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Women in Leadership within Social Work Education History:  
a collective biography of three key women  
at Edinburgh University between 1918 and 1968

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Declaration:

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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July 2024  
Edinburgh

Abstract:

This thesis is a collective biography of the careers of three women – Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne – who led the Department of Social Study (social work as we now call it) at the University of Edinburgh between 1918 to 1968. This research had its genesis in the centenary celebrations for social work at the university in 2018, which provided an opportunity to explore the history of social work education at Edinburgh.

Collective biography is an approach which is suited for researching members of historically marginalised groups, for whom fewer source materials exist. It enables researchers to examine the lives of individuals, but also set them within the context of a wider group. Doing so allows for themes that are relevant to the group to be identified and explored. Archival documents were the primary data source, along with interviews from past staff and students of the department.

My research had two aims. The first was to undertake biographical work on the three women as this had not been done before, and indeed very little research has been done into women in social work education in the UK more generally. The second aim was to examine the themes which emerged from the women's collective biographies relating to gender in early social work education. The current literature on this topic characterises women as holding lower status positions in university departments, and being focused on practical training. In contrast, men are characterised as leaders of departments, and as people who were academically focused. Yet, the careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne appeared to contradict this characterisation. Consequently, my research explored this disjuncture.

My research found that the three women were academically active, undertook research, developed new courses, and influenced training bodies and social work organisations as well as government legislation and policy. Furthermore, they challenged gendered narratives around social work and social work education throughout their careers. They were all strong and effective leaders of the department, and their promotion of social work as a profession, requiring university-level training, challenged ideas that social work was a charitable endeavour which could be done by well-meaning individuals. They successfully utilised their networks to attain professional achievements for themselves – and others, in social work and social work education. Yet, social work as a subject experienced ambivalence from the academy because of its connection with women. This led all three women to seek to protect the status of social work in the academy through, at times, engaging in exclusionary strategies – which may have affected some other women negatively.

My research findings broaden our current understanding of the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education in the UK, whilst also shedding light on the development of social work education at the University of Edinburgh during this period.

### Lay Summary:

This thesis explores the careers of three women – Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne – who led the Department of Social Study (social work as we now call it) at the University of Edinburgh between 1918 to 1968. This research began in the celebrations for the centenary of social work at the university in 2018, which provided an opportunity to explore the history of social work education at Edinburgh.

I use an approach called ‘collective biography’ which researches at the biographies of the three women individually and then looks for common themes between them. It is an approach which is particularly suitable for researching marginalised groups. It allows researchers to examine the lives of individuals while setting them in the context of a wider group. This allows relevant themes to be identified and explored. I mainly used documents held in archives but also interviewed past staff and students of the department.

I had two aims: (1) research the lives of the three women as this had not been done before (very little research has been done into women in social work education in the UK); and (2) examine the themes which emerged from the women’s biographies when brought together. I was particularly interested in the role of gender in early social work education. What has already been written on this topic tends to characterise women as holding lower status positions in university departments, and being focused on practical training in social work. In contrast, men are characterised as leaders of departments, and as people who focused on academic work. But the careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne appeared to contradict this and my research explored why this was.

I found that the three women did academic work and research, developed new courses, and influenced training and social work organisations as well as laws and policy. They also challenged the idea that men and women had different roles in social work and social work education throughout their careers. All three were strong and effective leaders of the department. They believed that it was important that social work was viewed as a profession, that it required university-level training and they challenged ideas that social work was just something to be done by well-meaning individuals. They used their professional relationships nationally and internationally to benefit themselves and others, in social work and social work education. However, the university was not always supportive of social work as a subject because of its connection with women. This led all three women to try to protect the status of social work in the university through sometimes keeping certain people out of social work training, which was mostly other women.

My research deepens our current understanding of the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education in the UK. It also tells us about the development of social work education at the University of Edinburgh during this period.

### Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Viv Cree and Professor Louise Jackson for their encouragement, guidance and support throughout my PhD studentship. As a part-time student, I am particularly grateful to them, because their ongoing commitment to me and my research has provided me with the support and consistency I have needed to complete this piece of work.

I would like to thank all the interviewees who generously gave me their time and their reminiscences, which have been invaluable for my research.

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List of Abbreviations:

APSW	Association of Psychiatric Social Workers
BASW	British Association of Social Workers
CGC	Child Guidance Clinics
COS	Charity Organisation Society
CRC	Centre for Research Collection, University of Edinburgh
EWCA	Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
JUC	Joint University Council
JUCSS	Joint University Council for Social Services
JWG	Joint Working Group
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
NLCS	North London Collegiate School
NRS	National Records of Scotland
PSW	Psychiatric Social Worker
SCPC	Scottish Central Probation Council
SED	Scotch Educational Department
SERU	Social Environment Research Unit
SIHR	Scottish Institute of Human Relations
SPEW	Society for Promoting the Employment of Women
SSRC	Social Sciences Research Centre
SWEC	Social Work Education Committee
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The growth of the Department of Social Study from the first year when I came as Director until today is, I believe, not without interest and I hope that in the future I may have the opportunity of writing up this story.<sup>1</sup>

These words were written by Nora Milnes, first Director of the School of Social Study and Training, and then Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University,<sup>2</sup> as the closing remarks in her final Director's Report before her retirement in 1951. Nora Milnes came to Edinburgh to be the first Director of the School in 1918, and she led it for the next thirty-three years, through its transition into the Department of Social Study. Referred to now as social work, this subject continues to be taught at the University of Edinburgh, the oldest in-existence social work course in Scotland, and second oldest in the UK.<sup>3</sup> There is, therefore, much history to be examined. Unfortunately, Nora Milnes never wrote up the story of the department, and the development of social work education at Edinburgh University is an area which has received scant attention, until recently. While this thesis does not seek to recreate what Nora Milnes might have written, it is written on the basis that the growth of the Department of Social Study is interesting, and that its story is worth recording. This thesis focuses on one particular aspect of its story – the role of three women who led it skilfully in its early years, with drive and ambition, and by doing so, secured the place of social work education at Edinburgh University. Those three women were Nora Milnes,

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<sup>1</sup> Minute Book, 1933-1957, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/1, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Now called the University of Edinburgh, but officially Edinburgh University throughout the period my research covered, hence it will be referred to as such throughout.

<sup>3</sup> The longest in-existence is at the University of Birmingham, which began teaching social work in 1908.

Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne, who together led the school and then department from 1918 until 1968. By examining their early lives and careers we can specifically explore the role which women could, and did, play in early social work education, and consider more broadly the ways in which the social construction of gender during this time both affected, and was challenged, by these three women and their careers in social work education.

Opportunities for research resulting from the centenary of social work education at Edinburgh University:

This is a timely and important area of research. Social work celebrated its centenary at Edinburgh University in 2018. This achievement was commemorated in a number of events, but these celebrations masked the more complex and tentative place social work education has historically had in the academy.<sup>4</sup> Social work education is central to the development of social work practice and university level social work qualifications are now required for all newly qualified social workers to practise in the UK.<sup>5</sup> Yet, social work education is under-researched and little value seems to have been placed on this work.<sup>6</sup> There is a scarcity of research on the history of social work education in the UK, which is surprising, given that social work has been subject to considerable scrutiny and regulation from its beginning.<sup>7</sup> This lack of research is especially the case in relation to Scotland, where very little research

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<sup>4</sup> Trish McCulloch, 'Education for the Crossroads? A Short History of Social Work Education in Scotland,' *Practice* 30, no. 4 (2018): 227-237.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Vicary, Vivienne E. Cree and Jill Manthorpe, 'Social Work Education – a Local and Global History,' *Practice* 30, no. 4 (2018): 223-226.

<sup>6</sup> Joyce Lishman, 'Introduction,' in *Social Work Education and Training*, ed. Joyce Lishman (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> McCulloch, 'Education for the Crossroads?'

on the history of social work education has been undertaken. This thesis will begin to address this gap.

The genesis of this PhD lay in the centenary celebrations at Edinburgh University. The centenary provided an opportunity to reflect on the past and consider how social work education developed here. As noted, social work at Edinburgh University is the oldest in-existence course in Scotland, and the second oldest in the UK. Consequently, researching social work education at Edinburgh University offers an exceptional opportunity to examine continuities and changes over a long period of time. There was a recognition by the university that this history is valuable and knowledge of it should be available to the wider public.

A Wellcome Trust grant was applied for by, and awarded to, the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) at Edinburgh University in 2018 to catalogue the archive of the School of Social Study and Training, and later Department of Social Study.<sup>8</sup> This project catalogued existing material held by the department, and also gathered new material, such as the papers of Megan Browne, which have been utilised for my research. The collection spans much of the department's history, and covers diverse areas of social work education and practice, as well as documents relating to the workings of the department itself. The project meant that, in many cases for the first time, material relating to the department was made available to researchers. I worked as a research assistant on the project, which ran from 2018 until 2020. This role was invaluable in informing my knowledge and understanding of

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<sup>8</sup> Its official name was the Department of Social Study & Training, but there is a statement in the minute of the Department's Advisory Committee from 20<sup>th</sup> November 1952 where Marjorie Brown stated that the '& Training' had been dropped from the department's title on notepaper some years before by Nora Milnes, as she felt the course was becoming more academic and this was the aspect to emphasise. The rationale behind this and its implications will be examined in the chapter on Nora Milnes.

not only the department, but also the records which were in the archive, which in turn underpinned my research.

In addition to the Wellcome Trust grant, the university advertised for a student to undertake a PhD focusing on the history of social work education at Edinburgh University. I saw this, and successfully applied for this PhD studentship. When I saw the advertisement I was working as a statutory social worker in the Mental Health (North) Team for the City of Edinburgh Council. I had qualified as a social worker in 2008, graduating with a Master of Social Work degree at Edinburgh University, prior to which I had studied history for my undergraduate degree. I was immediately interested in the possibility of undertaking research which examined social work and was historical in focus. The remit of the PhD was broad, requiring only that its focus be on Edinburgh University and social work education in a historical context. I was therefore able to explore potential topics within this remit to identify areas which had not been researched previously. This process involved working in the archives at the university to review the documents which were available to utilise for research purposes. Several potential areas of research were considered, including the development of practice placements, the biographies and training experiences of the students of the department, and the regulation of social work education. However, throughout this process I kept encountering the women who ran the department in its early years: Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne.

It became evident that these women were strong leaders of the department, and that they had played a crucial role in the development of social work education at Edinburgh University. Yet virtually nothing had been written about these women and the roles they played. When I examined the literature on women in early social work education more

generally it became clear that little had been written on this topic in general, and what had been written portrayed women as holding lower status roles within university departments, while men held higher status roles and were the leaders of departments. In addition, women were portrayed as being focused on the practical aspects of training, rather than the academic elements. The dominant narrative of women in early social work education therefore was one in which women had not played significant roles. This portrayal appeared to be in direct contrast to the women who ran the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University, and as a consequence I was drawn to researching these women to explore this dissonance.

#### Research objectives:

My research therefore had two objectives. The first was to undertake biographical research into the early lives and then careers of the three women. The objective of this research was to explore the individual contribution each of the women made to the development of social work education during their careers. This biographical research was new, as no research had been undertaken on any of the three women previously. These women were all exceptional leaders who contributed significantly to the development of early social work education at Edinburgh University, and in Scotland. Examining their early lives and careers not only recognises their achievements, but more generally it broadens our understanding of the nuanced roles women could, and did, play in early social work education.

The second research objective was to explore overarching themes that emerged from the women's collective biographies relating to gender in early social work education. As will be discussed, academics have explored social constructions of gender in social work,

but not in early social work education in the UK. It is important that this is done because, as will be shown, the dominant narratives around the roles women played in early social work education are somewhat simplistic, as they give little consideration to the challenges women faced when working in higher education settings. These narratives need to be examined in more depth, and then challenged because, as the three women's careers demonstrate, women could play much broader, and frankly much more important and influential roles than the current literature on this topic reflects. My research examining the three women's careers reveals not only that this was possible, but uncovers and demonstrates how they achieved this.

A limited number of personal papers were available relating to the women. This has meant that a collective biography approach has been utilised. Collective biography is a methodology which is useful for researching groups that have historically been more marginalised, such as women and children for example, and therefore have fewer source materials relating to them. It also enables connections between members of the group to be examined, and overall themes to be explored.<sup>9</sup> As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, the majority of my research has been undertaken using documents. In addition, a small number of oral history interviews were undertaken with former staff members and students of the department from the 1960s who had known and remembered Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne.

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<sup>9</sup> Krista Cowman, 'Collective Biography,' in *Research Methods for History*, eds. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

Time period of research – 1918-1968:

My research covers the time period from Nora Milnes's birth in 1882, until Megan Browne's retirement in 1973. However, the main focus is on 1918-1968. These are the years the three women were Director, or acting Director, of the school and then department at Edinburgh University. Nora Milnes was appointed as the Director of the school in 1918, becoming Director of the department (and Lecturer in Social Economics) in 1928, remaining in this role until her retirement in 1951. Marjorie Brown became the Director of the department from 1951 until her death in 1964. Megan Browne was acting Director from 1966 until 1968 when John Spencer, the first man, and first professor, was appointed head of the department. As well as being when the first male to lead the department was appointed, 1968 was also a hinge moment for social work education in Scotland as generic social work teaching was being ushered in, in the wake of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The time period 1918-1968 therefore reflects the establishment, solidification and development of social work education at Edinburgh University and across Scotland more broadly.

There was a fourth woman, Mary F. Gregor, who was acting Director from 1964 to 1966. While she is referred to in this thesis, there were simply not enough documentary data relating to her to facilitate an in-depth assessment of her career and contribution to the development of social work education at Edinburgh University. This is unfortunate, as the available data relating to her point to an intelligent, thoughtful and talented academic and practitioner. However, this serves to highlight the challenges which have been involved in researching the lives and careers of these women.

### Structure of the thesis:

This thesis is structured so that the introduction will be followed by a chapter reviewing the relevant literature. This chapter discusses the literature that already exists on key topics relevant to my research. These are the history of social work education, women in social work, women in academia and more specifically, women in early social work education. The limited nature of the literature around women in early social work education is discussed, alongside the fact that no research has been undertaken relating expressly to women in early social work education in Scotland. Consequently, the role my research plays in beginning to address this gap will be considered.

After this is the methodology chapter. This chapter sets out the theoretical basis for my research, which utilises both feminist theory and the theory of the social construction of gender, and their application to historical research. A collective biography approach has been utilised for my research, and the rationale for this decision as well as an explanation of the collective biography methodology will be described. Data were collected from documentary sources and oral history interviews, and the methodology underpinning the collection and analysis of these data, as well as the methods used to do so, will be described. Ethical issues are then considered, as are the limitations of my research.

A brief context chapter follows. This chapter sets out the background to the establishment of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh, prior to Nora Milnes appointment as its first Director. The chapter also includes a brief chronology of the school/department during the time period of this thesis, including the courses taught. This information is relevant for understanding the careers of the three women, but does not necessarily fit into their individual biography chapters. It has therefore been situated at this

point so that the reader gains an overview of the school and then department which should assist in their understanding of the women's careers and the development of early social work education at Edinburgh University. The three subsequent chapters then each focus on the early lives and careers of one of the three women, in chronological order of the years they were Director, or acting Director of the department: Nora Milnes (1918-51), Marjorie Brown (1951-64) and Megan Browne (1966-68). The role each woman played in the development of social work education has been examined and discussed in their individual chapters.

The chapter on Nora Milnes focuses on the period when social work education moved from being under the auspices of Edinburgh University (associated with it but a separate institution) to becoming integrated into the university as the Department of Social Study. Nora Milnes's role in this transition, and its significance for social work education at Edinburgh University is examined. Her involvement with organisations in Edinburgh focused on citizenship, and expanding public roles for women is discussed. The relevance of this in relation to the professionalisation of social work, and Nora Milnes's promotion of it as a paid career for middle-class women (and men) is explored. Nora Milnes's personal academic work and writing, and their relevance, is then discussed. Finally, her desire for the department more generally to engage in research work and the rationale behind this is considered, as is Edinburgh University's response.

The chapter on Marjorie Brown explores the role of international social work in her career. The opportunities her involvement in this arena gave her to import developments in casework techniques pioneered in America during the 1950s and 1960s will be explored, as will their significance for the ongoing professionalisation of social work. There will be

examination of the psychiatric deluge in social work education, where social work was said to have brought in theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis to gain status within the academy, and wider society. The extent to which this happened at Edinburgh University while Marjorie Brown was Director will be analysed. Finally, this chapter also focuses on Marjorie Brown's involvement in social work research. This is another area, alongside social work education, where little historical research has been undertaken. Marjorie Brown's own research work will be examined, as will the wider role women played in social work research during this period.

The chapter on Megan Browne focuses on her role as an advisor to the Scottish Office, and the developments in social work and social work education in Scotland which she influenced in this capacity. Her role as Chairman of the Scottish Central Probation Council (SCPC) Training Committee and the developments it brought in relating to probation training in Scotland will be considered. Her role as an advisor on the reorganisation of social work services in Scotland brought in by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 will then be explored. This was a seminal piece of legislation for both social work and social work education in Scotland, raising the profile and status of social work to new heights. Numerous changes brought in by the Act remain in place today. Alongside examining the opportunities these roles presented for Megan Browne to influence social work education at a Scottish level, their legacy for social work and social work education in Scotland will also be examined.

A discussion chapter follows the women's individual career biographies. The collective themes from the women's biographies relating specifically to gender in early social work education are brought together in this chapter. The chapter demonstrates how

Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne mitigated and challenged prevailing narratives of the social construction of gender for social work and social work education from the time period covered by my research. Their emphasis on professionalisation, their leadership of the department, their use of professional networks, and their utilisation of credentialist strategies and hierarchies to protect the status of social work education will all be explored.

Finally, the conclusion chapter will draw together the key findings, highlighting the relevance of my research for broadening our knowledge and understanding of the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter reviews the current literature which is pertinent to my research topic. This literature relates to the history of social work education in the UK, women in social work, women in academia and specifically in early social work education during the period covered by my research. It is important to note that the majority of the literature relates to the United Kingdom – meaning England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, a small minority refers to Great Britain only and which does not include Northern Ireland. In addition, some of the literature relates to specific geographic areas within the UK – for example, England. The terms and remits which have been used by the authors have been utilised throughout the literature review.

There is also a small number of biographical studies of the lives and careers of women in early social work education in other countries, namely the USA, Croatia, and Slovenia, and these will be examined. This literature demonstrates the relevance and importance biographical findings can have on broadening our understanding of the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education. Once the existing literature has been examined, current gaps in research will be highlighted, and the role of my research in addressing these will then be set out.

## History of social work education in the UK:

### The limited exploration of the history of social work education:

Rosemary Bogal argued, in the 1970s, that the history of social work education in Great Britain was an underdeveloped field.<sup>10</sup> This analysis remains valid today as little subsequent research has been undertaken. David Burnham argued that academics have avoided grappling with the complexities of this subject, and with the wider subject of the history of social work in the UK, with much of the work which has been done simply reproducing narrow narratives: in the case of social work education this focuses largely on the role of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in early training, and then developments from the 1970s onwards, with the intervening time period barely researched or discussed.<sup>11</sup> This view appears to be substantiated when we examine what has been written, as we will now do.

The earliest training for charity and social work is frequently credited to Margaret Sewell (Women's University Settlement) and Octavia Hill (pioneer of the house management movement), who started to organise and give lectures to train volunteers in these organisations in the early 1890s.<sup>12</sup> Charles Mowat noted that the COS became involved in training in 1896, when a lecture series examining themes of charity work and their practical applications was convened for volunteers working for the COS, alongside volunteers at the Women's University Settlement and the National Union of Women

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<sup>10</sup> Rosemary Bogal, 'From Friendly Visitor to Professional: The Development of University-Based Social Work Education in Great Britain,' (PhD Thesis, Loyola University Chicago, 1977).

<sup>11</sup> David Burnham, 'Selective Memory: A Note on Social Work Historiography,' *British Journal of Social Work* 41, no. 1 (2011): 5-21.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Macadam, *The Equipment of the Social Worker* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1925); Elizabeth Macadam, *The Social Servant in the Making: A Review of the Provision of Training for the Social Services* 2nd ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1946); Madeline Roof, *A Hundred Years of Family Welfare: A Study of the Family Welfare Association (Formerly the Charity Organisation Society) 1869-1969* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972); Ronald G. Walton, *Women in Social Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

Workers. These lectures continued, and the COS subsequently began to provide practical training to volunteers in their London offices.<sup>13</sup>

The Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity, more commonly known as the Charity Organisation Society (COS), was formed in London in 1896, and quickly developed numerous branches across the UK and abroad. Discussing its origins and ethos, Kathleen Woodroffe noted that it developed out of a concern that there had been a rise in begging and applications for relief from charities and the State. The COS believed individuals were responsible for taking care of themselves and their families, and that support from the State should be minimised to ensure that idleness, or reliance on others, was not encouraged.<sup>14</sup>

Madeline Roofff noted that the COS believed if people could not provide for themselves temporarily (because of short term illness, for example) then charities should offer limited assistance. This took the form of money, tickets (vouchers) for food or goods, loans or, latterly, assistance with emigration costs. If time-limited assistance would not be sufficient (i.e. people with mental illnesses, or physical disabilities) or individuals were deemed to have brought their difficulties on themselves (drunkards, or unmarried mothers, for example), then the State should provide assistance in the shape of relief under the Poor Law and the workhouse.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913: Its Ideas and Work* (Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable Ltd., 1961).

<sup>14</sup> Kathleen Woodroffe, 'The Charity Organisation Society and the Origins of Social Casework,' *Australian Historical Studies* 9, no. 33 (1959): 19-29.

<sup>15</sup> Roofff, *A Hundred Years of Family Welfare*.

Opinions on the efficacy of the COS differ. The COS believed that their work was effective – a view shared by some academics, including Roof and Woodroffe.<sup>16</sup> However, others such as Robert Humphreys have been highly sceptical of this, arguing that the COS spent most of its money on administration, largely failed to gain the trust and co-operation of other charities and was often viewed as the last resort among people applying for relief, because its staff were seen as hard-hearted, frequently refusing worthy cases. Humphreys, however, recognised the widespread popularity of the COS in British society for a time at the end of the nineteenth century. This was, he argued, due to the COS's ideas that a person was responsible for their own circumstances, which aligned with middle-class Victorian ideals of individualism.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the importance of their lasting legacy to social work has been widely agreed upon – the development of casework.

Casework was a method devised by the COS, in order to correctly distinguish between those who deserved relief, and those who did not. In order to make this distinction accurately, workers needed to systematically gather relevant information. Mary Richmond, a pioneer in the development of social work in the USA, who had worked for the COS in Baltimore, wrote about the importance of casework in her 1917 book *Social Diagnosis*. Her aim in writing this book, which used case studies to demonstrate how social workers worked and the practicalities of doing social casework, was 'to make some advance towards a professional standard' for social work.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Annual Reports of Council (no. 44) and District Committees for 1911-12, A/FWA/C/B/02/042, Family Welfare Association (Formerly Charity Organisation Society), London Metropolitan Archives; Roof, *A Hundred Years of Family Welfare*; Woodroffe, 'The Charity Organisation Society.'

<sup>17</sup> Robert Humphreys, *Poor Relief and Charity 1869-1945: The London Charity Organisation Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Mary Richmond, *Social Diagnosis* (New York: Richmond Sage Foundation, 1917): 26.

The role of the COS in the development of social work education has been emphasised by Chris Jones, who discussed in depth the ideas and beliefs which motivated the COS to develop formalised training for their own workers and others. Jones argued that the COS's motivation to promote their views on society and welfare led to social work's drive for professionalism and adoption of social sciences in order to bolster these beliefs.<sup>19</sup> While Jones offered convincing evidence for why the COS was seeking to influence others with their views on social theory and policy, it does not follow that this approach influenced and guided the development of social work education across the UK. The contribution of the many different organisations which were involved in social work education in the UK – such as the Hospital Almoners' Association and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) – was not acknowledged by Jones and, as a consequence, the complexities of the history of social work education were not fully recognised.

Bogal also focused on the COS and its role in the development of early training in her research on the origins of social work education, and its subsequent transition into the universities in Great Britain. Bogal argued that the role of the COS, the settlements (charitable organisations set up to do educational and social work in and with poorer communities – discussed in more depth in the next section), and the changing nature of the welfare state, all brought social work into the universities and facilitated its change from charitable work to a profession. However, Bogal offered no critique of the COS, and the examples of social work education developing in universities considered in any depth were limited to three sites: Birmingham, Liverpool and the LSE.<sup>20</sup> While Bogal's research is

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<sup>19</sup> Chris Jones, *The Foundations of Social Work Education* (Durham: University of Durham, 1976); Chris Jones, 'Social Work Education, 1900-1977,' in *Social Work, Welfare and the State*, eds. N. Parry, M. Rustin and C. Satyamurti (London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> Bogal, 'From Friendly Visitor to Professional.'

valuable in considering the wider societal changes which enabled social work training to move into the universities, it was essentially an overview and limited in its scope. This in itself is not objectionable, but it does leave scope for greater examination of what happened at different universities and of the influence of local contexts on the development of social work education.

Eileen Younghusband, herself an eminent person in the development of social work education, also wrote about the history of early social work education. She acknowledged that hers was a short history of social work, and indeed it is concise. Although centred on social work practice, training and its development were discussed. The focus, however, was entirely on the COS and LSE, with only one other institution mentioned – the Liverpool School of Social Science. Younghusband was critical of the lack of development, as she saw it, of social work education during the time period 1900-1945. She made a number of sweeping statements, for example arguing that after the establishment of the Department of Social Science and Administration at the LSE in 1912, there were no new developments in the field of social work education – ‘this gap in social work education continued until 1929 when the mental health course was started at LSE’.<sup>21</sup> This statement runs contrary to the fact that social work education had been established in the universities (or under their auspices) in Manchester and Glasgow in 1912, at Bedford College and Queen’s University Belfast in 1915, and in Edinburgh in 1918. But Younghusband’s writing – focused almost entirely on the LSE – did not discuss developments outside London.

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<sup>21</sup> Eileen Younghusband, *The Newest Profession: A Short History of Social Work* (Sutton: IPC Business Press Ltd, 1981): 22

Finally, Marjorie Smith, a Professor of Social Work at the University of British Columbia, undertook research regarding education for social workers during a Fulbright Scholarship to the UK in 1953. Smith's work was again concise, but clearly many documentary sources were utilised and she investigated the origins of social work training by the COS and other organisations in London thoroughly. However, again, there was no discussion of what occurred outwith London.<sup>22</sup>

When this body of work is taken together, Burnham's argument is validated to a large extent – there has been a tendency for academics to focus on the COS and the role it played in developing early social work education. This has been largely to the detriment of exploring other organisations which were involved in the origins and development of social work education. There has also been a focus on London, and the role played in the development of social work education by institutions and organisations there. Yet a small number of academics have done work to examine developments in other organisations and places, as will be discussed shortly. Before exploring this, we will examine the other criticism which Burnham levelled at the literature – that what has been written skims over the period following the origins of training and the COS, and moves on to developments since the 1970s.

Remarkably little research has been undertaken on, and very little written about, the history of social work education after its early development until 1970 (the year when social work services were reorganised in much of the UK, and the British Association of Social Workers was established). The work which has been done tends to reduce the period

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<sup>22</sup> Marjorie J. Smith, *Professional Education for Social Work in Britain: An Historical Account* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1965).

between training first being organised at the turn of the twentieth century to 1970 very succinctly. Karen Lyons, for example, did this in her book analysing changes and developments in social work education. While stating that she was going to examine the history of social work education, she in fact only scrutinised the time period from the 1970s onwards. The time period 1896-1969 was examined very briefly, succinctly summarised as a period when social work education fought to establish, and then sustain itself.<sup>23</sup>

Another example in which only the origins of training and then developments since the 1970s are examined was an article by Trish McCulloch, in which she argues that social work education has always been contentious and its form and role changes according to the political context of the time.<sup>24</sup> This was argued convincingly, but she utilised the examples critiqued by Burnham in order to do so, concentrating on the work of Octavia Hill, the COS and the Women's University Settlement and the work they did in London. While the article pertained to Scotland, only the settlement movement and its role in early training for social work in Scotland was mentioned, and this was done briefly. McCulloch then moved on to discuss the process of review and regulation in social work education and the impact that it has had, but again did not cite Scottish examples.

Finally, McCulloch explored the period from the 1970s onwards in more depth and drew out examples of how Scotland differed from the rest of the UK and continues to do so. In examining McCulloch's work we see an example of what Burnham was critiquing. McCulloch produced a thoughtful article about the complexities of the social work task and how social work education has been required to respond over time. It is fair to

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<sup>23</sup> Karen Lyons, *Social Work in Higher Education: Demise or Development?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> McCulloch, 'Education for the Crossroads?'

acknowledge that Octavia Hill, the COS and settlements in the south east of England were key in the development of early social work training in the UK. Yet, McCulloch missed the opportunity to question their role and motivations, and she did not present new research or analysis of what was happening in Scotland during these years, or the subsequent years until the 1970s.

Examining this literature highlights that research on the history of social work education in the UK is limited both in time and geography. The majority of work has focused almost exclusively on the very early stages of social work training and in particular the role of the COS, and has been centred on London, and then on the period from the 1970s onwards, with these persistent narratives rarely being critiqued. However, there has been some research which has explored other aspects of the history of social work education, and this will now be examined in the following section. This research considers the role of settlements and there is also a limited body of academic work which has examined other regional and institutional developments outwith London.

### The role of settlements:

Settlements aimed to provide opportunities to connect the social classes, often through charitable and educational endeavours, for the benefit of society as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Bogal, in her research on social work education moving into the realms of the universities, attributed the primary reasons for this move to the links which universities had with settlements and the fact that settlements were often early training arenas for social work.<sup>26</sup> The first settlement

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<sup>25</sup> Catherine Mary Kendall, 'The Queen Margaret Settlement 1897-1914: Glasgow Women Pioneers in Social Work,' (M. Litt Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> Bogal, 'From Friendly Visitor to Professional.'

was established in the UK at Toynbee Hall, London, in 1884. Toynbee Hall was established to promote opportunities for young men from universities (primarily Oxford) to live alongside the working-class community in the East End of London and undertake charitable and social work with them. But as Katharine Bradley argues 'this was no patronising enterprise: the graduates were expected to learn from the workers of Whitechapel as much as they were there to enlighten and educate them'.<sup>27</sup> Over the years the settlement movement expanded rapidly throughout the UK and abroad, with women's settlements being established as well as men's.

While the precise nature and focus of the social work undertaken varied from settlement to settlement (because of local need and circumstances) they held 'shared principles and values'<sup>28</sup> and the links between settlements, early social work and social work education are well established. A key example of this was Hull House in America, which was established in 1899 in Chicago by Jane Addams and Ellen Starr Gates, after they visited Toynbee Hall and were deeply influenced by the idea of working with a community from within. Jerry Lee Rosiek and Scott Pratt have written about the work of Addams and others at Hull House who collected data from the local community in order to understand their social problems and work out how to address them. The areas they worked on varied and encompassed wages, education, domestic violence,<sup>29</sup> housing, prostitution, and drug addiction.<sup>30</sup> Linda Shoemaker, in her PhD thesis, examined the development of social work

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<sup>27</sup> Katharine Bradley, *Bringing People Together: Bede House in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe 1938-2003* (London: Bede House Association, 2004): 12

<sup>28</sup> Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state: Charities and the working class in London, 1918-79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009): 7

<sup>29</sup> Jerry Lee Rosiek and Scott Pratt, 'Jane Addams as a Resource for Developing a Reflexively Realist Social Science Practice,' *Qualitative Inquiry* 19, no. 8 (2013): 578-588.

<sup>30</sup> Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964).

education in several cities in the USA. She highlighted the link between settlements and social work education, and the subsequent move social work education made into universities, citing the specific example of the Chicago School of Civics and Philosophy (its school of social work) at the University of Chicago as having developed out of Hull House and also Chicago Commons Settlements.<sup>31</sup>

Lynn Bruce and Catherine Kendall have written about the links between settlements, social work and universities in Scotland. Bruce researched the establishment of the six settlements in Scotland and argued that over time they evolved from a focus on 'reforming the characters of working-class individuals through personal connection between them and middle-class settlers'<sup>32</sup> to focus on providing social work training. Bruce has researched and written about Edinburgh University specifically, arguing that the Edinburgh University Settlement, because it was established relatively late (in 1905), was different to the other settlements in Scotland, as it was focused on being a place for social study and education from the start.<sup>33</sup> Its aspirations to provide training for social work never materialised. Yet, as we will see in chapter 4 it did play a significant role in establishing a foothold for social study at Edinburgh University. Kendall's research focused on the links between the Queen Margaret Settlement and women in Glasgow who pioneered social work with the establishment of the School of Social Study aligned with Glasgow University.<sup>34</sup> So we see examples of where settlements played an important role in the development of early social education in Scotland. We will now go on to examine the small body of research which has

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<sup>31</sup> Linda M. Shoemaker, "Charity and Justice' Gender and the Mission of Social Work: Social Work Education in Boston, New York and Chicago, 1898-1930," (PhD Thesis, State University of New York, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Lynn Bruce, 'Scottish Settlement Houses from 1886-1934,' (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2012): 1

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Kendall, 'The Queen Margaret Settlement 1897-1914.'

been undertaken examining the history of social work education in other regional and institutional settings outwith London.

Local differences in development of social work education:

As noted, there has been a lack of work which examines social work education at individual academic institutions outwith London and this is an area where further research is needed.

The small body of research which has been done is important as it expands the narrow narrative of the history of social work education in the UK by exploring individual

institutions other than the LSE and the development of social work education there.<sup>35</sup> Pat

Starkey examined the social and economic conditions of Liverpool at the time when social work education began there, looking at how this shaped the course and how local voluntary agencies were involved with training. Starkey accessed student records to analyse who studied social work at Liverpool and what this tells us about class and university education in the early twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

Ann Davis offered a chronology of social work education at the University of Birmingham, the longest running social work programme at a UK university. Davis was clear that this was 'not an "official history"',<sup>37</sup> and noted that the work brings personal perspectives as someone who had been involved in social work education for a long period

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<sup>35</sup> Pat Starkey, 'Kind-Hearted and Good with People – or Trained Professionals? Social Work Training at the University of Liverpool,' *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 155 (2006): 65-84; Ann Davis. *Celebrating 100 Years of Social Work – University of Birmingham* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2008); 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' University of Edinburgh, last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2023, <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>36</sup> Starkey, 'Kind-Hearted and Good with People – or Trained Professionals?'

<sup>37</sup> Davis, *Celebrating 100 Years of Social Work – University of Birmingham*: 2

of time.<sup>38</sup> In spite of these caveats regarding the academic authority of the work, Davis used documents and archival research to set developments at the University of Birmingham in their local and national context. In doing so, Davis highlighted the local circumstances and individuals who were central to the development of social work education in Birmingham.

Finally, as discussed in the introduction, the project marking the centenary of social work education at Edinburgh University (2016-2018) undertook research related to the history of social work education in Edinburgh. A number of outputs emerged from this project, including a website with a detailed chronology of social work, and social work education, in Edinburgh, UK and internationally.<sup>39</sup> The Wellcome Trust funded project to archive the Department of Social Work papers, *Advisors, Advocates & Activists – A Century of Social Work in Edinburgh*, also undertook research focused on the students of the department, and on a research project undertaken alongside the department to survey the new housing estate in Pilton, Edinburgh, in the early 1960s. Research findings were published on the project's website, and while it was deliberately produced to be accessible to a non-academic audience, it demonstrated the rich data available in relation to Edinburgh University, and its role in the development of social work education.<sup>40</sup>

Another aspect of the history of social work education which has received scant attention is the development and teaching of specialist courses. The majority of social studies courses taught prior to the 1970s were general Certificate and/or Diploma courses in Social Studies. Yet, several universities also taught specialist courses for medical social

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<sup>38</sup> Davis, *Celebrating 100 Years of Social Work – University of Birmingham*.

<sup>39</sup> 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>40</sup> 'Advisors, Advocates & Activists – a Century of Social Work in Edinburgh,' University of Edinburgh, last accessed 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023, <https://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/socialwork100/>

workers, psychiatric social workers, probation workers, welfare workers, and child care workers. Previous research I undertook examined Edinburgh University's Psychiatric Social Work (PSW) Certificate course, which was in existence between 1944 and 1969, as a case study. This was done to examine both the curriculum of one specialist psychiatric social work course and also to explore the means by which the course was used to reinforce and justify social work as a profession. My research found that, while the curriculum of the PSW Certificate course placed an emphasis on casework, psychology and psychiatry, it also ensured that students learned about social and environmental factors, and about human development. Through doing so students were trained to view themselves as an antithesis to the biological approach of the psychiatrists they worked alongside. Furthermore, there was an emphasis on the academic aspects of training students received, as opposed to the practice placement learning (although in reality both were considered important by the course staff), arguably as a means to justify and bolster the professional status of psychiatric social work.<sup>41</sup> While limited conclusions can be drawn about the history and development of early social work education from examining one specialist course, my article provides insights into how social work education developed at a particular institution and drew on other disciplinary theories to bolster its own knowledge base and status. Having examined research relating to institutions outwith London we will now explore the relationship between universities and social work education.

