of the unity of the Home Front. Indeed, because of them, the country was divided into those who performed their national duty by fighting physically and being involved in war effort whether on the war or home front and those who were voluntarily non-combatants and part of peace movements. Through their newspaper, the WSPU criticized the fact that unity was disrupted by pacifists; because of that, Britain appeared as a country under pressure from within to the enemy who might use this weakness as a starting point to invade Britain. That is why it was important to counterattack the pacifists and instead "show a strong and determined front"²⁴⁶ in order to demonstrate to Germany that Britain should not be a target of their atrocities as their willingness, their fighting spirit and their unity are enough to beat them. The newspaper requested to both stand against Germany but also against peace movements and pacifists as they represented a threat to the harmony of the nation and war effort. For the country, the war had to be won thanks to a flawless patriotism based on a "collective definition"²⁴⁷. In other words, patriotism had to be carried out by everyone – men and women; and it could only work if everyone was together working for and towards the same purpose. No one could deny that the nation needed unity and a collective war effort in order to win the war. The WSPU indeed believed that the war if it had to be lost, would be because of the pacifists' issues on the Home Front rather than because of soldiers²⁴⁸.

Pacifism was not the only form of peace which disrupted the nation's unity. Indeed, one of the major forms of peace movements near the end of the war to have been established is the one represented by Herbert H. Asquith who wished to pass a Compromise peace with the German enemy. This compromise was to result in a peace agreement between Germany and Britain on the military field but also in terms of economics²⁴⁹. What was condemned by the WSPU was that a compromise peace would mean giving up fighting and letting in a sense Germany – the epitome of their interpretation of violent masculinity – be victorious. They did not understand why a country who was on the point to lose the war or should lose the war from the WSPU's point of view, could obtain an agreement which benefited it more than the victors²⁵⁰. Moreover, the fact that it was mostly Asquith who proposed this idea was another reason for the Suffragettes to refuse any compromise peace. Indeed, not only did Asquith choose to side with "the Compromise Peace Party" rather than "the Party of

²⁴⁶ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

²⁴⁷ Kilday, Anne-Marie and Nash, David S. *Shame and Modernity in Britain: 1890 to Present*, 2017, p. 23.

²⁴⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The Home Front". Extracts from a speech at the Aeolian Hall on November 27, 1917, *Britannia*, 30 November 1917, p. 207

²⁴⁹ Pankhurst, Christabel. "No Compromise Peace". Extracts from a speech at Queen's Hall, July 26, 1917, *Britannia*, 3 August 1917, p. 73.

²⁵⁰ "The Folly of It!", *Britannia*, 30 April 1917, p. 368.

Victory" represented by another politician, Mr Lloyd George²⁵¹, he also was deeply criticized at the beginning of the war for his policies which were perceived by the WSPU as lacking in patriotic fervour, fighting spirit and more importantly tangible actions. To put it differently, the Compromise Peace appeared as a continuity of the personality of Asquith defined and criticized by the newspaper. Indeed, *Britannia* symbolised Asquith as the complete opposite of the long-established motto of the Suffragettes: "Deeds not words"²⁵². Actions were perceived as more efficient than words and certainly more representatives of the messages the WSPU wanted to spread. In this case, the WSPU wanted to spread a gendered patriotism relying on collective war effort and concrete actions, however the Compromise Peace was at the complete opposite of, first, patriotism, and secondly, of the fighting spirit praised by the nation. Asquith as well as his followers were therefore criticized of making the war against Germany as a "debating society"²⁵³ rather than a physical conflict both abroad and at home against what was perceived as barbarism. The end of the war on a peace agreement and not on a crushing victory from Britain especially meant for the WSPU letting down the soldiers, the "superhumans" who fought and sacrificed for years for the nation²⁵⁴, as well as civilians whose lives were put at risk on their very personal sphere and who also for years showed support and even made it a duty to protect the nation at all costs. Indeed, issues with the Compromise Peace were happening at home while soldiers were still on the war front, fighting for their nation and without truly knowing that this same nation was divided on whether to stop fighting or not. That is why a fervent patriotism was put in place by the Suffragettes – in a sense, they certainly wanted to protect their Home and would have certainly avoid any problems in this area but on the other hand, having a front directly at home also helped them to emphasise this duty of national support, it helped them to reduce the distance between soldiers abroad and themselves and thus create a united army to "back up the men in the field"²⁵⁵.

Furthermore, the Compromise Peace was not only a direct attack on the fighting spirit and patriotism of the British nation, but it was also perceived as a way for Germany to easily influence and replace all British national characteristics and qualities by German ones. For the WSPU, Germany was considered to be the most fitted representation for uncivilization, barbarism, violence, and masculinity. For the newspaper, the Compromise Peace was perceived to be an open door to German Kultur and dominance on the British country. The WSPU goes as far as to say that they would prefer to be annihilated and dead rather than seeing German

²⁵¹ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Don't Leave it All to Lloyd George! But Organise and Prepare for the Coming Struggle on the Political Home Front between the National Party and the Party of Pro-German Compromise Peace.", *Britannia*, 6 June 1917, p. 5.

²⁵² "Great Meeting in the Albert Hall – Mrs Pankhurst defies the Government", *The Suffragette*, 25 October 1912, p. 18.

²⁵³ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Russia, ourselves and the War". Extracts from a speech. *Britannia*, 22 June 1917, p. 23.

²⁵⁴ Ayrton, Phyllis. Speech at the McLennan Galleries, Glasgow. "Women's War against Germany on the Home Front" in "On the Home Front", *Britannia*, 24 May 1918, p. 470.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

culture take over their nation²⁵⁶. Indeed, they defined those agreeing with this Compromise Peace as being Pro-German²⁵⁷, especially Asquith who was certainly seen as the favourite leader over Lloyd George whose politics were far from pacifism²⁵⁸. In other words, pacifists were seen as enemies on the same level Germans were seen. As part of their duty to stand against pacifists²⁵⁹, the WSPU was using its newspaper to counterattack pro-German policies and arguments, thus *Britannia* was symbolising not only the unity of the nation, the patriotic and gendered actions to portray national support, but it also represented the fight against Germany and its followers on the Home Front²⁶⁰. One of the metaphors used by the newspaper to describe German influence in British society was to compare the British government led by Asquith and other pacifists as being the "Kaiser's cats-paws"²⁶¹. In other words, the WSPU characterised leaders and participants to peace movements as puppets manipulated by Germany – emphasising once again the threatening influence of their enemy on the nation they ought to protect. Manipulation from Germany was not the only criticism against pacifism; another metaphor used to describe them was the idea that pacifism was like a disease which infects people and spread to other countries too²⁶². Suffragettes had strong opinion about pacifists and wanted to exterminate them – like parasites – in order to prevent it from spreading and protect their home and national duties. By describing them as viruses or insects which need to be exterminated in Britain, the WSPU diminished the human qualities of the pacifists and thus accentuated – if one follows the logic of their propaganda – German characteristics: barbarism and civilisation. This is to link with the idea that pro-German people were perceived as enemies on the same level as German people were. Therefore, pacifists were not considered as British citizens as they seemed to be more supportive of German than the country in which they were living in. Indeed, if one follows British and feminine war propaganda, in order to be considered as citizens you had to be a part of a society, in other words, a civilised nation. However, it was not possible for the newspaper to consider Germans as civilised and by being on the same level as them, pacifists were regarded as traitors to the very country which welcomed and helped them, they were seen as less as citizens – as parasites. Besides the fact that pacifism was perceived as something which could spread in society is to link with the newspaper's idea that pacifists and pro-German threatening the nation were an issue created by the British government to a certain extent. Indeed, the WSPU had always campaigned for a compulsory war service as it would help

²⁵⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Russia, ourselves and the War", *Britannia*, 22 June 1917, p. 24.

²⁵⁷ Pankhurst Christabel. "The Home Front". Extracts from her speech at the Aeolian Hall on November 27, 1917, *Britannia*, 30 November 1917, p. 207.

²⁵⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. "Asquithian Manœuvres". Speech at the Aeolian Hall, on October 16th, 1917. *Britannia*, 19 October 1917, p. 160.

²⁵⁹ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The Home Front". Extracts from her speech at the Aeolian Hall on November 27, 1917, *Britannia*, 30 November 1917, p. 207.

²⁶⁰ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 28.

²⁶¹ Pankhurst, Christabel. "How to Win the War", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 198. See also Pankhurst, Christabel. "Let none be Kaiser's Cat's-paws", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 22.

²⁶² Pankhurst, Christabel. "No Compromise Peace". Extracts from her speech at Queen's Hall, July 26, 1917, *Britannia*, 3 August 1917, p. 72.

growing the numbers of soldiers sent on the Front and favour a victory. However, until 1916, enlistment was based on a voluntary system. The problem noticed by the Suffragettes with this system is that every brave and patriotic man went to enlist and of course fight for their country but it thus meant that all men left in the country were "traitors and cowards"²⁶³, in other words, pacifists and pro-German²⁶⁴.

Thanks to their main organ, *The Suffragette/Britannia*, the WSPU managed to put in place a gendered patriotism which would benefit the nation in time of war. By considering traditional gender roles, the WSPU tried to make their patriotic propaganda as efficient as possible. These roles involved motherhood and the protection of home but of course the WSPU also had their own element: their fighting spirit illustrating their famous motto "Deeds, not words". Coupled with this characteristic, their patriotic duties were composed of enlisting men – by using images of violence or shaming techniques – as well as protecting their home – not only from German air raids but also from their very own pacifist population. In a sense, this gendered patriotism allowed Suffragettes to rally as many women as possible by taking inspiration from their traditional duties and developing them in a more efficient and active way in war time. It also allowed the nation to notice the efforts and sacrifices women were executing at home which helped the Suffragettes to assert their war propaganda even more. By using their pre-war experience as militant to display patriotism but also convince people to join efforts to support the nation, the Suffragettes also managed to encourage the British government to women involve more actively in war effort. War propaganda through newspapers was one way to demonstrate patriotism for one's nation but the Suffragettes, still following their motto and influence by their pre-war suffrage campaign, did not stop at words, they also undertook deeds.

²⁶³ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "The Danger on the Home Front". Speech delivered at the London Pavilion on April 29, 1915, *Britannia*, 3 May 1918.

²⁶⁴ However, it is important to consider that Asquith did not want to put in place a compulsory war service at first. He thought that it would be unpopular and preferred to rely on patriotic actions to encourage enlistment. See Kilday, Anne-Marie and Nash, David S., *Shame and Modernity: 1890 to Present*, 2017, pp. 30-31.

III- Patriotic mobilization: the outcome of the WSPU's war campaign

Through their newspaper, the WSPU established and spread a form of war propaganda around gender roles. Their main organ highlighted each reason why women had to be involved in a society at war by focusing on the way they could and would portray national support. While formulating gendered aspects of patriotism, the WSPU defined a series of duties which had to be carried out by both men and women. These duties came under, more or less, the theoretical aspect of gender. In other words, the newspaper mostly focused on the intellectual and spiritual abilities of women such as their role as mothers or protectors of the home. All of these aspects were based on gender roles, with which the Suffragettes established their war propaganda. The WSPU used words through their newspaper to provide their audience of all the characteristics which made them patriotic and convince them to help the nation by spreading these gendered arguments. If words might have been enough to convince women and fellow Suffragettes to rally to the national cause, it was lacking if they wanted to reach a larger crowd. Following the long-established motto of the Suffragettes, deeds were needed to convince the British government of the necessity of having women more actively involved in war effort. That is why, the WSPU decided to put in place physical displays of patriotism in order to justify the gendered arguments they established through the years. The purpose of their deeds was therefore to appeal to the British government but also to put the national duties they defined into practice. The newspaper obviously played a huge part in establishing and telling the actions organised by the WSPU. It is in this organ that one can see the extent to which the Suffragettes played a part in war effort. From recruiting meetings to munitions factories, from replacing men at home to be involved on war front, the WSPU managed to settle and confirm their own gendered reasoning. Yet, one can wonder if the WSPU patriotic war campaign to support the national effort was as successful and efficient in obtaining the desired results in the other issues which they also campaigned for such as the vote for women or social reforms in favour of equality between genders.

1. Recruiting and munitions: the hobby horses of the WSPU

The WSPU's main patriotic actions were mostly focused on two themes: the recruitment of men whom the WSPU wanted to enlist for the national cause and the national service for both genders and which led, later on, to the great involvement of women in munitions factories. It is through patriotic actions based on these two aspects that the WSPU managed to get the approval of the Government and a better recognition of women's impact on the war effort. The reason behind these two themes was that the Pankhursts, and especially Christabel, thought that the involvement of women on the war front was something quite difficult to achieve at the time, so she instead decided to primarily focus on the Home Front and what could be achieved by women in this particular space²⁶⁵ in order to be successful and efficient in the end.

²⁶⁵ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 25.

1.1. The National duty of women: recruiting platforms

After establishing the concept of a national duty for women in their newspaper, the WSPU had to find means to put it into practice. The WSPU perceived the importance of the role of soldiers on the front and thought that a great number of them meant a shorter war and a necessary victory. Therefore, it was crucial to organise their campaign around them and create a form of propaganda to appeal to men who had not already enlist. Of course, the WSPU built its propaganda around gender and asked women to be the ones who had to make sure that men were enlisting as they should. The concept of patriotic motherhood was thus established but in order to spread it as quickly as possible around the country, the WSPU promoted in *The Suffragette/Britannia* "recruiting campaigns" organised in cities such as London, Brighton, Birmingham, Leicester, Plymouth, and Liverpool²⁶⁶. In these recruiting meetings, the speaker – in most cases, Emmeline or Christabel Pankhurst, explained to their audience why it was so crucial for men to enlist. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst argued in *The Suffragette* that men had to protect the nation because they were enfranchised, and they had to be "the worthy successors" of the feminine figure Elizabeth I²⁶⁷. The difference between genders was once again emphasised in the WSPU's newspaper: men had to show that they had "not weakened this nation within or without" after the rule of the "great Queen"²⁶⁸, which they will be able to do by enlisting. These recruiting meetings were organised not only to recruit men but also women who could later on appeal to men who had not already enlisted by using the gendered patriotic arguments established in the newspaper and meetings. They indeed explained the role of women in a country at war and dealt with women's primary duty which was to "talk to men about their duty to the nation"²⁶⁹. Even before the war, the main targets of the WSPU were women as they were fighting for their right to vote, and even though the newspaper later evolved into an organ which was more based on war propaganda, its audience was still largely composed of women. Of course, it did not mean that there were no men reading the newspapers and participating in meetings organised by the WSPU – in fact the newspaper never defines the audience as being strictly composed of men or women, but instead depicts them as "crowded and enthusiastic audiences"²⁷⁰. But one cannot help noticing that the topic of these recruitment meetings is often about how women could greatly help the nation if they were given the opportunity to be involved – which certainly implies that a great number of women were present at the meetings.