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession,' *Practice* 30, no. 4 (2018): 239-256.

### The ambivalence of universities to social work education:

Finally, one other important aspect of the history of social work education which has also been discussed by academics was the ambivalent relationship the academy has had with social work education. Catrin Heite argued, that for social work, the development of training was one of the fundamental ways it deliberately sought to move away from its charitable roots at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> While early training schemes were provided by numerous organisations, including, as we have seen, settlements and the COS, as well as religious organisations and professional organisations such as the Hospital Almoners' Association, over the course of the twentieth century, social work education increasingly moved into universities.<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Macadam highlighted that this shift was by no means assured when training for social work began.

Macadam argued that initially both social work and the universities were unsure about this partnership. Social service organisations were concerned that universities would focus too much on academic study at the expense of practical training, which was so central to social workers gaining experience in practice settings. Employers also generally placed less value on university education for social work at that time because, Macadam argued, they primarily saw social work as a vocation. They therefore questioned the need for universities to be involved with training.<sup>44</sup> Macadam wrote that 'on the other hand the universities, especially the older universities, while accepting the responsibility of education for established professions—law, medicine, the Church, and education—were reluctant to

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<sup>42</sup> Catrin Heite, 'Setting and Crossing Boundaries: Professionalization of Social Work and Social Work Professionalization,' *Social Work & Society* 10, no. 2 (2012): 1-14.

<sup>43</sup> Youngusband, *The Newest Profession*; Smith, *Professional Education for Social Work*; Kendall, 'The Queen Margaret Settlement 1897-1914.'

<sup>44</sup> Macadam, *The Social Servant in the Making*.

admit the claims of a hybrid occupation'.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, 'they dreaded a dilution of their own standards'.<sup>46</sup> Finally, Macadam argued that universities were anxious about the practical aspect of training because they were not providing it (other agencies were) and therefore could not control it. Macadam attributed the move of social work education into universities to the fact that there was a growing recognition that universities had a role to play in public affairs, which included preparing students to serve in public roles, and that they had the capacity to provide the academic input required for social work education. As a result, there was a gradual acceptance that universities would provide social work education.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to this, Bogal argued that British universities were reluctant to incorporate social work education into their institutions because they did not consider social work to be scientific.<sup>48</sup> Bogal argued that, in response to this, social work sought to adopt theories from other developing social sciences and subjects such as psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry in order to gain credibility,<sup>49</sup> an argument which has been supported by other academics including Rosalind Chambers, Jones, Steve Rogowski and Bruce.<sup>50</sup> Vivienne Cree has also written about the gendered nature of social work as an academic subject, which has been at the crux of this ambivalent relationship on the part of the universities, and which Cree argues continues to be valid:

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<sup>45</sup> Macadam, *The Social Servant in the Making*: 33

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: 33

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Bogal, 'From Friendly Visitor to Professional.'

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Rosalind Chambers, 'Professionalism in Social Work,' in *Social Science and Social Pathology*, ed. Barbara Wootton (London: Simson Shand Ltd, 1959); Steve Rogowski, *Social Work: The rise and fall of a profession* (Bristol: University Press Scholarship, 2010); Bruce, 'Scottish Settlement Houses 1886-1934'; Jones, 'Social Work Education, 1900 – 1977.'

One ongoing battle which must be fought by Departments of Social Work within a university is the struggle to win academic respectability. Social work is considered to be too 'practical' a subject to be taken seriously in intellectual terms: it is not 'abstract' or 'theoretical' enough to be given credit. Yet, many other departments in the university also have practical components to their teaching, for example Law, Architecture, and Medicine, none of which is in question academically. The added dimension here is gender: how 'feminine/masculine' the subject is, hence the fight for Nursing Studies and Social Work, both traditionally feminine subjects to be taken seriously.<sup>51</sup>

This point regarding the gendered dimension of social work leads us on to the next relevant body of literature relating to my research – the history of women in social work.

#### History of women in social work:

##### Charity work vs a profession:

Academics have noted the historically central role of women in social work since its inception, both as workers and people who use services.<sup>52</sup> During the latter half of the nineteenth century social work in the UK developed out of philanthropic and charitable work. Mirja Satka has argued that it was possible for middle-class women to be involved in this because social work was seen as an extension of their existing role within the home

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<sup>51</sup> Vivienne E. Cree, 'Surviving on the Inside: Reflections on Being a Woman and a Feminist in a Male Academic Institution,' *Social Work Education* 16, no. 3 (1997): 37-60: 41

<sup>52</sup> Vivienne E. Cree, *From Public Streets to Private Lives: The Changing Task of Social Work* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995); Ann Davis, and Eve Brook, 'Women and Social Work,' in *Women, the Family, and Social Work*, ed. Eve Brook and Ann Davis (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd, 1985); Walton, *Women in Social Work*; Laura S. Abrams, and Laura Curran, 'Between Women: Gender and Social Work in Historical Perspective,' *Social Service Review* 78, no. 3 (2004): 429-446.

sphere, which was viewed as private. It was therefore an acceptable progression for women to move from their own private sphere to that of other women and, as an extension of this, children.<sup>53</sup> The promotion of social service and study alongside concepts of good citizenship (which flourished during the Edwardian period) has been written about by Georgina Brewis, who noted that this period also saw an increasing emphasis on the value of voluntary roles in charitable endeavours for women and girls.<sup>54</sup> These voluntary roles were important for middle-class girls and women as this was a time when paid roles they could occupy were limited, with teaching being the most prevalent occupation.<sup>55</sup>

However, while social work initially offered middle-class women voluntary roles outwith the home, it was not long before social work, and those involved in it, sought to move towards being a professional occupation. Gillian Sutherland, writing about middle-class women and work at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century, has noted that its early association with charitable work made the transition to a paid profession challenging for social work. 'The explanation for this is almost certainly rooted in the sheer acceptability of philanthropy as an activity for ladies, and one moreover which could be pursued part-time and after marriage'.<sup>56</sup> However, there were other factors which also made its transition difficult, which will now be discussed.

In his famous speech to the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in Baltimore in 1915, the American educator Abraham Flexner, set out (his) criteria for what

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<sup>53</sup> M. Satka, 'Gender in the History of Social Work: Biographies of Male and Female Social Work Pioneers in Finland,' in *The History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and Their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations*, eds. S. Hering and B. Waaldijk (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Georgina Brewis, 'From Working Parties to Social Work: Middle-Class Girls' Education and Social Service 1890-1914,' *History of Education* 38, no. 6 (2009): 761-777.

<sup>55</sup> Gillian Sutherland, *In Search of the New Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Britain 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*: 50

constituted a profession, and his argument why social work did not meet these. This included his assessment that the definition of social work was too vague, its academics drew too much on other disciplines without developing their own bodies of work, and the training itself was too broad.<sup>57</sup> Flexner's assessment has been critiqued, with some going so far as to argue it had an adverse effect on the development of social work as it subsequently strove to shape itself in order to satisfy his criteria of a profession.<sup>58</sup> Whether this is accurate or not, his views are interesting because they demonstrate the situation social work found itself in during this period – striving to demonstrate that it was a profession.

Numerous academics have examined how social work sought to achieve this, arguing that this involved a plethora of approaches. These included controlling who could enter the profession, regulating training and disciplinary procedures, and bringing together ideas around professional standards, in order to gain the status of a recognised profession (these strategies were also used by other professions – often to exclude women).<sup>59</sup> Social work also sought to counter criticisms of its academic standing by incorporating theories from other disciplines, such as psychology and psychiatry, to bolster its credibility. Alongside this, its relationship with the State played a significant role. Its ability to gain legitimate and secure functions within the State was seen as an endorsement of its professional status.<sup>60</sup>

Although its status as a profession was contested and its association with charitable work remained strong, it was possible for women to engage in paid social work roles during

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<sup>57</sup> Abraham Flexner, 'Is Social Work a Profession?' *Research on Social Work Practice* 11, no. 2 (2001): 152-165

<sup>58</sup> Patricia McGrath Morris, 'Reinterpreting Abraham Flexner's Speech, "Is Social Work a Profession?": Its Meaning and Influence on the Field's Early Professional Development,' *Social Sciences Review* 82, no. 1 (2008): 29-60.

<sup>59</sup> Anne Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Chris Nottingham, 'The Rise of the Insecure Professions,' *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 52, no. 3 (2007): 445-475; Chambers, 'Professionalism in Social Work,'; Jones, *Social Work Education, 1900-1977*,; Sutherland, *In Search of the New Woman*; Vivienne Cree, 'Social Work and Society' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Martin Davies (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013).

its early development. Women were employed by charities or social organisations, for example by the COS, or as Poor Law Guardians. Yet, Sutherland has highlighted the paradox which existed regarding the acceptability of social work as a paid role for middle-class women because of its charitable roots, and because employment for middle-class women in general was still often viewed to be the preserve of those who needed to work to support themselves financially (as opposed to those who wanted to do so).

Angela Woollacott has argued that the First World War sped up both the process of professionalisation for social work and its acceptance as a widespread paid role for middle-class women. This was because, first, the war vastly increased the opportunity, and legitimacy of women taking up work in general, including social work roles, as men were fighting on the front. Consequently, both existing and new roles, such as factory inspectors, were increasingly available to middle-class women and more began to enter paid social work employment. The fact that roles were paid and often came with a level of authority was very important, as middle-class women were now legitimately moving into arenas which had previously not been open to them, but only to middle-class men. There was also an increased recognition that these were skilled roles, which required specialised training. This in turn bolstered social work's claim to be a profession.

Second, the First World War had seen the State's provision and involvement in welfare services increase significantly, which also increased the legitimacy of social work's claim to be a profession through its role as an agent of the State.<sup>61</sup> Throughout the twentieth century the continual growth of statutory social work has given more and more

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<sup>61</sup> Angela Woollacott, 'From Moral to Professional Authority: Secularism, Social Work and Middle-Class Women's Self-Construction in World War I Britain,' *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 2 (1998): 85-111.

credence to social work's claims to be a profession. Yet, as Cree has argued, this has not necessarily brought with it long-term security for social work; rather the challenges it has faced regarding its legitimacy have evolved, and continue to do so.<sup>62</sup> The relevant point for this thesis is that social work in its early years was a public role which middle-class women could legitimately engage in, but which found its status as a profession difficult to secure, arguably because of its link to women and origins in charitable work. In addition, while middle-class women were able to hold onto the progress they had made towards working in social work after the First World War, the gendered nature of the roles expected of them restricted the types of roles assigned to them in social work. We will now go on to explore these gendered roles in social work.

#### Gendered roles within social work:

Another important aspect of the history of women in social work for this thesis is the gendered roles which were inherent from its beginning. The contrasting opportunities and limitations which social work afforded middle-class women during this period, discussed above, have also been written about by Gisela Hauss, although her emphasis has been on examining the types of roles social work offered women. Hauss has argued that while social work and social work education offered women opportunities for paid work, at the same time they reinforced dominant societal ideas that women should undertake practical, caring roles, instead of challenging these conceptions.<sup>63</sup> Both Eileen Yeo and Satka have noted

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<sup>62</sup> Cree, *Social Work and Society*.

<sup>63</sup> Gisela Hauss, 'The Locations of Women in the History of Social Work: Three Examples from German-Speaking Switzerland (Switzerland),' in *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and Their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations*, eds. S. Hering and B. Waaldijk (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003).

that this affected the type of roles men and women fulfilled in social work, with men viewed as being scientific and natural administrators, and women viewed as caring and more practical.<sup>64</sup> This also affected the fields of social work practice that men and women traditionally worked in, with men concentrated in areas focused on control, such as probation, while women tended to work in areas which had a caring focus, such as child care and as almoners.<sup>65</sup>

In his book *Women in Social Work* (written in 1975), Ronald Walton explored the history of women in social work and discussed the different roles men and women fulfilled in social work practice. The main deficiency of his analysis was that Walton did not discuss or critique gendered assumptions – something which was not widely done by academics at that time, but which scholarship now would recognise and question.<sup>66</sup> An example of this would be when Walton commented on the higher proportion of men in managerial positions, he argued that:

As the Children's Departments [in England and Wales] expanded in the 1950s and 1960s the size of the departments entailed that the job of the children's officer became more administrative and organisational. This may have led local authorities to prefer men, and to women being slightly less attracted to a purely administrative post.<sup>67</sup>

The assumption reflected here was, as we have seen highlighted by other academics, that men were more orientated to, and gifted in, administration, while women were more

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<sup>64</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996); Satka, 'Gender in the History of Social Work.'

<sup>65</sup> Cree, *From Public Streets to Private Lives*; Walton, *Women in Social Work*.

<sup>66</sup> Wally Seecombe, 'Patriarchy stabilized: The construction of the male breadwinner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain,' *Social History* 11, no. 1 (1986): 53-76.

<sup>67</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*: 235-236.

focused on the practical aspects of social work. The manner in which Walton related this arguably demonstrated that this was an assumption he believed to be valid. Walton did not seek to critique why local authorities might have preferred men in management positions, or the structural or societal issues which may have prevented some women from seeking management positions at that time. He simply accepted and repeated these gendered distinctions. However, as noted, while we now have a framework to critique these assumptions (which will be discussed in chapter 3), this was not the case when Walton was writing, and his work needs to be viewed in this light.

While a substantial amount has been written about gendered roles in the history of social work, less attention has been given to the issue of social class for those working in social. This is pertinent for my research, as the fact that the three women were all middle-class arguably made their careers in early social work education possible. We will therefore now briefly examine what has been written about the social class of those women who worked in social work and early social work education.

#### Social class distinctions:

The social class of those working in social work has been explored in depth by Daniel Walkowitz – however, his work pertains to America.<sup>68</sup> In relation to the UK those writing about the history of women in social work from its inception to the late 1960s, such as Walton, have focused on middle-class women as social workers, with working-class women overwhelmingly presented as recipients of services. This limited examination of working-

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<sup>68</sup> Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Working with Class: Social workers and the politics of middle-class identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

class women employed in social work has been criticised by Davis and Eve Brook, and Burnham, who have argued that working-class women's roles in social work have been neglected.<sup>69</sup> Burnham cited examples including the significant numbers of working-class women who worked as 'welfare assistants' for local authorities in the 1950s and 60s, but about whom little has been researched or written.<sup>70</sup>

The division of roles middle-class and working-class women performed in social work was discussed briefly by Walton, but the issue of social class was given very limited attention by him. The main issue Walton highlighted regarding social class was the implication it had on who could afford to go to university to be trained in social work.<sup>71</sup> Here Walton highlighted an important issue – that this was a period when only limited bursaries existed to support students from lower income backgrounds. Consequently, those women who were able to attend university social studies courses and go on to work as social workers tended to be middle-class. We see this reflected in the biographies of the three women under consideration in this thesis, who were all middle-class. Nevertheless, in general, social class is an issue which has been given little attention or exploration by those writing about the history of women working in social work.

Having reviewed the relevant literature relating to the history of social work education and women in social work, we will now turn to explore the history of women in academia – both as students and as staff. This topic is central to my research, as it provides the context for the three women's careers.

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<sup>69</sup> Davis and Brook, 'Women and Social Work.'

<sup>70</sup> Burnham, 'Selective Memory: A note on Social Work Historiography.'

<sup>71</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*.

### History of women in academia:

#### Education for middle-class girls and women:

There was a substantial shift in the opportunities afforded to middle-class girls for education at all levels during the lifetimes of the three women and, as will be demonstrated, each of them benefitted from these opportunities. Prior to this, during the early and mid-nineteenth century, middle-class girls had been largely educated in their own homes, often by their mothers or by governesses, who themselves may have had limited academic education. Carol Dyhouse has argued that the purpose of their education was not academic, but rather to learn their social roles and duties.<sup>72</sup> As already noted, this period was influenced by the dominant ideology that middle-class women's role was a domestic one, in the private sphere. However, the idea that women should be educated began to gain ground during the 1840s and schools that sought to provide middle-class girls with genuinely academic educations were established.<sup>73</sup> June Purvis has argued that until this point, middle-class women had been unable to enter universities, not simply because universities would not admit women, but also because women had not been able to access good enough quality secondary education to prepare them academically for further study. However, with the development of more accessible academic education at primary and secondary levels, calls began for middle-class women to be able to attend universities.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981).

<sup>73</sup> June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

### Women as staff and students of universities:

The ability of middle-class women to access higher education began to shift during the middle of the nineteenth century. Kendall has argued that there was a growing movement at this time supporting the idea that women should be educated to a higher level, as this would enhance their ability to perform their roles as a mother and wife. This in turn would support their husbands and the development of their children. Furthermore, there was a belief that society in general would benefit as the morals of the country would be raised through the eradicating of foolish ideas through education.<sup>75</sup> Christina Bremner, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, highlighted the role of the University Extension Movement in initially opening up tertiary level education for both middle-class women and working-class men. This movement involved university lecturers giving extra-mural lectures to these groups.<sup>76</sup> Gradually, existing universities began to admit women as students and tertiary level educational establishments solely for women began to be established.

While an increasing number of middle-class women were attending universities, opposition to this remained, including among the male staff and students at universities. Laura Schwartz has argued that opposition to women's education was often based on 'a strong assertion of sexual difference'.<sup>77</sup> Women and men were believed to be different (a belief based on biological determinism, which will be discussed in more depth in chapter 3), and this belief manifested itself in numerous theories about why educating women in the same way, and to the same degree, as men was not appropriate. This included beliefs that

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<sup>75</sup> Kendall, 'The Queen Margaret Settlement 1897-1914.'

<sup>76</sup> Christina S. Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897).

<sup>77</sup> Laura Schwartz, 'Feminist Thinking on Education in Victorian England.' *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no. 5 (2011): 669-682: 674

women were too sensitive, were intellectually incapable, or their physical health may even be at risk if they engaged in academic study.<sup>78</sup> Women students faced overt restrictions on their admittance to some universities. If they did gain admittance, then restrictions on access to certain areas or resources within the university were in place, such as student societies or libraries. They also faced barriers from societal views and expectations which continued to believe education was not good for women, that they were not academically able enough, and that their role in life was to be a wife and mother; consequently, university education was not appropriate.<sup>79</sup>

Barriers to acceptance and admission were the case, not only for women students, but especially for women who wanted to work in universities as academics. Dyhouse has argued that women gained posts as academics during the early part of the twentieth century often through initially working at day training departments or through the patronage of certain male academics who were favourable to women working in universities. Women were less likely to gain lecturer jobs, or research grants, with the notable exception being the LSE which employed, and supported, a number of women academics, principally in the fields of economics and history.<sup>80</sup>

Margherita Rendel sought to ascertain the numbers and positions of women academics in universities across the UK between 1912 and 1976. Whilst acknowledging that this was complicated, as no one body held figures which recorded a male/female ratio breakdown, Rendel was able to compile figures which showed that in Scotland there were sixty-three women in academic roles in universities in 1921-22, rising to seventy-two in

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<sup>78</sup> Schwartz, 'Feminist Thinking on Education in Victorian England.'

<sup>79</sup> Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*.

<sup>80</sup> Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities 1870-1939* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1995).

1930-31, although the percentage of women staff remained the same at roughly 7-8%. For the UK as a whole, the proportion was similar at 9.9% in 1930-31. Rendel found that universities in London had a higher percentage of women academic staff, and of the seventeen female professors in the UK in 1930-31, eleven of them were at universities in London, with no female professors in Scotland.<sup>81</sup> A number of academics have highlighted that not only were the numbers of women working in academia very limited, but that the roles these women were able to hold were also curtailed, and we will now go on to explore this assertion.

#### Implications of gendered ideas and structures on women's roles in higher education:

Numerous authors have written about the particular challenges that have been (and continue to be) in place for women working in higher education which stem from patriarchal and gendered structures and ideas.<sup>82</sup> Brenda Gray and Cree have both argued that for woman in higher education there has been an expectation to fulfil a nurturing and caring role at work (characteristics which were also expected of women in social work), and to display these characteristics in their relationships with colleagues and students. This often led to women being expected to take on more pastoral roles, which tended not to have the same level of status within academia, which valued work related to research and

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<sup>81</sup> Margherita Rendel, 'How Many Women Academics 1912-76?', in *Schooling for Women's Work*, ed. Rosemary Deem (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Margo Culley *et al.*, 'The Politics of Nurturance' in *Gendered Subjects: The dynamics of feminist teaching* eds. Margo Culley and Catherine Portuges (Abingdon: Routledge, 1985); Brenda Gray, 'Women in Higher Education: 'What are we doing to ourselves?'' in *Changing the Subject: Women in Higher Education* eds. Sue Davies, Cathy Lubelska and Jocey Quinn (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1994); Cree, 'Surviving on the Inside'; Judith Okely, 'Gendered Lessons in Ivory Towers' in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures* eds. Deborah Faye Bryceson, Judith Okely and Jonathan Webber (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

the publication of books and articles more (and arguably still does).<sup>83</sup> Women who took on these roles had less time to focus on the other areas of work which were valued, and this had a negative impact on their career.<sup>84</sup>

Not only were there gendered expectations of the roles women would play in universities, but the institutional set up of universities themselves also placed constraints on women. Gray has discussed this in terms of academic procedures. Gray asserted that in higher education institutions the role of academic procedures has always been significant, but often operate without being noticed. Academic procedures provide the framework in which universities operated including managing access to positions within higher education, promotions and funding. 'These procedures gain their authority from tradition, precedence and the implicit ways in which they operate'<sup>85</sup> and they structure the way both staff and students organised, and measured, their work. While they have been presented as being neutral, Gray argued in fact they could be helpful, but also detrimental, and exclusionary to certain people.

These procedures, therefore, need to be scrutinised because, as Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and Raewyn Connell have argued, procedures bring about 'the beliefs that justify a particular pattern of practice, and persuade us to regard that pattern as just or efficient'.<sup>86</sup> Cree has discussed these procedures in terms of, for example, the fact that women have been more likely to work part-time, but that some universities or departments

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<sup>83</sup> Gray, 'Women in Higher Education.'

<sup>84</sup> Cree, 'Surviving on the Inside.'

<sup>85</sup> Gray, 'Women in Higher Education.': 80

<sup>86</sup> Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court, Raewyn W. Connell, *Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989): 29. In this section Franzway *et al.* are discussing the work of Catherine A. Mackinnon 'Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence' *Signs* 8, no. 4 (1983): 635-658.

precluded part-time staff from 'convenorship of courses'<sup>87</sup> on the basis that they need to be managed by staff who were fully committed to their roles. These staff have been full-time and often tended to be male. As a consequence, women could have been barred from certain academic and management roles. Therefore, we see that the history of women in academia highlights the opportunities which higher education offered to women, but at the same time this has come with challenges and limitations – some of which have been overt and easy to identify, and some of which have operated more tacitly.

Whilst the challenges women faced in higher education are important to recognise and take account of, some women were able to overcome these to varying degrees. Rebecca Turner has highlighted a number of factors which women could utilise to overcome these challenges, as well as the role that institutions played in helping or hindering women. Turner argued that we should look at the issue of women's leadership in academia in terms which are broader than simply questioning whether women are promoted to top academic positions. Rather, we should also examine access to grant and research funding, access to professional development programmes, opportunities to head up university committees, research projects and departments, and to mentor other women.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, while it is important to recognise the barriers women faced in academia, it is also important to explore how they mitigated these.

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<sup>87</sup> Cree, 'Surviving on the Inside.': 43

<sup>88</sup> Rebecca Turner, 'The Leadership Development of Women,' in *Women of Color on the Rise: Leadership and Administration in Social Work Education and the Academy*, ed. Halaevalu F. Ofahengaue Vakalachi and Wilma Peebles-Wilkins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Having looked broadly at this topic, we will now examine what research and writing currently exists specifically regarding women in the history of early social work education in the UK.

#### History of women in early social work education:

In relation specifically to women in the history of social work education in the UK, very little research or literature exists, with scarcely anything written that relates to Scotland. What has been written about women in early social work education is arguably one-dimensional, and open to critique. Women have been presented as having a homogenous experience – that of working in lower status roles within departments and being focused on the practical elements of training. In contrast, men have been written about as the leaders of departments and focused on academic work. There has been no recognition of a broader understanding of leadership, taking into account factors other than holding top academic positions, as discussed by Turner above. The careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne demonstrated that this generalisation set out in the literature simply was not the case and that the reality could be much more nuanced and varied than has been previously recognised. Furthermore, what has been written provided limited analysis of the gendered ideas and structures which operated in both social work and social work education during this time and the effects they had on women's opportunities in the field of social work education. Consequently, there has been no attempt to challenge the characterisation that women were less successful, essentially, in this field than men.

The academics who have written about women in early social work education in the UK are Walton, Yeo and Ann Oakley. As noted, they all described women as the lower paid

and lower status lecturers and practice teachers in universities, while men were appointed to the more senior lecturer and head of department roles, and as professors, and that their roles often were more orientated to social policy than social work education.<sup>89</sup> The literature has essentially equated leadership and authority with professorial status, presenting an assumption that, in order to be a leader, or have authority, it has been necessary to be a professor. Consequently, those who were not professors were not considered leaders.

The idea that being a professor equated to leadership has been explored by Steve Rayner, Mary Fuller, Lindsey McEwen and Hazel Roberts. They have argued that in UK universities, being a professor has long been associated with being at the pinnacle of the academic hierarchy and that it has a strong association with, and presumption of, leadership roles (although they found that scant research had been undertaken to investigate the actual function of professors as leaders).<sup>90</sup> Conversely, not holding the status of professor has been equated with a diminished leadership role. In relation to the history of women in early social work education, it has therefore been assumed that because there were no women professors of social studies during this time period, women were not leaders. However, to return to Turner's argument again, this one dimensional view of leadership can be critiqued as being too narrow.

Walton has argued that not only were there divisions in the roles of men and women in social work education but social work as a subject was also side-lined by universities because of its association with women and the higher than average number of women who

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<sup>89</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*; Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*; Ann Oakley, *Father and Daughter: Patriarchy, Gender and Social Science* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Steve Rayner, Mary Fuller, Lindsey McEwen, Hazel Roberts, 'Managing leadership in the UK university: a case for researching the missing professoriate?' *Studies in Higher Education* 35, no. 6 (2010): 617-631.

worked in this field, while departments like social policy and social administration were afforded more status and resources.<sup>91</sup> As we have already seen, this is an argument which Cree has also made.<sup>92</sup>

It is difficult to argue with the point that women in early social work education were often the staff in lower paid and lower status roles – they were. However, they did not exclusively occupy these positions. We know, for example, that Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were all departmental heads. It is also the case that, at Edinburgh University, men worked as lecturers within the department – they were not necessarily the leaders. However, the characterisation in the literature of the roles men and women played does not reflect this. For example, Yeo succinctly summarised the situation for women in early social work education, stating that ‘within the university world, women’s role so far may be summed up as increasing presence but responsibility without power’.<sup>93</sup>

As will be demonstrated, my research found that the three women did have power, and were able to act in many ways to develop social work education at a strategic level at Edinburgh University, and in Scotland more widely. However, there has been no recognition of this, or of the other roles women could play in early social work education in the UK in what has been written on this topic so far. This is a gap in the research, and work needs to be done to explore and recognise that some women were able to achieve much more than has been acknowledged. My research begins to address this gap by presenting the collective biographies of these three women.

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<sup>91</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*.

<sup>92</sup> Cree, ‘Surviving on the Inside.’

<sup>93</sup> Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*: 295

Biographical work of women in early social work education – international examples:

Innovative biographical work in a similar vein, which has explored the roles of individual women social work educators, has not been done in the UK, but has been done in both America and continental Europe. Biographical work by Anya Jabour, Iris Carlton-LaNey and Ellen Netting *et al.* in the USA, by Melita Richter-Malabotta in Croatia and by Darja Zavirsek in Slovenia has examined the lives of early female social work educators.<sup>94</sup> Their articles have sought to examine and critique the existing knowledge and portrayal of women in early social work education, ultimately presenting broader and more nuanced accounts of the roles women played.

For example, Jabour has written about the career of Sophonisba Breckinridge (1866-1948) in the USA, paying particular attention to the way she operated as a leader in early social work education. Breckinridge's academic achievements, including her work in research and her appointment as a Professor at the University of Chicago, as well as her roles in the establishment of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, her foundation of the journal *Social Service Review*, and her presidency of the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) are explored by Jabour. In doing so Jabour examined how Breckinridge used her relationships (both professional and

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<sup>94</sup> Anya Jabour, 'Relationship and Leadership: Sophonisba Breckinridge and Women in Social Work,' *Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work* 27, no. 1 (2012): 22-37; Iris Carlton-LaNey, 'The Importance of Place in the Life and Career of a Social Work Pioneer,' *Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work* 30, no. 1 (2015): 117-129; F. Ellen Netting, Mary Katherine O'Connor, David P. Fauri, D. Crystal Coles, and Amy Prorock-Ernest, 'Resurrecting Nannie Minor and Orie Hatcher,' *Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work* 30, no. 2 (2015): 259-269; Melita Richter-Malabotta, 'Life and Times of Tatjana Marinić – One of the Founders of the University Course in Social Work in Zagreb,' in *Need and Care: Glimpses into the Beginnings of Eastern Europe's Professional Welfare*, ed. Dagmar Schulte and Kurt Schilde (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2008); Darja Zavirsek, 'You Will Teach Them Some, Socialism Will Do the Rest!' History of Social Work Education in Slovenia During the Period 1940-1960,' in *Need and Care: Glimpses into the Beginnings of Eastern Europe's Professional Welfare*, ed. Dagmar Schulte and Kurt Schilde (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2008).

personal) with other women to create institutions, drive forward social policy and research and develop early social work education in the USA.<sup>95</sup>

Richter-Malabotta's biographical work on the life and career of Tatjana Marinić (1897-1966) explored the role which Marinić played in the development of social work education in Croatia. Richter-Malabotta charted Marinić's career through different phases: her involvement in politics as a feminist activist and an active member of the Communist party; in government where she worked in the Ministry for Social Policies, leading their work on child protection; and in developing social work education in Croatia, after she first studied abroad to gain the knowledge and skills to teach social work education in Croatia. Marinić's career culminated in her involvement in the foundation of the High Professional School for Social Workers in Zagreb in 1952, in which she was appointed Professor of Methodology of Social Work.<sup>96</sup>

These biographical articles and chapters record the lives of women in early social work education who were involved with politics, founded schools, institutions and organisations, developed and influenced social policy, led departments, undertook academic research and writing, developed courses and mentored the next generation of social workers, and social work educators. Their careers show they were pioneers and leaders.

As noted, similar biographical work has not been undertaken in the UK. The one biography of a woman in early social work education which has been written is about Eileen

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<sup>95</sup> Jabour, 'Relationship and Leadership.'

<sup>96</sup> Richter-Malabotta, 'Life and Times of Tatjana Marinić.'

Younghusband who was an important and influential figure.<sup>97</sup> However, while written by a social work academic, Kathleen Jones, the book can be critiqued. Jones was a friend of Younghusband and the book reads more as a series of summaries of reminiscences recorded following discussions with Younghusband than an academic biography. There are no references and so it is difficult to evaluate the sources and veracity of the information presented. Nor did the book place Younghusband in the wider social context of her time. It presented her actions and beliefs, but did not explore how these were shaped and formed within a societal context. Finally, it did not analyse the potential ways in which being a woman affected Younghusband's career. While interesting, Jones's work did not have the same level of analysis as the academic journal articles noted above, and therefore its contribution to broadening our understanding of women's roles in early social work education in the UK has been limited.

#### Limitations of the literature and gaps this thesis addresses:

This literature review has provided a summary of the current literature which is pertinent to my research, critically examining what has been researched and written on the history of social work education, women in social work, women in academia and specifically women in early social work education. As has been highlighted, the current literature on the history of social work education is narrowly focused on two-time periods – the origins of social work training, with a focus on the COS (at the expense of other organisations and institutions) and developments since the 1970s. Little work has been being undertaken which critiques

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<sup>97</sup> Kathleen Jones, *Eileen Younghusband: A Biography* (London: Bedford Square Press of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 1984).

these existing narratives, or broadens our knowledge and understanding of developments outwith these time periods or of institutions outside London. The small body of work which has been undertaken examining other regional institutions and developments has been considered and the importance of this work, and the ways in which it broadens our understanding of the development of social work education, has been highlighted. There is scope for considerable work to be done in this area, and this thesis makes a contribution to this, adding to the knowledge around the development of early social work education at the Edinburgh University between the years 1918 and 1968.

Furthermore, as has been demonstrated, the literature examining women in early social work education in the UK is very limited. Women have been characterised as holding lesser status positions in departments of social studies and focused on the practical, as opposed to academic, aspects of social work education. While it is accurate that women often held lesser status roles in departments, this portrayal is one-dimensional and does not reflect the many and varied ways in which women could be leaders and innovators in early social work education in the UK, as demonstrated by the careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne at Edinburgh University. Innovative biographical work from the USA, Croatia and Slovenia, has been highlighted which has demonstrated the more nuanced roles women played in early social work education. Similar work has not been undertaken for women in early social work education in the UK, and this thesis will begin to address this, through researching the early lives and careers of these three women.

### Chapter 3: Methodology Chapter

This chapter sets out in more detail the decisions which I have made both in regard to the theoretical framework and methodology for this research which is interdisciplinary, spanning social sciences and history. The methods for data analysis and collection will be outlined, detailing what was done and why, with both practical and ethical issues discussed. Finally, the limitations of this research will also be examined.

#### Theoretical framework:

My research draws on two theoretical traditions and their application in historical research: feminism and the social construction of gender. These theories have in turn contributed to the development of the fields of feminist history and gender history, respectively. My research is underpinned by both of these frameworks and by the analytical framework of intersectionality (which will also be discussed) as together they enable me to examine my two research objectives. To briefly summarise these again, the first objective is to undertake biographical research into the careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne because, as demonstrated in chapter 2, scant research has been undertaken regarding women working in social work education in the UK. The second objective is to explore the seeming dissonance between the gendered roles for women and men characterised in the literature on the history of social work education and the reality of the three women's careers. Theories relating to feminism and the social construction of gender are therefore relevant for my research, as I will now discuss. To do this I will begin by

exploring these theories through a chronology of their development and considering their use in research which is relevant to my own. I will then explore how these theories and their application to historical scholarship complement each other, before finally outlining how they have underpinned my own research.

### Feminist theory:

At its most fundamental level, feminist theory argues that women have been treated as unequal to men across all realms of private and public spaces, with the aim of understanding and changing this.<sup>98</sup> Part of the way in which feminists have sought to do this is through historical scholarship and the exploration of women's roles in history. As Sonya Rose highlights, it was not that women had been wholly absent from historical scholarship before this; rather, they had been viewed and presented in very specific terms – as saints or royalty, for example.<sup>99</sup> In other words, the only women who were portrayed were idealised and the lives of ordinary women had not been studied or written about.<sup>100</sup> In the UK, the process to redress this began as part of the first and second waves of feminism. Krista Cowman and Louise Jackson argue that during the first wave of feminism (in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century) this was primarily done by a small group of women academics at the LSE who researched and wrote about women's history. In doing so, these academics sought examples from periods of history when women had played different roles in society and used these to justify and provide models for women in the present to show

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<sup>98</sup> Marie Withers Osmond and Barrie Thorne, 'Feminist Theories: The Social Construction of Gender in Families and Society,' in *Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach*, ed. P. Boss et al. (New York: Springer, 2008).

<sup>99</sup> Sonya O. Rose, *What is Gender History?* (London: Hodder Education, 2004).

<sup>100</sup> Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, 'Introduction,' in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Hodder Mifflin Company, 1977): 1

that it was possible to fulfil different roles (for example, highlighting periods in history when men and women had been paid equally).<sup>101</sup> However, at this stage, women's history in the UK remained the preserve of a small group of academics.<sup>102</sup>

During the second wave of feminism (in the 1960s and 1970s), feminist historians argued that the largely absent role of women from written history was problematic and it became an important area for them to address as part of the feminist cause. This was because, until this time, it had been mainly men who had written history and they had written about areas of life where men had often been dominant.<sup>103</sup> This had not happened accidentally. As Rose argues:

What we know about the past is dependent upon the questions historians have asked and how they have answered them. What has been the focus of their interest? What have they deemed to be important to study about the past?<sup>104</sup>

Simply put, women and women's lives had not been deemed interesting or significant enough for historians (who had largely been men) to focus on and study. Feminist historians recognised this and during the 1960s and 1970s sought to uncover women in history as a means to redress this inequality, and to put 'women back in the historical picture, recognising and celebrating women's achievements which had been lost through the male domination of historical writing'.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson, 'Time,' in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, ed. Mary Eagleton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

<sup>102</sup> Laura Lee Downs, *Writing Gender History* (London: Hodder Education, 2004).

<sup>103</sup> Cowman and Jackson, 'Time.'

<sup>104</sup> Rose, *What is Gender History?:* 1

<sup>105</sup> Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992): 8

In order to do this, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz highlight that feminist historians had to grapple with and overcome challenges relating to existing source material. Many sources and archival documents had been written by men and were male-centred.<sup>106</sup> In other words, they focused on men, male experiences and perspectives, and/or the areas of life which men dominated. For example, Catherine Hall, writing about her research on middle-class women in Birmingham between the 1780s and 1840s, noted that she struggled to find anything about women in newspapers from the time. This was because, she realised, women were not supposed to be there – in that society it was men who were present in the public sphere (and the events which newspapers would report on), while women were in the domestic sphere and, consequently, their lives and experiences did not feature in newspapers.<sup>107</sup> They were therefore absent from this source material. It follows that the same can be said for other types of historical source material too. Consequently, in order to find out about the roles and experiences women had in the past, existing sources needed to be re-interpreted and new and different material had to be identified. This included letters, diaries, eye-witness accounts and oral histories.<sup>108</sup> Doing so enabled feminist historians to highlight women's roles in areas that had previously been viewed as the purview of men (like labour and politics). It also enabled research to be done in areas which had largely been neglected by historians – which were seen as more private arenas – such as childbirth and domestic violence.<sup>109</sup>

Rose argues that, while women's history did begin to enter the academy at this point, its acceptance varied geographically, with America being generally more open to it,

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<sup>106</sup> Bridenthal and Koonz, 'Introduction.'

<sup>107</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*.

<sup>108</sup> Bridenthal and Koonz, 'Introduction,'; Sherna Gluck, 'What's So Special About Women? Women's Oral History,' *A Journal of Women Studies* 2, no. 2 (1977): 3-17.

<sup>109</sup> Rose, *What is Gender History?*

while in the UK it took longer for the subject to gain academic acceptance and status.<sup>110</sup> In spite of this, as noted, feminist historical scholarship was viewed as an important part of the feminist cause because, as Bridenthal and Koonz argue, feminists (critical of their present situation) were working towards a more ideal future, but in order to do this they recognised the need to also work 'back into the past to understand the origins of sex-role stereotyping and of crippling patriarchy'.<sup>111</sup>

### Social Construction of Gender:

While these developments in feminist and women's history were taking place, sociologists had been questioning the concept that male and female characteristics were determined by biological sex. The view that there were natural and characteristic differences between men and women as a result of their biological sex had been widely held. Furthermore, the fact that these differences were deemed to be determined by their biological sex served to provide an explanation for why men and women held different roles in society, and was also a means to justify why this was acceptable and should continue.<sup>112</sup> However, these assumptions began to be questioned in the context of a wider debate on biological determinism – which was not restricted to sex but also considered ideas concerning race and class, for example – which had been taking place during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Rose, *What is Gender History?*

<sup>111</sup> Bridenthal and Koonz, 'Introduction.': 1

<sup>112</sup> Rose, *What is Gender History?*

<sup>113</sup> Chris Renwick, 'Eugenics, Population Research, and Social Mobility Studies in Early and Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain,' *Historical Journal* 59, no.3 (2016): 845-867.

The concept of gender began to be discussed in relation to male and female sex in the 1950s, with theories of social construction beginning to develop, including the sociological theory of the social construction of gender.<sup>114</sup> Essentially, this theory argues that what it means to be a man or a woman has not been biologically but socially constructed, and it sought to examine how these roles were constructed – both consciously and unconsciously – in society, as well as how individuals were socialised into these roles.<sup>115</sup> This theoretical concept began to be taken up by a number of different academic disciplines. During the late 1970s and early 1980s feminists used the theory that gender is socially constructed to challenge ideas that there was anything innate about differences between men and women. They argued that, rather than being innately different, male and female characteristics were in fact socially constructed to keep women in positions of subordination (to men), and they began to use ‘the term of “gender” to refer to the social construction of sex differences’.<sup>116</sup> This is the understanding and use of the term gender which underpins my research and is used throughout this thesis (in contrast to the current debates which are taking place regarding gender, which are different).

### Intersectionality:

Against a backdrop of these developments, Laura Lee Downs argues that some feminist historians began to consider that by focusing on women’s history they may, in fact, be promoting the continuing marginalisation of women by keeping them in a separate sphere,

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<sup>114</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, ‘A History of “Gender”,’ *American Historical Review* 113, no. 12 (2008): 1346-1356.

<sup>115</sup> Judith Lorber, ‘The Social Construction of Gender,’ in *Inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. David B. Grunsky and Jasmine Hill (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>116</sup> Meyerowitz, ‘A History of “Gender”’: 1346

and in opposition to men (although some continued to view work which focused on women as crucial).<sup>117</sup> There was also a growing recognition that there was no single women's narrative, but that different women had different experiences across time and societies.<sup>118</sup> This understanding is central to the analytical framework of intersectionality, which argues that there are numerous social divisions at work within individual lives, including gender, class, sexuality etc., and that these come together in different ways and with different consequences for different people.

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge discuss the importance of intersectionality for historical scholarship and learning, arguing that historical studies can often divide people into specific categories (such as men and women, or children and adults), and that this can favour particular groups or stories at the expense of others. Intersectionality can help us understand 'that major axes of social divisions in a given society at a given time, for example, race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, and age operate not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but build on each other and work together'.<sup>119</sup> Having this understanding means we can recognise the fact that, for example, while it is often characterised that women did not work in Victorian Britain, many working-class women did. Therefore, intersectionality allows for a deeper recognition and understanding of the complexities of people's lives.<sup>120</sup>

This is relevant for my research as social class was a key division for women in early social work education. While middle-class women faced barriers to accessing university level education and professional jobs, their elevated social class and financial status meant

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<sup>117</sup> Downs, *Writing Gender History*.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

that they could overcome these more easily than working-class women. Women did not all share the same experiences, and indeed the way in which social divisions interacted could see middle-class women push for increased rights for themselves, while at the same time continuing to act in ways which restricted the rights of working-class women. The role of social class in social work and early social work education has been discussed in chapter 2, and will be highlighted throughout this thesis, with the central point being that an awareness of the intersection of gender and social class is crucial to the context of the three women's careers and their achievements.

### Gender History:

We have seen that in the early 1980s there was a recognition that there was no single women's narrative. At the same time, it was also recognised that focusing purely on women's history may contribute to their continued marginalisation. Consequently, some historians began to consider how concepts of the construction of gender in history as well as other categories of social hierarchies, such as class and race, could be used in historical analysis.<sup>121</sup> While a number of academics began to do this, it was arguably Joan Scott's widely read and highly cited article of 1986: 'Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis' that brought this concept to a wider audience.<sup>122</sup> Scott argued that, in order to really gain an understanding of the inequalities of the past, historians needed to analyse how gendered roles and assumptions had been constructed and applied. This was not merely a way in which to explore how gendered constructions had negatively affected women, but also how

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<sup>121</sup> Downs, *Writing Gender History*.

<sup>122</sup> Meyerowitz, "'A History of "Gender".'

they had been used to create and sustain hierarchies (and consequently how they have been used in relation to power). Essentially, using gender as an analytical tool enabled researchers to examine much more than focusing on women's experiences alone.<sup>123</sup>

Scott emphasised the role which discourse and language played in the construction of gender – how do people discuss themselves and their experiences, how has language been used to shape meaning and to signify differences, and what can these things tell us?<sup>124</sup> Scott has been criticised, in particular for her focus on language and her argument that 'it is language which constructs meaning, rather than reflecting it'.<sup>125</sup> Some scholars chose to focus on discourse when working on gender history, but this is not required for gender to be successfully used as a category of historical analysis. Using gender and exploring its social construction enables researchers to examine assumptions around the roles of men and women played, how these were propagated and sustained, and how these shifted over time. This is important because, Rose has argued, gender and its social construction are not static. As a concept, gender has a history which shifts across different periods of time and societies, and this has historical significance.<sup>126</sup>

It is helpful to explore some examples of how gender history has been utilised by scholars, in order to demonstrate its potential for research. Rose, for example, explored how gendered assumptions around the roles of women and men in the English hosiery industry (1850-1910) had been constructed and sustained to promote segregation between the roles men and women could fulfil, but also crucially how these had shifted across time in

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<sup>123</sup> Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,' *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.; Cowman and Jackson, 'Time.'

<sup>125</sup> Meyerowitz, 'A History of "Gender"'; Catherine Hall, 'Thematic Reviews: Politics, Post-Structuralism and Feminist History,' *Gender & History* 3, no. 2 (1991): 204-210: 205

<sup>126</sup> Rose, *What is Gender History?*

response to the changing social and political context. Rose charted how, at the start of this time period, men and women working in the hosiery industry were paid as a family unit for the work they produced largely in their own dwellings (the putting-out of garments), but as mechanisation came to the industry production increasingly moved to the factories, and workers had to physically go there to do their jobs. As a result, they were no longer seen to be operating as a family unit, but as individuals, and were paid as such. Men and women began to be pitted against each other for jobs (and the wages that went with them) which led men to seek to justify their claims for higher pay through the assertion that women were not capable of operating the more technical machinery, but instead only fit to undertake the finishing and repair work for the garments (work which was paid at a low rate as it was deemed less skilled). Therefore, Rose's work uncovered how gendered assumptions around roles in the industry changed over time, and how gendered roles began to be constructed to characterise women as less able and less skilled than men. This ultimately led to women having less power in relation to their employment and earning capacity than men in the industry.<sup>127</sup>

Another example is the work of Mary Poovey, who demonstrated that, while notions of gender in mid-Victorian England have been portrayed as rigid, in fact she found they were unstable and subject to constant challenge and change. The development of anaesthetic and its use in childbirth, for example, was shown by Poovey to encompass arguments between doctors and religious ministers and churches about the framing of whether childbirth was a religious or a secular experience, about male doctors asserting their scientific superiority over female midwives, and about the status of male obstetricians

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<sup>127</sup> Sonya O. Rose, 'Gender Segregation in the Transition to the Factory: The English Hosiery Industry, 1850-1910,' *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 1 (1987): 163-184.

compared to other doctors who were members of medical Royal Colleges.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, we see that by examining the social construction of gender, its implications and uses, researchers can consider the complexities of the roles of men and women and the relationship of these to wider societal issues.

### Relevance for my research:

Both of these theoretical frameworks – feminism and the social construction of gender – and their contribution to feminist history and gender history, underpin my research. While debates within history and other areas have seen the field shift to encompass the broader concept of gender in examining historical periods, events and people, this does not mean that a feminist standpoint is no longer relevant. Indeed, Laura Abrams and Laura Currans argue that because of social work's strong association with women from its earliest origins (as discussed in chapter 2), and because so much of social work has been about interactions between women (as workers and clients) this is a field that is particularly important for feminist historians.<sup>129</sup> More broadly, Leonora Davidoff *et al.* argue that feminist historians have done pioneering work to uncover women's history in many countries. Crucially, 'this work does and must continue'.<sup>130</sup>

My research is part of that continuing work, drawing on the feminist approach to history which argues that women were often neglected in historical research and writing, and that this needs to be redressed. In relation to the history of early social work education

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<sup>128</sup> Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Women in Culture and Society. Edited by Catharine R. Stimpson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>129</sup> Abrams and Curran, 'Between Women.'

<sup>130</sup> Leonora Davidoff, K. McClelland and E. Varikas, 'Preface,' in *Gender and History: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Leonora Davidoff, K. McClelland and E. Varikas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000): ix

in the UK my argument is that this work has not been done. As discussed in chapter 2, scant biographical research on the lives and careers of women working in social work education in the UK has been undertaken. We therefore know very little about the lives and careers of the women involved, the roles they played or the contributions they made. Consequently, this thesis uncovers, recognises and celebrates the careers and roles of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne as a first step towards redressing this situation.

Whilst Abrams and Curran recognise the significance of feminist historical scholarship for the history of social work, they also argue that gender history scholarship likewise has an important role in relation to social work because it 'poses new questions, applies new lenses to older questions, and considers a range of primary source materials'.<sup>131</sup> In short, they conclude that these frameworks can complement each other. In terms of gender history and its use of the social construction of gender as a category of analysis, this is also relevant for my research. As we saw in chapter 2 the literature on women (and men) in the history of social work education in the UK is characterised by gendered assumptions. Women are represented as holding lower status roles in university departments, and being focused on practical training, while men are represented as leaders of university departments and focused on academic training. Examining these characterisations in terms of the social construction of gender explores why these assumptions were constructed and how they were sustained.

Furthermore, we saw in chapter 2 that social work as an academic discipline has been viewed ambivalently by the academy because of its association with women. By utilising gender as a category of analysis my research can also examine how gendered

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<sup>131</sup> Abrams and Curran, 'Between Women.': 340

assumptions and constructions had an effect at an institutional level (Edinburgh University). In other words, do we find that the university treated the Department of Social Study differently because of social work's association with women? If so, what did this mean for the development of social work education?

Therefore, while at times my research is underpinned by these theoretical frameworks separately, at other times they are used in combination. For example, without seeking to pre-empt my findings, in chapter 6 I explore the social work research undertaken by Marjorie Brown. There has been very little work undertaken on the history of social work research in the UK, and particularly the role women played in this field. My research uncovers (for the first time) the work Marjorie Brown did, but also examines why gendered constructions meant she was not given recognition for her work. We see in this example (and others throughout the thesis) that these two frameworks – feminism and the social construction of gender – can be used together to understand and explain research problems. My research therefore can be summarised as being feminist history which draws on concepts of the social construction of gender in my scholarship. The combination of these theoretical frameworks is also appropriate in relation to my methodology – collective biography. This is because the findings from my biographical research into the careers of each of the three women (underpinned by a feminist historical framework) can be brought together collectively and used to explore how they challenge gendered representations of women in social work education, and how these representations shifted over time. I will now go on to set out the methodology used in my research.

## Methodology:

### Collective biography approach:

The methodology used for my research is a collective biography approach. Collective biography is a methodology of historical scholarship that focuses on individuals but also sets them within the context of a wider group. Cowman notes that collective biography is a particularly effective approach for researching the lives of previously marginalised groups in historical research, such as women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and children, for example. For members of these groups there are often fewer historical records and documents available and so by exploring the group, as well as the individual, a fuller picture can be drawn up.<sup>132</sup> A central strength of the collective biography approach is that it enables gaps in history to be researched and written about, as this thesis is doing for women in early social work education.

Utilising a collective biography approach for my research means undertaking biographical research using both documentary sources and oral history interviews in relation to each of the three women individually with a focus on their careers in the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. The wider social, economic and political contexts which were relevant to the women's lives, and careers will also be examined in the chapters on each of the women. Biographical work has not been previously undertaken for any of the three women. This research therefore addresses the gap in our knowledge about the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education in the UK highlighted in the previous chapter. Limited research has been undertaken on the history of social work education in Scotland, and so this research is particularly pertinent

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<sup>132</sup> Cowman, 'Collective Biography.'

because it examines the women's careers at Edinburgh University. As discussed above, this biographical work uncovers, recognises and analyses the lives and careers of the three women, all of whom, as will be evidenced, were strong, capable leaders in their field.

Themes and commonalities that emerge from the individual women's biographies will be identified and discussed in the final chapter, in order to analyse what they can collectively tell us about gender in early social work education. This will involve examining the ways in which the social construction of gender created new opportunities for middle-class women in early social work education, but also the limitations which were placed on them by how gender roles were perceived and re-enforced. The women's responses to this will be examined, in order to create a deeper understanding of the role of gender in early social work education. Again, in order to do this both documentary sources and oral history interviews were utilised. These will each now be discussed in turn.

#### Documentary analysis methodology:

Because of the time period being researched (1918-1968) the majority of data have been collected from documentary sources. All three women died over thirty years ago, with the last, Megan Browne, dying in 1993. Nobody still alive has been identified who can remember Nora Milnes. A small number of people who remember Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne have been identified, the majority of whom were their students in the 1960s. Therefore, while interviews have been used to collect data where possible, the main focus of this research has been on documentary sources. Amanda Coffey argues that documents have a key role to play in qualitative research, because they can be a considerable source of data about both individual people and society. However,

researchers need to think broadly about what constitutes a document as they can come in many forms – from official records to letters and diaries, from social media to newspaper articles and pictures. Anything which documents aspects of people’s lives can be considered as a documentary source.<sup>133</sup>

As well as thinking broadly about what constitutes a document, Lindsay Prior argues that researchers need to analyse not just what is written in the documents themselves, but how and why the documents were produced in the first place, by whom, and what this can tell us.<sup>134</sup> Coffey emphasises the importance of considering who has written a document, because both individual authors and organisations have opinions, standpoints and motivations. Documents are subjective and what the author(s) sought to achieve or convey by producing the document is a central aspect of the data we can glean from it.<sup>135</sup> However, while utilising documents offers much scope to researchers, it is important to note the limitations of using documents for research. Coffey warns researchers that while documents can tell us much, they cannot tell us everything.<sup>136</sup> For example, Pat Starkey advises that: ‘Minutes of meetings are generally carefully phrased so as to give an account of the principal elements of discussion and the decisions taken; they often fail to record arguments and tensions’.<sup>137</sup>

The vast majority of documents accessed and analysed for my research are held in archives. Archives, however, like documents, need to be viewed critically, as Caroline Skehill

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<sup>133</sup> Amanda Coffey, 'Analysing Documents,' in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick (London: SAGE Publications, 2013).

<sup>134</sup> Lindsay Prior, 'Using Documents in Social Research,' in *Qualitative Research*, ed. David Silverman, (London: SAGE, 2016).

<sup>135</sup> Coffey, 'Analysing Documents,'; Pat Starkey, 'Archival Resources for Social Work History,' in *Innovations in Social Work Research: Using Methods Creatively*, eds. L Hardwick, R Smith and A Worsley (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2016).

<sup>136</sup> Coffey, 'Analysing Documents.'

<sup>137</sup> Starkey, 'Archival Resources for Social Work History.': 87

and Starkey remind researchers. Archives have been created and curated in certain ways and for specific purposes. They may be incomplete, or be missing key items – something which may be accidental or deliberate. Researchers need to remember this and analyse their material with this in mind.<sup>138</sup> For example, Megan Browne's papers were donated to the Department of Social Study archive at the CRC as part of the Wellcome Trust funded project, and have subsequently been used for my research. It must be remembered that these were documents which Megan Browne had already made decisions about keeping, and she may have discarded some personal and professional documents. These documents were then left to the Executor of her Estate, who donated them to the CRC, after first sifting through these and making further decisions about which ones to donate. The archivist at the CRC furthermore made decisions about which of the donated documents to keep and which to discard. Therefore, we see in this example that a number of decisions about retaining or discarding documents are likely to have been made throughout the process of documents being made available in archives, and researchers need to bear this in mind.

Liz Stanley argues consequently that researchers need to view an archive as a whole, as well as using it to access individual documents. It should be approached in a systematic manner, with the researcher taking notes of what the archive holds, in a sense archiving the archive. What is included – and excluded – should be examined, in addition to how the archivist has catalogued it, as this informs researchers about what the archivist has deemed to be its important (and, by implication, unimportant) features. Researchers should also be aware of scale, and the potential to become almost lost in an archive. Stanley, therefore,

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<sup>138</sup> Caroline Skehill, 'The Development of Child Welfare Services in the Republic of Ireland 1900-1950. A Case Study in Archival Research in Historical Analysis,' in *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and Their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations*, eds. S. Hering and B. Waaldijk (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003); Starkey, 'Archival Resources for Social Work History.'

advises the researcher to scope an archive before they dive into examining individual documents (as tempting as this may be) in order to ensure they have the time to see everything they need to.<sup>139</sup> I utilised these techniques for my research in visits to both physical archives, but also when accessing archives online. The actual method used to analyse documents for my research will be discussed in the methods section below.

### Oral history methodology:

Oral history interviews were undertaken because this methodology enabled the recollections of the interviewees regarding both Marjorie Brown and Megan Brown as professional women to be explored. Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack argue that the focus of oral history interviews is not collecting facts. Rather, its purpose is to explore people's recollections and narratives, and the aspects of these which they place emphasis on.<sup>140</sup> Researchers are able to explore what interviewees remember as being important or significant and to examine how these events, people, or feelings are framed by the interviewees. Lynn Abrams argues that in oral history in particular, the researcher is actively looking for the subjective – what are people's views, biases, and assumptions and how are these voiced?<sup>141</sup> In turn, this also allows researchers to consider the wider social context of people's narratives.

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<sup>139</sup> Liz Stanley, 'Archival Methodology inside the Black Box: Noise in the Archive!' in *The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences*, eds. Niamh Moore, Andrea Salter, Liz Stanley and Maria Tamboukou (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>140</sup> Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses,' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>141</sup> Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2016).

One critique of oral history has been its reliance on people's memories being accurate, which cannot be guaranteed. Paul Thompson however argues that this is partly the point of oral history. It is interested in the very possibility that memory can be selective, and change over time. It is by examining what people remember, but also what people do not remember, perhaps deliberately, by considering the distortion of memory and what people choose not to talk about, that insights can also be gained.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, the potential for inaccuracy is not restricted to oral history. How far any source is a completely accurate reflection of events can be challenged and, as noted previously, it is the subjective nature of events which is of interest in oral history.<sup>143</sup>

Additionally, oral history methodology is pertinent for my research as it has been utilised by feminists as a means of challenging what has been traditionally considered as historically important. As noted above, Sherna Gluck contends that many documents in the past related to men and the aspects of life men placed importance on. Women's lives and the details of them were often not recorded because they did not fulfil prominent public roles (although some women did), but rather had more domestically-focused roles.<sup>144</sup> Gluck and Daphne Patai argue that oral history provides a methodology for feminists to address this imbalance by seeking out women's stories and experiences. Oral history can be used to explore, record and highlight the lives of women which have previously been unnoticed or disregarded.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, Caroline Daley argues that oral history provides researchers with the opportunity to examine the narrative means by which men and women present their experiences, and what we can surmise from this about gender and how it operates:

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<sup>142</sup> Paul Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*; Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.

<sup>144</sup> Gluck, 'What's So Special About Women? Women's Oral History.'

<sup>145</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, 'Introduction,' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991).

‘What women remember and retell, and how they tell it, tells us much about their individual experiences and their understanding of their own cultural place within their community’.<sup>146</sup>

Methods: data collection and analysis:

Data collection: documentary sources:

The documentary sources used in this research are a combination of the women’s published writing, speeches, reports, newspaper articles, research publications, government documents, and letters. Most of these documents are held in archives, which will be discussed below. However, some are more publicly available in libraries, while a small number are held by individuals who agreed for them to be used for this research, although these individuals retained the original documents.

As discussed in the introduction, a Wellcome Trust grant was awarded to the CRC in 2018 to catalogue the archives of the School of Social Study and Training and later Department of Social Study. My work as a Research Assistant afforded me an intimate knowledge of these documents, which has been invaluable for my research. These documents are wide ranging and relate to the school, and then Department of Social Study, including Minute Books, Board of Studies records, student records, research project notes, conference notes, academic papers and many other miscellaneous documents. Few are of a personal nature, as might be expected, given that the department was a work-place. Yet,

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<sup>146</sup> Caroline Daley, ‘“He Would Know, but I Just Have a Feeling”’: Gender and Oral History,’ *Women’s History Review* 7, no. 3 (1998): 343-359: 344

much can still be gleaned about the personalities of the three women, as well as their professional personas.

In addition to the documents held at the CRC, numerous other archives in the UK and America were identified, and their catalogues searched in order to identify and access relevant documents. A full list of these archives is noted in the Appendix 1. Without using documents, the research for this thesis would not have been possible. However, using documents also brought challenges. I am a part-time student, and began my PhD studentship in 2016. I had begun the data collection process, and completed this for Nora Milnes by the time the COVID-19 pandemic began, but the impact of restrictions from March 2020 did affect my research to a certain extent. Virtually overnight, visits to access documents relating to Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were no longer feasible. Many archives have online search functions; it was, therefore, possible to identify those which held relevant documents. Individual archivists in many of the archives contacted during this time were extremely helpful and retrieved and scanned relevant documents for me. Without this assistance the data collection could not have continued, and there was a time during 2020/2021 when data collection was disrupted. However, by and large, this process was only slowed down, and it did not stop completely.

The documents I accessed numbered well over one thousand. Archives have different rules about accessing material, and therefore the method for capturing and storing the data from the documents needed to be adapted depending on the individual archive. Where possible, photographs of the documents were taken on-site and transferred to a laptop. A data management plan was developed with a coding system for the documentary data. Each document was assigned a code which allowed identification and retrieval from

the laptop. If taking photographs was not possible, written notes were made, copying sections which were deemed relevant verbatim. While the majority of data analysis happened at a later stage, Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin argue that the data analysis process actually begins in the data collection stage, and they warn researchers to be aware of the decisions they make at this stage as these shape the research projector and research findings.<sup>147</sup> This was helpful for me to bear in mind as I did find myself making decisions about which documents I should read and what I should 'discard' when I was searching through archives.

#### Data collection: Oral history interviews:

As noted, the vast majority of the data collected and analysed for this research was documentary. However, the importance of oral history and, specifically, the memories of key individuals who remember Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne, should not be minimised. In order to generate and collect data from these people, I undertook oral history interviews. The term 'generate' is used because these were new data which had not been recorded or collected before (in contrast to the data in the documents). In total five oral history interviews were undertaken. While this number may seem small, these five interviews generated high quality data that were extremely relevant to the research project. One individual, who both studied and worked in the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University between the years of 1962 and 1991, proved to be particularly important in terms of the interviews. This was not only in relation to what she said in the

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<sup>147</sup> Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1995).

interview, but also as a key gate-keeper who was able to put me in touch with others whom I might approach to interview.

The process of arranging and undertaking the interviews was complicated by the ill-health and death of other potential interviewees and by the COVID-19 pandemic. One former staff member who had expressed willingness to be interviewed became unwell and was no longer able to give informed consent to be interviewed. Another professional who had worked with Megan Browne was contacted, but unfortunately was ill and died soon afterwards. While one interview was undertaken in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 delayed further interviews significantly due to restrictions around meeting up with people. On reflection, these delays had some positive aspects to them. This enabled a focus on the collection, and analysis, of documentary data, and by the time it was possible to undertake the interviews I had gained a greater understanding of the women's careers. This in turn meant that the topics explored in the interviews were more refined and relevant. The interviews were semi-structured. An interview schedule was developed and utilised (see Appendix 3), although this was used flexibly as both Thompson and Gluck urge researchers to be adaptable and to be willing to listen to what the interviewee wants to talk about, as it is likely this will be something that is of importance to them.<sup>148</sup>

Three of the interviews took place in-person, while two took place on Microsoft Teams online as these interviewees lived outwith Edinburgh. All the interviews were audio recorded on a dictaphone (the two online interviews were not recorded visually) and permission was given for these interviews to be used for my research (this will be discussed in more detail in the ethical considerations section of this chapter). Until recently, online

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<sup>148</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History*; Gluck, 'What's So Special About Women? Women's Oral History.'

technologies (such as Zoom, MS Teams etc.) were not widely used in research. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to their rapid adoption as a means to conduct interviews when restrictions were in place. Research into their use suggests that, while there are some limitations, these technologies can largely make a positive contribution. For example, research undertaken by Valerie Lo Iacono *et al.*, Sally Seitz, and Mandy Archibald *et al.* found that the limitations of these technologies mainly related to the potential for technology to fail or connectivity through the internet to be poor.<sup>149</sup> They had hypothesised that rapport building between interviewer and interviewee might be harder to build online, but their research found that this was not the case. The exception to this was found by Seitz to be during instances when connectivity had been poor, or picture quality blurred, in which case relationships had been more difficult to build.<sup>150</sup> The benefits of using an online forum for qualitative interviews were recognised, with Archibald *et al.* finding that this was particularly the case when interviewer and interviewee were separated by large geographical distances.<sup>151</sup>

#### Data analysis: documentary sources:

As discussed above, data need to be interpreted and analysed in order to gain insights from them. In relation to documents, Stanley notes that: 'Documents, whatever their kind or type, and whether written or oral or visual, do not 'speak for themselves' but were

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<sup>149</sup> Valeria Lo Iacono, Paul Symonds and David H.K. Brown, 'Skype as a Tool for Qualitative Research Interviews,' *Sociological Research Online* 21, no. 2 (2016): 1103-1117; Sally Seitz, 'Pixilated Partnerships, Overcoming Obstacles in Qualitative Interviews Via Skype: A Research Note,' *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 2 (2016): 229-235; Mandy M. Archibald, Rachel C. Ambagtsheer, Mavourneen G. Casey and Michael Lawless, 'Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants,' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (2019): 1-8.

<sup>150</sup> Seitz, 'Pixilated Partnerships.'

<sup>151</sup> Archibald *et al.*, 'Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection.'

produced purposively, from a particular viewpoint or position, and their author/s had particular purposes in mind'.<sup>152</sup> In order to analyse these factors Stanley devised a documentary analysis toolkit which requires the researcher to focus on the context, pre-text, text and inter-texts and post-text of documents. The context is the circumstances in which the document was written, including the wider social context of the time. The pre-text is the immediate circumstances prior to the production of the document. The text and inter-text are what is actually written, how it is structured, who it is written to, who will read it and what other documents it refers or relates to. Finally, the post-text is how it was used or what happened as a result of the document.<sup>153</sup> This toolkit was chosen to analyse the documents for this thesis because by examining these elements of the documents a far richer picture can emerge which enables patterns that existed over a long period of time to be identified. This has been especially informative in relation to the role which gender played in early social work education, as will be shown in the subsequent chapters.

#### Data analysis: oral history interviews:

Once the interviews were complete the audio files were transferred to a password-protected Edinburgh University laptop (in line with university guidance at this time). Cindy Bird encourages researchers to think about the transcription process and the implications of how you do this, and why, for your research.<sup>154</sup> Abrams discusses the types of analysis that can be used for oral history interviewee data, including narrative analysis, which can focus

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<sup>152</sup> Stanley, 'Archival Methodology inside the Black Box: Noise in the Archive!': 54

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Cindy M. Bird, 'How I Stopped Dreading and Learned to Love Transcription,' *Qualitative Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (2005): 226-248.

on the language and syntax or on the way in which narratives are structured and formed by interviewees.<sup>155</sup> However, the aim of the interview data for this my research was not to analyse how the interviewees used language, for example. Rather, it was to identify the memories they place importance on, and those they did not, and what this can tell us about Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne. In relation to the transcription process this meant that while words were transcribed verbatim – and long pauses, humour and strong feeling within the text were recorded – details of every pause, or the length of them were not transcribed, for example. Judith Lapadat and Anne Lindsay remind researchers that the process that of transcription, like the retrieval of documents in an archive, involves analysis, and researchers make decisions about what they have heard in the interview, and what to record, for example.<sup>156</sup> The process of reflection during this process helped me to consider the role which I, as the researcher, had in the process of knowledge creation and analysis.

The oral history data were analysed using thematic analysis. After the interviews had all been transcribed, written transcripts were utilised to code the data. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDA) tools for analysing the interview data were not used. Jamie Harding discusses the advantages of using CAQDA. For example, they can be especially supportive in analysing large data sets. However for smaller data sets, such as the one for this thesis, it can be beneficial for the researcher to code the data themselves as this enables them to become more familiar with it.<sup>157</sup> This was valuable for this data set as the first interview had been undertaken and transcribed three years before the others (due to

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<sup>155</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.

<sup>156</sup> Judith C. Lapadat, and Anne C. Lindsay, 'Transcription in Research and Practice: From Standardization of Technique to Interpretive Positionings,' *Qualitative Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (1999): 64-86.

<sup>157</sup> Jamie Harding, *Qualitative Data Analysis: From Start to Finish* (Los Angeles: SAGE publications, 2018).

the pandemic). Therefore, coding all the transcripts at the same time allowed me the opportunity to gain an overview of all the data together.

Lyn Richards notes that the purpose of coding data is to identify wider themes which emerge. Researchers can then refine these themes further and/or examine how different concepts with a theme are presented. Are some negative, and others positive? Can patterns about the theme be identified? And what do these representations tell researchers about the topic?<sup>158</sup> For my research, each interview transcript was coded separately and fully by itself. Once each transcript had been coded individually and themes identified, the commonality of themes across the interview transcripts was then analysed. Data on common themes were brought together so they could be analysed and further categorised.<sup>159</sup> Some themes emerged in only one interview, such as wider societal changes, while others emerged in all five interviews, such as generic social work. Questions had been posed in the interviews about specific themes – such as generic social work and gender – and so it was not surprising that these came through in the interview data. Yet, themes also emerged which were not asked about and which, to be honest, were not expected – such as patronage, hierarchies and networks.

Richards encourages researchers to note tensions within the coding process as these can provide deeper insights in the analytical process.<sup>160</sup> Tensions did indeed become clear in the process of coding the interview data: for example, relating to how the interviewee viewed a person or situation. This might be positive for one, negative for another and

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<sup>158</sup> Lyn Richards, *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE, 2009).

<sup>159</sup> Harding, *Qualitative Data Analysis: From Start to Finish*.

<sup>160</sup> Richards, *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*.

ambivalent for a third. These tensions and what they tell us proved to be very informative and they will be returned to in the discussion chapter.

### Ethical considerations:

The vast majority of documentary sources utilised for this thesis are held in archives. The decision around access to these documents, including ethical decisions, have consequently been taken by the archivists who manage these archives. Due to the time period being researched, many of the relevant documents were openly accessible to researchers. Data Protection and GDPR legislation and guidelines are often the deciding factor archivists take into account in making decisions about access to documents, and these stipulations offer significant protection to personal data when someone is alive. However, the Data Protection Act does not apply to deceased people. For example, in its 'Archives and Data Protection law in the UK – an overview', The National Archives states that: 'Public use of 'archived' personal data will generally be possible once the people concerned are dead, and may be possible earlier if the use is fair to the individuals in the records'.<sup>161</sup> Therefore, ethical approval from Edinburgh University was not needed to access documents.

However, ethical approval was required in order to undertake the oral history interviews. A submission for ethical approval was therefore submitted to the School of Social and Political Science (where I am registered as a student). Ethical approval to undertake the interviews using oral history methodology was given in 2019. The rationale behind the use of oral history had to be set out clearly in the ethics submission as social

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<sup>161</sup> 'Archives and Data Protection Law in the UK – an Overview,' The National Archives, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/legislation/archives-data-protection-law-uk/overview/>

science interviews tend to work with the rule that interviewees remain anonymous, while with oral history the identification of the interviewee is the norm.

While anonymity is appropriate for many research topics, especially more sensitive subjects, my research was seeking to elicit people's recollections about the careers of women who worked in an academic department in a university. The three women's work and academic lives are a matter of public record and feature, for example, on Edinburgh University's Social Work Centenary Project website.<sup>162</sup> The Wellcome Trust funded archiving project which took place in 2018-2020 (noted previously) meant that there was the potential for the oral histories to be deposited with the wider social work archive at the CRC and thus enrich the archive held there for future researchers. The ethical guidelines for oral history interviews set out by the Oral History Society guided the design of the consent and storage forms and information sheet given to potential interviewees (see Appendix 2).

The UK Oral History Society has identified the principles that oral history interviewees should have their confidentiality respected, even if they are not anonymous, and that participants should be treated as 'intelligent beings' who can make their own decisions about how the information they provide can be used.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, while anonymity is not the norm in oral history interviews, this was offered as an option for interviewees, and they were also able to choose whether or not to deposit their interview with the archive at the CRC. From the five interviewees, two chose to remain anonymous, and they will be referred to by a pseudonym in this thesis. The three other interviewees all consented to be named and they will be referred to by their names when the interview findings are discussed. Four of the interviewees agreed that their interviews could be

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<sup>162</sup> 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>163</sup> 'Legal and Ethical Preparation,' Oral History Society, last accessed 15th March 2023, <http://www.ohs.org.uk/legal-and-ethical-advice/legal-and-ethical-preparation>

deposited with the CRC and be accessed by future researchers, while one stipulated that the data could only be used for this my PhD research. Initial discussions with the CRC around depositing the interviews took place in 2018 and Grant Buttars (Collections Archivist, CRC) gave approval for this to take place. The process for depositing these interviews will be revisited once this thesis has been submitted.

### Limitations of my research:

This research has been undertaken with an understanding, rooted in feminist scholarship, that research is not impartial or value free, because everybody – researchers and subjects – have a subjective view of themselves and others which influences how they view the world and interact with it.<sup>164</sup> As Cowman argues, specifically in relation to biographical research, the researcher is presenting a subjective take on what happened.<sup>165</sup> Consequently, all research will have limitations, as it will never be able to present one definitive account. It therefore follows that my research will not produce a definitive account of women in the history of early social work education – that is simply not possible. Rather, my research draws out and highlights a number of important aspects of the three women’s careers, which demonstrate that women could occupy broader roles in early social work education than is currently reflected in the literature.