Recruiting meetings were common as obligatory conscription for men was not established before 1916²⁷¹. They helped in showing a physical representation of patriotism and that is why the WSPU organised them. They wanted to show that their gendered patriotism was not merely words but could also be deeds; and

²⁶⁶ "Women rally to their country's call", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 12.

²⁶⁷ Pankhurst, Christabel. "A Few Words to British Men", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 166.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 25.

²⁷⁰ "Wake Up! – Mrs Pankhurst at Hall", *The Suffragette*, 28 May 1915, p. 111.

²⁷¹ Byles, Joan Montgomery. "Women's experience in World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 483.

both promoted in the newspaper. Not only were the recruiting campaigns composed of speeches made by the charismatic leaders of the WSPU, but they were also accompanied sometimes with films. Indeed, during a recruitment at Hull, Mrs Pankhurst also attended the showing of a patriotic film²⁷² which reinforced the fact that patriotism was not only based on words but also had to be based on physical interpretations if they wanted it to be successful. The short-film, "Wake Up! Or, a Dream of Tomorrow" tells the story of a pacifist English soldier who decides to enlist after dreaming that his country was to be invaded by aliens²⁷³ which following the strategy of war propaganda at the time, represented the Germans. The purpose of showing such a film is to accentuate on the fact that men had to enlist to fight against the enemy and prevent the horrors of the war from happening. It was also a way to convince men to go to war by showing what barbarous and non-human beings²⁷⁴ could do to the British nation. Indeed, recruitment meetings helped in spreading this concept of the national duty of women, but also of men. Women were present at these meetings because they sought to put the patriotic arguments of the WSPU into practice; in a sense, it gave credibility to the newspaper's arguments because their meetings were always full, which could mean that their words successfully transformed into deeds. These meetings were also linked with, for instance, the horrors of the war being depicted in the newspaper. An article published in May 1915 gathers statements from witnesses of German Atrocities to make a list of what happened in other countries and what could happened to England too: "pregnant women were bayoneted", "whole families were buried alive", and "machine-guns were turned upon crowds of civilians, women and children"²⁷⁵. With recruitment meetings and *The Suffragette*/*Britannia* relaying speeches along with other articles based on their propaganda, the WSPU hoped to convince the last men who did not enlist to go fight for their country. Emmeline Pankhurst believed that those men who were still staying at home did not realize the dangers of such a war on Britain and its population²⁷⁶ and thus their campaign would help them to face reality.

Even though recruiting meetings by the WSPU were common, the Pankhursts still believed that it was not a pleasant thing to do; because there were meetings there and then, it meant that it was very much needed, and if it was needed, it also meant that not every man enlisted and thus fulfilled their own gendered national duty. Indeed, Emmeline Pankhurst explains that posters for enlistment were already "humiliating" enough; they "beg[ged] and pray[ed] men to enlist"²⁷⁷: believing in the power of deeds, recruitment platforms were the next level in the war campaign of both the government and the WSPU to recruit and appeal to men who had not yet enlisted. However, even though it was shameful to be obliged to organise meetings for men who did not want to enlist – when it was considered to be their sole duty – , the WSPU used it as its advantage to push further their gendered patriotism and hopefully its successful involvement in society. While posters and

²⁷² "Wake Up! – Mrs Pankhurst at Hall", *The Suffragette*, 28 May 1915, p. 111.

²⁷³ "Wake Up! Or, a Dream of Tomorrow", *IMBD*, url: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2268639/>. Accessed 01 April 2020.

²⁷⁴ "Wake Up! – Mrs Pankhurst at Hall", *The Suffragette*, 28 May 1915, p. 111.

²⁷⁵ "The Germans in England – What an Invasion would mean.", *The Suffragette*, 21 May 1915, p. 92.

²⁷⁶ "W.S.P.U War Service Meeting", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 174.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

meetings were made to convince men, women did not need that to volunteer to fulfil their patriotic actions. Indeed, women did not have "appeals from great names", "no attractive pictures, 'Your King and Country want you'" but it did not prevent them from volunteering in mass for the national service wished by the WSPU²⁷⁸. The fact that women of the WSPU and from other parts of the society were not begged to volunteer as they had to do with men, was a way for the WSPU to demonstrate that women's involvement in the war effort was very much needed and possible to organise. If as nearly as thirty thousand women volunteered in one week²⁷⁹ without any thorough propaganda apart from the newspaper, what could happen if the WSPU decided to begin a propaganda campaign targeted more carefully towards women? That is what the Pankhursts wanted the audience, and especially men who had not yet enlisted to see: women who could not go to fight against barbarism because of their traditional gender roles established by society were in fact more involved than the men targeted by war propaganda.

The WSPU also demonstrated through these meetings the role of the gendered patriotism they established through the years. The fact that women were the ones who had to convince men to enlist could have given a feeling of priority to women in society. The duty men had to accomplish was to enlist as a soldier in order to protect their nation, both their home and family – the Pankhursts had even argued that British men felt superior in this position²⁸⁰ as they were the main objective of the British government and were thus treated as heroes saving the nation if they enlisted – yet as years went by, the focus of the government shifted little by little. They still had in mind the wish to convince men who had not already volunteered to enlist, but this time they decided not to only rely on their gendered traditional role of protector. Indeed, they instead asked for the help of the WSPU which had already campaigned for their enlistment in other recruitment meetings. *The Suffragette*, of course, republished the speeches but also press extracts praising the role of women in the procession as well as the war effort; many acclaimed "the spirit of our women", "never before surpassed"²⁸¹. That is why, in 1915, the WSPU seemed to have become a part of "the official war effort"²⁸² and national propaganda thanks to their various recruitment meetings and their newspaper which certainly contributed to spread and emphasise the WSPU's propaganda through deeds and words. It was indeed used to deliver messages addressed to potential volunteers²⁸³. The fact that the Government trusted to a certain extent the WSPU with helping the nation to win the war while only a year ago they were enemies and treated each other violently, was a sign that the WSPU and women's national duty was in some sense superior as the Government gradually recognized the impact women's gendered patriotism could have on society and how they could be deemed useful to war effort.

²⁷⁸ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is Our Duty? – continued", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ "The Great Procession", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 232.

²⁸² Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's movement in Britain*, 2000, p. 8.

²⁸³ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 21.

1.2. The National service and munitions factories: co-operation with the Government

After a break of almost a year from August 1914 to April 1915, the WSPU and their newspaper came back changed as they saw in the war an opportunity to prove the necessity of an active involvement of women in society. Organising recruiting meetings to appeal to soldiers but also to women was not the only purpose of the WSPU's war campaign. Indeed, one of the things the Suffragettes also campaigned for was to create a National Service – not only for men but also for women. If such a reform was to be put in place it would mean that women and the WSPU's members would be officially involved in the war effort. The national service was a way for them to demonstrate once again that to have a peaceful society, women were needed for the same reason men were needed too. A united society had to be founded if Britain wanted to win the war²⁸⁴. The fact that the WSPU asked for a national service was thus a way to show the British government but also the population that they were lacking a proper organisation²⁸⁵ which was very much needed in a society at war. Indeed, planning an official organisation like that would help show the population what to do and how to help their nation both on the war front and at home; and therefore exploit "the whole intelligence and the whole capacity of the nation"²⁸⁶. What the WSPU meant obviously by "the whole" was both men and women. It is important to remember that with such a national service, the WSPU and certainly women in general did not of course hope to go fight like soldiers did on the front; however they instead asked for acknowledgement of their necessity in wartime on the home front, and the organisation of tasks which were still linked with their abilities as women (because they were not used to having work based on the same characteristics of men) and their traditional gender roles (even though one can notice that the WSPU in fact makes these traditional roles evolve into something more active and typical of their own militancy). Besides, if women were not filling the requirements of men's jobs, the WSPU hoped that what was considered the "greatest need"²⁸⁷ in society would also provide the necessary training for women²⁸⁸. It would in fact make them "a reserve force"²⁸⁹ but also certainly help in making women's involvement more acceptable in society. Of course, such a measure is to be understood within a context of gendered patriotism: once again, the WSPU wanted – with all the means possible – to help men to enlist. The establishment of a national service would therefore leave no choice for men to accomplish their national duty as protectors of the nation because women will finally be recognized, if not authorized, to replace men at their jobs while they went to the front. In order to campaign for a national service, the Pankhursts accomplished a series of "Weekly War Service meetings"²⁹⁰ promoted in the newspaper. They were composed of a series of speeches from the leaders of the WSPU but also from different prominent

²⁸⁴ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Our National Duty", *The Suffragette*, 1 October 1915, p. 354.

²⁸⁵ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Awaiting the call to action", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 165.

²⁸⁶ "We will not see Freedom sacrificed", *The Suffragette*, 2 July 1915, p. 184.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Awaiting the call to action, *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 165

figures which always helped emphasised the WSPU's arguments on the establishment of a national service. For instance, a meeting on June 3rd, 1915²⁹¹ gathered of course the Pankhursts, but also Lady Mackworth: a survivor from the Lusitania ship which had been torpedoed by Germany. This event was one of the first which brought to light the possibility for British civilians to be directly targeted in their own waters. Another person participating in the meeting was there to sing "La Marseillaise" in order to pay tribute to one of the most crucial Allies according to the WSPU. Therefore, these meetings were one of the patriotic deeds to represent the WSPU's patriotism during the First World War. These gatherings were not only important to stress the involvement of women in the war, but they also helped the WSPU to earn funds²⁹² in order to continue their "war effort from women" campaign and support their newspaper. It is important to notice that the WSPU functioned primarily on funds from generous donors as they were not financially supported by the government which is why in a way the WSPU's work during wartime is even more impressive. Indeed, they campaigned for years for a better involvement of women in society while relying on funds; a more specifically "patriotic fund" in order to help for "the Special Work by the W.S.P.U. in time of war"²⁹³. The need for funds was advertised in the newspaper which shows, once more, its importance in the WSPU's campaign. In fact, *The Suffragette* also promoted requests for "fighting" funds²⁹⁴, before the war, for the same purpose: maintain the campaign of the WSPU. Whether it was before or during the war, there was always great support from the readers of the newspaper and from those who attended meetings. It certainly helps in acknowledging the certain impact the WSPU had in campaigning for war effort and the fulfilment of the national duties defined by them. These patriotic meetings were most often followed with processions. Perhaps the most important one took place on the 17th July 1915 as it resulted in measures taken by the Government which favoured women and war effort. But first, this procession was the result of what the WSPU and women in general had praised for months and was a clear physical depiction of the gendered patriotism established during the war. Indeed, this procession named "The Great Procession"²⁹⁵ was used to prove what women could and would do for the nation, if only they were given the ability to do so. The procession was a demonstration of women's unity as it gathered "women of all classes, women of all political parties and of no party"²⁹⁶. To put it differently, the WSPU certainly helped in organising this procession but it did not forbid other women's societies or women who did not agree with all of the WSPU's measures to participate. As Mrs Pankhurst puts it, the purpose was to impress the government, so the more women there were, the better it was. Impressing the British government was crucial if women wanted to continue and improve their gendered roles in society. It indeed helped in underlining the WSPU's war measures, but it also promoted the abilities of women to exercise better and more developed patriotic actions. One of the criticisms the WSPU made about the British government was its lack of organisation; by setting up such a gathering, women proved to the government that they were capable of organising themselves through

²⁹¹ "Universal Obligatory War Service Demanded", *The Suffragette*, 11 June 1915, p. 136.

²⁹² "War Service for Everybody!", *The Suffragette*, 28 May 1915, p. 101.

²⁹³ *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 176.

²⁹⁴ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Treasurer's Note", *The Suffragette*, 22 November 1912, p. 83.

²⁹⁵ "Winning the right to serve", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 200.

²⁹⁶ "Review of the Week", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 195.

different patriotic deeds. Furthermore, this Great Procession was also a way to bring into light the importance of a united country. Indeed, it was crucial for everyone to understand that the nation could only work with both genders and even though they were not participating in society under the same conditions, they could not be kept divided. Great processions and meetings gathering both men and women helped in physically demonstrating the unity the WSPU had been campaigning for in its newspaper as part of their Briton's duty. In fact, the meeting helped in showing the government that women were also part of the British society: the dominant colours of the procession were blue, red, and white²⁹⁷ in order to represent the national flag and showing once again that the establishment of a national service would help winning the war as well as uniting the nation – not only during the war but also after it.

In the end, this great procession bore fruit as it led to an official and significant co-operation between the government, represented by the Minister of Munitions, Lloyd George and the WSPU. Indeed, it was after this procession that Lloyd George announced that he was establishing a national register for women in order to better organise war effort coming from them²⁹⁸. Lloyd George had indeed a particular relationship with the WSPU as he helped establishing the passage of the WSPU from "public enemies to arch-patriots"²⁹⁹. The national register he wanted to put into action was to officially "registering the names of all women who are prepared to devote the whole of their time"³⁰⁰ to war effort and therefore the nation. In fact, the WSPU had already established a register of this type to keep track of all the women participating in the patriotic activities the union decided on; and to have a full vision of how many women were present or had to be trained or not³⁰¹ for jobs as gardeners, clerks, factory workers, linguists, dressmakers etc.³⁰². However, their register was certainly reduced to the active members of the WSPU (even though it attracted 40,000 women³⁰³) whereas what Lloyd George had in mind was to be settled across the whole country disregarding of women's membership in unions. The Minister of Munitions also explained that the country was in a particular situation and therefore he could not deny anymore the necessary help women could bring to the nation; however it makes one wonder if a measure of this type which reinforced women's involvement in industrial life and society would have been taken even in a peaceful context? Changing the way gender roles were defined in British society was necessary but the war definitely favoured and accelerated radical reforms³⁰⁴. In fact in an issue of *Britannia* from March 1918, the WSPU explains that it was Lloyd George who asked them to organise a procession of this size because he was met with opposition and he thought that no one could deny the WSPU's

²⁹⁷ "Review of the Week", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 195.

²⁹⁸ "Women needed for Victory – Verbatim Report of Mr. Lloyd George's Speeches to the Deputation and Processionists on July 17", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 231.