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<sup>164</sup> Maria Mies, ‘Towards a methodology for Feminist Research,’ in *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice* ed. M. Hammersely (London: Sage, 1993); Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking out again: feminist ontology and epistemology* (London: Routledge, 1993); Katherine R. Allen, ‘Janet Saltzman Chafetz Plenary Discussant Comments,’ *Journal of Family Affairs* 25, no. 7 (2004): 984-989; Lorraine Code, ‘Feminist Epistemology and the politics of knowledge: questions of marginality,’ in *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory* eds. M. Evans et al. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014); Gayle Letherby, ‘Feminist Auto/Biography,’ in *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory* eds. M. Evans et al (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014): 45-60.

<sup>165</sup> Cowman, ‘Collective Biography.’

Being aware of the impact of subjectivity on the research process is important for researchers, and can be facilitated through the use of reflexivity.<sup>166</sup> Gayle Letherby encourages researchers to utilise reflexivity in examining their research process – thinking about, for example, which documents have I chosen to use, and which have I chosen to discard, and why? What are the implications of these decisions, and will the choices I make reinforce or challenge existing narratives?<sup>167</sup> Reflexivity has been very valuable for me, especially in relation to some of the less positive aspects of the women’s careers and actions. My research has been based on an argument that challenges the dominant narrative about women in early social work education, in order to positively expand it. Yet, I also recognise that, while my aim has been to uncover and highlight the three women’s achievements, my research found that they sought to exclude other women in order to protect the status of social work education. This has, quite honestly, been a difficult realisation. But if I had chosen not to document this finding, in order to present purely positive findings, this would have done an injustice to those who were negatively affected – and they also deserve to have their experience recognised.

In terms of the limitations of my research, one was the available data. While numerous documentary sources were available, across a number of archives, there is no escaping the fact that it was not possible to interview the key people for my research – Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne – because they have all died. As noted already, some people I would like to have interviewed about the women were either no longer able to give informed consent, or had died; this was frankly disappointing. As a result, I have had

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<sup>166</sup> Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet, ‘Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis,’ *Sociology* 37, no. 3 (2003): 413-431; Teresa Brannick and David Coghlan, ‘In Defense of Being “Native”: The Case for Insider Academic Research,’ *Organizational Research Methods* 10, no. 1 (2007): 59-74.

<sup>167</sup> Letherby, ‘Feminist Auto/Biography.’

to triangulate my methods, which in turn led to a significant amount of work searching for, and accessing, different documentary material (which was held across a number of archives and repositories) with more tangential links to the three women, in addition to the most obvious ones.

My research has focused on one institution and geographical location – Edinburgh University. My findings, therefore, cannot be said to represent the experience of all women in early social work education across the UK, although as discussed, it would never be possible for my research, or indeed anybody else's, to provide a definitive account. However, their careers demonstrate that it was possible for women to occupy leadership roles, and do so successfully, as well as to produce academic writing, undertake research and shape national policy and legislation. Further research examining the careers of other women in early social work education is required to further uncover the diverse roles women could, and did, play elsewhere in the UK.

It must also be acknowledged that the three women represent a limited demographic picture. They are all white, middle-class, and we assume able-bodied women (although, as we know, not all disabilities are visible). However, evidence from the student records deposited in the CRC archive highlights that this demographic made up the vast majority of both students and staff at the Department of Social Study during the time period 1918-1968. The women therefore were similar to those working and studying in the department. However, it should be acknowledged that the records also demonstrate that there were a small number of male staff and students, that some students were from

minority ethnic backgrounds, some were working-class and some had disabilities, but their experiences are not the focus of my research.<sup>168</sup>

In relation to the women's sexual orientation this is an area which cannot be commented upon, as this information was not public during the time period of my research. None of the three women married, or had children, but we cannot draw conclusions based solely on their circumstances. Women's sexual orientation was a private issue, outwith the public arena, until recently. Even now concerns can remain in relation to being an 'out' lesbian in the workplace.<sup>169</sup> In their article examining same-sex relationships in early women social work leaders in the USA, Karen Frederiksen-Goldsen *et al.* highlight the complexities of identifying and labelling women's relationships in history, while also recognising the importance of scholarship which seeks to redress the silence around the history of sexual minority social workers.<sup>170</sup> While it is both interesting and important to consider that the three women's biographies may have a contribution to make to this field, it is impossible to draw conclusions about their sexuality solely on the basis of their marital circumstances.

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<sup>168</sup> Student Records, 1918-1998, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>169</sup> Avril Mclvor, 'Social Work: a profession that chose me,' In *Becoming a Social Worker* ed. Vivienne E. Cree (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>170</sup> Karen I. Fredriksen-Goldsen, Taryn Lindhorst, Susan P. Kemp, and Karina L. Walters, "'My Ever Dear': Social Work's "Lesbian" Foremothers — a Call for Scholarship.' *Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work* 24, no. 3 (2009): 325-336.

#### Chapter 4: Establishment of Social Work Education at Edinburgh University

This chapter will briefly set out relevant background information regarding the establishment of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh, prior to Nora Milnes's appointment as its first Director. The chapter will then provide a brief chronology of the school and then Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University until 1968, including an overview of the courses and practice placement elements of early social work education at Edinburgh University. This chapter enables the reader to gain an overview of the context in which Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne worked for the subsequent chapters discussing each woman in turn (a timeline has also been provided in Appendix 4 to aid the reader to orientate themselves quickly to a chronology of the three women's careers).

It is also important to clarify for the reader at this point that different legislation and policy applied, and continues to apply, in Scotland to social work and some other devolved issues including health and education than in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. It should not therefore be assumed that policy and legalisation that was in place in England and Wales applied in Scotland (and vice versa), nor that social work and social work education had the same contextual environment in which to develop.

#### Edinburgh University Settlement:

The Edinburgh School of Social Study and Training had its roots in the Edinburgh University Settlement – a link which, as discussed in chapter 2, was a common means through which

social work education transitioned into universities. The settlement was founded in 1905 by lecturers at Edinburgh University, principally Richard Lodge, Professor of History and later Dean of the Faculty of Arts. It was established to bring students into contact with, and develop friendships with, people in the deprived areas of the Canongate and Cowgate,<sup>171</sup> and also to 'carry on social work in the poorer areas of the city'.<sup>172</sup> Unfortunately, the settlement never quite achieved its objectives, as it faced a number of difficulties relating to its finances and the impact of the First World War on its operations was significant, as many of the students and local residents it was seeking to work with were called up to fight. As a result, its ability to provide training for social work was very limited. While the idea that the settlement would be a place to study social work did not evolve, its involvement with the university paved the way for the establishment of the Edinburgh School of Social Study and Training, which took over its role to provide social work education, as we shall now see.

#### Plans to establish School of Social Study and Training:

In March 1917, *The Scotsman*, reported on plans for a conference to discuss establishing a school where social work training would be taught in Edinburgh. The article stated that the idea had come from the Senatus (supreme academic body) of Edinburgh University which 'has been considering for some time the desirability of providing instruction and training for those desirous of engaging in social, administrative and philanthropic work'.<sup>173</sup> Nora Milnes later wrote that it was, in fact, due to the foresight of Professor James Seth (Chair of Moral

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<sup>171</sup> Edinburgh University Settlement Association, *The Scotsman*, 11th February 1905: 11

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*: 11

<sup>173</sup> The Promotion of Social Study and Training: Edinburgh University Proposal, *The Scotsman*, 12th March 1917: 3

Philosophy at Edinburgh University) that action was taken at this time. Professor Seth had recognised the need for new training to be provided to address social problems, understanding that these problems had been exacerbated by the First World War.<sup>174</sup>

It was agreed at a conference on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1917 that an Association for the Promotion of Social Study and Training would be formed to organise a scheme (essentially a school) for training social workers, and a Provisional Committee was appointed. Sir Richard Lodge (as he was by then) was appointed Convenor along with another twelve Executive Committee members.<sup>175</sup> Representatives from twenty-nine wide ranging organisations sat as Members of the Council, including the Senatus Academicus, the Town Council, Edinburgh Provisional Committee for the Training of Teachers, City of Edinburgh Charity Organisation Society, Edinburgh Social Union and Edinburgh Infant Health Centres Committee.<sup>176</sup> These organisations were indicative of the scope of interest in the school and the growing scope of social work itself.

#### Provisional Committee membership:

The Provisional Committee was elected to draft the Association Constitution, plan for the Association's financial basis, drive forward the foundation of the school and to act as the school's Executive Committee. Many of the Committee members were already involved with charity work and social reform in Edinburgh. Lady Leslie MacKenzie, for example,

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<sup>174</sup> Nora Milnes, 'James Seth and the Department of Social Study,' *University of Edinburgh Journal* (1955): 43-53.

<sup>175</sup> Social Service: New Organisation in Edinburgh, *The Scotsman*, 24th March 1917.

<sup>176</sup> Edinburgh School of Social Study and Training. *Courses of Study for Social Work and Regulations for the Diploma in Social Study and Training. Session 1918-19.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1918).

campaigned for the medical inspection of school children in Scotland,<sup>177</sup> Mrs George Kerr was involved in housing reform,<sup>178</sup> and Professor James Seth was Director of the Royal Blind Asylum and School.<sup>179</sup> It is interesting to note that, although the members of the Committee believed in the need for social reform and social work, their beliefs around the ethos behind this, and the means to do accomplish this, were polarised. This polarisation reflected a debate going on in British society at that time regarding the nature of welfare and charity, personified by the reform of the Poor Law.

#### Debates around charity and welfare:

The Poor Law (Amendment) Act 1834 and the Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1845 had both sought to establish centralised systems of providing relief and care to those in need. However, neither system had been evaluated, and it became increasingly apparent that the existing arrangements were not fit for purpose. In 1905 *The Royal Commission on the Poor Law and the Relief of Distress* was set up to consider longer term solutions to the chronic difficulties faced by those seeking assistance from the State. The men and women appointed to the Commission in December 1905 were drawn from different backgrounds, but all had expertise in the area of the Poor Law and its administration.<sup>180</sup> While the Royal Commission began as one group, factions emerged, and ultimately Majority and Minority Reports were

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<sup>177</sup> Lady Leslie Mackenzie: Edinburgh Woman Honoured – Pioneer and Administrator, *The Scotsman* 30th June 1933.

<sup>178</sup> Mrs George Kerr, LL.D, *The Scotsman*, 10th February 1940.

<sup>179</sup> Edinburgh Royal Blind Asylum and School, *The Scotsman*, 2nd December 1904.

<sup>180</sup> Kathleen Woodroffe, 'The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1905-09,' *International Review of Social History* 22, no. 2 (1977): 137-64.

produced. These reflected the differences of opinions about the potential causes of poverty, and the appropriate remedies to fix the system.

This debate reflected an important distinction, both for the future development of welfare provision and for the development of social work. The reports reflected opposing beliefs about whether the poor were individually responsible for their circumstances (the Majority Report) or if societal structures were the main cause (the Minority Report). Differences about the root cause of these issues led to disagreements about how to address them. The Majority Report, which included the COS members, argued that voluntary organisations should administer relief, with the State only dealing with those deemed to be chronically in need and the most challenging. The pioneering methods of social casework developed by the COS should be used to assess whether people deserved assistance or not. Meanwhile, the Minority Report argued that the State should be the main provider. To allow voluntary agencies to do this signalled that those in need were in some way at fault, and did not deserve society's assistance.<sup>181</sup>

The two central figures in the formation, and early years, of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh – Sir Richard Lodge and Professor James Seth – reflected both sides of this debate. Richard Lodge, Convenor of the Provisional Committee, was also the Vice-Chairman of the City of Edinburgh COS. Its aim was the same as the COS in London, to ensure that aid was given to recipients deemed to be worthy through investigation into their circumstances. Professor James Seth occupied a contrasting stance. He believed that individuals had free will, and that the result of this was the need to act morally. The State

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<sup>181</sup> Woodroffe, 'The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1905-09.'

was 'an ethical institution'<sup>182</sup> and citizens had a duty to contribute to society. Ultimately, however, the State was there to serve its citizens and not the reverse.<sup>183</sup> A supporter of the Minority Report on the reform of the Poor Law, James Seth publically asserted that the causes of poverty and destitution were complex and individual. He believed the most effective system to address these issues utilised different expert agencies focusing on separate factors such as unemployment and child neglect.<sup>184</sup> Other members of the Provisional Committee were similarly polarised in their views. However, it was clear that the committee managed to agree that whoever worked with the needy, and whatever the means through which their difficulties were addressed, they needed to be trained. Their agreement on this fundamental point meant they were able to work together successfully to form the school as a means to provide this training in Edinburgh.

#### Curriculum at the School and Department of Social Study:

The School of Social Study and Training began teaching on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1918, with eleven candidates enrolled, and operated under the auspices of Edinburgh University. It was thus associated with, but not officially part of, the university. The school began without a Director in post, as Nora Milnes was not appointed until April 1918 and did not come to take up the post until October 1918. The school provided a Certificate course over two years for students who did not already have an MA, and a Diploma course over one year for those who did.

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<sup>182</sup> A. C. Grayling, Naomi Goulder, and Andrew Pyle, *The Continuum Encyclopedia in British Philosophy* Online ed. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 2006): 2883

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Poor Law Reform, *The Scotsman*, 22nd October, 1910; Professor Seth on the Minority Poor-Law Report, *The Scotsman*, 24th November 1910.

The format of the curriculum altered very little in the subsequent years. Students were required to take a number of taught courses, which involved lectures, tutorials and examinations. These included subjects such as Social Ethics, Political Economy, Psychology, Public Health and Administrative Law. Students were also required to complete practice placements in organisations which provided social work, including in factory welfare departments, hospitals, the Edinburgh Council of Social Service, the National Vigilance Association of Scotland (Eastern Division), the YWCA, the Church of Scotland police court social work departments and the COS.<sup>185</sup> Students were required to progress satisfactorily, both in their academic and practice placements, and this was monitored closely. Those who were not deemed to be progressing sufficiently were placed on probation, and their progress was scrutinised regularly.<sup>186</sup>

As will be discussed in the chapter on Nora Milnes, the school offered its own Certificates and Diplomas to students, but from 1922 onwards these were issued by the university. In 1928 the school officially became part of the university, becoming the Department of Social Study & Training. The department continued to offer Certificate and Diploma courses throughout the period covered by my research, although additional courses were offered at different times. These included specialist one-year Certificate courses in Psychiatric Social Work (established 1942), Medical Social Work (established 1954) and Child Care (established 1960). These courses required that students already held a Certificate or Diploma in Social Studies. There was also a short lived Moral Welfare Certificate Course established in 1947, which failed to attract sufficient students and

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<sup>185</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh; 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>186</sup> Board of Studies in Social Study and Training: Minute Book, 1928-1951, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/3, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

stopped being offered after one year.<sup>187</sup> During the 1920s and 1930s the school and then department also provided training for nurses for a short time and a Certificate for Health Visitors for a number of years.

Throughout the period 1918-1968 the vast majority of students for the school and then department were women. There were male students, but they only numbered around 10-15% of the department's cohorts. For example, in 1956/57 there were ninety-two students studying in the department, thirteen of whom were men. The majority of students were from the UK, although some students came from overseas. For example, again in 1956/57 there were students from America, Uganda, India, Norway, Kenya, Holland, and Ceylon.<sup>188</sup> The number of academic staff grew over the time period as well, from just Nora Milnes in 1918, to twelve (nine women and three men) by 1966/67.<sup>189</sup>

Having provided a brief background to the establishment of the School and overview of its curriculum during the time period 1918-1968, we will now turn to the three women, and their individual early lives and career biographies, starting with Nora Milnes.

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<sup>187</sup> 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>188</sup> Department of Social Studies Advisory Committee, 1933-1961, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/2, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>189</sup> University of Edinburgh, *University of Edinburgh Calendar 1966/67* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1966).

## Chapter 5: Nora Milnes

It is all too easy to underestimate the enormous determination required on the part of a woman to establish the Department in its early years.<sup>190</sup>

### Introduction:

As the first Director of the school, and then Department of Social Study, Nora Milnes oversaw and drove forward the development of social work education at Edinburgh University from 1918 to 1951. Yet, she is little remembered. In Nora Milnes we find a person at odds with the prevailing notion that women played lesser roles than men in early social work education.<sup>191</sup> As the quotation above (from her obituary) implies, she was a forceful and dynamic personality. But it also acknowledged that, as a woman, she faced obstacles from within the academy.

This chapter examines the early life and career of Nora Milnes. It begins by providing a biographical sketch of her early life and career to the point at which she became the Director of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh in 1918. It then focuses on her career developing the school, and then Department of Social Study. Nora Milnes's biography reflected wider changes that were taking place in British society. As was discussed in chapter 2 this included the development of educational and employment opportunities for middle-class girls and women, with social work emerging as an area where

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<sup>190</sup> 'Obituary,' *University of Edinburgh Journal* 75 (1972): 75

<sup>191</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*; Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*.

middle-class women could acquire paid work. Social work education was in its infancy but was increasingly moving into the universities.

However, as Nora Milnes found, this was not always an easy alliance. Social work's position in the academy was tenuous. While Edinburgh University wanted to be associated with social study and training on one level, it was somewhat ambivalent about providing social work education directly. The early years of the school were precarious, and Nora Milnes had to fight to ensure the school's survival. She recognised that in order to safeguard the future of social work education it needed the status and security that came with being an official part of Edinburgh University. Nora Milnes worked hard to ensure it received status as a university department, and could benefit from the security that came with that.

Nora Milnes also experienced both the benefits and challenges which resulted from increased academic education for middle-class women and girls. While societal ideas around the education of women were changing, opposition remained. Middle-class girls and women were able to access academic educations, and indeed hold academic positions at universities. Yet, Edinburgh University was reluctant to fully embrace women, both as students and staff. This reluctance was also evident in its attitude towards the school, and then Department of Social Study, because, as discussed in chapter 2, social work was so closely associated with women. Although social work education was part of Edinburgh University, its status, and the institutional support it received, was marginal. As will be shown however, Nora Milnes, was determined to ensure that, once it became part of the institution, social work education retained its place at Edinburgh University, and that it was

taken seriously as an academic subject, which educated both men and women for roles as professional social workers.

### Early life:

Nora Jessie Milnes was born into a middle-class family in Wandsworth, Surrey, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1882. The third child of Alfred and Helena Milnes (née Goldberg),<sup>192</sup> her father was an economist, who had been born in Bolton in 1849. Having gained the Rector's Scholarship at Lincoln College, Oxford,<sup>193</sup> Alfred Milnes was subsequently awarded an MA in 1873, after which he attended the University of London, receiving a DLitt in 1876.<sup>194</sup> Her mother, Helena Goldberg, was born in Staffordshire in 1853 to a Polish father and an English mother. Alfred and Helena married in 1876, and that year Alfred was appointed as Head of the Imperial Naval School in Tokyo.<sup>195</sup> To relocate to Japan at that time must have been an unusual prospect. Japan had only very recently started to open up to foreign trade and influences after two hundred years of self-enforced isolation.<sup>196</sup> However the Milnes's time there was brief as they returned to the UK again in 1878.<sup>197</sup>

When they returned to the UK in 1878, Alfred joined the staff of the University of London and lectured in Economics and Political Science. In addition, he 'became widely known as a lecturer on the University Extension staff'.<sup>198</sup> As noted in chapter 2, the University Extension movement, which began in the middle of the nineteenth century,

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<sup>192</sup> Census Office, 'Census of England and Wales,' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891).

<sup>193</sup> Obituary: Dr. Alfred Milnes, *The Times*, 5th November 1921.

<sup>194</sup> *The Biographical Dictionary of British Economists*. (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004).

<sup>195</sup> Obituary: Dr. Alfred Milnes, *The Times*.

<sup>196</sup> Christopher Harding, *Japan Story: In Search of a Nation 1850 to the Present* (London: Penguin, 2018).

<sup>197</sup> Obituary: Dr. Alfred Milnes, *The Times*.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

aimed to widen access to higher education. Previously, only middle and upper-class men had generally hoped to go to university, but the University Extension movement sought to broaden this out in a demographic and geographic sense, extending it to middle-class women and working-class men, through providing lecture series, given by university lecturers.<sup>199</sup> Arguably, Alfred Milnes's involvement in a scheme which offered education at university level to women demonstrated that he recognised the ability of women to be educated at a higher level (something which was contested at this time)<sup>200</sup> and that he believed this was appropriate.

Alfred and Helena Milnes had seven children, four of whom survived infancy.<sup>201</sup> By the time Nora was born in 1882, the family was living in Wandsworth, and from there they moved to Goldhurst Terrace, in Hampstead, in 1891.<sup>202</sup> Part of Goldhurst Terrace was noted as being a 'Middle-class area. Well to do'<sup>203</sup> by the survey assistants who worked on Charles Booth's *Inquiry into the Life and Labour of the People of London* (1886 – 1903), which looked at the living and working conditions of London inhabitants and mapped out levels of poverty and wealth across the city. However, the part of Goldhurst Terrace where the Milnes family lived was colour coded as 'Mixed. Some comfortable others poor'.<sup>204</sup> The survey assistant's notebook recorded that Goldhurst Terrace 'for some reason has gone down a little'.<sup>205</sup> Although the evidence suggests that Nora Milnes's family were part of the group of residents who were comfortable (based on her father's job and census records showing

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<sup>199</sup> Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain*.

<sup>200</sup> Carol Dyhouse, 'Towards a 'Feminine' Curriculum for English Schoolgirls: The Demands of Ideology 1870-1963,' *Women's Studies International Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1978): 297-311.

<sup>201</sup> Census Office, 'Census of England and Wales,' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911).

<sup>202</sup> Census Office, 'Census of England and Wales,' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891).

<sup>203</sup> 'Charles Booth's London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks,' London School of Economics & Political Science, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 <http://booth.lse.ac.uk>

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

they employed two servants), it is interesting to note that Nora Milnes may have seen evidence of poverty at quite close quarters.

'At last we have a B.A!': North London Collegiate School for Girls:

Details of Nora Milnes's early life are scant but in 1895, aged thirteen, she became a pupil at the North London Collegiate School for Girls (NLCS).<sup>206</sup> The NLCS was established by the Buss family in 1845, one of the growing number of schools referred to in chapter 2, which sought to provide genuinely academic education for middle-class girls. The head teacher, Frances Buss, ensured that a robust and full academic curriculum was provided, with prospective pupils required to pass an entrance examination. The curriculum covered English Language and Grammar, Political Economy, Geography, History, Arithmetic and Mathematics, Experimental and Natural Sciences, Drawing, Laws of Health, Religious Instruction and Languages.<sup>207</sup> Frances Buss was also involved in campaigns around widening education opportunities for middle-class girls and women more generally. This included, for example, petitioning the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (established in 1858 to raise standards in education and provide local examinations to students who did not attend the University of Cambridge) to open its examinations to girls as well as boys. This was trialled at the NLCS in 1863, and having been deemed successful, girls were allowed to sit the examinations on the same terms as boys from 1868.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Register of Fees 1895-1900: Book E, 11463, North London Collegiate School.

<sup>207</sup> Prospectus: April 1895, 986, North London Collegiate School.

<sup>208</sup> 'Our Heritage,' Cambridge University Press & Assessment, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019, <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-heritage/>

The NLCS was, therefore, not just providing academic education at a secondary level to girls, it was also preparing them for tertiary education. NLCS pupils prepared for, and sat, University of London, Cambridge and Local Examination and Higher Cambridge Examinations.<sup>209</sup> Of those entered for public examinations, 72% passed successfully.<sup>210</sup> In 1880 the school magazine was jubilant in its marking of a major achievement: 'At last we have a B.A! Clara Collett has just passed successfully the Second B.A. Examination'.<sup>211</sup>

In 1895, the year Nora Milnes started at the school, forty-three former pupils graduated from, or matriculated at, higher education establishments. These ranged across the University of London, Royal Holloway College, Girton College, the Pharmaceutical Society, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, University College of Wales (Aberystwyth), the Royal Academy of Music and the University of Oxford.<sup>212</sup> Nora Milnes was one of forty pupils who sat the University of Cambridge Junior Local Examination in December 1897, passing with Third Class Honours.<sup>213</sup> Yet, while the NLCS was driving forward standards in academic education for middle-class girls, their influence in terms of changing wider societal opportunities for women has been questioned. Dyhouse has argued that the NLCS, and other schools like it, were in fact conservative entities which did not seek to educate girls so that they could then go out and enter the workplace. Instead they supported the dominant middle-class view that a woman's role was primarily as a wife and mother. They saw their role instead as educating girls so they could be better, more informed, wives and mothers. Dyhouse draws attention to the fact that, while increasingly

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<sup>209</sup> 'Our Heritage,' Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

<sup>210</sup> Album 1: 1877-1914, 1243, North London Collegiate School.

<sup>211</sup> K. Anderson, 'Frances Mary Buss, the Founder as Headmistress, 1850-94,' in *The North London Collegiate School, 1850-1950. A Hundred Years of Girls' Education. Essays in Honour of the Centenary of the Frances Mary Buss Foundation.*, ed. R. M. Scrimgeour, (London: Oxford University Press, 1950): 37

<sup>212</sup> Prize Day Reports: 1894-1909, 6, North London Collegiate School.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

middle-class girls were afforded academic opportunities, both at school and university, the underlying message remained that although education was good, marriage was better.<sup>214</sup>

However, Dyhouse's critique needs to be viewed in the wider social context of the times. In the 1850s and 60s in Britain and America, the so called 'single-women' problem had emerged, as awareness grew that the number of single women was increasing. This was happening because men were emigrating or postponing marriage for financial reasons. It was socially acceptable for working-class women to support themselves financially, however this was not the case for middle-class women. Debates went on about how to view the problem – was the problem the women who did not marry, or was it society which forbade them from working? – as well as the solution – how should these women be supported?<sup>215</sup> While the NLCS might not have been educating its pupils with a view to supporting themselves through paid employment, they were arguably shifting societal attitudes by demonstrating that women could be educated, and that this was not detrimental to society.

#### King's College London:

Having passed the University of Cambridge Junior Local Examinations in 1897, Nora Milnes left the NLCS in 1898. What she did between 1898 and 1908 is unclear. I have been unable to identify her in any records from this time except for the 1901 census which lists her as

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<sup>214</sup> Dyhouse, "Towards a 'Feminine' Curriculum for English Schoolgirls'; Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*.

<sup>215</sup> Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets and William Veeder, *Social Issues*. Vol. 2 of *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

living with her parents at 44 Goldhurst Terrace.<sup>216</sup> Her older sister Alice was recorded in the census as being a school teacher, but no occupation was noted for Nora, or her two younger sisters.<sup>217</sup> Then in 1908 she matriculated at King's College in London, graduating in 1911 with a Bachelor of Science degree.

King's College had been the first university in England to allow women students to enrol for degrees, since 1878. It established a Ladies' Department in 1885, and the mix of students at the department just prior to Nora Milnes's matriculation tells us much about the diverse nature of tertiary education for middle-class women at that time. The Vice-Principal of the Ladies' Department from 1894-1907, Lilian Faithful, described the department as having three types of students. The first were middle and upper-class women who viewed attending lectures as a leisure pursuit, but did not study in a formal sense. The second, a smaller proportion, were those who matriculated and were studying for degrees, and finally a third, were scholarship students who were training to become teachers. Christine Jones and Anna Snaith cite Lilian Faithful as saying that, while she wanted to attract more of the second type of student, she thought the diversity among the students was positive, and that learning, whatever the motivation, was to be encouraged.<sup>218</sup> The mix of students at King's College evidences the dynamic nature of women's higher education during this period, and the different motivations which existed for women attending university.

Reviewing the story so far, it is clear that the diversity of motivations among women students highlighted by Lilian Faithful is important because it demonstrated the wider shifts and debates around not just women's education, but women's roles in society during this

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<sup>216</sup> Census Office, 'Census of England and Wales.' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901)

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Christine Kenyon Jones and Anna Snaith, "'Tilting at Universities": Woolf at King's College London,' *Woolf Studies Annual* 16 (2010): 1-44.

period. Although opposition and obstacles remained, there appeared to be a gradual growth in women's education, as evidenced by the establishment of schools for girls, the University Extension scheme, the foundation of women's colleges (such as Girton College, Cambridge, in 1869) and by the admittance of women into a number of existing universities. In relation to Nora Milnes we see that she benefitted personally from these shifts. It is evident that she grew up in a family which valued academic education for middle-class girls and women. Her father taught on the University Extension scheme, she and two of her sisters were sent to the NLCS to receive an academic education, and both she and her sister Gladys attended university and gained degrees.<sup>219</sup> As we will see, Nora Milnes went on to use her education to achieve a career and financial independence. Furthermore, in addition to accomplishing this herself she became a firm believer in the value of higher education for middle-class women more generally, as a means to provide them with professional training and career opportunities.

#### Secretary for the COS:

After her graduation from King's College, London, there was a short period when, again, it is unclear what Nora Milnes did. When she was appointed as Director of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh, the newspaper announcement of her appointment reported that she came directly from working at both the LSE and King's College, but 'previous to occupying these teaching positions Miss Milnes acted as Secretary to the Camberwell Committee of the COS, and was engaged in various forms of voluntary social

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<sup>219</sup> Prize Day Reports: 1894–1909, 6, North London Collegiate School.

work'.<sup>220</sup> Despite searching newspaper databases, and the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), I was unable to identify documents relating to the nature of this voluntary social work. However, Nora Milnes's employment at the Camberwell Committee of the COS was recorded, at least in part.

The records of the Camberwell District Committee of the COS are held at the LMA. The surviving minute books record that Nora Milnes was working for the Camberwell District Committee as a Secretary in June 1913.<sup>221</sup> Arguably, Nora Milnes's position within the COS was indicative that she had considered entering social work as an occupation – as Brewis argues 'by the Edwardian period time spent at a settlement or with the Charity Organisation Society was widely seen as the best preparation for social work'.<sup>222</sup> Nora Milnes worked for the Camberwell Committee as a Secretary. The title 'Secretary' did not refer to a post which entailed clerical work, as we might understand it today. Rather, it was an organising role which involved an understanding of poverty, relief work and the charitable aid available. Consequently, it had close association with the role a social worker would undertake.

The COS Annual Report from 1911 noted that a Secretary was paid £150 a year for men or £100-£130 a year for women.<sup>223</sup> The fact that this was a paid role is important – it demonstrates that Nora Milnes was doing this as her job. As discussed in chapter 2, although social work was a role in which middle-class women could undertake paid

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<sup>220</sup> Educational, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1918.

<sup>221</sup> Camberwell Committee: Committee Minute Book July 1913–March 1918, A/FWA/LS/A/02/002, Family Welfare Association (Formerly Charity Organisation Society), London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>222</sup> Brewis, 'From Working Parties to Social Work.': 768.

<sup>223</sup> Annual Reports: Annual Reports of the Council (nos. 40–43) October 1907–September 1911, A/FWA/C/B/01/008, Family Welfare Association (Formerly Charity Organisation Society), London Metropolitan Archives.

employment at this time, it was often viewed as a task which they should undertake in a voluntary capacity, as a kind of civic and moral duty. Nora Milnes, however, was not doing it in this capacity – and for her this distinction was important. Years later, Nora Milnes described herself ‘as one who had always prided herself on being a working woman’.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, it is clear from the early days of her career in social work, and then social work education, this was a field in which Nora Milnes (and other working middle-class women like her) could find paid employment, and with it a degree of self-sufficiency in a society which, at that time, still largely equated women’s primary roles as being wives and mothers.

Nora Milnes did not continue to work for the COS for long. In autumn 1913 she was appointed as a tutor at the new Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration at the LSE. The nominee of Sir Charles Loch, Honorary Secretary of the COS, she would be teaching courses such as *Methods and Details of Charitable Administration*.<sup>225</sup> Although she offered to continue working for the COS two days a week, this ‘had not been accepted by the administration committee as they considered that this would put too great a strain on her’.<sup>226</sup> We cannot know if this experience tainted Nora Milnes relationship with the COS, or if she had been at odds with its philosophy for some time, but from this point on, the only published references she made to the COS were critical. In 1915 she also began working for King’s College London, in its newly established Household and Social Science Department, as its sole lecturer in Economics.<sup>227</sup> Nora Milnes demonstrated that working in two jobs did

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<sup>224</sup> The Homeless Girl: Prevention and Rescue Work in Edinburgh – Secret of the Trouble, *The Scotsman*, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1929.

<sup>225</sup> Nora Milnes, Staff File, LSE Institutional Archive.

<sup>226</sup> Camberwell Committee: Committee Minute Book, London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>227</sup> Neville Marsh, *The History of Queen Elizabeth College: One Hundred Years of University Education in Kensington* (London: King's College London, 1986): 129

not put too great a strain on her, contrary to the concerns of the Camberwell COS Committee.

The Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration:

The Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration at the LSE had been established in 1912, as the result of a donation from the Indian industrialist Ratan Tata. The purpose of the department was to investigate the causes of poverty, and also to provide training for social work. The department incorporated into it the existing School of Sociology, which had been founded in 1903, and was closely linked with the COS.<sup>228</sup> This was interesting, as the COS and LSE were not natural partners. Those behind the LSE, namely the Fabians, Beatrice and Sydney Webb, had found themselves at odds with COS members on the Poor Law Commission, fundamentally disagreeing on the nature of poverty, charity and welfare (as discussed in chapter 4). Yet, having become involved with social work training in 1897, the COS was keen to explore how they could develop this branch of their work. They became involved with the School of Sociology in 1903, although Mowat notes that the COS expressed confidential doubts, even at this stage, about their newly-developed training programme being connected to the LSE because of its links with socialism.<sup>229</sup> The fact that the COS continued to be involved with the School of Sociology, and then the Ratan Tata Department, despite their reservations, arguably demonstrated

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<sup>228</sup> Ralf Dahrendorf, *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

that both the COS and the LSE were united in one shared aim – to professionalise social work training.<sup>230</sup>

Yet, it rapidly became clear that the COS was unhappy with what was being taught at the LSE and that their ongoing partnership was untenable. The COS presently sought to extricate itself from this association. A meeting of the training subcommittee for the COS from June 1916 recorded that arrangements should be made for the training of candidates for a COS certificate, with lectures, tutorial supervision and examinations to be arranged. The COS wanted to provide its own training, where it could set the curriculum and ethos of the course. Interestingly though, the views expressed at the meeting varied widely, demonstrating that there was no single COS standpoint on this issue. Nora Milnes was present at the meeting, termed as a 'visitor'. She stated that a COS scheme for training would be viewed as a rival to the LSE, and 'she indicated that by starting rival training schemes the COS aroused hostility in her department and made it unlikely that the department would send students to COS offices'.<sup>231</sup> Nora Milnes was not the only person present at the meeting to express dissenting views about the COS plans, but clearly these carried little weight. The motion to set up a COS certificate was unanimously passed 'as a resolution of Council'.<sup>232</sup>

While the COS moved forward with plans for its own certificate, the general trend was moving in another direction. By the mid-1910s the ideas of the COS were being dismissed by the younger generation. Violet Markham (social campaigner and reformer) noted that the casework approach used by the COS remained valuable, but their views on

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<sup>230</sup> Dahrendorf, *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995*.

<sup>231</sup> 'Proceedings of Council,' *Charity Organisation Review* 40, no. 236 (1916): 81-87: 83

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*: 84

the role of the State in redressing societal inequalities were out of date.<sup>233</sup> Increasingly, as discussed in chapter 2, social work training was being offered in partnership with, or by, universities. Alongside the Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration at the LSE other university departments and Schools of Social Studies had been set up around the country, in Liverpool in 1905, Birmingham in 1908, Glasgow in 1912, Manchester in 1912 and Belfast in 1915.

In Edinburgh, as we have seen, a School of Social Study and Training was founded in 1917, under the auspices of the university. Professor James Seth (one of the school's founders) wrote in January 1918 that

As an ideal of social work, 'charitable organisation' is already obsolete. It has been superseded by the new ideal of the prevention of poverty and the other social evils which call for such relief, and the community is beginning to realise its responsibility for social welfare through the use of such means as the care of infant and child life, the aftercare of school children, the continuation of their education after school age, old age and unemployment.<sup>234</sup>

The days of charity organisation as an approach were waning. While the COS survived by changing its focus over time, and remained an organisation which provided practice placements for students, its aim to re-establish its own training courses for social workers quickly faded away. Although the *Charity Organisation Review* noted further meetings about the COS Certificate, these references petered out, and there are no records of the Certificate being awarded.

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<sup>233</sup> Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913: Its Ideas and Work*.

<sup>234</sup> The Edinburgh School of Social Study and Training, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1918: 4

### Appointment as Director of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh:

In October 1918 Nora Milnes was appointed as Director of the School of Social Study and Training in Edinburgh. As noted in chapter 4 the school had been established under the auspices of Edinburgh University in 1917, and began teaching on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1918. Interestingly, it started without a Director in post. In an article she wrote for the *University of Edinburgh Journal* in 1955 Nora Milnes attributed this to a disagreement within the Executive Committee about the nature of the role. Nora Milnes stated that some felt the Director should only organise and oversee the practical training element of the school, while others thought they should lecture as well.<sup>235</sup> This disagreement lasted for some time, and was resolved only when it became clear that the job of a 'Director of Practical Training' on a salary of £250 per annum was not appealing, and no candidate could be appointed. After advertising, interviewing and failing to appoint a candidate, Nora Milnes wrote that the Executive Committee realised that to attract a suitable candidate they needed to include lecturing in the role, and pay a higher salary. The post was re-advertised and this time, on 29<sup>th</sup> March, the committee decided to invite Miss Milnes for interview. They met on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, and offered her the post, which she accepted, and took up in October 1918.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Nora Milnes, 'James Seth and the Department of Social Study.' *University of Edinburgh Journal* (1955): 43-53

<sup>236</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1917-1922, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/1, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

### Women at Edinburgh University:

While the development of academic education for middle-class girls and women was discussed in chapter 2 in general terms, the situation for university level education in Edinburgh will now be examined to understand the context which Nora Milnes came to work in. The Edinburgh Ladies' Educational Association was set up in 1867 to progress the goal of higher education for women. It organised lectures of university level standards for middle-class women, with Professor David Masson of Edinburgh University playing a central role in organising, and promoting, the cause. The Association, aware of the opposition they faced, was careful to position itself as promoting education for women, not training them for careers. A Commission was established in 1889 to consider university education in Scotland, and in 1892 it recommended that Edinburgh University should accept women students. The first women students graduated from the university in 1893. The Association continued to work to promote women's entrance to higher education, and to establish the infrastructure necessary for this, including Halls of Residence and a Women's Union.<sup>237</sup>

This continued campaigning was necessary because opposition to women in higher education was rife among both male academics and students at Edinburgh University. Still within living memory, in 1869, seven women had attempted to matriculate and study at the medical school at Edinburgh. Initially the University Court had allowed the women to matriculate and attend classes, but opposition from male academics and students grew and the university ultimately refused to grant them degrees. This opposition took a number of forms, including being passed over for scholarships they were entitled to, having to pay

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<sup>237</sup> E.J.M.B, *Edinburgh Association for the University Education of Women: 1867-1967* (Edinburgh: William Bishop, 1968).

higher fees, being verbally insulted by male students, and at one point physically prevented from attending examinations.<sup>238</sup> Although women students were admitted from 1893, much hostility remained. For example, the Edinburgh University Student's Handbook for 1938-39 openly stated that: 'Women have filtered into most places discovered by men, but, thank the constitution, the Union is still reserved for men'.<sup>239</sup> Views about women not being as intellectually able as men continued, as shown by the fact that women were barred from speaking at debates at the Union into the 1930s because they were considered unable to present a fluent argument in front of a boisterous audience.<sup>240</sup>

Yet, in spite of opposition from some, Edinburgh University was admitting women as students and it was also employing women as lecturers, admittedly in small numbers. When the school became a department in 1928 and Nora Milnes was appointed as a lecturer, there were only eight other women on the academic staff, and she was the only woman who was a head of a department. While Nora Milnes was able to occupy this position, as we will see, she faced resistance from the university as an institution on a number of occasions. This was arguably because she was a woman, and because social study and social work were so strongly associated with women.

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<sup>238</sup> Wendy Moore, 'The Art of Medicine: Trailblazing Women in Medicine: Laurels at Last for Edinburgh Seven,' *Lancet* 394 (2019): 294-95.

<sup>239</sup> University of Edinburgh Student Union, *Edinburgh University Student's Handbook 1938-1939* (Edinburgh: J & J. Gray Printers, 1938): 49

<sup>240</sup> Iain Catto, *'No Spirits and Precious Few Women': Edinburgh University Union 1889-1989* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Union, 1989).

### Curriculum and practical training:

When Nora Milnes arrived in Edinburgh in October 1918 the school was already in its second academic year. Decisions about the curriculum were made before her arrival, and were influenced by a recently established government body – the Joint University Council for Social Sciences (JUCSS). The JUCSS had been established by the Home Office in 1917 to co-ordinate the teaching of social work education, which had been established in several universities by that time.<sup>241</sup> Cree argues that the government wanted to use the JUCSS to promote collaboration between the key stakeholders in social work education – university departments, universities themselves, practice agencies and government departments. But it also wanted to regulate what was being taught, and how.<sup>242</sup>

Prior to the establishment of the JUCSS, universities providing education for social workers were able to set their own curriculum. For example, at the LSE, Nora Milnes had been teaching *Methods and Details of Charitable Administration* and *Methods of Charitable Organisations*.<sup>243</sup> These courses differed considerably from those being taught at Edinburgh just a year or two later. From its inception, the JUCSS was clear about the general subjects it expected to make up the curriculum of social studies courses. These included the history of social and economic conditions, economics facts and how to analyse these, principles of social administration including law, local government organisations and voluntary services and social principles. The shift away from charitable organisation, and the acknowledgment of the developing role of the State in providing social welfare in the curriculum,

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<sup>241</sup> Joint University Council for Social Studies, *Social Study and Training at the Universities* (London: P. S. King & Son Ltd, 1918): 5

<sup>242</sup> Vivienne E. Cree, 'States of Change'? One Hundred Years of the JUC,' *Social Work Education* 38, no. 8 (2019): 1054–1068.

<sup>243</sup> Nora Milnes, Staff File, LSE Institutional Archive.

demonstrated the wider shifts occurring in the understanding and provision of welfare at that time.

Nora Milnes later wrote that when she arrived she immediately had to set to work arranging the practical element of the course.<sup>244</sup> She related that the 'academic members' of the Executive Committee (by which she meant the men) were accustomed to planning lectures and so were confident in doing this, but they were 'troubled by the fact that in all existing Schools practical training was an essential part of the course and on this matter they were entirely in the dark'.<sup>245</sup> Nora Milnes stated that they thought 'they could turn for advice to the three women members of the Executive'<sup>246</sup> to resolve this matter. The men on the Committee were academics, and held posts at the university. It is true that the three women – Lady MacKenzie, Mrs Kerr and Ethel De La Cour – did not hold academic posts. Yet, we see here an assumption that the women would hold knowledge of a practical nature, which would mean they could arrange practice learning for the school.

However, the careers of these three women demonstrate that this assumption was misplaced – only one had any experience of arranging practical work relating to social work. But what the assumption clearly shows is the dominant expectations of gendered roles held at this time regarding men and women. If we examine these women more closely we find that rather than fitting in with these gendered views of their age, in many senses they contradicted them. Indeed, they were highly esteemed, politically and socially influential women in their own right and, like Nora Milnes, their careers also demonstrated the nuanced roles that women played in relation to early social work education.

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<sup>244</sup> Milnes, 'James Seth and the Department of Social Study.'

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*: 47

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*: 47

Lady Leslie MacKenzie (Helen, but known by her husband's name) worked alongside her husband, Dr Leslie MacKenzie to promote the health of Scottish schoolchildren, and ensure medical inspections of children occurred at schools.<sup>247</sup> Together, they collaborated on a Royal Commission investigating the health of Scottish schoolchildren in 1903, with Lady MacKenzie organising the study and writing up the findings.<sup>248</sup> Subsequently appointed a member of the Departmental Committee for the Review of Public Health Services in Scotland, and President of the National Association of Health Visitors, Women Sanitary Inspectors and School Nurses, Lady MacKenzie was also a founder of the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association.<sup>249</sup> Lady MacKenzie went on to provide academic input into the school, and then Department of Social Study, teaching the course on *Local Government* from 1919 until 1932.

Mrs George Kerr, (also Helen, but she too was known by her husband's name), was as we have already seen actively involved with the Edinburgh COS as its Honorary Secretary, and worked to improve housing as a Superintendent with the Edinburgh Social Union. She was appointed to the *Royal Commission on the Housing Conditions of the Industrial Population of Scotland*, and wrote a book entitled *The Path of Social Progress*, in which she discussed the role of charitable aid, and the need for the people administering it to be adequately trained.<sup>250</sup> Finally, Ethel De La Cour was the Superintendent of the Edinburgh School of Cookery and Domestic Economy (which later developed into Queen Margaret

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<sup>247</sup> Dr W. Leslie MacKenzie was the first Medical Inspector of Schools at the Local Government Board for Scotland.

<sup>248</sup> Tom Begg. 'Mackenzie, Helen Carruthers N. Spence,' In *The new biographical dictionary of Scottish women: from the earliest times to 2004*, edited by Elizabeth Ewan, Rosemary J. Pipes, Jane Rendall and Sian Reynolds. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

<sup>249</sup> Lady Leslie MacKenzie: Edinburgh Woman Honoured – Pioneer and Administrator, *The Scotsman*, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1933: 8

<sup>250</sup> George Mrs Kerr, *The Path of Social Progress* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1912).

College, and then University). Appointed to the Scottish Food Campaign during the First World War, which oversaw rationing, she later became the first female Justice of the Peace to be appointed in Edinburgh.<sup>251</sup>

Ironically, Nora Milnes recorded that the women could not agree on how to proceed with regards to practical training, and so the belief that they could solve the problem was unfounded. However, for us, the involvement of the women in the formation and running of the school demonstrated that Nora Milnes was not an anomaly – there were other women occupying influential roles. While, at times, their experience and knowledge seems to have been stereotyped and pitched to confirm to gendered assumptions of the time, the reality of their personalities and influence was more nuanced, and importantly was utilised, and not dismissed.

#### The School of Social Study and Training:

The school appeared to get off to a positive start, with the *Third Annual Report (1920)* stating that 'it may well be claimed that the School has now established itself as an important part of the educational system of the city'.<sup>252</sup> It had a right to be positive, as merely starting the school was an achievement. Yet, documents in the CRC archive reveal that, in those early years, the school was in a precarious position, and that its financial position was particularly challenging. Although initially satisfied with money raised through public subscriptions, donations and public body funding, the subscriptions, in particular,

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<sup>251</sup> Tom Begg. "Ethel Maud De La Cour." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>252</sup> Annual Report, 1918-1928, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

soon started to dwindle. From the £106 7s 6d the school received in 1919, individual subscriptions decreased to £38 11s 6d in 1923.<sup>253</sup> Initially, funding from public bodies amounted to £250 from the Carnegie Trust, £100 from the Town Council of Edinburgh and £10 from the Merchant Company annually.<sup>254</sup> However, even this appeared somewhat provisional. The Executive Committee had to re-apply for grants to the Town Council and Education Authority, and asked the university for a grant in 1921 – a request, it seems, the university declined.<sup>255</sup>

Indeed, the university's contribution towards the finances of the school at this time was to offer a room to operate from, and to provide heating and lighting without charge. As minimal as this arrangement may appear now, Nora Milnes later recorded that it was 'considered sufficiently generous'.<sup>256</sup> The room provided by the university was to act as a lecture room, Director's office, reading room and library. The room was described years later by Nora Milnes, and her description is worth quoting at length as it arguably demonstrated the complex relationship the school, and social work education, had with the university at that time:

No one room could serve the various purposes which the Executive had in view. The office could not function while lectures were in progress, and no one could read while others were being instructed, nor while the Director was interviewing intending students, or tapping out letters on a typewriter. While the main part of the floor space was taken up with desks and a bookcase one corner was furnished as

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<sup>253</sup> Annual Reports, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1921-1925, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/2, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>256</sup> Milnes, 'James Seth and the Department of Social Study.': 46

an office and much care given to the choice of furniture. The room possessed the inevitable sink (so described because for years a sink seemed part of the equipment of the Social Study Department) which by an ingenious arrangement of a curtain was made the basis of a cloakroom. There is no denying it was an odd set-up and somewhat dismaying to a newcomer who arrived with the expectation that more usual accommodation would be provided for the work of the School.<sup>257</sup>

Nora Milnes was careful to say that the school felt grateful to have it, but the room itself was clearly a second-rate, inadequate, resource. She went on to note that the school was granted two rooms in the basement of Old College the following year, and that:

With all their defects, not least of which was the deplorable state of the stairs and corridors, the rooms possessed one great advantage: no one cast longing eyes upon them and the School was enabled to develop as a small self-contained unit.<sup>258</sup>

These descriptions are very revealing of the nuanced position of the school, and social work education at the university at this time. On the one hand, the school was located in Old College, the impressive quadrangle designed by the architect William Playfair for the university, and completed in 1827.<sup>259</sup> Its location seemed to demonstrate that legitimacy had been accorded it by the university – it was part of it. Yet, in reality, it was a couple of basement rooms that nobody else wanted. It was, quite literally, hidden away from general sight. So whilst social work education was associated with the university, it was shut away, and given as little status and prominence as possible – to the rest of the university, at least.

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<sup>257</sup> Milnes, 'James Seth and the Department of Social Study.': 47

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*: 47

<sup>259</sup> Robert D. Anderson, Michael Lynch, and Nicholas Phillipson, *The University of Edinburgh: An Illustrated History* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2003).

Returning to the issue of finance, in 1922 the Executive Committee decided to approach the Town Council again. At the same meeting, the Executive Committee agreed to approach selected individuals to ask them to contribute to a fund, so that the work of the school could continue on to the next session. The situation was clearly very serious, and having a tangible effect on the school's resources. Nora Milnes had already dispensed with her Secretary in 1921 to save money, leaving only a part-time Secretary to cover the administration of the school. Finally, by 1923, the school was reduced to organising a jumble sale to raise funds (£89 7s 7d was raised).<sup>260</sup> There was a tangible impression in the Minutes of the Executive Committee that the existence of the school was hanging by a thread. Something had to change, as Nora Milnes publically acknowledged in the Director's Report for the *Fifth Annual Report (1922)*, when she stated plainly that the school could not be allowed to 'remain in so precarious a situation'.<sup>261</sup>

It was not just a concern about finances that troubled the Committee, but also the number of students they had, the future job prospects of those students, and the status of the school. The Executive Committee recognised the need to take assertive action, and responded in a three-pronged approach. First, it addressed the issue of attracting more students to the school, arranging for a public lecture to take place in 1922 setting out the importance of social study training. Second, it sought to ensure graduates could secure jobs. It worked to raise the profile of the graduates of the school among the voluntary and local government organisations in Edinburgh by, for example, sending out leaflets to publicise that students from the school were available for posts.<sup>262</sup> Finally, it sought to

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<sup>260</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1921-1925, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/2, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>261</sup> Annual Reports, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>262</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1921-1925, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/2, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

secure its status in relation to the university. This was a particular concern of Nora Milnes. She recognised that by addressing this, the other two issues would also benefit.

The minutes from a meeting held in October 1920 record that Nora Milnes thought ‘the present position of the School in relation to the University was unsatisfactory’.<sup>263</sup> Richard Lodge was present at the meeting, countering that all students could matriculate at the university, and therefore could access ‘such privileges as matriculation conferred’.<sup>264</sup> It was therefore not necessary to push for a closer relationship with the university. However, Nora Milnes was not swayed by his argument, and did not consider the privileges students of the school had to be sufficient, actively pushing back against his stance. Either her concern was shared by others, or she made a strong enough argument to persuade the committee that they should ascertain the situation of other schools and universities around the country. The Executive Committee agreed to approach the university regarding its status.<sup>265</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1922, at a meeting of the University Court, regulations were approved for a Post-Graduate Diploma and a University Certificate in Social Study for non-graduates. The school was to remain independent, but its students became Edinburgh University students. The School’s *Fifth Annual Report (1922)* recorded its belief that ‘this academic recognition is bound to enhance very considerably the value of the certificates they [the students] obtain’.<sup>266</sup> Arguably, it is not a coincidence that the university also started to support the school financially from 1922 onwards. The financial situation of the

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<sup>263</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1917-1922, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/1, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>264</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1921-1925, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/2, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>265</sup> Annual Reports, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

school was transformed by this support. By 1926, income from fees had almost doubled, and the university and Carnegie Universities Trust gave £400 and £250 per annum respectively. There is no mention about financial difficulties in the *Ninth Annual Report* (1926).<sup>267</sup> The school had reached an even keel. Nora Milnes's determination that the school should become more closely associated with the university had been instrumental in turning its fortunes around.

#### From school to department:

In 1924 the two most influential people in the school's establishment departed. Professor James Seth died suddenly, and although he had stepped back from his official involvement with the school on his retirement earlier that year, his loss was palpable. Sir Richard Lodge also retired in 1924. The *Eighth Annual Report* (1925) paid tribute to them both. Writing about Richard Lodge, the *Annual Report* recorded that:

He had been largely responsible for starting both institutions [the School and Settlement], and had acted as Chairman of the Council of the Association for Social Study and Training since its inauguration. The success of the movement had been largely due to his constant interest and support.<sup>268</sup>

Then, a few pages later, Nora Milnes wrote of James Seth in the Director's Report that:

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<sup>267</sup> Annual Reports, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

Professor Seth, as is well known, was chiefly responsible for the founding of the School, and it is to his untiring efforts that the success of the movement is largely due.<sup>269</sup>

While it seems contradictory that they were both deemed to be principally responsible for the school, the fact remains that their involvement was seen as key to its early success. It was likely that the patronage of these two men, and others, was necessary for the school at its inception, and during its first few years. However, it is testimony to the determination, drive and leadership skills of Nora Milnes that the loss of these men, both highly esteemed academics within Edinburgh University, did not mean that the school foundered. In fact, Nora Milnes continued to push for a closer relationship between the school and the university, arguing that the school should officially become part of the university.

*The Scotsman* newspaper reported that, as of the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1928, the school would be taken over by Edinburgh University, and would be known as the Department of Social Study and Training.<sup>270</sup> The article quoted Professor Kemp Smith as saying that the reason why the school had not started out as a department of the university was because it had initially been experimental in nature. However, it had shown it was meeting a real need ‘and the School had established itself in the public esteem of the community, and to the knowledge of the University, in such a satisfactory manner that the University authorities **had agreed** to take over the School’ (my emphasis).<sup>271</sup> Reading *The Scotsman* article, the

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<sup>269</sup> Annual Reports, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/2/4, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>270</sup> See footnote at the bottom of page two for an explanation of the fact the Department was rarely referred to as the Department of Social Study and Training.

<sup>271</sup> The Social Worker – University Recognition: Edinburgh School of Social Study, *The Scotsman*, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1928: 14

words 'had agreed' could easily be skimmed over quickly, without much thought being given to them. However, they are, in fact, quite significant. Arguably, the school had to prove itself to the university, and while it had done so to a satisfactory level, this merger was not initiated by the university.

There is clear evidence during these early years of ambivalence on the part of Edinburgh University towards the school. As we have seen, the university wanted to be associated with the school to a certain extent – it was agreeable to it being established under the auspices of the university – but not to be associated with it too closely. It initially declined to fund it. Then when it did give it resources, these were arguably meagre and, quite literally, resources that no one else wanted. Richard Lodge, not simply a Professor, but by then Dean of the Faculty of Arts, opposed pressing the university to provide University Certificates and Diplomas. When the university agreed to do this, and then agreed to the school becoming a department, both of these developments were at the request of the school – the university itself did not seek to establish closer ties. Yet, we see that, in spite of this, within ten years of being made Director, Nora Milnes had successfully ensured that the school had become part of the university. This was crucial. As Nora Milnes recognised, being part of the university brought status and security. Having seen social work education brought fully into the university we will now shift our focus to Nora Milnes's engagement in the public arena.

#### Women's roles in society: Citizenship, professionalisation and social work as a career:

Nora Milnes, as we will see, played an active role in women's organisations in Edinburgh, both as a speaker and as a member. By examining her involvement with these organisations

we can explore the public roles which middle-class women could increasingly take on after some women gained the vote in 1918, and after the passing of the Sex Disqualification Removal Act 1919.<sup>272</sup> More specifically we will examine how Nora Milnes's involvement in these organisations connected to her belief that social work was a profession, and consequently offered opportunities for women to have paid careers – something she promoted publically. She also used her networks with former students of the department to endorse this idea, through supporting individuals to ensure they gained good quality, well paid jobs. At the same time, she also gathered data to support her arguments for increased salaries for social workers. This was an area she focused on because she recognised that ensuring social work was well paid made it more viable as a career option for both women and men.

#### Women's organisations:

The year Nora Milnes moved to Edinburgh – 1918 – was a time of great social and political change. As noted previously, the First World War meant that many women engaged in paid employment for the first time, not just in social work, but in roles related to war work, or posts vacated by men going to the front. The Representation of the People Act 1918 widened the franchise to include all men, and for the first time some women were able to vote in general elections. Numerous suffrage societies changed their names and shifted their focus in response to this, instead becoming focused on considering the potential new

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<sup>272</sup> Women who were over 30 and were householders, or wives of householders gained the vote in 1918. Other women had to wait until the Representation of the People (Equal Representation) Act 1928 was passed when everyone over 21 became entitled to vote.

roles for women, and how these could be achieved through the vote and public office.<sup>273</sup> I have identified no evidence that Nora Milnes campaigned for women to have the vote, or even that she agreed with this in principle. However, her involvement in certain Edinburgh societies demonstrated that she was concerned with ideas of citizenship. Sue Innes argues that after the first women gained the vote, the idea of citizenship was a way in which women's organisations sought to legitimise women's roles in public life: 'It was a conception of citizenship that drew on core components of rights, duties and participation in public life'.<sup>274</sup>

Innes argues that many women's organisations distanced themselves from actions or beliefs which appeared to be feminist, as the perception of feminism had attracted many negative associations immediately after the First World War. Consequently, many women did not seek to associate with organisations, or causes, that were overtly feminist. Instead organisations focused on citizenship, which were more appealing to the public, were formed. An example of this was the Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association (EWCA). Formed in 1918, the EWCA took an interest in family welfare issues, and carried forward the Victorian and Edwardian idea that women had a legitimate role to play in issues which touched on the domestic, even when this took place in the public arena.

From 1920 onwards Nora Milnes was reported in *The Scotsman* to have spoken at events for a number of societies in Edinburgh which advanced ideas of women's citizenship, and women's involvement in local and national politics. Between 1920 and 1940, *The Scotsman* noted she spoke at, or was an invited guest at, thirteen meetings of the Edinburgh

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<sup>273</sup> Sue Innes, 'Love and Work: Feminism, Family and Ideas of Equality and Citizenship, Britain 1900-39,' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998).

<sup>274</sup> Sue Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period: The Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association,' *Women's History Review* 13, no. 4 (2004): 621-648: 637

Equal Citizenship Society, the Women's Union, the Edinburgh Soroptimists, the National Council of Women and the EWCA. As noted, the EWCA focused on promoting women's roles in public life through work in areas relating to welfare issues. Lady Leslie MacKenzie, a founder of the EWCA was, as we have seen, a member of the Association for the Promotion of Social Study and Training, and taught the course on *Local Government* at the School, and then Department of Social Study until 1933.

The other organisations Nora Milnes was known to have spoken at had similar ethos. The Soroptimists focused on promoting women's rights and opportunities to participate in society. Ethel De la Cour from the school's Provisional Committee was the first President of the Edinburgh Branch.<sup>275</sup> The National Council for Women campaigned to further women's representation in government at local and national levels. The Edinburgh Equal Citizenship Society was formed out of the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage following the Representation of the People Act 1918, and was one of the organisations which Innes described that sought to promote women's involvement in government and wider society through citizenship after gaining the franchise. In addition to speaking at events, Nora Milnes was a member of at least one of these societies, the EWCA, and was referred to as its Secretary in an article in *The Scotsman* in 1933.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> 'Soroptimist International Edinburgh News, Notes, Anecdotes: Issue 157,' Soroptimist International, last accessed 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024, <http://sigbi.org/edinburgh/files/2012/10/SIEnna-157-October-2016-web.pdf>

<sup>276</sup> Lady Leslie MacKenzie: Edinburgh Woman Honoured – Pioneer and Administrator, *The Scotsman*, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1933.

Professionalisation and social work as a career for women:

Nora Milnes spoke at, or attended, events organised by these societies throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The speeches she gave focused predominantly on citizenship, and the value of social work as a career for women, which required professional training. Nora Milnes argued that the duty of the citizen was to work to improve the world, and to do this citizens must first understand the problems faced by the modern state. Social study strove to give citizens an opportunity to understand, and work through, these problems.<sup>277</sup> It was no longer sufficient to be kind, and want to do good. In Nora Milnes's view 'social work has developed greatly since the days when the Lady Bountiful went round with a basket distributing things among those who were commonly called the deserving poor'.<sup>278</sup> Rather, social science was now key, in order to gain an understanding of the problems of society and how to address these, as she herself explored in her own research and writing (which will be examined shortly). Consequently, social workers needed to be trained in social science to understand this, and to respond in a professional manner.

In making these arguments Nora Milnes was challenging ideas which related to gendered ideas regarding roles in social work and wider society at the time. We saw in chapter 2 that social work continued to be viewed as a charitable/voluntary activity for middle-class women, even after paid roles became available for women. This was bound up with other societal expectations about middle-class women and work. Marriage was portrayed as the ideal for middle-class women in Britain, a belief which was reinforced across society and through popular culture during this period. When a middle-class woman

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<sup>277</sup> Pioneers of Social Study: Ideals and Aims, *The Scotsman*, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1927.

<sup>278</sup> Careers for Girls: Almoner-Labour Manager, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1936.

did marry, the expectation continued to be that her husband would financially support her, and her role would primarily be as a wife and mother.

Social work was portrayed as an acceptable activity for middle-class women who married – but only in a voluntary capacity. Although higher education had begun to open up for middle-class women, it was still a commonly held idea that women would not have a paid role after marriage. Given this, social work was presented as a means by which married women could still contribute to wider society in a meaningful way. We even find this idea being promoted by those working in the field of higher education for women, for example in a newspaper article from January 1930. In the article the newly appointed Principal of Bedford College for Women, Miss Geraldine Jebb, stated that women should consider a university education, as even those who go on to marry will find having higher education beneficial. She gave the example of social work, and argued that:

Social services to-day need women of balanced judgement, and the woman who had the advantage of higher education is in a position to render valuable honorary public services. Amongst married women there are many who have a certain amount of leisure, and the call of public services should not remain unanswered by those who have the advantage of education combined with the ability to spare the time necessary for public work.<sup>279</sup>

The implication of Geraldine Jebb's comments were that social service would be a good use of married women's leisure time – a voluntary role, which would be a form of public service. Finally, Geraldine Jebb's comments also demonstrated the belief that to undertake social work it was sufficient to have 'balanced judgement', and that a level of

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<sup>279</sup> The University Woman, *Hull Daily Mail*, 14<sup>th</sup> January 1930.

higher education was valuable because it supported women to develop this. There was no mention of specialist training being required, or even desired, for social work. Social work was not represented as a profession, nor as a role providing a paid career for women.

Nora Milnes consistently argued against this characterisation of social work. For her, social work was a profession, and one which ought to offer women (and men) paid careers. For example, *The Scotsman* reported on one of the speeches she had made in 1936 where she stated:

That proper study and training is essential for the profession of social work was stressed by Miss Milnes, who insisted on proper qualifications in the candidate. 'We really do want the right kind of students' she said – 'It is no longer a job that if you possess a good heart you can automatically do by the grace of God'.<sup>280</sup>

Professionalisation was a key theme for all three of the women, and its importance is examined in depth in chapter 8. Here, it is sufficient to make the point that Nora Milnes, through her involvement in women's organisations and through the speeches she gave, demonstrated her belief that social work was a profession which required university-level education.

Nor was she doing this just in relation to social work. Nora Milnes, and the Department of Social Study in general, was arguably furthering opportunities for middle-class women in social work, but in other occupations too. During the 1920s and 1930s, as well as providing Certificates and Diplomas in Social Study the school, and then department, also provided training for nurses for a short time, and a Certificate for Health Visitors for a

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<sup>280</sup> Careers for Girls: Almoner-Labour Manager, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1936: 16

number of years, as noted in chapter 4. These roles were similar to social work in that they were careers in which women could legitimately be employed. The overt message of being trained professionals, arguably underscored a subtler message: that social work, and these other roles, was a means to legitimise women's roles in the public arena as experts.

#### Student network and issues of pay and conditions:

It was important for Nora Milnes that social work was a career which provided women with paid jobs, but this on its own was not sufficient. There also needed to be a sufficient number of social work posts, and they needed to be appropriately paid. Pay was important so that social workers – both women and men – could afford to support themselves adequately, and would be attracted to working in the profession. In arguing for this Nora Milnes was again directly contradicting the characterisation, discussed in chapter 2, that social work continued to be seen in terms of its philanthropic origins, and therefore as charitable work, which was done not for financial reward, but out of religious motivations and/or a desire to contribute to society. Therefore, the motivation (and reward) for middle-class women doing social work was the opportunity to contribute to the good of wider society. Because of this characterisation of social work as a charitable task for middle-class women, this meant, consequently that salaries for social work did not need to be high, as women were primarily not working in social work for a living wage. Put simply by Leonora Eyles in her 1930 book *Careers for Women*, in social work 'salaries are not very high, but adequate for a girl who is keen on service to others'.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Leonora Eyles, *Careers for Women* (London: Unwin Brothers Ltd, 1930): 110

Nora Milnes's concern about the issues of pay and conditions for social workers was reflected in her letters to former students, departmental documents and in interviews she gave to newspapers. Nora Milnes built up a network with her former students through correspondence, much of which is held in the CRC. This correspondence had several purposes, which included Nora Milnes providing information about job opportunities, career advice, references and training opportunities, as well as just keeping up-to-date about the former students' careers. Nora Milnes clearly liked to hear news, as she wrote in one letter: 'I had a long letter from [xxx] the other day and she gave me such a lot of news of other students, which I so much enjoyed getting'.<sup>282</sup> The wider importance of this network for Nora Milnes, the former students and social work education will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 8. However, here I want to briefly highlight that Nora Milnes used this network to gather data and undertake research regarding the pay and conditions of former students, in order to further her arguments around social work as a profession, and as a career for women, which should be well paid.

Primarily, Nora Milnes informally gathered information around pay and conditions, through this correspondence. What she concluded was that there were limited opportunities for social workers to be employed in Scotland, and that those who were employed here were not well paid – to the detriment of both former students, and social work itself. She reported her concerns regularly in the department's Advisory Minutes and Director's Reports. For example, in the Report of the Director of Study in 1937/38 she recorded that:

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<sup>282</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

Miss Marjorie Brown, who is now engaged upon Research work for the Maudsley Hospital, seems to be following in the footsteps of Mrs Jackson. She is receiving a salary of £275 to £300. She is anxious to return to Edinburgh but there seems little likelihood at present of any such salary being forthcoming for work of the kind.<sup>283</sup>

Although much of her data were gathered informally through correspondence, Nora Milnes did undertake more official research in the late 1930s, sending out questionnaires to former students. The findings of this research were reported in the Director's Report of 1940. Nora Milnes reported that the average salary of former students was £240 per annum, with Diploma graduates receiving on average £23 more than Certificate graduates. She bemoaned the fact that there was a lack of opportunities for paid social workers in Scotland, and made the case that more posts for professional social workers needed to be created here. While she stated that the numbers of hospital almoners had increased, the vast majority of posts for probation officers, child guidance workers and labour managers were in England.<sup>284</sup>

This was a long standing issue for social work in Scotland, as we will see in chapter 7 on Megan Browne, with numbers of social workers remaining chronically low until the rapid expansion of social work roles in response to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. For Nora Milnes, the expansion of paid social work positions in Scotland was necessary as without them social work as a profession suffered. Many of the social workers trained at Edinburgh had to move to England to gain paid roles. Consequently, Scotland was losing out on the expertise of trained social workers. A lack of paid positions also reflected the lack of status

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<sup>283</sup> Board of Studies in Social Study and Training: Minute Book, 1928-1951, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/3, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

and recognition afforded to social work, and social workers, in Scotland. The need to expand paid positions applied to specialist roles too. For example, Nora Milnes, publically called on Professor James Drever, Professor of Psychology at Edinburgh University, to address the situation regarding a lack of paid positions for psychiatric social workers (PSWs) in Scotland in an article in *The Scotsman*. Noting that six students who had graduated in Social Studies at Edinburgh University had gone on to train as PSWs, she stated that

Each student on completing her training at once obtained salaried posts in England.

No one deploras the fact more than I do, that such students cannot find an outlet this side of the Border. But such are the facts.<sup>285</sup>

In examining Nora Milnes's engagement in the more public arena, through organisations focused on women's citizenship, we have seen that she used this public position to promote social work's status as a profession, and career choice for women – a theme which will be returned to and expanded upon in chapter 8, as this was relevant for all three women. Moreover, she actively used her network with former students to gather data to inform her arguments on this topic, in particular in relation to pay and conditions for social work roles. We will now move on to explore her academic research and writing. This was a key aspect of her career, and it provides clear evidence to counter the picture presented in writing about women in early social work education that their focus was on the practical, as opposed to academic, aspects of training. In Nora Milnes we see that this was simply not the case.

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<sup>285</sup> Woman's Outlook: A New Career: Psychiatric Social Worker, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1946: 11

Academic research and writing:

Nora Milnes produced a number of academic books, chapters and articles during her career based on social science research she had undertaken. In fact, she not only engaged in academic research and writing herself, but she was acutely aware of the need for the Department of Social Study to undertake research. She argued that failure to do this limited the ability of the department to develop to its full potential, and also diminished the status of the department in relation to the rest of the university. Although her success in developing the department's research scope was limited, Nora Milnes never stopped pushing the university to grant it the resources needed to facilitate this. This section will first examine Nora Milnes's academic writing, before exploring her push for the Department of Social Study to develop a research base, and be part of the wider research community at Edinburgh University.

Nora Milnes's academic writing:

Nora Milnes's academic writing was a combination of economics and the integration of economics with social work. As noted previously, Nora Milnes's father, Alfred, was an economist, and Nora Milnes herself was also interested in economics. As we saw, she worked as the sole lecturer in Economics in King's College's Household and Social Science Department from 1915-1918. At King's College the curriculum she taught focused on prices and trade, with lecture titles including *Elements of the Mechanisms of Exchange* and *Elementary Considerations in regard to Taxation*.<sup>286</sup> Ralf Dahrendoff has argued that

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<sup>286</sup> Household and Social Science Department, Q/EPH/SYL/9-15, Queen Elizabeth College Ladies Department, King's College London Archives.

economics at this time was thought of theoretically, or in terms of economic history, but was not applied to practical, or every day, problems.<sup>287</sup> Nora Milnes researched and published work that focused on economic history ('Mint Records in the Reign of Henry VIII'<sup>288</sup>), on theoretical economics (*The Economics of Wages and Labour*<sup>289</sup>) and an economic study of industry in Edinburgh (*An Industrial Study of Edinburgh and the Surrounding Area, 1923-1934*<sup>290</sup>). Yet, while she undertook work focused on a more traditional approach to economics, she was also influenced by new developments.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth century, a small number of people were pioneering a new application of economics, and this movement was adopted as a central tenet at Nora Milnes's other place of work, the LSE. This new approach influenced her ideas about how economics could be used, and its integration with social studies. Its development coincided with concerns which developed among government officials regarding the nation's health following the poor physical condition of Boer War recruits. This concern, along with the desire to maintain imperial strength and international influence, led to a drive for national efficiency, and a focus on how factors pertaining to this could be measured.<sup>291</sup> Early surveys, such as the work of the Congregational Union in 1883 into the lives of London's poor, and Joseph Rowntree's

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<sup>287</sup> Dahrendorf, *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995*.

<sup>288</sup> Nora Milnes, 'Mint Records in the Reign of Henry VIII,' *English Historical Review* 32, no. 12 (1917): 270-273.

<sup>289</sup> Nora Milnes, *The Economics of Wages and Labour* (London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1926). This book, published after her father's death, was based on a number of papers and writings by Alfred Milnes which he had intended to publish. Nora Milnes added to these and edited them to form this book, acknowledging her father's authorship, as well as her own.

<sup>290</sup> Nora Milnes, *A Study of Industrial Edinburgh and the Surrounding Area 1923-1936* (London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1936).

<sup>291</sup> Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*.

subsequent work in the mid-1880s, were examples of measurements and enquiries into the state of the nation and people's lives.<sup>292</sup>

Rowntree, initially sceptical about the findings of the Congregational Union on the scale and depth of poverty in London, set out to undertake his own enquiry to ascertain what was really happening. His enquiry confirmed that around 30% of people in London lived in poverty, and led him to begin to try to understand the causes of poverty.<sup>293</sup>

Through examining the data, Rowntree was able to show that many people simply never earned enough money to live outside poverty. It was not that they were wasteful or feckless, their poverty was not their own fault. Rather their earnings never exceeded their outgoings, and never could. This important finding had wider implications. Socialists, including those who established and ran the LSE, began to consider how to apply economics to understand, and solve, social problems and the LSE developed its economic teaching partly along this line.<sup>294</sup> For example, Alexander Bowley and Alexander Burnett-Hurst, Nora Milnes's contemporaries at the LSE, published a study of wages and poverty in Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading in 1915. In the study they examined how different industrial and population conditions in these locations affected the income and lives of their working-class inhabitants.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>292</sup>Howard Glennerster, 'The Context for Rowntree's Contribution,' in *One Hundred Years of Poverty and Policy*, ed. Howard Glennerster, John Hills, David Piachaud and Jo Webb (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004).