²⁹⁹ Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's movement in Britain*, 2000, p. 9.

³⁰⁰ "Women needed for Victory – Verbatim Report of Mr. Lloyd George's Speeches to the Deputation and Processionists on July 17", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 231.

³⁰¹ "Women rally to their country's call". *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 13.

³⁰² "Women's War Services", *The Suffragette*, 17 September 1915, p. 330.

³⁰³ "Women rally to their country's call". *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 13.

³⁰⁴ Vellacott, Jo. "Feminist Consciousness and the First World War", *History Workshop*, Spring 1987, p. 88.

influence and his measure if they managed to show how organised, patriotic and willing to work women were³⁰⁵. He also considered Mrs Pankhurst to a great leader and "the pioneer in women's new and larger war service"³⁰⁶. Furthermore, it is crucial to settle this war measure within the notion of gendered patriotism. Indeed, in his speech on July 17th, Lloyd George considers the gendered duties the WSPU took time to define and praise in their newspaper. He recognized that women were to replace men in industries so men could later on enlist. He indeed thought that the first thing to do was "to get rid of prejudice" people had against women and then train them so that they could "do it so well that there will be no further need for the services of men"³⁰⁷. It was of course expected from women to convince the men in their lives to enlist but Lloyd George here admits the WSPU's version of this duty which is way more active than the traditional one. His speech also recognises to a larger extent the necessity of a united nation and the acceptance of a patriotism which comes from both genders and which would drastically help in winning the war. Indeed, the future Prime Minister clarifies that Britain will definitely win; however, the victory would be simpler, sooner, and less painful with women involved. He expresses this thought with sentences which would be taken again in *Britannia* later on: "Without them victory will tarry and the victory which tarries means a victory whose footprints are footprints of blood"³⁰⁸. Lloyd George explains that with a sufficient involvement of women in war effort – and especially in munitions factories – they could save soldiers' lives as well as civilians because a much more considerable participation from both genders will shorten the war and "diminishing the burden of sorrow"³⁰⁹. He makes, in fact, the connection with women whose traditional gendered qualities are to comfort their family, including soldiers. In a sense, he is trying to find a good balance between the traditional duties of women and their new necessary active role in society. The National Register was also so crucial in the WSPU's patriotic campaign as it helped them to make one step further in what they had been campaigning for years starting before the war. The fact that Lloyd George includes them in a measure which is a part of a national decision and context, enables the WSPU and women to develop this feeling of belonging to a country³¹⁰. During their processions, women used to wear colours representing the flag of their country in order to demonstrate their patriotism and their desire to be identified as citizens in the same way men are considered, and with the National Register, their desire was becoming more and more achievable. In fact, Lloyd George's speech was so important to the WSPU that it was republished in the newspaper years later in March 1918 while women were asked to leave

³⁰⁵ "Review of the Week", *Britannia*, 22 March 1918, p. 387; 399. See also Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 34. And Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 290.

³⁰⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 289.

³⁰⁷ "Women needed for Victory – Verbatim Report of Mr. Lloyd George's Speeches to the Deputation and Processionists on July 17", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 231.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*, 1999, p. 190.

munitions factories³¹¹. The WSPU (renamed Women's Party in late 1917) felt responsible for these women as they were the ones who got them here in the first place. So, in order to remind people of how women in munitions factories greatly assisted the nation, they reprinted Lloyd's speech as well as press extracts describing the Great Procession of July 17th ³¹².

Lloyd George's recognition towards women and the WSPU's war effort also comes from his acknowledgment of their work in munitions factories. According to his speech, munitions played a significant role in the increasing participation of women during the war. Indeed, women in munitions factories seem to be the ones who have made the government think about a greater feminine involvement. It is with this example of munitions factories that Lloyd George justifies the need of women in the nation. Once again, it is important to take into account that even munitions factories were part of a gendered patriotism. For instance, according to Lloyd George, women were more fitted to work on the making of "shell fuse" as it was something which did not require much physical strength³¹³ – more typically associated with the gendered characteristics of men. If we consider the gendered patriotism praised and established by the WSPU in the newspaper and in their various organised events, munitions factories are in fact one of the deeds the Suffragettes established in order to spread their ideas of how and why women should be patriotic. Indeed, the WSPU's national duties are based on the traditional duties of women but they have developed in a more active style which reflected the more radical gender ideas of the WSPU. An important member of the WSPU, Flora McKinnon Drummond, also known as General Drummond because of her military style uniform, perfectly explained the balance between the long-established domestic role of women with the new involvement established by the WSPU as well as its fighting spirit: "We are not going to stop at home and weep but to stay at home and work while you do the fighting"³¹⁴. Moreover, munitions factories were also used to accomplish the national duties of both genders. The first one also portrayed in the war propaganda of the WSPU is of course the appeal to future soldiers and munitions factories are no exception to the fulfilment of that duty. The fact that women were working in munitions factories helped freeing men so they could go to war and fulfil their own national duty³¹⁵. But the WSPU also organised their propaganda around another duty: patriotic wifehood and motherhood in order to justify their need of working in munitions factories. Indeed, catchphrases such as "Shells Made by a Wife May Save a Husband Life" were used by the WSPU and other women in processions³¹⁶. In fact, Susan Kingsley Kent explains that the speech on munitions factories by Lloyd George was not directed to women in particular (even though they represented most of his audience on July 17th) but to munitions factories owners who might have been reluctant to employ women³¹⁷. Therefore, with such catchphrases, the WSPU but also the Minister of Munitions

³¹¹ "Women and Munitions, *Britannia*, 22 March 1918, p. 391.

³¹² "Review of the Week", *Britannia*, 22 March 1918, p. 387.

³¹³ "Women needed for Victory – Verbatim Report of Mr. Lloyd George's Speeches to the Deputation and Processionists on July 17", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 231.

³¹⁴ Drummond, Flora M. "Our Present Duty", *The Suffragette*, 21 May 1915, p. 85.

³¹⁵ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "What is our Duty?", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 26.

³¹⁶ Kent, Susan K. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 34.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

hoped to convince British owners to agree to work with women as it is for the common good of the nation and soldiers on the front. The Pankhursts also criticized the refusal of certain owners of munitions industries in their newspaper. Emmeline Pankhurst explained that when she travelled to France, she noticed that owners were not reluctant and had no prejudices against women in their factories³¹⁸. The fact that Mrs Pankhurst decided to use another country as an example adds to the credibility of an argument; moreover, the country in question is one of the most important allies of Britain in the war. By using France, Mrs Pankhurst once again develops characteristics which reinforce the idea that Allies are the superior countries in the war, and thus they ought to be used as model for the British society.

Even though no one can deny that the WSPU put in place measures that were necessary and well representative of the patriotic and gendered arguments the newspaper helped to spread, the question remains to know if the WSPU in fact played a role in increasing the numbers of volunteers in munitions factories? During the Great Procession of July 17th, Lloyd George estimated around 50,000 women were already working in these industries³¹⁹. In March 1918, when the WSPU reprinted his speech, Mrs Pankhurst added that nearly one million women had participated in the making of shells – in part because of the “breaking down of prejudiced opposition”³²⁰. One can absolutely think that these numbers can be exaggerated as *The Suffragette/Britannia* remains a war propaganda newspaper during the First World War but in fact these numbers are closed to reality. Arthur Marwick states that in July 1915, 256,000 women were working in munitions factories³²¹. We are far from what Lloyd George stated but he might have calculated those in connection with the WSPU only. An increase was noticed in 1916 thanks in part with the compulsory military service later established³²². It is not easy to confirm that the WSPU’s patriotic actions were entirely successful on a larger scale than the WSPU members; however one cannot deny that the WSPU still had a profound impact on the way patriotism among women was portrayed and how the latter could participate to the war effort thanks to their principal organ: their newspaper – which contained all the patriotic arguments and detailed descriptions of what the WSPU was putting in place in order for women to be more involved in society and win the war.

1.3. Deeds... and words: the role of the newspaper in the development of the WSPU’s patriotic actions

Even though the motto of the Suffragettes was “deeds not words”, during and after the First World War, it is undeniable that the newspaper, which can in fact be considered as a deed was predominantly composed of words and arguments which the WSPU spread in the country through other deeds such as patriotic meetings. Indeed, it is important to notice the significant role the newspaper played in the development and the success in patriotic actions of the WSPU. First of all, the newspaper appeared as the embodiment of patriotism

³¹⁸ “Winning the right to serve”, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 200.

³¹⁹ “Women needed for Victory – Verbatim Report of Mr. Lloyd George’s Speeches to the Deputation and Processionists on July 17”, *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 231.

³²⁰ “Review of the Week”, *Britannia*, 22 March 1918, p. 399.

³²¹ Marwick, Arthur. *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 1979, p. 91.

³²² *Ibid.*

during the war, displaying themes such as gendered patriotism, war effort and politics³²³. *The Suffragette/Britannia* was used as a patriotic weapon by the Suffragettes who saw in it the potential to spread their patriotic ideas and actions which could, later on, play a key role in their future demands. It was not the first time that the newspaper was considered as a propaganda weapon. In fact, the pre-war history of this paper as well as its publishers had an impact on the way the newspaper was used for during the war. *The Suffragette* was established at first in order to represent and spread their militant campaign for the vote for women. If one takes into account the pre-war issues of the Suffragettes, we can very much notice that the newspaper revolved around the suffrage campaign, the government in charge and the violence with which they treated the Suffragettes, as well as the speeches and the meetings of the leaders, the Pankhursts. Now, from the issues published during the war, the newspaper also rested on speeches and meetings, the violence which women were victims of, not by the Government this time but by German soldiers, and instead of primarily focusing on the suffrage campaign, they relegated it to the background and rather became interested in establishing a war campaign. The same rhetorical elements were used but the main theme evolved³²⁴. In other words, the newspaper managed to "outlast the militant campaign"³²⁵ for suffrage and instead developed itself into a war paper; and even the leaders themselves acknowledged this change³²⁶. The newspaper grew into a platform which was based on what the WSPU believed in to win the war such as a national military service, the involvement of women in war effort, standing against barbarous enemies and pacifists³²⁷.

The role the newspaper played in spreading the necessity of a united war effort is important. Indeed, it was in this newspaper that all information about what the WSPU organised was published. Not only did the WSPU publish about invitations to patriotic meetings, but it also published the speeches, a summary and the consequences of these meetings in the following issue. By doing so, Christabel Pankhurst, the main editor of the newspaper helped in spreading the Suffragettes' war campaign to people who could not attend the meeting or to people who just joined their campaign. In fact, the leaders themselves considered the newspaper as a tool of "education and inspiration"³²⁸ for people. The main change which settled the newspaper as a true war paper is on October 1st, 1915 when the Pankhursts decided to rename it as *Britannia*. This change was significant because it meant that the newspaper was not anymore focused on one part of the population: women but it was rather interested in the nation, men and women together, with as an aim: win the war together. In fact, it is said in an article issued in 1916 which put together a few letters of readers, that *Britannia* was read by men and that their number was increasing³²⁹. Thus, there is a visible difference in the principal target of the newspaper. The pre-war *Suffragette* certainly targeted more women than men as its principal theme was the

³²³ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 21.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³²⁵ Mercer, John. "Media and Militancy: propaganda in the Women's Social and Political Union's campaign", *Women's History Review*, 2005, p. 472.

³²⁶ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "Awaiting the Call to Action", *The Suffragette*, 25 June 1915, p. 172.

³²⁷ Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1999*, 2000, p. 9.

³²⁸ "Patriots versus pacifists: "Britannia" against the pacifist press", *Britannia*, 5 April 1918, p. 411.

³²⁹ "Generous support for the W.S.P.U Patriotic Campaign", *Britannia*, 19 May 1916, p. 184.

vote campaign but by becoming a war propaganda tool, the newspaper could be directed towards both genders. Even if one of the main themes is women and war effort, the newspaper also appealed to men by encouraging them to enlist or by giving them information on the horrors of the war; and in fact articles about women were also interesting to them to see that women are as patriotic and useful to the nation as them and thus deserve to be more involved in the British society. The newspaper became so important for the WSPU, the readers but also the nation because it became the symbol of militarism. Indeed, the WSPU had always praised since the beginning of the war the development of the British Army whether it is by campaigning for the enlistment of men or by developing an army at home composed of women. With *The Suffragette/Britannia*, the WSPU managed to build up "a militarisation of society"³³⁰, especially after the title changed³³¹. The WSPU indeed strengthened this feeling of a necessary fighting and patriotic spirit from both men and women by emphasise it with words and deeds.

Moreover, the WSPU and the newspaper were not only deemed useful by the Pankhursts and the readers but, in fact, they were also considered as a helpful tool for the Government. Indeed, the newspaper obviously helped in setting events up directly based on the theoretical arguments of gendered patriotism by the WSPU and it acted as an invitation to attend the meetings organised by the WSPU. By asking the WSPU to hold a great procession, Lloyd George probably knew that this meeting would bring together a great number of persons, as the invitation would be published in the newspaper. Coupled with charismatic and patriotic leaders³³², the newspaper had everything to make the deeds of the Suffragettes successful. In fact, important political figures recognised the role played by the WSPU and the newspaper in the war effort. Lloyd George did it in his speech on July 17th, 1915; and later on, an interview was published in *The Suffragette* between the King and General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. Both acknowledged the sacrifices women made for love of their nation and soldiers; they also explained that women were drawn by a "mighty force" and should be given even more responsibility and work³³³. To put it differently, *The Suffragette/Britannia* managed to make a name for itself – not as a suffrage newspaper only but as a war paper for the whole nation. The WSPU considered it as a weapon which would help defeat every enemy of Britain by spreading a "pro-British, pro-Ally, pro-Victory message [...] to be carried into every factory and every home in the land"³³⁴. *Britannia*, "a source of education and inspiration"³³⁵ even managed to get the support and positive coverage of other newspapers³³⁶; something which would have been unbelievable before the First World War. Indeed, it is common to see press

³³⁰ Proctor, Tammy M. "'Patriotism is not enough': Women, citizenship, and the First World War", 2005, p. 170.

³³¹ Byles, Joan Montgomery. "Women's experience in World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 475.

³³² Mirsky, Boris. "The volunteers of the Women's military and national union", *Britannia*, 10 August 1917, p. 78.

³³³ "Miscellaneous news", *The Suffragette*, 7 May 1915, p. 62.