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Colin M. Lewis, 'Economic History at the London School of Economics and Political Science: A View from the Periphery,' in *The Palgrave Companion to LSE Economics*, ed. Robert A. Cord, (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2019); Dahrendorf, *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995*.

<sup>295</sup> Alexander L. Bowley, and Alexander R. Burnett-Hurst, *Livelihood and Poverty: A Study in the Economic Conditions of Working-Class Households in Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd, 1915).

During her time working at the LSE, Nora Milnes developed an interest in social science research and began to utilise economics to examine and address social problems. She researched and wrote about employment, linking income and employment status to health, housing, education and welfare, and argued that in order to be an effective social worker, you needed to understand how these factors were interconnected. Nora Milnes set out her view that economic factors and social studies were inextricably linked in her book *Child Welfare from the Social Point of View* and article, 'Public Health and the Family'. Her argument was that the role of the father, and specifically his economic situation, needed to be given prominence in efforts to promote better welfare of children. While efforts to promote maternal health, good sanitary conditions and free school meals were important, these alone could not fully address the issue. To ignore the economic position of the breadwinner resulted in a failure to grasp the key factor in individual cases of poverty and ill-health.<sup>296</sup>

Throughout her career Nora Milnes recognised the importance of data, and the centrality of collecting and interpreting it for research. We see clear examples of this in two journal articles she wrote, which reported on findings from research she had undertaken. In the first, 'Some Aspects of the Infant Welfare Question', Nora Milnes responded to findings of a recently published report, *Child Mortality at the ages of 0-5 years in England and Wales*, by Sir Arthur Newsholme. Newsholme's report argued that housing was a central factor in causing child mortality in the case of large families (five children or more).<sup>297</sup> However, Nora Milnes argued that when she examined data gathered by a clinic

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<sup>296</sup> Nora Milnes, *Child Welfare from the Social Point of View* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1920): 108

<sup>297</sup> Arthur Newsholme, *On Child Mortality at the Ages 0-5 Years, In England and Wales* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916).

working with mothers in the East End of London, this demonstrated that housing was not as central in the case of large families as the report concluded. Instead, time between pregnancies was the important factor. The longer the time between pregnancies, the lower the rate of infant mortality.<sup>298</sup>

In the second article, 'Social Aspects of British Health Insurance', Nora Milnes examined the 1931 audit report of Friendly Societies (who distributed sickness benefits to their members on behalf of the Government) to assess the composition of who claimed sickness benefits. Nora Milnes analysed the figures and used them to demonstrate that women drew on these benefits more than men, and married women, particularly those aged under 45, were the largest claimant group. She went on to demonstrate that, in the case of female domestic staff, sickness rate claims had increased from a very low baseline to be much higher by the early 1930s. Although reticent in drawing a conclusion as to why that might be the case, she did hypothesise that female domestic staff were more likely to be employed as day staff by this time, returning to live in poor housing each night, rather than living in at their jobs (in better quality housing) as they had done previously. Consequently, this was having a negative impact on their health. Furthermore, she hypothesised, a wider variety of working opportunities were now open to women, and so the healthier, more educated women were potentially taking other jobs and leaving domestic work to the women who were in poorer health, and hence their sickness rates had increased.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Nora Milnes, 'Some Aspects of the Infant Welfare Question,' *Sociological Review* IX (1917): 121-128.

<sup>299</sup> Nora Milnes, 'Social Aspects of British Health Insurance,' *Social Services Review* 6, no. 4 (1932): 581-591.

Nora Milnes used data in her social work research, and advocated that others did the same, arguing that data have the potential to highlight wider trends and societal level problems which then enabled action to be taken. Nora Milnes argued that in social work, casework and records were central to good and effective practice in several ways – one of which was their potential value as a basis for social research.<sup>300</sup> Data gleaned during the process of casework and held in records could be utilised to understand societal level issues. Nora Milnes, as we saw, provided an example of this in her analysis of the records of a clinic in the East End of London, using it to identify the link between infant mortality and shorter time periods between pregnancies in large families.

Nora Milnes not only produced academic writing herself but was also keen that the academic element of the department's courses was emphasised more than its practical training. We learn about this through an incidental comment made by Marjorie Brown in 1952. In the department's Advisory Minutes in November 1952, Marjorie Brown related that Nora Milnes had ensured that the department's notepaper was changed from the Department of Social Study & Training, to the Department of Social Study, as she thought the course was becoming more academic and wanted to emphasise this.<sup>301</sup> Thus we see that Nora Milnes, in contrast to the characterisation of women in early social work education as being focused on the practical aspect of training, was in fact both personally and departmentally clear that the academic aspect of social work education was central. Further evidence of this is found in her push for the department as a whole to engage in research, which we will now examine.

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<sup>300</sup> Nora Milnes, 'The Difficulties Encountered in Recruiting and Training Voluntary and Professional Workers in a Social Case Agency,' *Charity Organisation Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1929): 21-31; Nora Milnes, 'Public Health and the Family,' *Charity Organisation Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1931): 148-157.

<sup>301</sup> Minute Book, 1933-1957, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/1, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

Departmental research work:

We have seen that Nora Milnes personally undertook research and produced academic work. But documents held in the CRC also show that Nora Milnes recognised that the Department of Social Study in general needed to undertake research. Her argument was that ‘a Department of Social Study which is to take its rightful place in a modern University should be equipped to undertake field research’.<sup>302</sup> It is clear that Nora Milnes understood that research not only supported the understanding of social issues, and potential remedies to address them – and so was beneficial for both students and clients – but also that it was important for the status of social study as an academic discipline within universities. To be recognised as a serious academic subject, it needed to do research. However, Nora Milnes met one particular obstacle with regard to developing the research focus of the Department of Social Study – the University Court did not provide the necessary funds.

Nora Milnes wrote that ‘the Department of Social Study has not sufficient staff for work of this kind [research] with the result that no real researches are being carried on in the Department’.<sup>303</sup> Consequently, Nora Milnes requested funding for additional staff to ensure that both the teaching commitments of the department and the proposed research could be undertaken adequately. In addition, Nora Milnes also requested funding for Research Scholarships. But the requested funding was not provided by the University Court. The result of this was that the department simply could not undertake the research Nora Milnes wanted it to. She herself had been doing her research in her spare time, and the fact

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<sup>302</sup> Committee on Co-operation and Research in the Social Sciences: Minutes, 1947-1963, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/5, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

that she published no further research after the mid-1930s demonstrated that this was not a sustainable way of working.<sup>304</sup>

In spite of this set back, Nora Milnes continued to seek a means to support research in the department. Changing tack, she sought to ally the department with others in related fields. This resulted in the establishment in 1947 of the Committee on Co-operation and Research in the Social Sciences, at her instigation.<sup>305</sup> The committee was a collaboration between the Departments of Moral Philosophy, Education, Economics, Sociology, Social Psychology, Criminology and Social Study and led to a number of research projects. Funding for these endeavours was made available by the university through a series of grants. Research projects were undertaken by staff from the different departments. In the case of the Department of Social Study, these staff members were Tom Burns and Hewan Craig who, for example, undertook projects exploring the social organisation of factories and a social survey of Edinburgh. However, funding from the university did not last for long. By 1952 (with Marjorie Brown now the Director of the department), the grants were cut and the decision was made to establish the Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC) as a separate entity, where research could be continued.

It is crucial to highlight two points in relation to Nora Milnes, and the department's, academic writing and research. The first was, quite simply, that Nora Milnes undertook research and produce academic writing, including numerous books, chapters and journal articles. This contradicts the characterisation of women in early social work education as focused on practical training, while men focused on academic work. Women could, and did,

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<sup>304</sup> Social Study: Directors, 1950-1951, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/67, Faculty of Arts, 1827-1977, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>305</sup> Committee on Co-operation and Research in the Social Sciences, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/5, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

have an academic focus, as Nora Milnes demonstrated. Consequently, her career and academic work broadens our understanding of what women in early social work education did. The second point is that Nora Milnes recognised the value of research for the status of the Department of Social Study. She understood that, in order to be viewed as a serious, academic subject, the Department of Social Study needed to undertake research. Not undertaking research made it easier for the university to dismiss social studies as a sub-standard subject. However, accessing the resources the department needed to undertake research was challenging.

Arguably, when we analyse the relationship between the university and the school, and then department, since 1918 there was resistance at an institutional level to support social studies. We see this in the lack of funding that was provided initially, in the sub-standard accommodation that the school was given, in the need for Nora Milnes to push for University Certificates to be granted, and then to push for the school to become part of the university, and in the failure to provide funding to facilitate research. While perhaps, on their own, none of these issues present particularly substantial barriers, when they come together, the institutional ambivalence is evident.

#### Retirement:

Nora Milnes worked until 1951, retiring at the age of sixty-nine. Given that the retirement age for women was sixty at this time, Nora Milnes worked considerably longer than was usual. This was not wholly her choice. Documents in the CRC include several references to her being acutely ill with influenza towards the end of the 1940s, and being in a convalesce

home at one stage.<sup>306</sup> In spite of this serious health issue, the university requested that she continue to work during the 1950/51 academic year, in order to allow a smooth transition to a new Director. Nora Milnes agreed: 'all I want to make sure of is that the members of my Department will not be over-burdened with extra work though the absence of a Head'.<sup>307</sup>

Through analysing these documents, it becomes evident that the university, on an institutional level, did not have a grasp of what social studies was. The documents which relate to Nora Milnes's retirement and replacement, when analysed as a body, arguably demonstrate that the university had been content to allow the department to run without much input from the wider institution (in terms of oversight and management, but also in their financial resourcing of the department). However, as Nora Milnes planned for her retirement she requested that the next Director be given a Chair in Social Studies. The university responded by hastily convening a Special Committee, which included the Principal, Sir Edward Appleton, as one of its members, 'to consider the future policy with regard to the Department of Social Study'<sup>308</sup> and to decide whether to approve a Chair.

In order to come to this decision, it needed to understand what social studies actually was – something which it did not seem to grasp. The university acknowledged that they had 'immediately realised that our task is a big one and will involve quite a deal of work and enquiry'.<sup>309</sup> The committee met over the next seven months and interviewed Nora Milnes, as well as other Heads of Departments of Social Studies, including Professor Thomas Simey of the University of Liverpool. However, it concluded that:

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<sup>306</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>307</sup> Social Study: Directors, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/67, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

The Committee, while agreeing that the Head of the Department must be of high academic standing, with contacts outside the University, is not convinced that it is necessary to institute a Chair to attract the right person, nor that the development of Social Science as a subject of study in this University has yet recognised the stage to warrant the institution of a Chair.<sup>310</sup>

Nora Milnes's reaction is not recorded in the archives documents. Given all that we know about her – her own record of academic work, her argument for the importance of university level education for social work, her consistent argument for the department to undertake research – it must have been galling. She had pushed throughout her career at Edinburgh for the university as an institution to support the development of the department, and while some influential figures supported her, she frequently faced indifference and a lack of support. This was commented upon directly in her obituary in *The Times*, in 1972, which recorded that 'Edinburgh University between the wars was a hierarchical male society where, despite her enormous talents and charm, Nora found it a hard battle to secure the steady expansion to which the importance of her work entitled her department'.<sup>311</sup> The refusal of a Chair for Social Studies, on the pretext that social studies was still not an academic enough subject, could be viewed as a prime example of this.

After her retirement Nora Milnes wrote to the LSE, asking for information about the Department of Social Science and Administration when she taught there, as:

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<sup>310</sup> Social Study: Future Policy of the Department, 1950-1952, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/69, Faculty of Arts, 1872-1977, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>311</sup> Dr Nora Milnes: Social Study at Edinburgh, *The Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1972.

For some time, with many unfortunate interruptions I have been trying to write a book on Social Study – its meaning and its history, and I find I have no records previous to 1918 when I came to the University here [Edinburgh].<sup>312</sup>

Unfortunately, she never wrote this book. However, her intention to do so demonstrates that she remained interested in social studies, even after her retirement. At some point after 1955 (it is unclear when) Nora Milnes moved back to London, and lived in Chelsea, until her death in 1972, aged ninety.

### Conclusion:

Nora Milnes's biography demonstrates the new opportunities for middle-class girls and women in social work and social work education which arose from societal changes during her early life and career. These changes, in particular the growth of academic education for middle-class girls and women, meant it was possible for women to train and work in paid roles as social workers. Women could also gain employment in social work education at universities and, as Nora Milnes showed, this was a subject where they could be leaders of departments. However, opposition was present, both to women and to social work education's place in the academy. Nora Milnes's biography shows she was a dynamic person who focused on developing social work education at Edinburgh University, working hard to overcome barriers which initially hampered this.

Nora Milnes advocated that a skilled, trained and professional workforce of social workers had a role to play in addressing societal issues, recognising that being part of the

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<sup>312</sup> Nora Milnes, Staff File, LSE Institutional Archive.

university provided social work education (and social work) with status. Nora Milnes was vociferous in her belief for the need to develop social work as a profession, and its important role as a career choice for women. Nora Milnes undertook research and produced numerous pieces of academic writing, including books, chapters and articles. She recognised, and pushed for, the Department of Social Study to engage in research, as she knew this would both inform those engaged in social work, and raise the status of social work as an academic subject. Nora Milnes's early life and career challenge the picture which is often presented of women in early social work education in the UK. Her successor Marjorie Brown, a former student of the department, built on the foundation Nora Milnes had laid. Although she appears to have been, or needed to be, less forthright and vociferous than Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown was also a successful and dynamic leader of the department, who similarly challenges the characterisation of women in early social work education in the UK, as we shall now examine.

## Chapter 6: Marjorie Brown

To be Miss Milnes' successor was no easy task.<sup>313</sup>

### Introduction:

These words were spoken in the eulogy to Marjorie Brown, who was Director of the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University from 1951 until her death in 1964. The eulogy was given by F. E. (Stella) Waldron, who worked with Nora Milnes at Edinburgh, and trained on the Mental Health Course at the LSE with Marjorie Brown. Stella Waldron knew both these women well, and went on to elaborate in her eulogy that while Nora Milnes was a 'colourful and outspoken woman'<sup>314</sup> whose influence 'went far beyond her own department',<sup>315</sup> Marjorie Brown was equal to the challenge of succeeding her. Although her personality and leadership style appears to have been different, Marjorie Brown was no less successful in leading the department. Building on her predecessor's work, she strengthened the department, consolidating the strong foundations Nora Milnes had laid down, as will be shown.

Marjorie Brown took over the helm of the Department of Social Study at a particular moment in social work history. The years after the Second World War saw a rapid expansion of the welfare state, building on previous legislation, provisions and financial allowances that had been developing over the last half century. Its expansion saw the introduction of a system of services and support for the population which was unparalleled.

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<sup>313</sup> F. E. Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.' *British Journal of Psychiatric Social Work* 8, no. 1 (1965): 3-5: 4  
The year of Marjorie Brown's birth cited in this article title is incorrect – she was born in 1907.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*: 4

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*: 4

Social work had to quickly demonstrate its worth in the new system as administrators of welfare, and also as specialists who could help those whom the welfare state could not fix – the so-called ‘problem families’ that had been identified during the Second World War, and remained a preoccupation throughout the 1950s.<sup>316</sup> To do this, social workers incorporated ideas from the fields of psychology and psychiatry to understand the people they worked with and – particularly in the field of psychiatric social work – to justify their role as specialists.<sup>317</sup> The role of the individual faded, and the importance of family and community became more prominent.

Social work, and social work education, had to develop its knowledge base and shift its focus to address this. The extent to which these theories transformed individuals’ practice is questionable.<sup>318</sup> But for social work education this shift was real, and was clearly shown in both the syllabus and the emphasis on the casework model. The influence of American social work education and practice also grew, and with it the commitment to casework. These developments can be charted through the professional career of Marjorie Brown. A psychiatric social worker (PSW) herself, she believed that developing the use of casework, and incorporating new theories and methods from America strengthened social work education and practice. Marjorie Brown became involved in international social work during the 1950s, and the role which she carved out for herself in this field will be examined. The networks she accessed through international social work afforded her both knowledge and support, and their significance for her leadership of the department will be analysed in more depth in chapter 8.

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<sup>316</sup> Philip Seed, *The Expansion of Social Work in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

<sup>317</sup> Henning, ‘Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.’

<sup>318</sup> Cree, *From Public Streets to Private Lives*.

Working initially in clerical work, a role recently opened up for women, Marjorie Brown moved into social work in her late twenties. A PSW for more than ten years, she then moved into social work education. During her time as a PSW she also worked on at least three research projects focused on mental health. Yet, there was minimal public acknowledgment of her involvement in this research. It is primarily through evidence from archives that I have identified her involvement in these projects. When I researched this further, I found that a lack of official acknowledgement of her role was not solely the case for Marjorie Brown, but for her female contemporaries in social work research in general. This chapter explores Marjorie Brown's research work, as well as the lack of acknowledgment women experienced for their research in social work, in light of gendered constructions during this time. The chapter will then examine her career from 1951 onwards, when she became the Director of the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. The development of the psy- discourses, how Marjorie Brown viewed these, and their role in social work education during the 1950s will be explored.

### Early life:

Marjorie Alice Brown was an only child, born on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1907, in Edinburgh, to William and Marion Brown (née Pendrich).<sup>319</sup> Her parents had married seven years earlier in 1900, and were aged forty and thirty-nine respectively when she was born.<sup>320</sup> Her father was an

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<sup>319</sup> Marjorie Alice Brown, Certified copy of Birth Certificate dated 23rd February 1907, 685/6 191 Morningside Registry Office, Edinburgh.

<sup>320</sup> William Brown and Marion Paterson Pendrich, Certified Copy of the Marriage Certificate dated 28th February 1900, 685/2 81, St Andrews Registry Office, Edinburgh.

architect,<sup>321</sup> with the 1911 census recording that he worked for the Town Council.<sup>322</sup> Her paternal grandfather was recorded as a clerk (deceased) and her maternal grandfather was recorded as a jeweller (deceased) on her parents' marriage certificate.<sup>323</sup> The family lived at 13 Maurice Place in Newington, Edinburgh, and Marjorie attended George Watson's Ladies' College from 1916 to 1924, then situated at 7 George Square.<sup>324</sup> George Watson's Ladies' College was a fee paying girls' school, opened in 1871 – one of a number of Merchant Company schools in Edinburgh. Originally set up to educate poor and destitute children their *raison d'être* had evolved, and the schools had progressed to educating children from the merchant classes of the city. Like Nora Milnes before her, Marjorie Brown came from a middle-class family, and received an academic education.

Marjorie Brown's mother died from cancer in 1922, aged fifty-five, by which time the family had moved to 15 Lauderdale Street in Marchmont.<sup>325</sup> Her father died soon afterwards, in 1924, from vascular heart disease, and Marjorie was orphaned aged seventeen years.<sup>326</sup> It is not clear where she lived after this, but she did have other family in Edinburgh, including her paternal aunt, Elizabeth Brown and it is possible she lived with her, or she may have paid for a room as a boarder, as many students did at this time. When she left George Watson's Ladies' College, Marjorie Brown, like Nora Milnes, did not enter social

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<sup>321</sup> Marjorie Brown, 'Certified Copy of Birth Certificate for Marjorie Alice Brown.'

<sup>322</sup> *Census return for Maurice Place, Edinburgh*. Morningside Sub district, Edinburgh. Census 685/6 30/1 (1911) Available at [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

<sup>323</sup> William Brown and Marion Pendrich, 'Certified Copy of the Marriage Certificate for William Brown and Marion Paterson Pendrich.'

<sup>324</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1 ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>325</sup> Marion Paterson Pendrich Brown, Certified copy of Death Certificate for Marion Paterson Pendrich Brown dated 1st December 1922, 685/7 960, Morningside Registry Office, Edinburgh.

<sup>326</sup> William Brown, Certified copy of Death Certificate for William Brown dated 29th March 1924, 685/7 214, Morningside Registry Office, Edinburgh.

work immediately. Instead she studied at Edinburgh University from 1924 to 1928, gaining an MA degree with Honours (2<sup>nd</sup> class) in English.

In chapter 2 we saw that university level education had opened up to middle-class women during the early years of the twentieth century, although opposition remained. The majority of this literature relates primarily to England (where both Nora Milnes and Megan Browne were educated). At this point, however, it is helpful to explore the situation in Scotland specifically, as it was here that Marjorie Brown was educated and of course where Edinburgh University is located. During the early years of the twentieth century, the Scotch Education Department (SED) had aspirations to increase the number of working-class adults who attended university, through extending and upgrading secondary school infrastructure in Scotland.<sup>327</sup> While this was their intention, Lindsay Paterson, Alison Pattie and Ian Deary argue that these reforms effectively stalled due to the financial crisis of the 1920s and 30s, and the policy was unsuccessful.<sup>328</sup>

The number of female students was also affected by the financial crises of the 1920s and 30s according to Robert Anderson, Michael Lynch and Nicholas Phillipson. They note that the proportion of female students at Edinburgh University had grown to 31% in 1924/25, but fell to 24% by 1938/39.<sup>329</sup> They argue that the economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s led to less money being available to universities and to households. As a result, women in particular found themselves less able to pay for tertiary education.<sup>330</sup> Consequently, women could, and did, go to university during the inter-war years, as we see

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<sup>327</sup> Lindsay Paterson, Alison Pattie, and Ian J. Deary, 'Social Class, Gender and Secondary Education in Scotland in the 1950s,' *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no. 3 (2011): 383-401.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Anderson, Lynch, and Phillipson, *The University of Edinburgh: An Illustrated History*.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

with Marjorie Brown. However, university education remained the preserve of students from middle-class backgrounds, as they were the ones able to afford it. This was significant, as it meant that it was mainly middle-class students (the vast majority of whom were women) who made up the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. Consequently, as they were the ones who had been educated to university level, it was also predominantly middle-class women who made up social work educators at Edinburgh University.

#### Employment for middle-class women:

After graduating, Marjorie Brown moved to London, and undertook clerical training at Mrs Hoster's Secretarial College.<sup>331</sup> As discussed in chapter 2, employment for middle-class women was becoming increasingly socially acceptable towards the end of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century, as different roles and professions were opening up. Social work, as we have seen, was one of these, but clerical work was another. The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW) was set up in 1859. It worked to change social attitudes and promote the employment of women and to provide vocational training for women.<sup>332</sup> Constance Hoster was closely involved with SPEW, and believed that adequate training was necessary to enable women to get jobs and keep them. Working, she recognised, was an economic necessity for many middle-class women.<sup>333</sup> Constance Hoster established the Mrs Hoster's Secretarial College in London in the 1890s and the College,

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<sup>331</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>332</sup> Anne Bridger, 'A Century of Women's Employment in Clerical Occupations: 1850-1950 with Particular Reference to the Role of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women,' (PhD Thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2003), accessed 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021, [http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/3098/1/DX235954\\_Redacted.pdf](http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/3098/1/DX235954_Redacted.pdf)

<sup>333</sup> Constance Hoster, 'The Training of Educated Women for Secretarial and Commercial Work and Their Permanent Employment,' *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 65 (1917): 262-269.

along with others like it, reflected the changes taking place regarding women and clerical work.

Formerly, clerical work had been undertaken predominantly by middle-class men, like Marjorie Brown's grandfather. But as other roles, such as working in foreign trade, opened up for men, middle-class women started to fill clerical roles. This coincided with a time when communications and technological developments, such as the telegram and telephone, saw the number, and scope, of clerical roles grow exponentially. Educated middle-class women had the literacy and numeracy skills required. SPEW worked to promote them as potential workers and train them in skills such as shorthand and book keeping.<sup>334</sup> By the time Marjorie Brown trained at Mrs Hoster's, middle-class women were well established as the majority of clerical workers, although they were routinely paid less than men to do the same work, and the potential for promotion was slight. It is not clear why Marjorie Brown choose to train in clerical work, or indeed why she later changed direction and entered social work.

By the end of the 1920s there was no longer a surplus population of women, and the vast majority of women could and did marry.<sup>335</sup> Susan Pedersen, in her analysis of the British welfare system between 1914-1945, argues that during the inter-war years governments sought to reinforce the idea that the family unit was a married couple with children, where the man worked and the woman cared for the children and home. The First World War had normalised the idea of middle-class women working, and there was a general acceptance that women could work while they were single. However, once they

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<sup>334</sup> Bridger, 'A Century of Women's Employment in Clerical Occupations.'

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

married they would stop. The ways successive governments supported families through welfare benefits deliberately reinforced this. Governments continued to develop a system underpinned by the assumption that the family would provide, and crucially that this provision would come from the man's wages (the ideal of the male breadwinner). In terms of state benefits, this meant that if the male breadwinner became ill or unemployed and could not support the family financially, the State would step in. Pedersen argues that successive governments during this period had a choice: they could either support the idea of the man as the breadwinner and base a family's entitlement to benefits on his contributions, making payments only when he could not work, or they could support the idea of a family allowance, which was not based solely on the man's entitlement, and which recognised the role and entitlement of women in their right – they chose the former. By doing so the governments of the inter-war years, Pedersen argues, reinforced the concept that married women should be supported by their husband as the breadwinner.<sup>336</sup>

The ideal of the male breadwinner was also supported and promoted by the (male) trade unions, who prioritised furthering men's employment rights over women's. In practice this meant that trade unions fought for men's wages and job security to be increased and protected, at the expense of women's entitlements. Consequently, women's wages, job security and opportunities were worse than men's.<sup>337</sup> Kate Murphy argues that this ideology was reinforced, not just in government welfare policy and by trade unions, but across British society through the media (print and radio), popular opinion and through the marriage bar. While the Sex Disqualification Removal Act 1919 had enabled some careers to

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<sup>336</sup> Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>337</sup> Seecombe, 'Patriarchy stabilized: The construction of the male breadwinner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain.'

be opened up to women, the inter-war period paradoxically also saw these new freedoms begin to be curtailed in the context of the austerity and depression of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>338</sup> Marriage bars were introduced in some jobs, including the civil service and teaching, whereby women were no longer employed once they married. I have found no evidence of a marriage bar in social work. However, there were references in the Director's Report in the CRC of female social workers stopping work when they married during the inter-war years.<sup>339</sup> While it seems for social work at least this was not automatically required there may have been a cultural marriage bar, which was reinforced by a lack of policy and legislative infrastructure which would have supported married women to work, for example policies around maternity leave.

The chronology of Marjorie Brown's education and early career came from a C.V. in her student file from the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. Unfortunately, dates are not given for much of her early employment, or for the course at Mrs Hoster's. However, it seems that she moved to London after graduating in 1928. She attended Mrs Hoster's before finding employment as a confidential clerk to the secretary of the Froebel Society in London, a role she occupied for eighteen months.<sup>340</sup> The Froebel Society for the Promotion of the Kindergarten System, more commonly known as the Froebel Society, was founded in Britain in 1874. Its aim was to promote the principles and methods of teaching developed by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), which emphasised play-based learning for younger children. This was the first reference to a social work related

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<sup>338</sup> Kate Murphy, 'A Marriage Bar of Convenience? The BBC and Married Women's Work 1923-39,' *Twentieth Century British History* 25, no. 4 (2014): 533-561.

<sup>339</sup> Board of Studies in Social Study and Training: Minute Book, 1928-1951, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/3, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>340</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

organisation that Marjorie Brown had a connection with, and could have been the impetus for her pursuing social work as a career.

'Miss Brown's work from every aspect is exceptionally good'<sup>341</sup>:

Marjorie Brown returned to Edinburgh, where she worked as secretary to the Accident Manager at the Caledonian Insurance Company for three years.<sup>342</sup> In 1934, she applied to the Diploma course in Social Study at Edinburgh University, which she began in January 1935. She was evidently a model student. Her student record included placement reports, which noted her exceptional abilities and the high esteem she was held in. She had practice placements at the Council for Social Services in Edinburgh, where Anne Ashley (Secretary) noted that she was 'an excellent student'<sup>343</sup> and at the COS in Southwark, London. She also had an extended placement at Edinburgh University Psychological Clinic for Children and Juveniles, where she was supervised by Dr James Drever (the first Professor of Psychology in Scotland) and Isobel Stirling (Supervisor Social Service). They noted that 'Her reports are excellent, so much so, that she has written the official report for the Clinic on some quite involved cases'.<sup>344</sup> With regard to home visits for the clinic, 'these visits Miss Brown did so well from the first, not only bringing back the right information, but making thoughtful suggestions for the case'.<sup>345</sup> Overall, they concluded that 'Miss Brown's work from every aspect is exceptionally good'.<sup>346</sup> Nora Milnes clearly agreed, writing that 'Miss Brown's work

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<sup>341</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

on the theoretical side was of a consistently high standard',<sup>347</sup> and repeating the praise she had been given for her practical work.

#### Mental Health Course, LSE and Psychiatric Social Work:

Marjorie Brown evidently had an aptitude for psychiatric social work, a relatively small, but growing specialism within social work. She clearly felt this was the right area of work for her and she was accepted onto the LSE 'Training for Social Work in Mental Health' course after she completed the Diploma. The Mental Health Course at the LSE, established in 1929, was the first of its kind in Britain. While the title of the course was quite general, in practice it trained students to become PSWs. This was a new role in Britain, and reflected wider changes in attitudes towards both mental illness and the wellbeing of children.<sup>348</sup> Since the turn of the twentieth century children had increasingly been recognised as individuals, with greater importance placed on their development into future citizens. The possibility that they may develop into delinquents was of concern, and the Child Guidance movement, which went on to employ many of the early PSWs, emerged to attempt to address the problems children might have.<sup>349</sup>

There was also a growing recognition in Britain that the asylums used to house many of those with the most severe mental illness were not offering treatment, but simply being used to contain patients.<sup>350</sup> A greater understanding of mental illness needed to develop,

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<sup>347</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>348</sup> Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.'

<sup>349</sup> Noel Timms, *Psychiatric Social Work in Great Britain (1939-1962)* (London: Routledge, 1964); Vicky Long, "'Often There Is a Good Deal to Be Done, but Socially Rather Than Medically": The Psychiatric Social Worker as a Social Therapist 1945-1970,' *Medical History* 55, no. 2 (2011): 223-239.

<sup>350</sup> Edgar Jones, Shahina Rahman, and Robin Woolven, 'The Maudsley Hospital: Design and Strategic Direction, 1923-1939,' *Medical History* 51, no. 3 (2007): 357-378.

alongside effective treatments.<sup>351</sup> More patients began to be cared for in the community, which necessitated greater infrastructure and services.<sup>352</sup> Many of the developments in child guidance and the treatments of mental illness which Britain began to adopt originated in America, including the training of PSWs. The first PSWs had been trained at Smith College, Massachusetts, in 1918.<sup>353</sup> In 1927 and 1928 the Commonwealth Fund of America agreed to fund a small number of students from Britain to receive this training in America.<sup>354</sup> This was a precursor to the Mental Health Course being established at the LSE in 1929.

When Marjorie Brown started the course, the prospectus stated that it was 'designed for social workers who desire special knowledge and experience of the causes and treatment of psychological difficulties of and behavioural problems in adults and children'.<sup>355</sup> The course lasted for ten months and was a mixture of lectures and practical placements. Lectures were in 'psychiatry, psychology, physiology, mental hygiene and social casework'.<sup>356</sup> Three days a week were spent on practical placements at child guidance clinics, the Maudsley Hospital and the Central Association for Mental Welfare. Students had to be aged twenty-two and over (and to be eligible for a scholarship had to be aged under thirty-five), to have a Social Studies Certificate or Diploma; and relevant experience in social work.<sup>357</sup> There are no records of Marjorie Brown's impressions of the course, and no student file recording her assessments and reports. However, Stella Waldron, in her eulogy

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<sup>351</sup> Edgar Jones, 'Aubrey Lewis, Edward Mapother and the Maudsley,' *Medical History* 47 (2003): 3-38.

<sup>352</sup> Myron J. Rockmore, 'Social Work Responsibility in Mental Illness,' *Social Work* 5, no. 3 (1960): 70-76.

<sup>353</sup> Timms, *Psychiatric Social Work in Great Britain (1939-1962)*.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> LSE: London School of Economics, May 1934-April 1969, MSS.378/APSW/P/12/20/58-59, Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, Modern Records Centre.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*

of Marjorie Brown years later, reported that: 'She had been a notable student, chosen by Dr Aubrey Lewis, now Professor Sir Aubrey, to join a research team at the Maudsley Hospital. She worked on the twins study started by Dr Eliot Slater'.<sup>358</sup>

### The history of social work research:

Marjorie Brown was involved with social work research, in different forms, for the rest of her career. Little has been written about the history of social work research in Britain. However, in a recent article addressing this topic, Ian Shaw presents a rough chronological sketch of social work research, from the COS and settlements until the present day.<sup>359</sup> Shaw acknowledges that this is a complex topic, and argues that there are a number of conflicting issues in how this field can be conceptualised and presented. Social work, of course, has been understood to be different things at different times, and social work research has also taken place in different arenas (universities, government departments, voluntary organisations), and been described as different things. Yet, it is evident from Shaw's article, and other sources, that there is a dearth of work examining social work research, but not an absence of social work research itself.

We saw in chapter 5 that social work and social enquiry were developing alongside one another in university settlements and the LSE, for example. Nora Milnes undertook a number of different research projects on topics which impacted clients' lives, and the same can be said for Marjorie Brown during the 1930s and 1940s. However, in Marjorie Brown, we see not only a social worker who undertook research, but also an example of someone

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<sup>358</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.': 3

<sup>359</sup> Ian F. Shaw, 'Times Present, Times Past: The History of Social Work Research in the United Kingdom,' *Bulletin of the Social Work History Network* 7, no. 1 (2020): 30-43.

whose research activities have not been formally acknowledged. This caused difficulties for me as a researcher, because it was unclear at times what type of work she did, to what extent, and to what competence. The evidence of her work I found came from sources of archival material in the CRC for the Dumfriesshire Mental Health Survey, and her own co-authored *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*, which focused on the impact of evacuations on a rural area. The fact that her involvement was not consistently credited will be examined later. For now, let us begin by exploring the work she was involved in, starting with her time at the Maudsley Hospital.

### The Maudsley:

Marjorie Brown started working at the Maudsley hospital, London, in 1937 after completing the Mental Health course at the LSE. At that time the Maudsley was a relatively new hospital. It had been established 'with the stated aim of finding effective treatments for neuroses, mild forms of psychosis and dependency disorders'.<sup>360</sup> Initially working with shell-shocked veterans of the First World War, it opened to the public in 1923. The Maudsley had a clear ethos of working in a different manner to the older asylums, which the first Medical Director, Dr Edward Mapother, believed did little more than offer a place where patients could be monitored, and restrained.<sup>361</sup> Instead, the Maudsley aimed to utilise and develop treatments for mental health conditions. They sought to do this by learning from what others were doing, primarily in America, but also through undertaking research, and testing, into potential treatments at the hospital. Dr Mapother was not keen to adopt experimental

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<sup>360</sup> Jones, Rahman, and Woolven, 'The Maudsley Hospital.': 357

<sup>361</sup> Jones, 'Aubrey Lewis, Edward Mapother and the Maudsley.'

treatments, such as insulin coma therapy, instead preferring to gather as much information about the patient and their habits as possible to try to work out what may have caused their mental ill health. More gentle treatments were then utilised, such as warm baths, to try and restore the patient's previous level of functioning. Dr Aubrey Lewis, who took over as Medical Director in 1939, agreed with this approach.<sup>362</sup>

PSWs did work at the Maudsley, and so it is likely that Marjorie Brown worked there in this capacity too, as well as being involved with research. The research project which she worked on was a study examining the development of mental illness in twins, and whether this could be ascribed to genetics or their environment. However, her contribution to this research is unclear. Her name was not mentioned in the literature reporting the project, or in the Eliot Slater archive.<sup>363</sup> In fact, the only direct reference I found to her role in the research was in Stella Waldron's eulogy. It is plausible that this lack of recognition was because Marjorie Brown was a woman, and this will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter. Marjorie Brown's work at the Maudsley was interrupted when the Second World War broke out in 1939. The Maudsley was temporarily shut down, its staff redeployed, and work on the Twins study was paused.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Jones, 'Aubrey Lewis, Edward Mapother and the Maudsley.'

<sup>363</sup> Eliot Slater (1904-1983): The Online Archive, The Estate of Eliot Slater, last modified 2013, <https://eliotlater.org/>

<sup>364</sup> Irving I. Gottesman, and Peter McGuffin, 'Eliot Slater and the Birth of Psychiatric Genetics in Great Britain,' in *150 Years of British Psychiatry Volume II: The Aftermath*, eds. Hugh Freeman and German E. Berrios, (London: Athlone Press, 1996).