³³⁴ "Patriots versus pacifists: "Britannia" against the pacifist press", *Britannia*, 5 April 1918, p. 411.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Purvis, June. "The Pankhursts and the Great War" in Allison S. Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds.) *The Women's movement in Wartime: international perspectives, 1914-1919*, 2017, p. 146.

extracts from other papers in the WSPU's. Many extracts of various newspapers which praised the Great Procession were published in the weekly issue after the event³³⁷. In fact, the Pankhursts as well as Lloyd George thought that the event would even be more successful if other newspapers joined to support it. That is why Lord Northcliffe, the famous editor of various British newspapers, agreed to offer his support to the procession and to future WSPU's patriotic actions³³⁸. What is important to notice there, is the fact that Lord Northcliffe was actually an anti-suffragist and had always been at the extreme opposite of what the Suffragettes symbolised; however after seeing the patriotic campaign set up by the WSPU, he decided to support them because he believed the newspaper as well as the WSPU were having a great and positive impact on society³³⁹.

Through deeds such as the establishment of a national service, a national register, or munitions factories, the WSPU managed to represent physically the characteristics of the gendered patriotism they been campaigned with and for during the War. The newspaper obviously played a significant role in spreading information to not only pre-war or regular readers but also to a larger part of the population by emphasising on the necessary unity of British people. Deeds previously mentioned were carried out on the Home Front and were still deeply linked with domestic traditional roles of women such as munitions factories and its propaganda around wifehood or motherhood. Other opportunities of showing female patriotism progressively opened and munitions factories were in fact only the beginning of an increasing development of gendered roles which aimed to be less traditional and more representative of the WSPU.

2. An evolution of gender domestic roles through patriotic actions?

At the beginning of the conflict, women had not many opportunities to participate actively in war service³⁴⁰ but with the various patriotic actions established through the gendered patriotism of the WSPU and portrayed in the newspaper, women progressively found a way to finally be more involved in society. However, this involvement meant replacing men in professional fields which were not usually opened to women. Even though, munitions factories were the perfect symbol of mobilisation by women and participated in changing traditional roles³⁴¹, they were not the only industries which were involved in women's mobilisation and which perceived a change in the gender of their employees; many other fields saw an increase of women workers who wished to replace men who had to enlist in order to achieve both their national duties. Munitions factories were only a small part of the involvement of women in jobs which were typically done by men before. Even though, the WSPU put a great emphasis on this type of industries, it is also important to take into account other jobs in order to truly understand the extent which the patriotic campaign for the war effort achieved. Through these

³³⁷ "The Great Procession", *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915, p. 232.

³³⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 290.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Douglas, R. M. *Feminist Freikorps: The British Voluntary Women Police, 1914-1940*, 1999, p. 9.

³⁴¹ Grayzel, Susan R. "Women and Men" in John Horne *A Companion to World War I*, 2010, p. 267.

jobs done on the Home Front one can wonder whether replacing men enabled women to escape their traditional roles? Moreover, some women also decided to go directly on the front or at least as close as possible to it; while the Front might be seen as the extreme opposite of where women should have been according to social conventional spheres, their roles as nurses, for instance, can make one wonder if they were not just a simple evolution of the traditional gendered roles of women in a place which did not seem to be fitted for these.

2.1. Replacing men on the Home Front: the Suffragettes' militancy and evolution of the traditional gendered roles.

Progressively, during the First World War, many jobs which were done by men were now undertaken by women as part of the national war effort they were participated in. Munitions factories were just a small part of what women were actually able to do. Indeed, the WSPU did not only campaign for working and involving women in munitions industries which were probably deemed as the most important field in time of war but the Suffragettes also took the time to involve women in other jobs which did not require the traditional gendered abilities of men. One has to remember that the WSPU had been wishing for the involvement of women in society way before the war started. Therefore, even though munitions factories were certainly the most urgent matter at the time, the WSPU also tried through other means of the war effort, demonstrating their patriotism towards the nation, to make women even more involved in other fields of society which were not as associated with war. To put it differently, the WSPU tried to also make women participate in industries which will still be as useful even after the war. By doing so, the WSPU probably wanted to make the government but also public opinion and men see that women were not only to be vital during war but that they could also be as useful in a peaceful country. In fact, Christabel Pankhurst explains that the "Suffragettes were to be found in every kind of war service"³⁴². In other words, everything was perceived as useful for the nation in time of war. Indeed, it is not difficult to find articles in the WSPU's newspaper on women who are doing what they can to answer to their "country's call"³⁴³. *The Suffragette* will often give information on "what members of the W.S.P.U are doing" with short descriptions of the progressive involvement of women in professional areas and photographs³⁴⁴. It helped in representing once more the positive consequences of the WSPU's gendered campaign and the newspaper which words could lead to deeds. One of the jobs women got involved to in order to relief the usual men workers and to let them enlist was as railway porters. A first experiment was done in order for the employers to see to what extent women could replace men³⁴⁵ but a week later, railroad companies employed even more women either to clean wagons or in the clerical department to type or to book³⁴⁶ in order to replace the manpower they lost because of the war. The positions women were fulfilling still seem quite far from the physical work men were doing but it is important to understand that they were possibly not as much employed before in these fields. Even though, they could not be or be perceived as physical as men, they still participated

³⁴² Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 291.

³⁴³ "Women rally to their country's call", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 12.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ "What women are doing:", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 30.

in the war effort according to their abilities. Yet, there were still exceptions, two women were for instance also employed as tram conductors for a company which had two thousand of its men who enlisted in the war and their work was seen as satisfactory³⁴⁷. The latter is incredibly significant for the WSPU but also for public opinion. Indeed, by admitting that women's work was satisfactory when they were in fact replacing men was certainly something viewed as a success for the Pankhursts. It was the accomplishment of what they had been wishing for since the beginning of their war campaign; it was a way for them to show everyone who doubted about women in war effort or doubted about the WSPU's patriotic nature that women could actually do men's work as good as they used to do before the war. In fact, testimonies which praised women's work were common in the newspaper in order to prove that the gendered patriotism promoted throughout the war was successful. For instance, a manager who employed young girls as messengers explained that they were in fact doing a better job than boys; they were also seen as "energetic, quick and always courteous" whereas young boys were perceived as "lazy, slow and insolent"³⁴⁸. One can see that public opinion on women and war effort were quite different among employers: some industries such as railroads companies (for instance, Lancashire or Yorkshire Company³⁴⁹) were more than willing to let women replace men as clerks, ticket collectors or even conductors³⁵⁰ for the nation's and their company's sake; whereas for some munitions industries, the Minister of Munitions himself had to ask for the organisation of a great procession in order to convince managers to employ women. Even though the country could sometimes lack employers willing to give women a chance, the main interested party was not lacking volunteers. In fact, the WSPU had so many volunteers registering themselves for national war effort that they had to stop recruiting because they could not supply them with enough jobs³⁵¹. The newspaper acted as a platform for recruitment; it is through its articles that volunteers could have all the information needed to register and participate in the war effort. Indeed, many women registered to fill various positions in different professions. For instance, six thousand registered to work in armaments, four thousand in clothing trades, two thousand as agricultural workers and five thousand in the commercial and clerical field³⁵². Another thing which is interesting in *The Suffragette* is the fact that the WSPU not only published short articles to demonstrate the eagerness and the success of women in professional fields usually belonging to men but the Union also published photographs of women in action, fulfilling their duties as patriotic citizens. Throughout the years during which the newspaper was published, few photographs were included, and it is interesting to notice that the very few photographs or images which were published were those which depicted women. From portraits of Joan of Arc and Queen Elisabeth I to women working in farms, as messengers, or in railroads companies³⁵³, the WSPU, as always, put the emphasis on the female gender. Even though the Pankhursts had redefined their newspaper as a war paper which praised the unity of the nation, it still was rather focused on

³⁴⁷ "Women rally to their country's call", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 12.

³⁴⁸ "What women are doing:", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 30.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ "Women's war services", *The Suffragette*, 17 September 1915, p. 330.

³⁵² "What women are doing:", *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 30.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

women and what they brought to society being from this gender and accomplishing patriotic actions. Once again, it was all part of their patriotic and gendered propaganda: by publishing photographs no one could deny what the newspaper had written on the involvement of women because the photographs acted as visual proofs. To a certain extent, it established the importance of the newspaper in their patriotic and gendered campaign as it helped in reporting every deed of the WSPU so that readers could also witness the success of the involvement of women in various fields which were not traditionally associated with them.

Another profession in which women got involved and in which one would not expect to see women at the time was in the police force. Women taking part in the society as policewomen were part of the British Voluntary Women Police. Some of them were employed as clerks and others could also be employed as policewomen patrolling in the streets in cities such as Grantham or Mansfield³⁵⁴. However, they were not considered as having the same role or powers as policemen. In fact, some of them were employed to supervise women in munitions factories³⁵⁵. What is interesting to see is how these feminine volunteers replaced men in this profession which was certainly deeply considered as a male profession in society and how it may have changed gendered conventional roles. As with other professions, women were taking part in male jobs because they wanted them to enlist to achieve their national duty, thus working as police officers entered the gendered patriotism the WSPU was praising at the time. Of course, these volunteers – even though they were only patrolling³⁵⁶ – seemed far from their traditional gendered roles because it was a masculine task to protect civilians. *The Suffragette*, thus, makes sure that the mobilisation of the women police are recognised by public opinion: as well as giving details on their work mission which was “to render valuable assistance to women and children”³⁵⁷, the newspaper also published a letter from a General Officer describing the women police “of great value”³⁵⁸. Physically protecting and helping civilians was a traditional masculine role at the time, yet the war made it difficult for men to be on both fronts. On one side, they were to protect those who were endangered in other countries, but on the other, they also had to protect those of their own nation from the “common danger”³⁵⁹. Unity was key and *The Suffragette* was to represent that; with only its publication and its portrayal of the mobilisation of the WSPU, the newspaper managed to “do its part towards maintaining the unity of the nation”³⁶⁰. In a way, the fact that women were protecting civilians and to a larger extent their Home was still part of their traditional gendered roles. As part of the police force, women were still fulfilling this duty, however the definition of home and family extended to the whole nation and to the entire population. War had indeed as a consequence to alter the gendered spatial divisions and therefore both genders had to adapt their roles to

³⁵⁴ “Women rally to their country’s call”, *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 13.

³⁵⁵ Woollacott, Angela. ““Khaki Fever” and its control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1994, p. 337.

³⁵⁶ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 36.

³⁵⁷ “Women rally to their country’s call”, *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 13.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ “We will not see Freedom sacrificed”, *The Suffragette*, 2 July 1915, p. 185.

³⁶⁰ Pankhurst, Emmeline. “A Message from Mrs Pankhurst”, *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

that change³⁶¹. At the beginning of the war, the spatial division was still very much made between “home” and “front”, establishing women on one side who should wait peacefully the end of the war by doing what they were used to do, and on the other side, men also continued to carry out their gendered role of physical protectors of civilians from the enemy. However, as war directed itself progressively towards Britain and led to the establishment of a home front, the gendered roles which were based on traditional spatial divisions also had to evolve, which led to a reinforcement of gendered war work³⁶². The fact that traditional gendered roles changed partly because of a war context raises the question of whether these conventional gendered duties would have changed if the First World War had not happened. One might think that it would not have been the case because some of these roles changed thanks to the gendered patriotic campaign the *Suffragette/Britannia*, but on the other side if one focuses solely on the WSPU’s campaign, it is important to notice that the involvement of women in society and in politics was something they had been wishing even before the war. The WSPU even though that the war started because they were not given the opportunity to be involved and “be equal partners with men from the beginning”³⁶³. The WSPU had always campaigned for a change in the traditional roles of women even though some parts of their gendered patriotic campaign had still as an inspiration the tradition role of women, they still acted for a more active effort of women. To put it differently, there is no denying that the roles of women in society would have at one point changed even if the war had not happened because of the WSPU’s militancy. However, the war certainly made it easier and quicker to obtain these changes. The conflict also probably made them more easily accepted by public opinion as they were establishing these changes following a patriotic logic for the nation’s good. There is little mention of the British Voluntary Women Police in the newspaper which is in fact quite surprising considering that many of the volunteers came from the WSPU and had been or were still Suffragettes³⁶⁴ and this police movement was also considered as an imitation of the WSPU’s militancy³⁶⁵. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst believed that the various patriotic actions and war effort women were involved in were a continuity of their experience as militants before the war, she explained that the “Suffragette spirit had become generalised”³⁶⁶. In other words, the leaders of the WSPU believed that the Suffragette militancy impacted not only the WSPU, but it managed to spread to the whole nation which made war effort from women a success. Indeed, they thought that the experience they gained through their pre-war militancy – that is to say, their fighting spirit, the way they stood against conventional gendered roles and against the government – was the reason why women were able to demonstrate all of their abilities which were, this time, not directed against the government and which embraced the nation as a whole. They

³⁶¹ Robert, Krisztina. “Constructions of “Home”, “Front” and Women’s military employment in First World War Britain: a spatial interpretation”, *History and Theory*, 2013, p. 321

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 342.

³⁶³ Pankhurst, Christabel. “The War”, *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

³⁶⁴ Woollacott, Angela. ““Khaki Fever” and its control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1994, p. 336.

³⁶⁵ Douglas, R. H. *Feminist Freikorps: the British Voluntary Women Police, 1914-1940*, 1999, p. 3.

³⁶⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 291.

considered indeed that the Suffrage movement they organised before the war brought “new confidence” to women for undertaking “difficult tasks”³⁶⁷ which were later acknowledged by the British government.

Even though gendered patriotic actions recommended by the WSPU in *The Suffragette/Britannia* were mostly accomplished at Home by replacing men and thus establishing new gendered roles, some Suffragettes also decided to take patriotism to the next level by directly volunteering themselves on the front alongside male soldiers. Being on the front with soldiers when this place was typically associated with masculinity and their gendered duty can make one wonder why women decided to follow men, and how it responded to the WSPU’s campaign and especially, if it has changed any of their traditional duties.

2.2. On the front: an evolved traditional role

The WSPU focused mainly on patriotic actions to be settled on the Home Front and how to demonstrate their patriotism through these actions which reflected an evolution of their gendered characteristics given by the conventional society, yet, some women took the WSPU’s patriotic campaign to another level and decided to go the closest as possible to the war front and alongside male soldiers in order to participate in war effort. One might think that by doing so, women were far from what was traditionally expected of their gender but in fact, as with most of the other professions campaigned by the WSPU and in which women were also involved, the way they were demonstrating their patriotism was more of a balance between their traditional gendered roles and their newly found fighting spirit, to a certain extent, the patriotic Suffragette spirit which was actively supporting war effort by using most of their gendered abilities; the same abilities which had been limited by conventions.