Evacuated children:

The next piece of research I have identified that Marjorie Brown was involved in took place in Westmorland, in 1943. During the summer of 1941,<sup>365</sup> Marjorie Brown moved to Westmorland (part of Cumbria, north west England) to work as a PSW with evacuees.<sup>366</sup>

The first mass evacuation during the Second World War took place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939. It saw around 1.5 million people, mainly children but some adults (mostly mothers and pregnant women), move from areas which were deemed potential targets for bombing by the Germans to more rural areas (known as reception areas) around Britain.

Other smaller scale evacuations followed later in the war. One outcome of the evacuations was that the supposed poor health, lack of cleanliness, clothing and manners of many of the evacuees were highlighted to the general population. This phenomenon was initially publicised by the *Our Towns* report, written in 1943 by representatives from the National Federation of Women's Institutes.

The report argued that the evacuation process threw into sharp relief the deprivation that many people from inner cities and towns still lived in, despite improvements in housing and welfare services the government had introduced over the last thirty years.<sup>367</sup> This idea quickly gained traction and became widely accepted, although its findings have been questioned and critiqued.<sup>368</sup> The prevalence of scabies, poor personal hygiene, including soiling and a lack of toilet training among children, in addition to the poor

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<sup>365</sup> Jonathan Taylor, '[Her] Hostess...Is Anxious to Have Her Back When She Is Cured': The Impact of the Evacuation of Children on Wartime Local Services, England, 1939-1945,' *Medical Humanities* 46, no. 2 (2020): 144-153.

<sup>366</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

<sup>367</sup> Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns: A Close Up – a Study Made During 1939-1942* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943).

<sup>368</sup> John Macnicol, 'The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention,' in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, ed. Harold L. Smith, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

social behaviour of the children and their mothers, was thought to be a widespread problem. The scale of this, it was argued, had previously been masked but was exposed when they came into contact with host families. While this was not said to be the case of all, or even most, of the evacuees, the supposed scale of the problem was sufficient to cause concern among the public and government. Arguably, the idea that some people in society were incapable of making lasting changes, in spite of any support offered to them, was not new. As has already been examined, the COS, for example, considered some to have caused their own problems – the idle poor – and to be beyond the reach of the help they could give.<sup>369</sup> However, this was now conceptualised as the ‘problem family’ – the family that, in spite of being the recipient of improved welfare and housing services, still had poor hygiene, morals and behaviour.

Marjorie Brown was a co-author of *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland* along with J. F. Dow (Medical Officer, Westmorland County Council), published two months after *Our Towns*. While *Our Towns* reported that its purpose was to write about the conditions of working-class people in towns and cities, the stated purpose of the Westmorland Survey was to ‘assess to some degree the benefits or ill-results that have been the outcome of the tremendous social experiment of evacuation’.<sup>370</sup> Its focus was clearly on the impact of the evacuations on the reception area, not the evacuees. The survey itself examined the work done in preparation for the evacuations from 1938 onwards by local Billeting Officers, and how the four waves of evacuations to Westmorland (in 1939, 1940 and May and September 1941) had been received and managed locally. While the work of local officials was

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<sup>369</sup> Albert Philp and Noel Timms, *The Problem of 'the Problem Family': A Critical Review of the Literature Concerning the 'Problem Family' and Its Treatment* (Liverpool: Family Service Units, 1957).

<sup>370</sup> J. F. Dow and Marjorie A. Brown. *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*. (Kendal: Westmorland County Council, 1943): 3

universally praised, it was clear the local population had largely mixed feelings about the evacuations. Overt comments were made, particularly regarding the fact that evacuation was voluntary, but billeting could be imposed on residents. Other complaints were alluded to, such as the perceived higher crime rate among evacuees.

The Westmorland survey reported some of the same issues highlighted in *Our Towns*, such as the incidence of scabies among the evacuee children and cases of poor hygiene. Most of the children who were evacuated to Westmorland came from Newcastle and South Shields in 1939 and 1940, and from Barrow-in-Furness in 1941. All groups were noted to have had much higher incidence of scabies than children in Westmorland, and fewer children were deemed to be in the highest category of nutrition (although no explanation of what this meant was given). However, with regards to the evacuees, 'the general health was good,<sup>371</sup> with no rickets being evident, and their dental health was noted to be far better than children in Westmorland. Statements were made on several occasions that the children benefitted greatly from being in the countryside, much like in *Our Towns*, with little evidence given for how this was assessed. For example, the survey reported that 'as to the general health progress during the time the children were here there could be no doubt whatsoever; the children improved out of all knowledge'.<sup>372</sup> The countryside was evidently viewed as a place where children's health could prosper, compared to their living conditions in towns and cities. However, unlike *Our Towns* the Westmorland Survey was rarely overtly critical of working-class town and city dwellers. In general, the survey sought to explain – and minimise – the difficulties the evacuees, and

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<sup>371</sup> Dow and Brown, *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*: 12

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*: 12

their hosts encountered – presenting them as something to be expected when different groups of people were thrown together.

A significant section of the Westmorland survey examined ‘psychological problems’ among the evacuees.<sup>373</sup> It noted there was a small number of ‘problem children’ and a PSW (Marjorie Brown) was engaged to work with them.<sup>374</sup> Marjorie Brown was in fact one of three consecutive PSWs who worked in Westmorland during the Second World War, but the other two are not mentioned in the survey.<sup>375</sup> The survey noted that 176 children were seen by the PSW (out of a total of 13,310 evacuee children). While *Our Towns* spoke negatively about enuresis, stating that it was a significant problem and caused major difficulties for host families, the Westmorland Survey was far more sympathetic to this issue. It never attributed enuresis to a lack of care from parents – as *Our Towns* did – but instead attested it to children being somewhere new, being anxious, or having underlying medical conditions. It noted that for most children the issue stopped when they had settled in to their billets. While the survey recorded that some children with a persistent enuresis issue were moved to a hostel, this was done to benefit the children so they did not receive negative judgement and behaviour from host families.

‘Behaviour problems’ were also discussed but again, unlike *Our Towns*, this was not framed as due to poor parenting, but rather because hostesses did not feel able to discipline other people’s children.<sup>376</sup> The children’s sometimes naughty behaviour was presented by the survey as normal, and it implied that if hostesses had felt able to discipline them, as they presumably did their own children, the issue would have been resolved. In *Our Towns* ‘dull

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<sup>373</sup> Dow and Brown, *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*: 16

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*: 16

<sup>375</sup> Taylor, “[Her] Hostess...Is Anxious to Have Her Back When She Is Cured.”

<sup>376</sup> Dow and Brown, *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*: 18

and backward' children were linked to poverty and juvenile delinquency.<sup>377</sup> In contrast, in the Westmorland survey, while 'backwardness' was noted to evoke negative feelings and behaviour from host families, the survey was again more understanding. It noted that many of the children termed as such – and viewed as difficult – had a low IQ, something which we might conceptualise today as learning difficulties, and found the changes in their circumstances challenging. It noted that these children seemed happier in small group homes, and recommended that this be a billeting policy in future.

Finally, the survey also discussed juvenile delinquency, and again a more nuanced and thoughtful interpretation than in *Our Towns* was evident. The survey noted that 'this has been a problem which has caused considerable anxiety throughout the country, but our experience in Westmorland has been that the gravity of the offences has been exaggerated'.<sup>378</sup> It highlighted that children from Westmorland had appeared at the County Court in higher numbers than the evacuees, although in Kendal the numbers were more equitable. While juvenile delinquency had been a growing issue in Kendal for some time, it acknowledged that the more serious offences (e.g. larceny, wilful damage) had been perpetrated by evacuee children. In general, a much more complex picture was presented, which sought to avoid merely blaming the evacuees.

The evacuee children who presented with psychological problems were referred to the PSW (Marjorie Brown). A monthly child guidance clinic also took place, which diagnosed children, and advised the PSW on ongoing interventions. The Westmorland survey concluded that, while there had been some difficulties and some opposition from locals, the

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<sup>377</sup> Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns*: 50

<sup>378</sup> Dow and Brown, *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*: 21

scheme in Westmorland had been managed well, and that most of the evacuees who stayed settled in well, and benefitted from their time there. There was little reference to the systemic problems which *Our Towns* claimed to uncover. While the survey reported on behavioural problems among the evacuees, they were reported as being managed effectively through the intervention of the PSW and Child Guidance Clinic. Arguably, the idea of the problem family was not given the same weight in the Westmorland survey as in *Our Towns*. In fact, that survey placed great faith in the ability of the PSW, with the support of the Child Guidance Clinic, to adequately address the issues of those children deemed to have psychological and behavioural problems. The role of the social worker as a specialist who could address these issues was in evidence here.

#### Mental Health Survey in a Rural Area:

From Westmorland, Marjorie Brown moved to Dumfriesshire, Scotland, to work at the Crichton Royal Hospital.<sup>379</sup> Founded in 1838, the Crichton was a large psychiatric hospital which provided care for both private and non-fee paying patients. In 1939 Dr William Mayer-Gross moved to the Crichton to become its Director of Clinical Research.<sup>380</sup> Clinical research had previously been undertaken at the Crichton, but Dr Mayer-Gross's appointment heralded an era when the volume of research grew exponentially. Research was undertaken into topics including insulin coma therapy, neurology, pharmacology, social psychiatry, alcoholism and leucotomies.<sup>381</sup> Dr Mayer-Gross was German and had moved to

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<sup>379</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

<sup>380</sup> R. G. McCreddie, A. C. Tait, and Morag Williams, 'Crichton Royal Hospital, 1839-1989,' *Psychiatric Bulletin* 13, no. 6 (1989): 294-295.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

Britain to escape Nazi persecution in the early 1930s. It is conceivable that Marjorie Brown already knew Dr Mayer-Gross as both worked at the Maudsley during the mid-1930s. Stella Waldron described Marjorie Brown's work at the Crichton as multifaceted: 'She did research amongst other subjects on the mental health services needed for the rural community around the hospital, and she was a caseworker... She was external examiner in the Course in Psychiatric Social Work [at Edinburgh University]'.<sup>382</sup> Stella Waldron stated that Marjorie Brown 'did research **amongst other subjects**'<sup>383</sup> (emphasis added), but I have only been able to identify documentary evidence for her involvement in the mental health survey of Dumfriesshire, the first mental health survey to be undertaken in Britain.

The survey began in 1945 and the field work was completed by September 1947.<sup>384</sup> Although Dr Mayer-Gross expressed plans to publish a full report, this never happened.<sup>385</sup> Instead a summary of findings was presented by Dr Mayer-Gross to the Eugenics Society in 1948, and was subsequently published in the *Eugenics Review*. The fact that the report was published in the *Eugenics Review* is important. The eugenics movement aimed to improve the quality of the genetics of the population, and was linked to ideas that biology and genetics determined social behaviour. Renwick argues that the eugenics movement in the UK was not unified, and different proponents of eugenics had different aims. Some saw eugenics as a means through which to identify and control negative (as they saw it) parts of the population – people with mental health issues, physical disabilities or lower IQ levels. Others looked to eugenics as a means to promote groups in the population, such as those

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<sup>382</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964,': 3-4

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.: 3

<sup>384</sup> W. Mayer-Gross, 'Mental Health Survey in a Rural Area: A Preliminary Report.' *Eugenics Review* 40, no. 3 (1948): 140-48.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

with higher intelligence, and promote social mobility more generally.<sup>386</sup> The published article of the findings from the Mental Health Survey of Dumfriesshire demonstrate that it fell into the first category. While I would argue that Marjorie Brown was involved with this research, I do not think it follows that the published article reflected her views, which (as will become evident) were constructed so differently in the Westmorland Survey, with its emphasis on social and environmental as opposed to biological factors as key determinants for behaviour.

The genesis of mental health survey research was a concern that the local working-class population in Dumfriesshire was in decline, not only in a numerical sense, but also in terms of eugenic concerns – that there was a mental, moral and physical decline in the health of those who remained.<sup>387</sup> Marjorie Brown's role in the research was opaque. Dr Mayer-Gross referred to 'the social worker'<sup>388</sup> once in his published article – unnamed there, but I have identified her to be Marjorie Brown, as described below. In his correspondence with the Eugenics Society he did not mention or allude to her at all. Yet, the documentary evidence suggests that her role in the research process was significant.

The CRC holds extensive papers relating to the survey. These include over 5,000 completed questionnaires, charts, graphs and preliminary reports illustrating survey findings, and correspondence related to the survey. Documents are also held that related to an earlier pilot survey of Dumfries, Aberdeen and Dundee.<sup>389</sup> These documents were part of the Department of Social Study papers which were donated to the CRC to be archived.

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<sup>386</sup> Renwick, 'Eugenics, Population Research, and Social Mobility Studies.'

<sup>387</sup> Mental Health Survey, 1943-1947, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/17, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>388</sup> Mayer-Gross, 'Mental Health Survey in a Rural Area.': 142

<sup>389</sup> Mental Health Survey, 1943-1947, Survey Administration and Analysis, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/17/2, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

How they came to the Department of Social Study was not recorded. However, it seems highly likely that the reason they were at Edinburgh was because Marjorie Brown brought them there. These documents demonstrate that Marjorie Brown was closely involved in gathering data for both the mental health survey and the earlier study mentioned. She visited individuals, completed numerous questionnaires for the survey (unlike Dr Mayer-Gross who did not visit the participants), conducted correspondence to gather data, and was involved in the process of editing the report Dr Mayer-Gross submitted to the *Eugenics Review*.<sup>390</sup>

The survey claimed to find a 9% incidence of 'abnormality' in the population, which it noted was slightly higher than similar surveys conducted in Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Finland and the USA.<sup>391</sup> This was calculated based on the percentage of individuals who could be categorised as having one of twenty-two clinical diagnoses, which included affective psychosis, schizophrenia and psychopathy, as well as having a stammer, being deaf or blind, having epilepsy or being of 'old age'.<sup>392</sup> The survey also included in its calculated prevalence of 'abnormality' those individuals' who had an IQ of less than eighty, which it referred to in the accepted medical terms of the time as 'dull and backwards'<sup>393</sup> as well as 'idiots'<sup>394</sup> and 'imbeciles'.<sup>395</sup> The tone of the report published in the *Eugenics Review*, it must be noted, was quite different from the Westmorland Survey, and to a reader now it can be quite unsettling to read some of the language used. It was much harsher than the

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<sup>390</sup> Mental Health Survey, 1943-1947, Dumfries, Aberdeen and Dundee Data, 1943-1944, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/17/3, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>391</sup> Mayer-Gross, 'Mental Health Survey in a Rural Area.'

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*: 144

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*: 143-144

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*: 145

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*: 145

Westmorland survey in its critique of those who are deemed to have less acceptable social situations: 'Dull, defective and maladjusted children are to a large extent the offspring of families of the labouring population. The fertility of these families is above average; they often live in unfavourable conditions, physical and moral, in overcrowded dwellings'.<sup>396</sup>

The idea of the problem family emerged here too. The report commented upon the need for special education for children who were 'subnormal'<sup>397</sup> and stated that:

First and foremost they should be taught the daily routine of a civilised life: how to wash and keep clean, how to dress and eat properly, how to make use of the appliances in the house, of the street, of leisure time, how to be helpful and honest and to live as normal members of the community – all things which a normal child of normal parents learns as a matter of course at home; but which are not so easily picked up by the subnormal child and are often not practised in the families of subnormals.<sup>398</sup>

The report concludes by recommending that greater special school provision be made for children of low intelligence, because they were having a negative impact on the education of others – 'in some schools the dullards form a large minority, frustrating the schoolmasters efforts'.<sup>399</sup> This was quite different to the conclusion in the Westmorland survey that children with a low IQ should be provided with small scale group living accommodation, as this would better meet **their** needs.

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<sup>396</sup> Mayer-Gross, 'Mental Health Survey in a Rural Area.': 146

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.: 147

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.: 147

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.: 146-147

### Research at Edinburgh University:

In 1948, Marjorie Brown was appointed as the first PSW at the Department of Psychological Medicine in Newcastle.<sup>400</sup> From there she moved to Edinburgh in 1951, when she was appointed Director of the Department of Social Study, at Edinburgh University. Although there is no record of her conducting research herself after she left Dumfries, there is evidence she facilitated research at a strategic level at Edinburgh. We saw in the previous chapter that Nora Milnes recognised the value of research to the department, and worked hard to establish a research base, finally achieving this through collaboration with other departments. However, as noted, funding for this stopped in 1952, and the department's involvement with research subsequently diminished. Yet, there were ongoing references to research in documents held in the CRC, albeit on a small scale. Mary F. Gregor (Senior Lecturer, Social Study), for example, worked with the South Bridge School, and undertook research into the problems of truancy there, although the details and outcomes of this research are unfortunately not recorded.<sup>401</sup>

Marjorie Brown's involvement with research continued at Edinburgh. In 1959, a Social Environment Research Unit (SERU) was established at Edinburgh University, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to undertake research into the lives of residents of the Pilton area of Edinburgh. Pilton was a relatively new suburb of Edinburgh, and had been built to rehouse residents primarily from slum and old tenement housing in nearby Leith. Some professionals working in Pilton were concerned about how the residents were adapting to life in the new suburb and were worried that a number of social problems (from

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<sup>400</sup> Graham Parker, *Casework within Social Work* (Newcastle: University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1973).

<sup>401</sup> Minute Book, 1933-1957, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/1, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

a lack of amenities to delinquency), were becoming endemic. The work the SERU undertook, at least initially, sought to identify the root of these problems and aimed to present a plan of action to address these. The SERU worked on the project for five years, and was headed by Geoffrey Hutton. It was, however, Marjorie Brown who was responsible for establishing the SERU and its ongoing association with and funding from the JRF.

Marjorie Brown was approached by the Chairman of the Pilton Working Party in 1953 as Director of the Department of Social Study to discuss if the department could undertake: 'Enquiries in Pilton which would help to clarify some of the problems, and act as a guide when it came to formulating a plan for action, in the fields of welfare, community organisation and recreational activity'.<sup>402</sup> Marjorie Brown agreed to this, and Tom Burns (Lecturer in Social Study, and later Professor of Sociology) and six students, undertook preliminary research. The idea for a more in-depth project developed, and by 1958 Tom Burns and Marjorie Brown had approached the JRF with a view to securing funding to set up the SERU.

Correspondence held in the CRC demonstrates Marjorie Brown's involvement in this process throughout 1958 and 1959, showing that she met with members of the Pilton Working Party, hosted meetings in her own flat to discuss the project, drafted the proposal to the JRF for the project, and corresponded and met with Lewis Waddilove, Secretary of the JRF. Furthermore, she corresponded with the University Court about their potential contribution to the project and with the Education Department in Edinburgh about suitable accommodation for the SERU.<sup>403</sup> Once the SERU was funded, she continued to meet with

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<sup>402</sup> Preliminary Correspondence, 1953-1959, EUA IN1/ACU/S3/1/1, Social Environment Research Unit, 1953-1964, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

Lewis Waddilove during his periodic visits to Edinburgh to see first-hand how the project progressed.<sup>404</sup> While Marjorie Brown did not undertake any of the research herself, her role in securing its funding and in the smooth management of the relationship with the JRF was evident. The final letters relating to the Pilton project which referenced Marjorie Brown are from 1964, the year she died. In June 1964 she met with Lewis Waddilove as part of a visit he made to the project.<sup>405</sup> From this we can see that Marjorie Brown's interest and involvement in research spanned her whole social work career, from her first job at the Maudsley until her premature death.

#### Gender and the acknowledgment of work in research:

To explore the point raised earlier about the lack of recognition for Marjorie Brown's role in research it is helpful to examine the role gender may have played. To start with, Marjorie Brown was not unique in being a woman who worked in social science research at this time. Oakley argues, in relation to the LSE specifically, that female researchers did work for male academics, although they were poorly paid and received scant acknowledgment.<sup>406</sup> Oakley examined the work of Marie Meinhardt, an economist, who worked with Oakley's father (Richard Titmuss) on research into mortality and disease in the 1940s. Oakley argues that while there was evidence of Meinhardt's work in notes and correspondence, in particular to the statistical work done in the research, Meinhardt was not credited, or even mentioned,

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<sup>404</sup> Joseph Rowntree Trust, 1960-1964, EUA IN1/ACU/S3/1/4, Social Environment Research Unit, 1953-1964, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ann Oakley, 'Legacies of Altruism: Richard Titmuss, Marie Meinhardt, and Health Policy Research in the 1940s,' *Social Policy & Society* 18, no. 3 (2019): 383-392.

in the final report. Oakley argues that Meinhardt's experience 'speaks of a general history of women's assigned role in the production of academic knowledge'.<sup>407</sup>

While Oakley's comments relate to social science research in general, my research has identified that female social workers were also doing research and faced similar challenges. (An exception seems to have been Daphne Phelps, a PSW, who worked with Dr Solly Zucherman as part of a team that researched the psychiatric effect on civilians of bombing during the blitz; she was named in the subsequent research publication.<sup>408</sup>)

Women's roles were not only downplayed by others, however; women themselves seemed to dismiss what they were doing as not important, or not real research. Two specific examples deserve mention here. First, Sibyl Clement Brown, a PSW, carried out research on female juvenile delinquents in Birmingham and California in the 1920s<sup>409</sup> and also undertook research into casework methods in the 1930s.<sup>410</sup> Yet, in an interview conducted in the 1980s, she talked about her research work in Birmingham as mainly 'taking rather full notes'<sup>411</sup> in the courts and probation department about the decisions of the magistrates. Her whole tone was one which did not seem to think she was doing serious work with important outcomes. This was in spite of the fact she recognised she was:

Probably the first person to take the records of the approved school and go back to the Education Department to see what had been said about these children when they were at school, and so to trace the whole record with a view to seeing whether

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<sup>407</sup> Oakley, 'Legacies of Altruism,': 387

<sup>408</sup> R Fraser, I. M Leslie, and D Phelps, 'Psychiatric Effects of Severe Personal Experiences During Bombing,' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 36, no. 3 (1943): 119-123.

<sup>409</sup> Sibyl Clement Brown, interview by Alan Cohen, *The Cohen Interviews: conversations with 26 social work pioneers*, (1980) accessed 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021, [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives\\_online/speakingarchives/socialwork/929.publ\\_no\\_7\\_scb.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives_online/speakingarchives/socialwork/929.publ_no_7_scb.pdf)

<sup>410</sup> Walton, *Women in Social Work*.

<sup>411</sup> Sibyl Clement Brown, interview by Alan Cohen.

the Magistrates had considered the relevance of this when they reached their final decisions.<sup>412</sup>

Second, Margaret Simey similarly worked on a research project which examined the needs of young unemployed women in Merseyside, organised by David Caradog-Jones, as part of his *Social Survey of Merseyside 1933-39*.<sup>413</sup> In an interview recorded in 1980, she reflected on whether she was likely to get a job doing research following her Social Science course. She stated that 'I think it very soon became apparent that I wasn't that quality'.<sup>414</sup> She acknowledged that Caradog-Jones had employed her to 'to run the statistical side',<sup>415</sup> which was a central aspect of his project, but she played down her contribution, and there was no official acknowledgment of her work on the project.

The *British Journal of Psychiatric Social Work* (first published in 1947) published a number of articles which featured a 'study' or 'investigations' by women PSWs (they did not use the term research to describe their work). These studies or investigations (often on a small scale) covered a range of different topics including the psychological impact of pregnancy on women,<sup>416</sup> the difficulties women had in trying to run a home and hold a professional job,<sup>417</sup> and an attempt to establish 'some concept of a norm in ordinary family

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<sup>412</sup> Sibyl Clement Brown, interview by Alan Cohen.

<sup>413</sup> Margaret Simey, interview by Alan Cohen, *The Cohen Interviews: conversations with 26 social work pioneers* (1980) accessed 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021, [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives\\_online/speakingarchives/socialwork/929.publ\\_no\\_17\\_simey.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives_online/speakingarchives/socialwork/929.publ_no_17_simey.pdf)

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.: 2

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.: 8

<sup>416</sup> Elizabeth Irvine, 'Investigations by the Parents' Group of the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers: A Contribution to the Psychology of Pregnancy and Lactation,' *British Journal of Psychiatric Social Work* 1, no.2 (1947): 18-23.

<sup>417</sup> R. N. Brown, and Elizabeth Irvine, 'Home and Career: Woman between Two Worlds,' *British Journal of Psychiatric Social Work* 2, no.3 (1947): 36-44.

life' in order to inform the learning of students of new Child Care Courses.<sup>418</sup> This was, on the face of it, research into the lives of the people they worked with, and it sought to inform their practice and develop how social work education was taught. But it was talked about in dismissive terms, even by the women themselves. This was, arguably, consistent with some of the ideas around men's and women's roles in social work and social work education which were present during this time. It was men who were associated with administration and academic work – which included research work. Therefore, a lack of acknowledgement for the role women played perhaps needs to be viewed in this context.

In returning to Marjorie Brown specifically, we can consider the effect gendered ideas had on the recognition she received for her research work. We have seen that she was involved with at least three research projects (but possibly more). The only project to officially acknowledge her work was the one she co-authored, *A Survey of Evacuation in Westmorland*. We have also seen that Marjorie Brown was instrumental in the development and successful funding of a further major social research project at Edinburgh University in the Pilton Study at the SERU. However, again her involvement in this process was not widely acknowledged. Indeed, this was only identified when I examined archival documents. Evidence exists that Marjorie Brown undertook considerable work for the mental health survey, yet the senior, male academic/doctor was the sole author of the work. Her work included visiting participants to gather information for questionnaires which formed the basis of the data used to produce the survey findings but little value seemed to be placed on her contribution, at least officially.

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<sup>418</sup> Pauline C. Shapiro, 'The Search for a "Norm" in Home Life,' *British Journal of Psychiatric Social Work* 2, no. 2 (1951): 4-9.

The Twins research is another case in point. Here, again, there was no acknowledgement of the work Marjorie Brown did; indeed, we only know about it through Stella Waldron. Yet, when Dr Eliot Slater, who ran the project, was interviewed about his work, he talked about having to go and collect data from twins in psychiatric hospitals around London and from their families in the community. He found collecting the data in the community 'laborious and taxing' and was glad when he was able to stop doing it.<sup>419</sup> But there was a clear sense in the interview that he saw this as valid work, very much part of the research. Arguably we can infer that when a man – and a man in a senior position at that – did this work he thought it was important and valuable. Yet, when a woman did this work, it was not acknowledged as such by her or by the men involved. In some senses this is a simplistic argument and one which does not always apply. Marjorie Brown also worked with a senior, male doctor – Dr J. F. Dow (Medical Officer, Westmorland County Council) – in the Westmorland Survey and both are credited on the survey. But it is fair to argue that a general trend was seen repeated in Marjorie Brown's career, where women involved in social work research were not credited for their work.

#### Development of social work and social work education after the Second World War:

Having examined Marjorie Brown's involvement in social work research, let us now explore her time as Director of the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. To set this in context we need to understand that both social work and social work education developed rapidly in Britain after the Second World War. Philip Seed argues that in the years after 1945 the environment in which social work found itself operating had completely

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<sup>419</sup> Brian Barraclough, 'In Conversation with Eliot Slater,' *Psychiatric Bulletin* 5 (1981): 158-161.

shifted. Social work had originally developed in a society that relied on charities and voluntary action to meet the requirements of those in need of support, but the State had increasingly taken over the provision of welfare services.<sup>420</sup> The welfare state had been developing since the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the *Social Insurance and Allied Services* report by Sir William Beveridge (better known as the Beveridge Report), published in 1942, heralded an increase in state provision on a whole new scale. It aimed to reconstruct the British economy and society after the war, and increase the scope of state provision (in contrast to the deprivation experienced during the economic recession of the 1930s when support from the State had been limited). Not only was there an extension of welfare benefits, but housing, education and healthcare provision from the State all vastly increased.<sup>421</sup> The role of social workers increased accordingly, as they were required to administer a growing amount of this provision. The expansion of their role, in turn, necessitated more social workers to be employed by the State.

Phoebe Hall has noted the centrality of three pieces of legislation at the end of the 1940s for social work provision specifically. These were the Children Act 1948, the National Assistance Act 1948, and the National Health Service Act 1946 – all UK wide legislation, and so applicable to Scotland.<sup>422</sup> These pieces of legislation required local authorities to provide services for a range of people including children in care, adults with disabilities, people who were homeless and older adults who needed support. Furthermore, the Curtis Committee (1945) in England and Wales and the Clyde Committee (1946) in Scotland, having been convened to investigate the systems currently in place to board out children in foster care,

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<sup>420</sup> Seed, *The Expansion of Social Work in Britain*.

<sup>421</sup> Kevin Hickson, and Ben Williams, 'The Beveridge Report at 80,' *Political Insight* 13, no. 1 (2022): 26-29.

<sup>422</sup> 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/>

remand homes and approved schools, made recommendations aimed at improving statutory child care services. Their recommendations, among them that each local authority set up a Children's Committee to oversee new Children's Departments, sought to ensure more unified and better quality care was provided to children who needed support (as legislated for in the Children Act 1948).<sup>423</sup> For social work, Seed argues, this huge change in terms of welfare provision not only led to a practical shift in who provided services and how they were organised, but also the way in which welfare and services were viewed. It was no longer the case that a client would be grateful for any support they received. Now they expected to receive services, and when these were not forthcoming, or did not meet their needs, they had just cause for complaint.<sup>424</sup>

Social work education also needed to rapidly adapt to these changes. In 1947, Younghusband published her *Report on the Employment and Training of Social Workers*. The report had been commissioned by the Carnegie Trust as it sought to decide which areas of work to focus on in post-war Britain – with social work training a potential arena for its involvement. The report's purpose was to assess the current situation in social work at that time. Younghusband reported that social work was a broad field, with many different activities being undertaken, by both statutory and voluntary organisations, and by workers who were often untrained. She noted that the State was increasingly involving itself in providing statutory services, and that social workers were becoming skilled servants of the State rather than charitable workers.<sup>425</sup> Younghusband published a supplementary report in

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<sup>423</sup> Phoebe Hall, *Reforming the Welfare: The Politics of Change in the Personal Social Services* (London: Heinemann, 1976); Bob Holman, 'Fifty Years Ago: The Curtis and Clyde Reports,' *Children & Society* 10, no. 3 (1996): 197-209.

<sup>424</sup> Seed, *The Expansion of Social Work in Britain*.

<sup>425</sup> Eileen Younghusband, *Report on the Employment and Training of Social Workers* (Edinburgh: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1947).

1951 and found that even in that short space of time the field of social work had changed dramatically. Its level of integration into the State had grown exponentially, and she was critical of the array of social work courses offered by universities, which she largely criticised as not providing professional training.<sup>426</sup> This was the context into which Marjorie Brown was appointed Director in 1951.

#### Appointment as Director of Social Study at Edinburgh:

Stella Waldron noted that when she came to retire, Nora Milnes 'hoped that her former pupil [Marjorie Brown] would apply for her post and was delighted when she was appointed'.<sup>427</sup> Indeed, when the annual Director's reports are examined between 1936/37 and 1950/51, Nora Milnes regularly drew attention to Marjorie Brown's new jobs and career progression and as we have heard she held her former student in high esteem.<sup>428</sup> As noted in chapter 5, out of the candidates interviewed to replace Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown was the only woman. It is interesting to note that this was a role which attracted a number of male applicants, in spite of the fact that the university had declined to provide a Chair for the head of the department.<sup>429</sup>

Marjorie Brown inherited a department which had, in some senses, blossomed. In 1942, it established the second specialist PSW Certificate course in the UK. The potential for specialist child care and probation training courses were being discussed in the department,

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<sup>426</sup> Eileen Younghusband, *Social Work in Britain: A Supplementary Report on the Employment and Training of Social Workers* (Edinburgh: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1951).

<sup>427</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.': 4

<sup>428</sup> Minute Book, 1933-1957, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/1, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>429</sup> Social Study: Directors, 1950-1951, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/67, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

and the Institute of Almoners presently approached the department to discuss establishing a Certificate in Medical Social Work (this was set up in 1954). There were now five lecturers, and the department complained of being too cramped in its Old College accommodation. Finally, there were more applications to study with the department than places available.<sup>430</sup> The 1950s was a decade of significant change for social work education, and there was an appetite for development from those working in university Social Studies Departments, Marjorie Brown included.

#### Social casework and American influences on social work education:

Margaret Yelloly argues that, particularly during the 1950s, British social work and social work education was influenced by new theories and approaches from America, partly due to social work's desire to become more professional (as discussed in chapter 2). Social casework in particular (at times referred to simply as casework) was adopted across Europe during the 1950s. While casework had been used for a long time in social work, especially by the COS, Yelloly argues that by the 1950s and 60s the term had evolved into something more multifaceted.<sup>431</sup> The teaching of social casework was disseminated in Europe, in part by seminars organised by Marguerite Pohek, Social Affairs Officer, from the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration.<sup>432</sup> In her 1954 article 'What can casework contribute to European Social Work' Pohek described the acceptance of casework as a method in Europe over the previous few years, and stated that a conference of European social

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<sup>430</sup> Minute Book, 1933-1957, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/1, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>431</sup> Margaret Yelloly, *Social Work Theory and Psychoanalysis* (London: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1980).

<sup>432</sup> Katherine A. Kendall, and Rene Sand, 'International Developments in Social Work Education,' *Social Service Review* 27, no. 1 (1953): 92-94; Yelloly, *Social Work Theory and Psychoanalysis*.

workers in Stockholm in 1952 had reached the following definition: 'Social casework is a basic method of social work founded on a wide knowledge and sympathetic understanding of the individual, helping him by means of the mobilisation of his own and his community's resources, towards his social adjustment'.<sup>433</sup>

Pohék noted that social casework had been somewhat modified to suit the European context, and recorded its three main elements as: i) an awareness of self, with a non-judgemental attitude, and professional boundaries; ii) the incorporation of psychology in order to complement knowledge of social policy and legislation, as well as a knowledge of research, and iii) skills around interviewing, eliciting relevant information, and the critical evaluation of this information.<sup>434</sup> The incorporation of theories from psychology into social casework encouraged social workers to think about their own self and how they may influence their interactions with their clients, especially in thinking about how they elicited information. Yet, there was also a clear emphasis on teaching skills and techniques, which included the use of supervision and case records to teach social casework.<sup>435</sup> It was first and foremost a method of social work practice.

#### The influence of social casework on Marjorie Brown:

During her time as Director of the department Marjorie Brown demonstrated a keen interest in international social work, and particularly in new methods which had been pioneered in America. International social work began in the 1920s, with the First

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<sup>433</sup> Marguerite Pohék, 'What Can Casework Contribute to European Social Services?' *Social Work Journal* 35, no. 1 (1954): 15-18: 15

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Yelloly, *Social Work Theory and Psychoanalysis*.

International Conference on Social Work held in Paris in 1928 (Nora Milnes had attended this). However, the souring of international relations in the lead up to the Second World War, and the war itself, led to a hiatus for international social work. After the Second World War there was a new thirst for collaboration, and international social work was resurrected, with America playing a central role. Joseph Kuilema argues that this was made possible because of its role as a superpower, and also because of the development of the United Nations, based in New York, which developed programmes around the teaching of social work, including the programme Marguerite Pokeh taught, as discussed above.<sup>436</sup> America truly was an innovative centre of social work education during this time, and in 1956, Marjorie Brown spent four months there, travelling round schools of Social Work to learn about these methods first hand on a trip funded by the Carnegie University Trust.<sup>437</sup>

In a letter to a former colleague at the Crichton Royal Hospital, Marjorie Brown gave details of her trip and wrote that she had undertaken visits to schools of Social Work in New York, Boston, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Chicago.<sup>438</sup> During her visits, Marjorie Brown met with social work educators and these connections proved, in some cases, to be long lasting and beneficial for her knowledge and understanding of social work theories, methods and education. For example, during this trip she met and established a friendship with Professor Grace Coyle, a key figure in the development of group work for social work.<sup>439</sup> In addition to visiting Schools of Social Work, Marjorie Brown attended classes in Chicago, including casework classes given by Helen Perlman, who later recalled

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<sup>436</sup> Joseph Kuilema, 'Lessons from the First International Conference on Social Work,' *International Social Work* 59, no. 6 (2016).

<sup>437</sup> Marjorie A. Brown, 'Some Impressions of the American Scene,' *University of Edinburgh Gazette* 16 (1957): 27-31.

<sup>438</sup> Records of Crichton Royal Hospital, Staff Records: Personal Papers – Articles and draft papers by various staff members, DGH1/6/16/3, Wellcome Collection, Dumfries and Galloway archives.