Of course, all women who were involved in war effort far from home did not all have a link with the WSPU and Suffragettes, but I think it is important to notice that the reasons why they decided to go and how they were helping soldiers are very much similar to what the WSPU praised during their patriotic campaign but also their pre-war militancy: a participation of women which would be based on their natural abilities coupled with this desire of activeness and an equality between men and women. As in other professional fields, women on the front were found everywhere: as “doctors”, “nurses”, undertaking “relief work of various kinds”, “in the tranches even, aiding the wounded; driving motor-cards”³⁶⁸. However, women on the front seemed to be under-represented in the newspaper compared to other patriotic actions at home. One of the reasons why might be due to the fact that the WSPU wanted to focus more on actions happening at home, directly on the British territory because they were thinking about the future of their role after the war. The WSPU might have seen a better opportunity to keep and recognise women’s involvement at home rather than on the front, which was settled far from home - even though women there were very much needed - because it might have been better for public opinion and the government to observe and witness women’s war effort when it had direct and visible consequences on the British territory.

³⁶⁷ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 291.

³⁶⁸ “Winning the Right to Serve”, *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 200.

As women felt paralysed at home³⁶⁹, some decided to actively participate in the war effort closer to the front; they felt that they were limited at home compared to what they could offer to society. *The Suffragette* indeed published an article from Christabel Pankhurst admitting that women felt "idle" because they could not do "their full share in the work of national defence"³⁷⁰. Thus, having the opportunity to go away from the traditional conventions of society but still being involved in a patriotic war effort was something they could not refuse. Of course, this feeling of paralysis was understandable for women who wished to be more active in society and the fact that they could finally get out from what they might have perceived as oppressive but at the same time not being criticized for it because they were still demonstrating important patriotism is also one of the reasons why some women decided to participate to the war effort in this way. This feeling of paralysis at home possibly went progressively away especially with the patriotic actions of the WSPU, which demonstrated an effective and more active involvement of women and greatly extended the spatial boundaries of what was defined as home. The WSPU also wanted to be equal to men, it was part of their campaign before but also during the war – indeed as they wanted more female participation in war effort, they also wished the Government to see that both genders could work together and achieve the same aims, but for that they had to give the opportunity to women and base their actions on one's own gendered abilities which would complete each other and achieve a sense of unity among men and women. Going to the front was a way for women to feel as equal as possible to men, or at least they thought it was one of the ways to feel as such. The fact that men and women could share their similar experiences helped in "effac[ing] the differences demarcating the sexes so vividly at home"³⁷¹. Indeed, they wanted to experience the war and life on the front in the same way men did, or at least, they wished to perceive the war directly on the front as men did, nonetheless still according to their gendered roles. One of the missions of *The Suffragette* established by the Pankhursts was to "bringing home to the minds and imagination of its readers, the situation of other countries not less menaced than we ourselves"³⁷², by describing in full details the situation of soldiers on the War Front, the newspaper recreated it and helped its readers to fully live by proxy the war. This wish might have been fuelled by descriptions of the heroism of male soldiers on the front but also by the emphasis the propaganda put on the enlistment of men. Indeed, propaganda from the WSPU and others on the enlistment of men was so intense, they made it perceived as a duty to save the nation and that their sacrifice will not be vain that it might have convinced some women that their role was also near the front. Their wish to be united as a whole population rather than putting aside one part of it was also reflected in the way some women perceived the uniform. Indeed, uniforms of soldiers always aroused women's patriotism because they were perfect symbols of heroism and patriotism³⁷³. Most of the time it was on the wearing of a uniform that women compared one's patriotism and devotion to the nation; if they were seeing a man without a uniform in Britain, the man was given the

³⁶⁹ Kent, Susan K. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 58.

³⁷⁰ Pankhurst, Christabel. "How to Win the War", *The Suffragette*, 9 July 1915, p. 198

³⁷¹ Kent, Susan K. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 63.

³⁷² Pankhurst, Emmeline. "A Message from Mrs Pankhurst", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

³⁷³ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*, 1999, p. 192.

controversial white feather. Khaki was therefore perceived as the colour which defined the most patriotism and might be one of the reasons why women decided to go to the front, because they could also wear uniforms and feel like they were belonging to a united group of soldiers. In fact, wearing a uniform for women also came on the British territory as they were displays of one's patriotism³⁷⁴. However, because of uniforms, gendered patriotism which the WSPU campaigned for was less visible than before, and yet on the other hand it also physically symbolised the unity they have been wishing for: actively participating in the war³⁷⁵. The few mentions of uniforms in the WSPU's newspaper also demonstrate this sense of unity, not only on the front but also at home. Indeed, even women participating in the war effort at home were wearing khaki uniforms such as the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps³⁷⁶ or even munitions workers in their overalls³⁷⁷. Even though the latter was not khaki, women in munitions factories still had a uniform symbolising their patriotism as well as their involvement in war effort. Nonetheless, women wished to experience the war on the same level as men for various reasons: they wanted to be a part of what was viewed as the peak of patriotism, and experience this feeling of unity and belonging to a nation which was also one of the main duties the WSPU campaigned for. However, it is still crucial to understand that even though they wished to experience the war front as men did and escape this feeling of paralysis at home, women and their war effort were still much defined by their gender. Their physical interpretation and representation of their patriotism was still based on their abilities as women as the WSPU explained through their own campaign; the only differences they had with women participating at home were the kind of jobs they were contributing to, and the front.

The main profession carried on by women on or near the front was that of nurses. Nurses were highly respected by the WSPU which promoted and praised their members who worked in military hospitals to carry out their patriotic duties and campaign and *Britannia* praised their "charitable" and "splendid work"³⁷⁸. Indeed, the WSPU found great interest and pride in the military hospital in London founded by a member of the WSPU, Dr Flora Murray, and Dr Garret Anderson, as it was one of the first hospitals to have been recognized by the British War Office³⁷⁹ and to which many other members of the WSPU were working³⁸⁰. Once again, it demonstrates the extent to which women were mobilised and willing to participate in the war effort. The role of nurses on the front was of course based on the gendered abilities and traditional function of women. Indeed, the whole profession was more based on "the natural capacities for caring and nurturing" rather than medical knowledge³⁸¹. These characteristics were therefore deeply linked with the national duty of women which

³⁷⁴ Grayzel, Susan R. "The Outward and Visible Sign of Her Patriotism": Women, Uniforms, and National Service During the First World War". *Twentieth Century British History*, 1997, p. 149.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³⁷⁶ "The Premier in Manchester", *Britannia*, 20 September 1918, p. 134.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ "Women's War Work – Co-operate with the W.S.P.U", Extract from Mrs. Pankhurst's Speech at the Queen's Hall on May 22, 1917, *Britannia*, 6 June 1917, p. 7

³⁷⁹ "Women rally to their country's call", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 13.

³⁸⁰ "Honours for Women", *Britannia*, 31 August 1917, p. 103.

³⁸¹ Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*, 2002, p. 37.

represented them as mothers. However, even though the profession of nurse was still rooted in conventional gendered roles, the context, and the space in which they were working and evolving was far from being traditional to their gender. In fact, this profession enabled women to still actively and directly participate in the war without completely transforming their “traditional understandings’ of what was considered to be their gendered role³⁸². But what makes them representatives of the WSPU’s gendered patriotism and symbols of the WSPU’s wish for women’s involvement are the other qualities which make these traditional characteristics less conventional and more similar to how the WSPU portrayed women and their patriotism. Indeed, nurses were not only associated with their abilities to take care of male soldiers, but they were also identified with qualities such as selflessness, heroism, and self-sacrifice³⁸³. These notions for describing nurses were similar to how the newspaper of the WSPU described and represented countries such as Belgium or other feminine figures such as Joan of Arc. That is why one can consider that the mobilisation of women as nurses on the front is to be perceived as one of the interpretations and representations of the WSPU’s gendered patriotism, despite the lack of information in their newspaper. Their campaign was characterized by a blending of evolved gendered roles of women still inspired by traditional roles and the well-known fighting and militant spirit of the Suffragettes which encouraged this evolution of traditional roles. And to a certain extent, nurses were therefore symbols of this gendered patriotism: they were still characterised by their natural gendered capacities and roles as women but this time instead of being paralysed and limited in their private sphere, they were using these gendered characteristics to perform actively in society and war effort for the nation’s sake.

There is no denying that the WSPU’s patriotism was gendered and was carried out by patriotic actions defined on gendered definitions of one’s abilities. The purpose of the WSPU was to prove that women had all the useful and crucial abilities to war effort and the nation in general. Through various articles of *The Suffragette/Britannia* depicting the war effort of women, the WSPU managed to present their aim which was not to completely erase and radically reform gendered stereotypes and roles but rather to adapt them and to demonstrate them in a larger context than their usual private sphere in order to prove that their involvement was worthy and necessary to society and the British government. The war obviously favoured this demonstration rather than their pre-war militancy because their actions to prove women were necessary to society and politics were established for the nation and not against it. Replacing men at home in various industries, helping in the making of munitions factories and proving the feminine nature the WSPU defined all along the war and before that, at home or close to the front certainly helped the WSPU to prove their point on the necessary involvement of women and helped in bringing again to light what they were campaigning for years in their very own newspaper: the votes for women.

³⁸² Fell, Alison S. “Remembering French and British First World War Heroines” in Hämmerle, Christa and eds. *Gender and The First World War*, 2014, p. 109.

³⁸³ Grayzel, Susan R. “Women and Men” in John Horne, *A Companion to World War I*, 2010, p. 268.

3. Votes for women: the logical result of the WSPU's patriotism?

In August 1914, after the First World War broke out, Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the WSPU announced "an armistice with the Government" in order for all Suffragettes to stop militancy as the country was now at war³⁸⁴. Ceasing the militancy of the Suffragettes meant to a certain extent stopping the campaign for the votes for women. The newspaper was transformed from a suffrage to a war paper: in his first issue after a break of almost a year, the WSPU explains that *The Suffragette* is now entirely devoted to "the present national crisis" and "the patriotism of women"³⁸⁵. The WSPU remodelled its campaign from actions against the British government to patriotic and national actions. It then seemed that the WSPU, its leaders and members gave up on their controversial suffrage campaign to instead focus on how they could be helpful to a country at war; yet the newspaper still aimed in rousing "women to a sense [...] of their rights as individuals"³⁸⁶. Women – under some specific criteria – finally obtained the vote in 1918. But how could they obtain it if most of the pre-war suffrage societies, including the WSPU, stopped their militancy after the worldwide conflict was declared? It makes one wonder if the Suffragettes truly stopped their militant suffrage campaign during the war, even though they assured they suspended it. To a certain extent, they genuinely stopped some aspects of their pre-war militancy such as their most extreme actions against the British government, however they did not cease campaigning for the vote for women and rather carried out on a militancy more adapted to the context in which Britain was at the time. Moreover, if the vote was granted after all the patriotic actions led by the WSPU, one can also wonder whether granting the vote to women was an obvious result of the WSPU's war campaign to reward the involvement of women in the British society?

3.1. The WSPU's campaign for suffrage during the war

Even though leaders of the WSPU explained that they put an end to their militant campaign for suffrage as a demonstration of national support after the war was declared in 1914, and which caused suffrage to fall "into a moribund condition"³⁸⁷, the WSPU still dealt with pre-war militancy elements in their newspaper. This fight for suffrage was never abandoned by the WSPU and it would have been hard to imagine that the WSPU had decided to end everything overnight but it is true that the way they campaigned for suffrage was much more different from what the Suffragettes had been known for previously. Indeed, Christabel Pankhurst explained that it would have been impossible to end militancy and spoil "nine years of immense effort, will all the sacrifice and suffering"³⁸⁸. She considered that they were in fact on the verge of being granted the vote when "suddenly the other war broke out!"³⁸⁹. They did not diminish however the seriousness of the situation in

³⁸⁴ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 288.

³⁸⁵ "Review of the Week", *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915, p. 3.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "A Message from Mrs Pankhurst", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

³⁸⁸ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 287.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

which the country was and what it implied for the population, but they also did not want to sacrifice all the efforts of their fellow Suffragettes. Christabel Pankhurst had explained that “women’s militancy [was] never to disappear until they get the vote”³⁹⁰ and that is certainly why, some aspects of their pre-war militancy can be seen in their war militancy whose purpose was mainly to focus on war effort and the role of women in the latter through gendered patriotism. Even though it is not as evident as before the war, suffrage campaign was still important to the WSPU, however it was instead put in the background of war propaganda and mobilisation. In fact, their pre-war militancy was instead retrieved and transformed into gendered patriotism and mobilisation. Christabel Pankhurst explained that the spirit of the Suffragettes contributed to the success of the war effort organised by women³⁹¹. The war acted as an extension of their suffrage campaign but this time it was not as radical or as violent than before. Their experience as Suffragettes greatly helped the nation and even politicians such as Lloyd George used this experience to his advantage. Even though there might have been fewer mentions of the vote in the newspaper than before, all of the actions undertaken by the Suffragettes were still very much associated with this pre-war militancy and this wish to extent the franchise to women. In fact, a parallel was made between the First World War and the fight for the vote by the leader of the WPSU explaining that both originated from the same conflict, the “old old conflict between freedom and tyranny”³⁹². Therefore, it was impossible to cease and separate the WSPU’s vote campaign from its war effort campaign as they both were inspired by the same cause. It meant that if a war between European countries was to be won, then votes for women in Britain were also to be gained as both wars are fought under the same characteristics, according to the Suffragettes. Moreover, what would the suffrage campaign have been without the main organ of the WSPU? *The Suffragette/Britannia* had indeed a crucial place in the WSPU’s strategy. Before the war, the newspaper was mostly used to convey the WSPU’s arguments and events on suffrage as well as harsh criticism on British politicians who refused to give the vote to women. Thus, it played an important role as the principal tool of the militancy in order to convince and inform people on the WSPU’s suffrage campaign. During the war, the newspaper had actually the same role, except that this time harsh criticism was not made against the British government – or at least not against those supporting women’s involvement in war effort, and was instead made against Germany, the common enemy. What is to be understood here is that the same arguments were used in both periods in the newspaper³⁹³, yet since the primary target changed, the way the WSPU campaigned for suffrage changed too. Indeed, the war and the truce with the British government did not prevent the WSPU to use this newly war paper as “a major battlefield in this new phase of the suffrage war”³⁹⁴. However, because the context obviously changed from one year to another, the suffrage movement and the newspaper which people had knew before the war had to adapt itself to the conditions of a “militarised world”³⁹⁵.

³⁹⁰ Pankhurst, Christabel, “The inner policy of the W.S.P.U”, *The Suffragette*, 30 January 1914, p. 353.

³⁹¹ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 291.

³⁹² “Review of the Week”, *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 19.

³⁹³ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 26.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ Van Wingerden, Sophia A. *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928*, 1999, p. 154.

So, militancy for the suffrage campaign changed radically during the war (even though some techniques were still used) and it appears in the newspaper that this campaign seemed to have been relegated to a position of second importance. However, it was not the case: many suffrage societies including the WSPU “maintained their organisation” while mobilising for the war³⁹⁶. In fact, the war was used by the WSPU as an opportunity to finally obtain what they campaigned for years. But instead of relying on a violent and much controversial and criticized militancy, they organised a gendered patriotism based on a great mobilisation of women beneficial to the nation. The WSPU first perceived the war in 1914 as the consequence of refusing to grant the vote to women for only “enfranchised women [...] will save the race”³⁹⁷. However, in April 1915, *The Suffragette* returned with a different opinion on the war. Instead of complaining about what was the cause of the war, the WSPU focused on the advantages women could take of it. *The Suffragette* explained that it was the reason of its reappearance after almost a year of absence³⁹⁸, they indeed saw the war and what could be done by women as a way to obtain the vote. Through their various patriotic actions presented in their newspaper, they wanted to show the British population and especially the British government, which were against the extension of the franchise to women that they were more than fitted to, obtain it³⁹⁹. *The Suffragette/Britannia* acted as proof for the numerous deeds organised by the WSPU; the newspaper still benefited from its pre-war popularity as a suffrage paper and even though it principally became a war paper, its experience on suffrage issues certainly helped in establishing their new propaganda. Emmeline Pankhurst indeed agrees that *The Suffragette* “roused great enthusiasm for votes for women”⁴⁰⁰. The patriotic actions led by the WSPU were indeed largely inspired by the pre-war militant spirit of the Suffragettes; they could use this same fighting spirit which granted them strength and freedom⁴⁰¹ for the national cause too and be as efficient as possible. Their vote campaign was, in fact, an extension of the patriotic arguments they promoted throughout the war and in their newspaper. The Pankhursts argued in *The Suffragette* that all of the Suffragettes as well as other women were putting “the national cause first” before their personal interests⁴⁰². It helped the WSPU to settle this suffrage campaign into a context which was more dominated by unity and patriotic feelings rather than a context more oriented towards one part of the population⁴⁰³. Through war effort, mobilisation, and a gendered patriotism, the WSPU managed to demonstrate and showing in a good light all the abilities of women that the society would miss politically and economically if the vote was not given⁴⁰⁴. It helped in showing that the

³⁹⁶ Byles, Joan M. “Women’s experience in World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 478.

³⁹⁷ Pankhurst, Christabel. “The War”, *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

³⁹⁸ Review of the Week”, *The Suffragette*, 23 April 1915, p. 19.

³⁹⁹ Front cover. “The Women’s Victory”, *Britannia*, 11 January 1918.

⁴⁰⁰ Pankhurst, Emmeline. “A Message from Mrs Pankhurst”, *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

⁴⁰¹ Byles, Joan M. “Women’s experience in World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 1985, p. 474.

⁴⁰² “Universal Obligatory War Service Demanded”, *The Suffragette*, 11 June 1915, p. 137.

⁴⁰³ Marwick, Arthur. *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 1979, p. 94.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

feminine qualities the WSPU praised in their pre-war newspaper which one could also find in the fighting spirit of the Suffragettes could not only be used and perceived as violent, radical and a danger to the nation, but it also could be used as a national advantage to convince others to rally to the national cause. Through their pre-war militancy, the WSPU wanted to radically change the traditional roles of women in British society, and be "the advance-guard of the new womanhood"⁴⁰⁵. *The Suffragette* explains that the militancy of the WSPU was based on "legal enactments and attacks upon property"⁴⁰⁶. However, these methods were perceived by most of the population as too harsh and far from what they expected from women. However, during the war, the WSPU still wanted to transform the conventional feminine roles, yet it was more broadly accepted than before the war because this time the methods used were put in a context in which it was easier to see how women's influence and involvement in society would be an advantage for Britain. Their patriotism as well as their mobilisation helped in winning the war⁴⁰⁷ and possibly later on the vote because of their emphasis on the abilities of each gender. The purpose of their patriotism and their war effort was to "preserve those institutions which would admit of women having the Vote"⁴⁰⁸. Because the newspaper has always had an important role in the suffrage campaign of the WSPU, it was inevitable for the WSPU to once more rely more on their main organ. Indeed, *Britannia* promoted the suffrage as "a war measure", the national effort they made until then would even be greater afterwards because women will have a thing to look for after the victory and it will encourage them to see that their efforts and sacrifices were not for nothing⁴⁰⁹. One can thus wonder if the gendered patriotism praised by the WSPU was in fact a strategy to later on win the vote or if the WSPU still undertook all of these actions as part of a patriotic momentum? But certainly, the real question is to know whether their patriotism as showed in the WSPU's newspaper was the reason behind the British government extending the franchise to only a part of women or if there were other reasons which played a role in this decision?

3.2. Granting the vote: a reward for women's patriotism?

After years of militancy, the vote for women - yet still limited - had been finally granted after the Representation of People Act was signed on the 6th February 1918⁴¹⁰. After what had happened during the war with women, it seemed natural for them to have the right to vote, however historians have had mixed feelings⁴¹¹ on whether the war helped women who have participated in war effort to gain the vote or if it was given for other reasons not necessarily linked with the patriotism of women.

⁴⁰⁵ Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912.

⁴⁰⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. "The Policy of the W.S.P.U", *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁷ Marwick, Arthur. *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 1979, p. 98.

⁴⁰⁸ "We will not see Freedom sacrificed!", *The Suffragette*, 2 July 1915, p. 184.

⁴⁰⁹ "Women Suffrage: a necessary war measure", *Britannia*, 23 April 1917, p. 364.

⁴¹⁰ Bader-Zaar, Birgitta. "Women's Suffrage and war: World War One and politic reform in a comparative perspective" in Sulkunen, Irma and eds. *Suffrage Gender and Citizenship International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms*, 2019, p. 203.

⁴¹¹ Smith, Harold L. *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928*, 2010, p. 73.

According to the WSPU, the vote had been given for several reasons, the first being that women should be rewarded for their national effort and patriotism which showed the whole nation that “women handwork, brainwork and women’s devotion and public spirit” were more than needed for a functioning and peaceful society⁴¹². They thought that the franchise was extended because the British government could not ignore anymore the usefulness of the Suffragettes and women in general in society. Moreover, the Pankhursts had also warned them that if the vote for women was not given, the WSPU would resume their militancy where they technically left it before the war⁴¹³ and against which the British government could not do anything because of public opinion and women’s patriotic campaign. Many proved that their pre-war militancy worsened people’s opinions of suffrage for women⁴¹⁴ as the methods such as arson or bombing were perceived as too radical and violent to be considered as appropriate methods in order to win the vote⁴¹⁵. Christabel Pankhurst even reported in the first issue of *The Suffragette* that people thought that the WSPU’s “vigorous militancy [was] a crime”⁴¹⁶. It is certainly unlikely that the pre-war campaign of the WSPU would have helped in extending the franchise to women, however one cannot deny that *The Suffragette*’s militancy still had a key role in emphasising the issue the franchise had by not involving women. Indeed, it was because of the WSPU’s militancy that the question of suffrage was raised and known throughout the country⁴¹⁷; especially through their newspaper, whether as *Votes for Women* or *The Suffragette*, they always brought “great enthusiasm”⁴¹⁸ and remained pioneers in the publication of suffrage papers⁴¹⁹. Even though the militant methods were often viewed as too extreme, it is through these methods that the WSPU advertised itself and the vote for women. The Suffragettes combined their pre-war militant campaign perceived as “colourful, noisy and sometimes violent” with their war work and campaign – which could also be characterised as such but which instead acted for the government than against – and the vote for women could no longer be neglected⁴²⁰.

For various historians, however, militancy and the war effort were not the reasons behind this extension of franchise. In fact, it was in 1916 that the issue on suffrage was raised because a new election was approaching⁴²¹, however the question was not about giving the vote to women but instead on the soldiers who

⁴¹² “The Women’s Victory”, *Britannia*, 11 January 1918, front cover.

⁴¹³ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 292.

⁴¹⁴ Pugh, Martin. “Politicians and the Women’s Vote, 1914-1918”, *History*, 1974, p. 359.

⁴¹⁵ Crawford, Elizabeth. Viewpoint in Purvis, June. “Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain”, *Women’s History Review*, 2019, p. 1221.

⁴¹⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. “The Policy of the W.S.P.U”, *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 6.

⁴¹⁷ Purvis, June. “Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain”, *Women’s History Review*, 2019, p. 1212

⁴¹⁸ Pankhurst, Emmeline. “A Message from Mrs Pankhurst”, *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

⁴¹⁹ Mercer, John. “Media and Militancy: Propaganda in the Women’s Social and Political Union’s campaign”, *Women’s History Review*, 2005, p. 473.

⁴²⁰ Purvis, June. “Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain”, *Women’s History Review*, 2019, p. 1211.

⁴²¹ Kent, Susan Kingsley. *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, 1993, p. 83.

have gone to fight on the Front abroad and who did not fulfil all the requirements to vote anymore⁴²². *Britannia* as a patriotic war paper strongly disagreed with the disfranchising of "the man who had given greatest proof of their devotion to the country's welfare"⁴²³; they indeed thought that soldiers were more deserving than politicians to even have the vote as they had "a much cleaner record" and were fighting through in spite of the politicians"⁴²⁴. Ultimately, the vote was given to women because what they had done for the country could not be ignored anymore, but it was certainly not given on the same terms the WSPU had wanted. In fact, this political reform on the franchise helped in having "a large dose of male suffrage in combination with a limited franchise to women"⁴²⁵: only those above thirty years old will have the vote, making them six million against ten million men⁴²⁶. The focus on the extension of the franchise was certainly not on an equality between men and women, as one can see through the votes taken on this matter: 15 to 6 members voted to give women the vote but only 10 to 12 agreed with an equal suffrage with men in 1916⁴²⁷. The age limitation they put for women in order for them to qualify for the vote was a characteristic which reinforced their traditional roles instead of celebrating the new gendered roles the WSPU praised for years. Therefore, it undermines the idea that the vote was given as a reward to women's patriotism during the war. Yet, the newspaper still played an important role in the debates on the enfranchisement of women by bringing to light the various gender roles of women, stressing the positive impact of an involvement of women in society as for the war effort, and "broadcast[ing] [it] throughout the length and breadth of the land"⁴²⁸. It helped in proving women were fit for citizenship⁴²⁹, but if the Government had wanted to reward women who participated in war effort, they would have not put an age limitation as most of women working in munitions factories were younger than thirty years old⁴³⁰.

Furthermore, if we consider all of these options as justifications for the granting of the vote to women, it is also important to understand that the Suffrage Bill finally passed in February 1918 and it was not possible before because, first, it was not seen as a matter that crucial before. Suffragettes also dealt with opposition from Asquith and his majority in Parliament until Lloyd George, who had a decent relationship with the

⁴²² Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, 2000, pp. 34-35. See also Bader-Zaar, Birgitta. "Women's Suffrage and war: World War One and politic reform in a comparative perspective" in Sulkunen, Irma and eds. *Suffrage Gender and Citizenship International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms*, 2019. p. 201.

⁴²³ "Votes for our Fighting Men", *Britannia*, 6 October 1916, p. 265.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ Pugh, Martin. "Politicians and the Women's vote, 1914-1918", *History*, 1974, p. 358.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 363. See also Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, 2000, p. 36.

⁴²⁸ Pankhurst, Emmeline. "A Message from Mrs Pankhurst", *The Suffragette*, 14 May 1915, p. 69.

⁴²⁹ Bader-Zaar, Birgitta. "Women's Suffrage and war: World War One and politic reform in a comparative perspective" in Sulkunen, Irma and eds. *Suffrage Gender and Citizenship International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms*, 2019, p. 212.

⁴³⁰ Pugh, Martin. "Politicians and the Women's vote, 1914-1918", *History*, 1974, p. 366.

Suffragettes during the war, promised them to pass the measure affirming the vote for women⁴³¹ as the majority of the Government will agree with him, and that is what happens as later on in February 1918, 387 members of Parliament voted for what the Speaker had proposed with the age qualification while fifty-seven were against it⁴³².

Even though the vote was granted to women, only a small part of it received it because of the age qualification and it was thus far from the WSPU had wanted since the beginning of their campaign: equality between the sexes. Even the first issue of *The Suffragette* deals with the necessity of equality between men and women as otherwise the society will “descend into a war of outrage and barbarity” as no “rights are exclusively masculine”⁴³³. But in fact, more than the vote, the WSPU wanted to change the traditional roles of women, which they obviously tried to do during their gendered patriotic war campaign; since the beginning, the WSPU wished the Government to see that women were not “submissive and compliant” and were not “subordinate to men”⁴³⁴, and the vote was able to prove that to a certain extent. Indeed, even though the vote was granted, the militancy of the WSPU did not stop there, they were in fact only beginning and what they wanted as true social reforms in favour of their gender⁴³⁵ which they also campaigned for in their newspaper. However, instead of relying solely on their Suffragette’s militant methods, they had this time the opportunity to use their vote at their advantage and finally be more involved politically through the newly created Women’s Party.

3.3. The aftermath of the vote: The Women’s Party

Suffrage for women was just one of the measures the WSPU wanted to obtain as part of their campaign before and during the war, and once it was certain that the vote will be granted in the following months, the WSPU decided to focus on all the other social measures which “would bring equality for women in a male-dominated society”⁴³⁶. The main battle of the WSPU for all these years had been indeed the equality between both these genders, but now that they will obtain the vote, instead of relying solely on the WSPU and its militancy, they became more involved politically as they wished before and founded the Women’s Party, a political party for women in November 1917⁴³⁷; a party which aimed to “set an example to the men who have

⁴³¹ “Electoral Reform and Women’s Suffrage – Deputation to the Prime Minister”, *Britannia*, 2 April 1917, p. 354.

⁴³² Pugh, Martin. “Politicians and the Women’s vote, 1914-1918”, *History*, 1974, p. 369.

⁴³³ Douglas, James. “A Word to the Commons”, *The Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 3.

⁴³⁴ Purvis, June. “Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain”, *Women’s History Review*, 2019, p. 1201.

⁴³⁵ Smith, Angela K. *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 140.

⁴³⁶ Purvis, June. “Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain”, *Women’s History Review*, 2019, p. 1205.

⁴³⁷ Smith, Angela K. *The Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War*, 2005, p. 31.

got into false political grooves”⁴³⁸. The measures which this newly founded political party wanted to undertake were to be found in the main newspaper of the previously named WSPU, *Britannia*. Indeed, a manifesto titled “The Women’s Party. Victory National Security and Progress” gave the readers a complete description and list of the Women’s Party’s position on the war and measures on the British Government, Germans, the Irish Home Rule, on the industries, or even on education or the housing question⁴³⁹. All these matters followed the logic of the WSPU’s pre-war and war campaign: they forbade any form of pacifism whether it came from women, soldiers or the government, they wanted to preserve the British Empire as a strong feminine authority, they also wanted to preserve it by accepting to be ruled only by people of full British descent⁴⁴⁰ as part of their propaganda against the masculine enemy, Germany and whose victory will set back the British nation. They also aimed to favour women’s status and place in society, which even if it developed with the extension of the franchise, still had room for improvement. As during the war, their main purpose was to protect the “Home Front”⁴⁴¹, a role for which women were particularly fitted according to the WSPU’s gendered patriotism and propaganda. The Women’s Party could be considered as an extension of the war campaign of the WSPU; however, this time the Women’s Party was trying to change society through politics instead of focusing on rallying support from other parties. It made their militancy appeared more official as now it seemed more possible for them to pass these measures thanks to their new enfranchisement and thus their new involvement in the political sphere, and *Britannia*, in fact, helped in setting the campaign “of social reform”⁴⁴² of the Women’s Party by publishing numerous manifestos.

By naming their political party “the Women’s Party”, the notion of gender was of course very much still displayed. Indeed, it was a party which solely aimed women and which purpose was to prepare them to what their enfranchisement meant⁴⁴³ and how they could use it to the greater good for the improvement of the social status of women and thus for the nation. Indeed, as published in *Britannia*, the purpose of the Women’s Party was to “unite women to fight for victory and national security”⁴⁴⁴. The Pankhursts thought that it was necessary to create a women-only political party because they believed that it would help in preventing “the mistakes which the men’s parties have made”⁴⁴⁵, relating to the late enfranchisement and involvement of women which would have prevented the war according to them⁴⁴⁶. Besides, what they built through their war campaign such

⁴³⁸ “The Women’s Party”. Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst’s Speech at Queen’s Hall on November 7, 1917. *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 189.

⁴³⁹ “The Women’s Party. Victory, National Security and Progress”, *Britannia*, 9 November 1917, p. 183.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴⁴¹ “War Until Victory”, *Britannia*, 5 April 1918, p. 405.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴⁴³ Purvis, June. “The Women’s Party of Great Britain (1917-1919): a forgotten episode in British women’s political history”, *Women’s History Review*, 2016, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁴ “War Until Victory”, *Britannia*, 5 April 1918, p. 405.

⁴⁴⁵ “The Women’s Party. Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst’s Speech at the Queen’s Hall on November 7, 1917”, *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 189.

⁴⁴⁶ Pankhurst, Christabel. “The War”, *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 301.

as gendered patriotism was still used as an argument of the Women's Party. Indeed, all of their measures were dealing with this theme of gender and how they could be useful to society, especially when the war was still not won. Criticism was made on the fact that the British government was not settling its campaign on enough deeds and therefore did not use women at their full capacity so that if the war was lost, "it would be said by history that Britain could have done more than she has done"⁴⁴⁷. The purpose of the Women's Party was similar to the WSPU's war campaign presented in *The Suffragette/Britannia*: win the war as quick as possible, by using all the resources available and that is to say, involving even more women, increasing the supply of food rations as well as making it cheaper, limiting all industries which are not considered essential to provide enough manpower for the agricultural sector as well as the war front, and reinforcing the alliance between Allied countries⁴⁴⁸. Indeed, the Pankhursts had already clearly stated during the war that their main purpose was to win it otherwise "what would be the good of a vote without a country to vote in!"⁴⁴⁹ and now that they had the vote, it was as important to win the war in order to be able to use it in the following elections. One of the measures that the Women's Party wanted to establish was "an equal pay for equal work"⁴⁵⁰ as they already wished during the Great Procession of 1915, during which Lloyd George stated it was not possible. But they also were willing to campaign for equal marriage, equal employment, equal rights and equal social and political involvement⁴⁵¹: everything was based on the importance of an equality between genders which seemed necessary for the Women's Party after all the sacrifices and the actions women undertook as part of their gendered patriotism campaign⁴⁵².

Once the war was won in November 1918, the Parliament passed a bill to allow women to be elected to Parliament no matter their age⁴⁵³. The Women's Party of course saw it as an opportunity to even be more involved in British politics: the war was won and they had the vote, the only thing which mattered was to establish and reinforce social measures in favour of women. Because *Britannia* was still the main organ of the WSPU, its role in establishing the campaign of the Women's Party was crucial: *Britannia* acted once more as a platform for the WSPU's campaign on the question of gender. They indeed thought once again that it was their

⁴⁴⁷ "The Women's Party. Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at the Queen's Hall on November 7, 1917", *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 189.

⁴⁴⁸ "The Women's Party. Victory, National Security and Progress", *Britannia*, 9 November 1917, p. 183.

⁴⁴⁹ Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 1919, p. 288. See also "A Call to Women!", *Britannia*, 8 February 1918, front cover.

⁴⁵⁰ "The Women's Party. Victory, National Security and Progress", *Britannia*, 9 November 1917, p. 183. See also Purvis, June. "The Women's Party of Great Britain (1917-1919): a forgotten episode in British women's political history", *Women's History Review*, 2016, p. 4.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² "The Women's Party. Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at the Queen's Hall on November 7, 1917", *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 190.

⁴⁵³ Purvis, June. "The Women's Party of Great Britain (1917-1919): a forgotten episode in British women's political history", *Women's History Review*, 2016, p. 7.

"duty to issue a counter-appeal to our country"⁴⁵⁴ which meant "to strengthen Britain from within"⁴⁵⁵. In fact, it was not as different as their war campaign in the early years of the conflict: the answer to the war was the involvement of women. That is why Christabel Pankhurst decided to present herself under the Women's Party in order to emphasise on the needed social reforms but also to organise a peace agreement with Germany by demanding its resources in order to avoid any future war⁴⁵⁶. She chose Smethwick as the constituency in which she wanted to run her election and promote her party. She believed that the Women's Party was the solution to improve the conditions of women as she considered the other parties "worn-out" and part of the past⁴⁵⁷. Christabel Pankhurst praised modernity which was to be established through the measures taken by the party in order to emphasise the transformation of the traditional roles of women. Christabel Pankhurst was supported by the Prime Minister himself, Lloyd George who sent a recommendation letter to attest of his support to the representative of those who have done "splendid work during the war in endeavouring to stimulate the workers to supply the deficiency of labour", as well as participating in war effort⁴⁵⁸. It is not surprising that Lloyd George showed his support to the Women's Party as he had already expressed it during the war through various speeches. In fact, it shows that even if the war was over, patriotism was still crucial to determine who was fitted enough to be a candidate to a General election. The fact that the WSPU participated in building a form of war propaganda based on gender in their newspaper certainly contributed to the Women's Party as their patriotism and celebration of women's involvement in society were positively seen by the country; Lloyd George even admits that Christabel Pankhurst "would be of the greatest assistance" in Parliament as she had been for war effort⁴⁵⁹. Gendered patriotism was thus still very much useful even though the war was already won at that time: the measures were focused on the wellbeing of women and patriotism was the key to prove once again to British voters that an equality between genders had to be mandatory. Christabel Pankhurst seemed to have everything to win the election: a majority of women, support for the Prime Minister and an experience with which she could certainly obtain patriotic votes. And nonetheless, she lost her election. The last issue of *Britannia* was printed on December 20th, 1918, so almost a week before the full results of the election were known⁴⁶⁰. One can notice that once the war was won, the newspaper seemed also to have lost the quality it had before, most of the articles issued were only compilations of other press accounts on the General Election and

⁴⁵⁴ "The Women's Party". Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at the Queen's Hall on November 7, 1917. *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 189.

⁴⁵⁵ "The Women's Victory", *Britannia*, 11 January 1918, front cover.

⁴⁵⁶ "To Win the Peace. Report of Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall, on December 17, 1918", *Britannia*, 20 December 1918. See also, Purvis, June. "The Women's Party of Great Britain (1917-1919): a forgotten episode in British women's political history", *Women's History Review*, 2016, p. 8.

⁴⁵⁷ "The Women's Party. Extracts from Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at the Queen's Hall on November 7, 1917", *Britannia*, 16 November 1917, p. 189.

⁴⁵⁸ "The Smethwick Election. Some of the Letters Received", *Britannia*, 20 December 1918, p. 237.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ "To Win the Peace. Report of Miss Christabel Pankhurst's Speech at Queen's Hall, on December 17, 1918", *Britannia*, 20 December 1918.

Christabel's candidacy. It seems logical if we consider that *Britannia* was supposed to be and considered to be by the WSPU a war paper whose purpose was to inform people as well as campaigning for a patriotic and gendered war effort. But once the war was won, it might have seemed hard to continue praising women's war effort and patriotism when most of the fighting had been ended with the Armistice. Even the Women's Party did not last long and ended in 1919, only three years after its establishment.

The vote campaign certainly took an interesting turn at the beginning of the war: the WSPU had to cope with it being put in the background of British politics but also of their own Union, if they wanted one day to obtain it. Instead, war effort became the priority of these women who had since the beginning promoted and praised for a better involvement of women in society. The war therefore appeared as a great opportunity to demonstrate the abilities of their own gender, which was still obstructed by the conventional roles which society had assigned to women. However, even though the vote seemed to have been forgotten by the WSPU, all of their war militancy had in fact prepared for this upcoming enfranchisement: the words and deeds of the WSPU seemed to have helped in getting the vote in a way or another. *The Suffragette/Britannia*, of course, helped in bringing to light the various arguments of the WSPU on gender representation in society and more specifically politics; even though it became a war paper, its past experience as a suffrage newspaper did not disappear. One cannot deny that their patriotic and gendered actions helped in emphasising the necessity of an enfranchisement and make the issue quickly discussed in Parliament whereas before the war, vote for women was not even considered because of the controversial and violent militancy of the WSPU. Even though, the Women's Party seemed to have failed, one cannot deny either that the patriotism the WSPU showed during the war has helped in establishing at least a debate on the roles of women in society. And one can wonder once more if the Pankhursts and women would have been at the same point if their pre-war militancy and their pre-war *Suffragette* had continued its controversial methods instead of concentrating themselves on methods which were more acceptable by public opinion in wartime.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research has been to demonstrate the importance of gender roles in the patriotism of the WSPU during the First World War by focusing on what had been published in the newspaper of the Union, *The Suffragette/Britannia*. Because the WSPU was originally a society organised by women and for women's rights, the question of gender had always been at the centre of their various campaigns. Yet, the pre-war suffrage campaign was also tainted by violent and controversial deeds from the WSPU. Their militant methods indeed did not help to gain credibility for their own gendered arguments and wishes about women's suffrage. While the war with the British government over violent methods from both sides was still going, the First World War broke out and transformed the WSPU as well as the British nation radically. The government decided to sign a truce with the WSPU while the latter stopped their militancy for the duration of the war, which they did for approximately a year. As people thought that the WSPU would return to continue their suffrage campaign where they had left it before the war, the WSPU surprisingly declared that they will instead help the British nation by actively involving themselves in the war effort and for that they will use their main organ, their newspaper, as a platform to convince the population to join efforts. Even if the pre-war militancy of the Suffragettes was replaced by one which did not involve arson, bombings, or hunger-strikes, the WSPU still remained deeply inspired by their gendered argumentation. One cannot be surprised by this choice, even though the WSPU newly identified the newspaper as a war paper which main purpose was to demonstrate patriotism, the WSPU still had in mind the situation of women in British society. If in the early years of the war, the question of suffrage was put on hold, the determination of Suffragettes to improve the conditions of women even at war was nevertheless current. And in order to achieve their goal, they based their newspaper propaganda on a gendered patriotism which would eventually help to improve the vision that society had of women and to justify their demands for a better involvement, whether in wartime or not.

So, in order to emphasise the importance of gender in their patriotism, the WSPU first established and promoted propaganda based on a gendered interpretation of countries so that the Pankhursts could set a superior, improved version of women. Indeed, the fact that the newspaper decided to represent Germany as a masculine country which committed atrocities helped the WSPU to create a clear distinction between masculinity and femininity. In fact, German Atrocities were used as an example to justify this gendered distinction: the WSPU did not want to be associated with this sort of violence – perceived by them as far worse than their own pre-war militancy and they did not want women to be involved as they were the primary victims. Germany had been directly associated with masculinity because their victims were mostly women – even though all civilians fall victim to German soldiers. Because the distinction between genders was already strong within the participants in the war itself, creating propaganda around a gendered interpretation of countries seemed to be the expected course of events in order to arouse patriotism. Furthermore, by describing a country which committed crimes as masculine, associating it with barbarism, *The Suffragette* tried to assert that femininity was the key answer to society. This gendered interpretation of countries was also another way to represent the fight between masculinity and femininity of the pre-war suffrage campaign. As before, women were viewed as martyrs from masculinity in society, so *The Suffragette* also represented Belgium, a victim of German Atrocities as a religious martyr through the image of Madonna. France was perceived as the spiritual

symbol of femininity and the Suffragette state of mind through the representation of Joan of Arc, a figure which was also used before the war to justify the superiority of femininity. Russia was viewed as the physical representation of the warrior spirit praised by the Suffragettes after a battalion of women was created to replace men on the War Front. On the other hand, Britain was not defined as being entirely masculine or feminine, or at least, a distinction had to be made within the country in itself. The WSPU indeed declared to organise patriotic war propaganda and support the country in time of war, but the relationship with the British government and especially with Asquith was under pressure. Asquith was accused by the WSPU of being a pro-German after promoting his peace agreement and his lack of measures favouring war effort. In other words, the WSPU was fighting for and defending the nation and not necessarily the government, with its patriotic propaganda. Yet, one can wonder if this protection and devotion to the nation from the WSPU did not sometimes undermine the credibility of their war militancy. Indeed, even though the WSPU praised feminine characteristics, the fact that it supported the coercive British Empire as well as standing against the Home Rule was paradoxically in conflict with their beliefs and would rather be associated with masculine features according to their own propaganda. As with other Allied countries, Britain as a nation and country was associated with Queen Elisabeth I. Combining countries with feminine figures such as Joan of Arc and Elisabeth I was a way for the Suffragettes to justify their own propaganda and their choice of emphasising the importance of gender in their patriotic campaign. It thereby established the basis of their war propaganda as well as their vision of war. By depicting Germany as masculine, the WSPU hoped it will raise support from the population and convince people to enlist, but that it will also helped in determining the situation of women in the war. They were represented as victims and martyrs, but they were also perceived as brave, fearless, and powerful as the Suffragettes defined themselves. In this case, gender thus had a significant role in the patriotism of the WSPU: it helped define and reinforce this "sex war" between masculinity and femininity and reversing the trend of what had been traditionally perceived of Suffragettes. During the war, they were not the ones who were being violent, and who turned against the nation, but German soldiers and Pro-Germans in Britain were; on the other side, what the Suffragettes had been praising for years was what was needed the most. If countries like France, Russia, and even Britain were perceived as feminine, it gave credibility to the Suffragettes' deeds and words as it established a vision of femininity which was perceived as necessary and beneficial to the nation, unlike the masculine behaviour found in Germany.

Yet, it is important to also notice that on the same terms the WSPU and its newspaper distinguished two specific parts in Britain: the nation and the government, the Suffragettes also differentiated two different kinds of masculinity: one which was obviously based on the gendered interpretation of German Atrocities and one which emphasised the masculine qualities found in a British soldier. While the gendered representation of countries helped to demonstrate that the newspaper was celebrating femininity above all, the other kind of gendered interpretation in the militancy of the WSPU also dealt with a better outlook on masculinity – or at least it was considered that masculinity could be improved and useful if coupled with femininity. Of course, the WSPU supported British soldiers: it would have been hard to expect otherwise from an organisation or a newspaper which identified themselves as patriotic. However, the emphasis was still put on femininity rather than masculinity in *The Suffragette/Britannia* because their purpose remained to campaign for a better involvement of women in society. In order to do so, the WSPU established and portrayed in their newspaper a gendered patriotism: a patriotism which would separate the roles and duties of each gender to facilitate the

efficiency of national support and war effort. Before the war, the Suffragettes had always been perceived as persons who would radically transform the gender roles of society. Yet, the war propaganda as portrayed in their main organ has not been as radical as one would have thought, changes were definitely made but the WSPU was still inspired by the traditional roles of women. For instance, motherhood had a significant place in the conventional gendered interpretation of women's duties; women were expected to be mothers and in time of war, it was their duty to convince the men in their family to enlist and to protect their own home. Naturally, these traditional roles slightly change because of the war as the meaning of home evolved from a private space to the entire nation. As part of their gendered conventions, women felt the duty to protect it as it became transformed into a front. This change was welcomed with great terror especially if one considers the propaganda which had been spreading over the country by both *The Suffragette* and British mainstream press. Indeed, the detailed descriptions of German Atrocities on civilians and especially women in Belgium, as well as its constant presence did not help the British population to ease, and now that they knew and experienced what was the result of such attacks on one's own territory; it made the propaganda even more realistic and the establishment of an efficient united patriotism even more urgent. Through their newspaper *The Suffragette/Britannia*, the WSPU also promoted a gendered patriotic campaign inspired by these traditional duties, yet what differed from conventional roles was that the outlook and the interpretation of the Suffragettes on these duties. While they were definitely inspired by conventional gendered roles, the WSPU adapted and re-interpreted them so they could fit their own vision and the unusual situation the country was facing. The newspaper naturally contributed to spreading this image of a "new woman", a woman whose traditional duties evolved thanks to the addition of a Pankhurst dogma already established before the war. Through numerous articles, *The Suffragette/Britannia* conveyed the outlook of the Suffragettes on the way women should be involved in war effort; because of the importance of this platform, the WSPU managed to firmly establish their own gendered patriotism. The notions of motherhood and the protection of the home were still an argument which the WSPU used to define their patriotism; they felt it was still the duties of women whether they were traditional or not. However, instead of merely fulfilling these duties, they developed their propaganda around it: they used the fact that women were mothers to justify their ability to be more actively involved in war effort and patriotism. They thought of motherhood, a traditional gender role, as the solution to reach a position in society which was far from conventional for women at the time. While traditional gender roles of women were perceived as mostly passive, the Suffragettes instead re-interpreted them so that they could enable deeds. As always in the WSPU's war propaganda, their patriotism and thus their strategy as found in the newspaper was based on an opposition between genders: of course, femininity was celebrated above all by the Pankhursts, but they also dealt with the duties of men. While women's duties were to participate actively on the front according to the Suffragettes, men's duties were to enlist and fight for their nation. Contrary to the way Germany was described as opposed to the feminine gender, the opposition between British women's duties and British men's duties was not as violently criticised. Even though pacifists and men refusing to enlist were still seen as traitors to their countries by the Suffragettes, the gendered opposition was based on, admittedly, a celebration of femininity, but not entirely on a belittling of masculinity. In fact, the Suffragettes even called for unity between men and women as the Pankhursts explained that they felt British above all. It seems that this gendered interpretation of the patriotism of each individual was established because the WSPU still respected gender differences: women and men had both their own duties to fulfil, and they could not be reversed because

they were based on abilities proper to either men or women. That is mostly why the WSPU, through their newspaper, asked for a united front emphasised by their choice to rename the newspaper *Britannia*. This was by separating duties that they could find harmony and unity; and this, thus, helped to justify their propaganda and the progressive involvement of women in society.

The newspaper of the WSPU was not only used to set up and justify the arguments of the WSPU, but it was also used as a platform to relay every deed of the Suffragettes associated with these very same arguments. Indeed, now that the WSPU proved that women were fitted for a more active role of society because of their various abilities – conventional or not –, it had still to be proven how these abilities could be put into action. In order to do so, the WSPU mainly focused on two aspects on the Home Front: organising recruitment meetings and working in munitions factories. Recruitment meetings were entirely devoted to convincing men to enlist by using the same strategy, that is to say, by emphasising German atrocities done to women, and especially if identified as mothers. The newspaper *The Suffragette/Britannia* was thus used to publish the speeches of these recruitment meetings as well as their schedules so that they could have written proof of their patriotic actions but most importantly, the newspaper also helped in rallying support from the government itself. Coupled with patriotic deeds, the words of the newspaper had an important place in developing a gendered interpretation of the war effort. In fact, it could be one of the reasons why some members of the British government such as Lloyd George saw in the newspaper a significant potential and opportunity which would benefit the nation. As minister of munitions, Lloyd George even asked for the help of the Pankhursts in order to organise a great procession to campaign for a better enlistment of men and coordinate women in munitions factories. Gender roles played an important part in munitions factories: it was believed that the making of shells was directly associated to the role of women as mothers and wives. Once more, traditional gender roles combined with more active and physical roles promoted by the Suffragettes were at the heart of the WSPU's war militancy and newspaper. The whole of the WSPU's gendered patriotism was established on a significant evolution of feminine gender roles: while men were on the War Front, the WSPU felt that it was their duty to professionally replace them at home in order to protect their home which now meant the whole nation. From munitions factories to railway conductors, the WSPU members were to be found everywhere at home and the newspaper naturally promoted them as much as possible as part of their own strategy to demonstrate women as more than capable to be involved in society. Most of the WSPU's war propaganda relied on the Home Front; and it is understandable if one takes into account that the legacy of the WSPU's patriotism would be more impactful on the Government's decisions for future involvement of women in society once the end of the war. It was certainly thought that the British government would seriously consider actions at home as they were more representative of what women would be able to do in a peaceful nation. Yet, the evolution of traditional roles had also reached the war front as women were found to be actively participating in hospitals, and mostly as nurses. Paradoxically, one might even think that the roles of women on the war front were closer to the traditional gender roles than those at home because they relied on an even stronger vision of women as mothers and their role of caretakers; nonetheless, the space in which they were fulfilling their duties was radically reversed. Yet, this space represented by the War Front was a source of inspiration for many women who developed a fascination for the bravery of soldiers mostly symbolised by their khaki uniforms. Fascination or evolution of gender roles, *The Suffragette/Britannia* even published on various

occasions articles about one of the key figures of the WSPU who had chosen to dress in a khaki uniform and who went by the title "General" Drummond.

In the end, there is no doubt that the WSPU's gendered patriotism whether represented by deeds or words in the newspaper played a crucial role in the development of the outlook on women in society. *The Suffragette/Britannia* indeed greatly participated in creating a reasoning on a gendered interpretation of the war and the duties of each individual. By doing so, the WSPU managed to demonstrate and prove the necessity of women in society. One can, therefore, wonder if all of this gendered patriotism was only a strategy to finally achieve what the WSPU had wanted for years: the vote. While to vote did not seem to be the main concern in the early years of the war, it progressively came back in the newspaper as it felt that the war would be finally won. Naturally, the WSPU used their patriotism as a justification of their right to be more involved in society which would be improved with the enfranchisement; it acted for them as a reward for their war effort and gendered patriotic campaign, even though most of women were still not enfranchised. Once the vote was ensured, the WSPU transformed into the Women's Party in order to be politically involved in the government. Indeed, even though the vote for women was gained, the purpose was now to improve social conditions of women and progressively reach equal suffrage. The newspaper was therefore used, once again, as a platform for the Women's Party to publish its program on new social reforms for women and a more radical stance against pacifists and pro-German.

Gender roles, therefore, had a significant place in the patriotism of the Suffragettes; from a gendered interpretation of countries to gendered duties, the newspaper *The Suffragette*, also known as *Britannia*, managed to reunite all of these arguments in order to establish the war propaganda of the WSPU. While the WSPU was known for its radical actions and its portrayal of the conflict between femininity and masculinity, the First World War, in fact, helped, to a certain extent, in emphasising and even promoting some gender differences. The strategy of the WSPU was to build a patriotism which would celebrate an evolution of feminine gender roles, different from masculine gender roles but which would help in seeing the importance of women in society, and if both genders were united, society would be balanced and could prevent another war.

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Figure 1 - Front cover, *The Suffragette*, 7 August 1914

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RÉSUMÉ

La Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) dirigée par les Pankhursts a toujours placé la question du genre au centre de son militantisme. Tout en se battant contre la masculinité omniprésente dans la société, les Suffragettes firent également campagne pour le suffrage universel ainsi que de meilleures conditions sociales pour les femmes. Cette campagne fut établie et partagée dans leur principal outil de propagande : leur journal intitulé *The Suffragette* et publié pour la première fois en 1912. Ce journal fut donc utilisé comme plateforme sur laquelle la WSPU pouvait se reposer afin de propager leurs actions et idées. Alors que leur militantisme devient de plus en plus extrême et que la WSPU pense avoir bientôt réussi à sécuriser leur droit de vote, la Première Guerre mondiale éclate. La guerre était destinée à changer radicalement la société, et c'est pourquoi la WSPU se transforma également, mettant fin à toutes pratiques militantes violentes et controversées afin de se concentrer sur la façon d'illustrer le patriotisme dans leur journal et sensibiliser la population pour soutenir pleinement la nation britannique. Malgré des changements extrêmes, la question du genre resta le principal centre d'attention de la WSPU. Cependant, au lieu de se trouver au sein des méthodes militantes de l'avant-guerre, la WSPU trouva, grâce au patriotisme et la propagande de guerre, une façon de transformer les rôles des sexes dans la société et sensibiliser à l'amélioration nécessaire du rôle des femmes dans la société britannique.

C'est pourquoi, il est important de se demander comment le genre a-t-il joué un rôle significatif dans le patriotisme de la WSPU en s'appuyant sur leurs journaux *The Suffragette/Britannia* pendant la Première Guerre mondiale ?

La WSPU publia son journal de 1915 à 1918, ce dernier participa au développement d'une campagne patriotique autour du genre que ce soit en définissant le genre des pays participant à la guerre et mettant en avant la lutte de longue date entre masculinité et féminité dans la société ; mais encore en s'impliquant dans un patriotisme genré combinant une version améliorée des rôles des femmes dans la société et le renommé esprit guerrier des Suffragettes à la recherche d'actions patriotiques qui pourraient permettre de mettre en avant les aptitudes des femmes dans la société et aider à obtenir le tant attendu droit de vote des femmes.

mots-clés : WSPU, première guerre mondiale, Grande-Bretagne, patriotisme, genre, Pankhurst, Suffragettes, mobilisation, journal, *The Suffragette*, *Britannia*.

ABSTRACT

The Women's Social Political Union (WSPU) led by the Pankhursts has always put the question of gender at the centre of its militancy. Fighting against masculinity in society, the Suffragettes campaigned for equal suffrage and better social conditions for women principally in their main organ, the newspaper *The Suffragette*, first published in 1912. The newspaper was used as a platform on which the WSPU could rely on to spread their deeds and words. As militancy became progressively radical, and the WSPU thought that they were close to success with their enfranchisement, the First World War broke out. The war was intended to radically change society, and so the WSPU also transformed by stopping its violent and controversial militant methods to instead focus on how to portray patriotism and raise awareness amongst public opinion to fully support the British nation. In spite of radical changes, the question of gender still remained the main focus of the WSPU; however, instead of being found in pre-war methods, the WSPU found in patriotism and war propaganda an opportunity to transform gender roles and raise awareness of the necessary improvement of women in British society.

One can thus wonder how did gender play an important role in the patriotism of the WSPU in *The Suffragette/Britannia* during the First World War?

The WSPU's newspaper from 1915 to 1918 participated in developing a patriotic campaign around gender whether it is from depicting a gendered interpretation of countries at war bringing to light the long-established fight between masculinity and femininity, to engaging in a gendered patriotism combining an evolved version of traditional gender roles with the well-known Suffragette warrior-like spirit in quest of patriotic deeds which would highlight the abilities of women in society and might help in the long-awaited enfranchisement of women.

keywords: WSPU, First World War, Britain, war effort, patriotism, gender, Pankhurst, Suffragettes, mobilisation, newspaper, *The Suffragette*, *Britannia*.

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