<sup>439</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

being briefly acquainted with her when she attended these.<sup>440</sup> Marjorie Brown also went on observation visits, but did not do any field work. She did however, do written assignments, and noted that:

Pressure on students is terrific and already there is a feeling of near hysteria over the first assignment (written exercise) due tomorrow. I have done this too, though if my effort is poor it will be embarrassing for all hands.<sup>441</sup>

#### International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW):

Marjorie Brown's interest in social casework continued after her trip to America. Following her visit, she became involved with the IASSW and played a significant role in the organisation of a European Regional Seminar of the IASSW that was held in Edinburgh in 1962, acting as its Chairman.<sup>442</sup> The focus of the seminar was 'The Teaching of Social Work with Individuals, Groups, and Communities'.<sup>443</sup> The seminar set out first, to present the main ideas that were basic to each particular method of social work and then to explore the extent to which these might be applied to the two others. In this way, the implications for curriculum planning and for students' supervisory and tutorial needs would be evident, if schools of social work were to teach all three methods in an integrated way.<sup>444</sup> (It is worth noting that this theme would have been very familiar to Grace Coyle, whose writing argued

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<sup>440</sup> Graham Parker, *Casework within Social Work*.

<sup>441</sup> Staff Records, DGH1/6/16/3, Dumfries and Galloway Archives.

<sup>442</sup> Box 42 Folder 13: Correspondence, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

<sup>443</sup> 'Notes from the IASSW Secretariat,' *International Social Work* 5, no. 2 (1962) 12-15.

<sup>444</sup> Box 47 Folder 14: The Teaching of Social Work with Individuals, Groups and Communities: General Report and Critique of European Regional Seminar Edinburgh, Scotland, 10-20 September 1962, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

that case work with individuals and group work had a common philosophy and that both would be enriched by their integration.)<sup>445</sup>

Attendees of the seminar were all staff members at schools of Social Work in Europe affiliated with the IASSW or supervisors of field work placements with agencies linked to affiliated Schools.<sup>446</sup> The Seminar had fifty-four participants from twelve countries across Europe. A point to highlight is that this seminar in no way demonstrated evidence of the psychiatric deluge, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter; the focus was broad. From the discussion group reports it was evident that while psychology and psychoanalysis were discussed, their role in social work and social work education was clearly set out equally alongside theories from sociology, anthropology, philosophy and economics.<sup>447</sup>

The seminar was well received and considered to have elicited useful connections and discussions. In 'Notes from the IASSW Secretariat' in *International Social Work* it was recorded that:

The IASSW wishes to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Miss Marjorie Brown of the Department of Social Study of the University of Edinburgh who carried the heavy responsibility of planning and organizing the Seminar. Her vision, resourcefulness and hard work were a major contribution towards the successful outcome of the regional meeting.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> 'Grace Coyle (1892-1962),' VCU Social Welfare History Project, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> December 2023, <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/coyle-grace/>

<sup>446</sup> Box 42 Folder 13: Correspondence, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

<sup>447</sup> European Regional Seminar, bulk: 10<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September 1962, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/13, Department of Social Work, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>448</sup> 'Notes from the IASSW Sectrariat,' *International Social Work* 6, No 3. (1963): 16-19: 16

Marjorie Brown appears to have excelled at organisation and bringing people together. Her efficiency and hard work were consistently commented on.<sup>449</sup> For example, in the lead up to the 12th International Congress of Schools of Social Work meeting, held in Athens in September 1964, the IASSW commented that it was:

Indeed fortunate in the calibre of the Committee and splendid leadership provided by the Chairman Marjorie Brown of the Department of Social Studies, University of Edinburgh. Miss Brown has devoted endless hours and reams of correspondence to the preparation of the programme and orientation of speakers and panel members.<sup>450</sup>

But Marjorie Brown had more than simply the practical skills needed. It is difficult to grasp and quantify sixty years later, but it is evident from both the documents and the interviewees' recollections that her personality was an asset to her in her career. It enabled her to bring people together, to build good working relationship and this, in turn, enabled her to work effectively. For example, Helen Perlmann, who only knew her briefly in Chicago, commented that 'she had a kind of radiance about her, an *élan vital*',<sup>451</sup> while Stella Waldron described as 'a raconteuse'.<sup>452</sup> Her personality, and skilful use of self, seems to have been central to her ability to successfully lead the department and build on Nora Milnes's earlier success.

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<sup>449</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh; 'Notes from the IASSW Secretariat,' *International Social Work* 7, no. 3 (1963): 36-39; Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

<sup>450</sup> 'Notes from the IASSW Secretariat,' *International Social Work* 7, no 3. (1964): 36-39:37

<sup>451</sup> Parker, *Casework within Social Work*.

<sup>452</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

### Implications for social work education at Edinburgh:

What did Marjorie Brown's interest in social casework and her involvement in international social work mean for social work education at Edinburgh? The professional network which Marjorie Brown became involved in through the IASSW will be examined in more depth in chapter 8, as professional networks were significant for all three women, and facilitated their professional accomplishments. It is important to note here that, for Marjorie Brown, her involvement with the IASSW and other professional networks not only gave her access to greater knowledge, but also to people at the forefront of the development of theories and methods for both social work practice and social work education. She was able to incorporate the knowledge and expertise of these people into the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University for the benefit of staff and students. This included, for example, visits Marjorie Brown arranged from Muriel Cunliffe, Associate Professor of Social Work, University of British Columbia, in 1956, and Eleanor Cockerill, Professor of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, in 1959 to provide week-long seminars on supervision for social workers who were going to take students on placements.

In relation to the curriculum, analysis of the Certificate and Diploma courses during the time Marjorie Brown was Director demonstrates that much of the curriculum remained static, but there was an incremental shift to actively teaching social work methods. In 1950/51, the Certificate and Diploma courses required students to take broadly similar courses, including subjects such as Political Economy, Moral Philosophy, Psychology, Economic History, Social Economics, Elementary Anatomy and Physiology, Social Biology, Industrial Law, Organisation of Industry and Commerce, Administrative Law and Introduction to Social Theory. Discussion classes, tutorials and practical work were also

required.<sup>453</sup> By 1963/64, some changes had been made. Elementary Economics had replaced Political Economics, and Social Economics, Moral Philosophy and the lectures on Industrial and Social Legalisation were no longer offered. A new mandatory course on The Social Services had been introduced and Criminology, Social Anthropology and Social and Political Philosophy were also being offered.<sup>454</sup>

The Social Services course is of particular interest, as it included teaching on ‘the history and practice of social casework and groupwork and community organisation’.<sup>455</sup> The inclusion of this course, I would argue, demonstrated the shift to teaching the social casework approach, as well as groupwork and community work methods. Whilst it was only one of a number of courses, it demonstrates an evolution in social work education at Edinburgh University, and one which was moving towards greater professionalisation, with an increased emphasis on teaching skills in order to equip students for social work practice. Having explored casework, and its adoption in the department, we will now move on to examine the psychiatric deluge, and the degree to which it was, or was not, adopted into the teaching of the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University.

### The psychiatric deluge:

Writing in 1962, Woodroffe argued that in America, and then England, a psychiatric deluge took place whereby theories from psychology and psychiatry were integrated into social work, and casework, in particular. This topic has proved contentious. It is clear there are a wide range of opinions about the extent to which this happened in Britain, why, where and

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<sup>453</sup> University of Edinburgh, *Edinburgh University Calendar 1950-51* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1950).

<sup>454</sup> University of Edinburgh, *Edinburgh University Calendar 1963/64* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1963).

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*: 467

when. This topic is extensive, and so it is important to be clear of its significance for this research and it is only possible to discuss it to a limited extent. Its relevance to social work education at Edinburgh relates to the extent to which these theories were adopted into the Department of Social Study curriculum at Edinburgh during the 1950s and 1960s, when Marjorie Brown was the Director. In order to consider this, what has been written about the psychiatric deluge will be scrutinised, then what Marjorie Brown herself said will be examined, and finally what happened at Edinburgh will be explored. We can then use this evidence to draw some conclusions about the extent of the psychiatric deluge, and the impact it had on social work education at Edinburgh.

When Woodroffe wrote about the psychiatric deluge, she was careful to stress that her hypothesis applied mainly to America. However, she did also discuss what had happened in England. We need to be cautious as it is unclear if Woodroffe, an Australian, was intentionally referring to England at the exclusion of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, or if she used England to mean the whole of the United Kingdom. I say this because while she used the term England, she also listed Edinburgh among the courses she used as examples. Woodroffe argued that, in England, theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis were taken up by social workers in the 1930s and incorporated into social work practice. This changed the role of social work, Woodroffe argued, from being focused on providing economic assistance, to working with people to understand their issues.<sup>456</sup> In social work education, Woodroffe argued, there had been a move away from its early sociological slant. The rationale for this was the belief that by seeking to understand the individual (as opposed to their circumstances) an attempt could be made to change them

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<sup>456</sup> Kathleen Woodroffe, *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1962).

and by consequence their behaviour. This would then have a positive effect on wider society. Woodrooffe provided evidence from case files to support her argument of an uptake in theories and vocabulary from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis into social work practice. However, these case files were all American – none of them came from the UK.

While the evidence Woodrooffe provided applied solely to America there seems to be no dispute that theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis were taken on board by social workers and social work educators in the UK, as discussed in chapter 2. What is debated is when it happened, the reasons for doing so, and the extent to which it happened. Woodrooffe stated that the 1930s was the time when these theories were taken up in Britain.<sup>457</sup> However, Cree has argued that it was ideas from psychology more specifically which were adapted by social work for their use in the 1930s. Cree examined case files in Scotland and found little evidence of psychoanalytic and psychiatric theories being utilised by social workers with clients in the 1950s and 60s.<sup>458</sup> Jones concurred with Cree that ideas from psychology were incorporated into social work in the UK, although he goes further, arguing that theories from psychoanalysis were also used, but only those which reinforced the profession's existing moral viewpoints. While the vocabulary of Sigmund Freud and others were taken up to some extent, the assimilation into social work of concepts like the id, ego and superego were very limited, and superficial.<sup>459</sup>

Jones goes on to argue however that social work did not do this in a cynical sense, as purely scientific justification for its existence and actions. Rather, social work as a

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<sup>457</sup> Woodrooffe, *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States*.

<sup>458</sup> Cree, *From Public Streets to Private Lives*.

<sup>459</sup> Jones, 'Social Work Education, 1900-1977.'

profession thought these concepts demonstrated that people could change, with the help of social workers and other professionals, which was essentially a positive message.<sup>460</sup>

Similarly, Yelloly has argued that theories which were deemed useful were adopted. This occurred gradually at first, from the 1920s onwards through the Child Guidance movement, then as child development understanding grew during the Second World War, and finally as the teaching of human development became part of social work education in the 1950s and 60s.<sup>461</sup> Not only did these theories help develop an understanding of the individual but Yelloly argued they were also a way for social work to justify its claim to be a profession, based on scientific theories.<sup>462</sup> The idea that social work sought to gain status from its use of psychoanalytic theories is supported by Nikolas Rose, who further argued that social work acted as a state agent to reach into the private world of the family and link individual's problems with wider societal malaise.<sup>463</sup>

Others, however, date the influence of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis firmly to the later period of the 1950s and 1960s. Geoffrey Pearson, Judith Treseder and Yelloly<sup>464</sup> and Olive Stevenson<sup>465</sup> have argued that this was the key time social work incorporated theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, but they differ in their view of the extent to which these disciplines were influential. Pearson, Treseder and Yelloly argued that theories from psychoanalysis and psychiatry had an impact on the whole

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<sup>460</sup> Jones, 'Social Work Education, 1900-1977.'

<sup>461</sup> Yelloly, *Social Work Theory and Psychoanalysis*.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Nikolas Rose, 'Psychiatry: The Discipline of Mental Health,' in *The Power of Psychiatry*, ed. Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

<sup>464</sup> Geoffrey Pearson, Judith Treseder, and Margaret Yelloly, 'Introduction: Social Work and the Legacy of Freud,' in *Social Work and the Legacy of Freud*, ed. Geoffrey Pearson, Judith Treseder and Margaret Yelloly, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988).

<sup>465</sup> Olive Stevenson, 'Foreword,' in *Psychoanalytic Theory for Social Work Practice*, ed. Marion Bower (London: Routledge, 2005).

of society in America, and the UK, in the 1950s and 60s, and social work was inevitably part of this. Yet, social workers, with the exception of PSWs, did not have the time to seriously apply psychoanalytic approaches with clients. While they may have learned about them, and been influenced by the theories that helped in their understanding of an individual's behaviour, the impact from psychoanalysis, psychology and psychiatry theories actually had were limited.<sup>466</sup> Stevenson, on the other hand, argued that theories from psychoanalysis in particular revolutionised the way social workers understood people, particularly children and child development, but they did not psychoanalyse their clients as some claimed. According to Stevenson, there has been a general misunderstanding in relation to social work and its relationship with psychoanalysis, in particular.<sup>467</sup> Social workers were presented as being preoccupied with psychoanalytic theories, and as a result failed to work with their clients to address their actual needs.

The difficulty with the majority of the arguments about the psychiatric deluge in the UK is the lack of evidence produced to validate the claims. Stevenson, for example, stated that child care social work adopted many psychoanalytic theories in the 1950s because Clare Britton (a social worker and psychoanalyst) established the Child Care course at the LSE, and advised government on further child care courses. However, Stevenson does not offer any concrete demonstration of the actual content of these courses and what they taught. This leaves a question of how valid Stevenson's claim was. The true extent of the psychiatric deluge often appears elusive. That psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry influenced social work education and practice seems to be a justifiable claim. The time period this occurred over seemed, on balance to have begun in the 1930s, and to have lasted in varying

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<sup>466</sup> Pearson, Treseder, and Yelloly, 'Introduction: Social Work and the Legacy of Freud.'

<sup>467</sup> Stevenson, 'Foreword.'

degrees into the 1960s. However, evidence to support their widespread absorption, and use in practice, is far more limited.

### Marjorie Brown and the psychiatric deluge:

What did this mean for social work education at Edinburgh University? As Director, Marjorie Brown, like Nora Milnes before her, had a key role in leading the development of the department. While the JUCSS did require teaching on some specific subjects, scope remained for individual universities to make decisions about their course curriculum. We have seen, for example in regard to social casework, that Marjorie Brown explored and incorporated new theories and methods into the curriculum, which she believed to be valuable for social work education. We can gain insight into Marjorie Brown's views on the psychiatric deluge, and consider how much it was incorporated into the department at Edinburgh, through examining her response to Barbara Wootton's famous critique of social work, and analysing the course curriculum in the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh. Wootton, a sociologist and criminologist, was caustic in her critique of social work, and the way it had developed, in *Social Science and Social Pathology*. Wootton argued that although social work had worked to alleviate poverty in its early days:

All this has changed. Indiscriminate almsgiving, though still deprecated, is no longer credited with such magical powers of comprehensive mischief. The contemporary social worker no longer regards the relief of poverty as her primary function: still less does she concentrate upon the detection of fraud or upon discrimination between

the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. To-day the 'maladjusted', or social misfits, have taken the place formerly reserved for the poor in the ideology of social work.<sup>468</sup>

Wootton claimed social workers failed to address the actual, material needs which clients presented with and instead sought to ask unnecessary, and deeply personal questions to get at the 'real' root of the problem. In her critique Wootton quoted extensively from social work texts to demonstrate her points.

Marjorie Brown was one of three social work academics who were asked to respond to the issues raised by Wootton by the journal *Sociological Review*.<sup>469</sup> That she was invited to do so demonstrates the respect with which she was held at this time. Her response was more measured than the other two academics. Marjorie Brown wrote that social work as a profession has been offended by Wootton's comments, but that there could be some truth in what Wootton had said. She responded to Wootton's claims, arguing that they really only applied to a small number of specialist social workers who employed casework techniques, although Wootton presented her argument as if it applied across the profession. Marjorie Brown stated that these workers had been trained in caseworker techniques and wrote that: 'Casework courses make great demands on students and selection procedures have to be stringent. Those who have qualified as caseworkers tend to look on themselves, understandably, as an elite group'.<sup>470</sup>

Marjorie Brown noted that the texts which Wootton quoted from were primarily American, and some were out-of-date. How much they actually applied to practice in the UK was questionable. Social workers, she argued, had always set out to understand a

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<sup>468</sup> Barbara Wootton, *Social Science and Social Pathology* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1959): 269

<sup>469</sup> The others were G. H. Bantock and David Donnison.

<sup>470</sup> Marjorie A. Brown, 'Reform and Therapy,' *Sociological Review* 3, no. 1 (1955): 55-63: 60

client's nature and how they interacted with their surroundings – this was not new. She noted that if social workers only assisted clients by giving them financial support they did them a disservice because their problem(s) may be caused by something which needed to be addressed if it was to change in the longer term. Marjorie Brown acknowledged though that social workers had, at times, side-stepped issues they could not resolve, such as poverty, but she argued that, as a profession, social work did not ignore social reform issues. Instead, the introduction of the welfare state had meant the way they did so had changed, utilising theories of child development in their arguments to influence child care policy instead, for example.

We see, therefore, that Marjorie Brown clearly believed that theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis had an important role to play in social work and social work education. While there had been some changes, the curriculum for both the Certificate and Diploma remained largely the same during the period when the psychiatric deluge was generally argued to have had the biggest impact. The subjects taught demonstrated wide-ranging influences from sociology in the social theory course, psychology, population studies in social biology, economics and their relationship to social problems, administrative law in Scotland and the organisation of services, and anatomy. Social anthropology had become part of the curriculum by 1963/64, along with criminology, but there was no clear shift towards psychology, psychiatry or psychoanalysis. The fact that some of these elements became part of the general curriculum supports the argument

made by Yelloly, Cree and Pearson, Treseder and Yelloly that social work adopted theories which were useful to it – rather than adopting these theories as part of a deluge.<sup>471</sup>

The evidence suggests that Marjorie Brown herself believed in the need for a broad curriculum for social work education, with a growing emphasis on the teaching of methods. The greatest uptake of theories from psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis was in the specialist courses – the Medical Social Work and Child Care Certificate courses, and as previous research I undertook demonstrated, particularly in the Psychiatric Social Work Certificate course.<sup>472</sup> They all included courses in Psychological Medicine, Psychology or Child Psychology and Psychiatry.<sup>473</sup> Certainly in relation to PSWs there was a sense that they were an elite group within social work, or that they viewed themselves as being elite.<sup>474</sup>

This view was evident in the way the PSW Certificate course was framed in the internal Department of Social Study documents,<sup>475</sup> in documents the department produced for the wider university,<sup>476</sup> in the documents of the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (APSW),<sup>477</sup> and from the interviewees.<sup>478</sup> This sense of elitism came in part from their advanced training in the psy theories, although one of the oral history interviewees, a PSW student, was clear that they knew they were not trained psychoanalysts, and that studying

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<sup>471</sup> Yelloly, *Social Work Theory and Psychoanalysis*; Cree, *From Public Streets to Private Lives*; Pearson, Treseder and Yelloly, 'Introduction: Social Work and the Legacy of Freud.'

<sup>472</sup> Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.'

<sup>473</sup> *The University of Edinburgh Calendar 1963/64*.

<sup>474</sup> Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.'

<sup>475</sup> Department of Social Studies Advisory Committee, 1933-1961, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/2, Department of Social Work 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>476</sup> Marjorie A. Brown, 'The Department of Social Study,' *University of Edinburgh Gazette* 17 (1957): 15-21.

<sup>477</sup> Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1928-1975, MSS.378/APSW, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

<sup>478</sup> SA, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022; Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

these theories was only to inform their practice.<sup>479</sup> Another factor which produced this sense of elitism was the stringent selection procedure that was – very vociferously – in place for selection to the PSWs courses in general. The importance of this sense of elitism and hierarchy around courses and students within the department will be discussed in more depth in chapter 8. Suffice to say here, that the specialist courses catered to a minority proportion of students, and they were not the main focus of the Department of Social Study. The conclusion can be drawn that, at Edinburgh certainly, theories of psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry were the focus of a niche few.

#### Death in post:

Marjorie Brown died from cancer on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1964, aged fifty-seven, having continued to work until close to her death. With hindsight, evidence of her illness was there in the previous few years. Although the Chairman of the European Regional Seminar in 1962, she did not attend the seminar herself. At the time Katherine Kendall (Secretary of the IASSW) wrote to her on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1962 to thank her for all her hard work organising the seminar, noting that: 'We were sorely distressed to hear that you had to be deprived of the pleasure of participation in the seminar because of an emergency health situation. Eileen Youngusband has told me that you are now convalescing'.<sup>480</sup>

Marjorie Brown replied on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 1962 to say that 'for myself I am now feeling very fit and enjoying being back at work'.<sup>481</sup> By the time of the Twelfth International

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<sup>479</sup> SA, Interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>480</sup> Box 48 Folder 13: Seminars, Teaching of Social Work, Edinburgh 1962, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

Congress in Athens in September 1964, there was a hint in a letter from Katherine Kendall to Marjorie Brown that she may be unwell again:

Dear Marjorie,

A last word before we meet in Athens. First, let me say how worried I have been about whatever it was you thought might prevent you from making the trip. I understand now, however, that you will get there and I am greatly relieved.<sup>482</sup>

Although present and active at the Congress, Marjorie Brown died just a few months later. The numerous tributes paid to her demonstrate that she was highly respected as a social work educator. A Marjorie Brown Memorial Fund was set up in 1965, which inaugurated biennial lectures in her memory. This fund was administered by the APSW (of which Marjorie Brown was a member), one of the professional organisations for social workers which existed before the establishment of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in 1970, and arguably the most powerful and best organised. The APSWs archives, held in the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, contain the correspondence regarding the Fund. This collection of documents, when analysed as a body, shows the esteem Marjorie Brown was held in by fellow professionals. This was not just in terms of her abilities as a social work educator or leader of a department, although those were evident, but also her personal charm and the effectiveness with which she managed people and situations, which were frequently commented upon.

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<sup>482</sup> Box 47 Folder 189: Meetings, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, Athens, Program Committee Correspondence 1962-1964, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

Conclusion:

Marjorie Brown proved to be an effective successor to Nora Milnes, and under her leadership the department continued to develop and expand. Like Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown benefitted from the academic opportunities that had opened up for middle-class girls and women, and also from changing attitudes to work in relation to single, middle-class women. Marjorie Brown's career before she became the Director highlights the challenges women faced in social work research around a lack of recognition for their work. Marjorie Brown was not alone in this, and my research has found this was a trend in relation to women in social work research during this period. However, the fact that Marjorie Brown, and other women, did carry out social work research is important, and their contribution deserves to be recognised and highlighted.

Marjorie Brown became Director of the department during a time of great change for social work. The significant expansion of the welfare system at the end of the Second World War increased the role of the State, and social workers as its agents, in administering services. This, in turn, necessitated the development of social work education, and Marjorie Brown ensured that new methods and theories, particularly from America, were adopted by the department. She did this through her visit to schools of Social Work in America, and also through her involvement with international social work, a field in which she was active, particularly during the early 1960s. During the period of Marjorie Brown's Directorship, social work was criticised for its assimilation of theories from psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis. However, while this was important for the specialist courses taught at Edinburgh, particularly the PSW Certificate course, these theories were not significantly incorporated into the main teachings of the department. Marjorie Brown herself, whilst a

PSW, focused the department on developing competency in casework theories and methods. She proved herself to be a highly competent and effective leader of the department, whose practical and personal skills enabled her to build on the foundations established by Nora Milnes. Under her Directorship the department continued to develop and expand, with new Certificate courses in Medical Social Work and Child Care being established, an expansion in the staff team, and a move to new offices in George Square. Her premature death saw the directorship of the department move to acting heads – Mary F. Gregor, and then Megan Browne, and it is to Megan Browne that we will now turn.

## Chapter 7: Megan Browne

Megan set about raising standards wherever they were needed, using political skills and her considerable personal charm.<sup>483</sup>

### Introduction:

This chapter will explore the early life and career of the third social work leader – Megan Browne. First, her early life will be examined, which it is fair to describe as unsettled. Later in the chapter, the impact of this will be considered, as will its relevance to her life-long interest in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis. The chapter will then go on to explore her early career in child guidance clinics, and then in social work education from the point at which she came to work at the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh in 1948. Her role in the department focused on teaching on the specialist certificate courses, and their focus on psychoanalytic theories will be considered. In addition, the work Megan Browne did outwith the university, advising organisations and lecturing will also be examined.

Megan Browne acted as Director of the department from 1966 to 1968, at which point in time Professor John Spencer was appointed. We will see in this chapter that, although she only led the department for a short time, Megan Browne's impact on social work and social work education in Scotland was significant. This was predominantly through her role as an advisor to the Scottish Office, initially in relation to probation officer training, then later as one of three social work academics appointed to advise the Scottish

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<sup>483</sup> Papers of Kay Carmichael, ACCN 4115/4/2, Archives & Special Collections, University of Glasgow.

Office on the reorganisation of social work services in Scotland. This led to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 – a seminal piece of legislation for social work and social work education in Scotland.

Megan Browne's role in shaping the 1968 Act is not widely known. In fact, the names of the three advisors – Megan Browne, Kay Carmichael and Richard Titmuss – are mentioned only fleetingly in literature about the Act.<sup>484</sup> In spite of this, their role is uniformly presented as significant. Murphy, in his book on Scottish social services, went as far as to argue that 'the make-up of the study group was of crucial importance' in shaping the Act.<sup>485</sup> This claim will be examined through exploring the role of civil servants in the process of reorganisation, which my research found to be far more influential than has been previously recognised. Yet, as will be shown, Megan Browne and the other advisors did wield considerable influence in this process, and worked alongside civil servants to achieve their vision for social work and social work education in Scotland. The chapter will conclude by scrutinising the changes the 1968 Act brought in, and the impact these had on the need to train social workers, on the organisation of social work education at Edinburgh University and on the unity of the profession in Scotland.

### Early life:

Megan Browne's early life has proved more challenging to research than either of the other two social work leaders. A former student, colleague and friend of Megan Browne's

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<sup>484</sup> Most commonly referred to as advisors, sometimes they have been referred to as consultants. For clarity, I have used the term advisors throughout.

<sup>485</sup> John Murphy, *British Social Services: The Scottish Dimension* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1992): 139

commented that she could be elusive about her background, and at times gave different accounts of her upbringing. This description matched my experience of trying to find out about her early life – details were elusive. Her obituary in *The Scotsman* was frank about the difficulties of her early life, noting that that she had been ‘brought up in theatrical circles in London, after a severely traumatised childhood’.<sup>486</sup> Seemingly, Megan Browne was adopted at some point during her adolescence, and her surname changed.

The first adoption legislation was passed as the Adoption of Children Act 1926 in England and Wales (with legislation in Scotland being passed in 1930). Jenny Keating argues that although the Labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald at the time recognised that some oversight of adoption was necessary, the first adoption legislation was designed to be as minimal as possible, with the focus being to provide a legal means of adoption. The government was keen not to put anything in place that would deter adoptions, especially in relation to the work of adoption societies. This meant, for example, that the legislation did not require all adoptions to be formally registered.<sup>487</sup> In the case of Megan Browne, I found no official record of an adoption, which would have taken place sometime between 1926 and 1934. It may have been that she was not formally adopted, although there was a formal process in place by that time.

Megan Browne was born Edith Margaret Steel, on 5<sup>th</sup> May, and baptised on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1913 at Oystermouth, Glamorganshire, Wales. Her mother was Helen Irene Steel (née Stratton) and her father was Edmond Dyne Brooks Steel, recorded as being a Company

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<sup>486</sup> Megan Browne: Pioneer in Social Work, *The Scotsman*, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1992: 10.

<sup>487</sup> Jenny Keating, *A Child for Keeps: The History of Adoption in England, 1918-45* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

Secretary.<sup>488</sup> Megan Browne's parents had married in 1911, but their marriage appeared to break down, and the 1921 census recorded that Megan (referred to as Ethel Margaret Steel on the official record) and her mother lived in King's Martin Trelawn School, Mount Wise, Newquay, Cornwall. The school was owned and run by Helen Stratton's aunt, and Helen worked there as a teacher. Helen Stratton died in November 1921, aged just forty. At some point after this, Megan moved to Clovelly-Kepplestone, a private girls' boarding school in Eastbourne. Why she moved there, or when, is unclear. Megan's father, Edmond Steel, remarried, but it is uncertain what, if any, further involvement he had in Megan Browne's life. It seems that Megan was adopted by a woman called Frankie Browne, although as noted, I cannot find any official documentation relating to this adoption.

Frankie Browne worked as a teacher at Clovelly-Kepplestone school in Eastbourne – the school to which Megan was sent after her mother died. Frankie Browne's mother, Frances Browne, had set up several schools from the 1890s onwards, with Clovelly-Kepplestone being the last.<sup>489</sup> Clovelly-Kepplestone, like the NLCS which Nora Milnes attended, and George Watson's Ladies' College which Marjorie Brown attended, was a fee paying girls' school offering an academic education to middle-class girls. Frankie Browne worked there, first as a teacher, then as Principal. The CRC holds a collection of Megan Browne's papers, mainly professional, but some personal. Amongst the personal papers is a photograph with 'M. Steel (12 years old)' on the back. There are also several newspaper

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<sup>488</sup> Information regarding Megan Browne's birth and parents accessed through the Findmypast website: <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBPRS%2FWAL%2F4262205%2F00036&parentid=GBPRS%2FB%2F871842169%2F1>

<sup>489</sup> Maurice Browne, *Too Late to Lament: An Autobiography* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1955); V. M. Allom, *Ex Oriente Salus: A Centenary History of Eastbourne College* (Eastbourne: A. G. Bishop & Sons Ltd, 1967).

While Maurice Brown does not name Clovelly-Kepplestone in his book the timeline of events he describes makes it clear this is the school he is referring to.

clippings which featured reviews of plays put on by pupils at Clovelly-Kepplestone. One was a review for 'The Post Office' with the headline 'A Young Girls [sic] Success', which recorded that the author had seen: 'Brilliant acting at Clovelly Kepplestone. For an hour yesterday (Friday) afternoon a thirteen-year-old girl held an audience at Clovelly Kepplestone school spellbound. She was M. Steel'.<sup>490</sup>

From this, we know that Megan Browne used the surname Steel until she was at least thirteen years old. Another review, this time of the play 'Outward Bound' from *The Eastbourne Gazette*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 1933 reported that: 'At that performance someone who was just "M. Browne" on the programme became for an hour or so the likeable, good-for-nothing Prior...I liked her – or him – which just shows that the clever characterisation compelled our sympathy'.<sup>491</sup> Evidently, as well as being praised for her acting abilities (which were evident again later in her role at the Department of Social Study), Megan had changed her surname to Browne at some point before December 1933. Clearly, she still had a connection with the school, despite being twenty years old by this time.

Frankie Browne was the Principal of Clovelly-Kepplestone by 1933, although her headship was marred with difficulties which her brother, Maurice Browne alludes to in his book (discussed below) without specifying their precise nature. Exactly what happened is not clear but it seems Frankie Browne was removed from the headship, and then set up a rival school, taking all the pupils with her. However, both this school and Clovelly-Kepplestone closed at some point soon after this.<sup>492</sup> There is scant documentary evidence

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<sup>490</sup> Papers of Megan Browne, Coll-2010, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Browne, *Too Late to Lament*.

about Megan Browne and Frankie Browne's relationship. Megan Browne was not mentioned in the autobiography of Frankie's brother, Maurice, a famous theatre producer, although he did discuss family members in the book. This included details of Frankie Browne's spiral into alcoholism and poor mental health, the fact that she attempted suicide on at least two occasions, as well as serving prison sentences for theft. Frankie Browne died in 1952. Maurice Browne noted that she had had 'a long-postponed operation, made no attempt to recover, and was content to die'.<sup>493</sup> How much involvement Megan Browne had with her by that time is unclear.

#### Early career:

Megan Browne's papers in the CRC contain a note in her handwriting, which gives a brief outline of her career, but does not record, what she did between finishing school (presumably around 1931) and matriculating at university in 1935. Nor have I been able to find this out from any other source. Having matriculated in 1935, Megan Browne graduated BA Honours in Psychology from University College London in 1938.<sup>494</sup> Again, there is a gap in what she did before she undertook the Mental Health Course at the LSE in 1940-41, through which she became a qualified psychiatric social worker (PSW). The CRC records contain a note records that she then worked as a PSW in child guidance clinics (henceforth referred to as CGC) in Berkshire and Ealing, London.

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<sup>493</sup> Browne, *Too Late to Lament*: 343-344.

<sup>494</sup> This is verified by a listing of the graduation of Edith M. Browne in the University of London Graduations lists 1935-1939. 'Browne, Edith M. : B.A. \*, Univ. C.' The asterisk denoted that she was awarded an Honour, Medal or Distinction in her examinations – although which one was not recorded.

As discussed in chapter 6, CGCs played a central role in the movement to expand knowledge and understanding of mental health issues in the UK from the 1920s until after the Second World War. John Stewart, who is critical of CGCs, argues that the child guidance movement reflected the preoccupation British society had during this period with psychiatry, and with the scientific claims it embodied: 'this was an era in which science held considerable social, cultural and intellectual status. An assertion of the scientific method and character of method and practice was thus a claim to associated social, cultural and intellectual capital'.<sup>495</sup> Therefore, using science to understand people's difficulties became increasingly popular and lent authority to those who used scientific approaches, including PSWs employed in CGCs. Stewart argues that these approaches were deliberately adopted in order to give legitimacy and status to the professionals who utilised them, as we will see at the Ealing CGC where Megan Browne worked.<sup>496</sup>

I was unable to identify which CGC Megan Browne worked at in Berkshire, but did identify references to her employment in the CGC in Ealing. The Borough of Ealing *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and School Officer 1945* details the work of the Ealing CGC. It noted that the clinic had been open for over a year but that, within this time, there had been a turnover of staff which had interrupted its operation. Consequently, it was noted, a comprehensive report of its functioning was not possible, but an outline of the number of children worked with, and their diagnoses, was given. The CGC employed a psychiatrist, psychologist, and a psychiatric social worker – Miss M. Browne.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> John Stewart, 'The Scientific Claims of British Child Guidance, 1918-45,' *British Journal for the History of Science* 42, no. 3 (2009): 407-432: 407

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Thomas Orr, *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and School Officer 1945* (London: Perry & Routledge Ltd., Printers, 1945).

The *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and School Officer 1945* reported on a number of aspects of health and education in Ealing, and every section makes extensive use of figures, tables and statistics. The report demonstrated visually and in terms of its content the scientific approach to health, including mental health, that was being undertaken. It documented the number of children the clinic had seen, the classification of diagnoses they had been given, the outcomes of the cases and provided further tables detailing breakdowns of the symptoms experienced, age of the children and their IQ levels. The report clearly sought to portray the work of the CGC as a scientific endeavour, with every aspect of its work being measurable and quantifiable, much as Stewart described.<sup>498</sup>

The *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and School Officer 1947* gave more information about the types of cases the CGC saw. It noted that there was one group of children for whom:

circumstances are so adverse that no child could be expected to escape unscathed.

This group of children presents home difficulties of such a serious character that a disproportionate amount of time and effort had to be spent on them in order to effect any improvement or alteration [...] whatever is prescribed has the end in view of restoring mental health if possible, or, at least minimising [poor] mental health.<sup>499</sup>

The 'adverse circumstances' referred to included having a mother and/or father who had died or was psychotic or borderline neurotic, parents who had separated or divorced, and having been adopted or spent time 'in a home'.

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<sup>498</sup> John Stewart, "'The Dangerous Age of Childhood": Child Guidance and the "Normal" Child in Great Britain, 1920-1950,' *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 6 (2011): 785-803.

<sup>499</sup> Reginald Leader, *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and School Officer 1947* (London: Perry & Routledge Ltd., Printers, 1947): 43

It is striking that Megan Browne herself experienced several of these adverse circumstances. Her parents had separated, her mother had died when she was eight, and while it may not have been a children's home, she had grown up in a boarding school, arguably a quasi-home of sorts. Finally, her adoptive mother had experienced poor mental health – potentially the psychotic or neurotic mental health issues the report noted. What must Megan Browne have thought of herself if others who had similar experiences to her own were thought to require serious input, and even with this input, it may not be possible to restore good mental health and, at best, minimise poor mental health? Arguably, Megan Browne's career-long interest in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis may have stemmed from her own traumatic childhood experiences, and the potential for theories and approaches from psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis to offer a means to overcome the serious consequences of early adverse circumstances.

#### Department of Social Study:

In 1947 Megan Browne applied for a lecturer's post in the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University and was subsequently appointed.<sup>500</sup> Stella Waldron (at that time a lecturer in the department) wrote to a friend on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1947 about Megan Browne's decision to come to Edinburgh. The letter talked about hearing from 'Maggie Browne' out of the blue, and her coming to visit for the weekend in Edinburgh because she:

had been considering coming to work in Edinburgh, that she thought we would work well together, and what did I think? I was so surprised that Meghan [sic] actually

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<sup>500</sup> Papers of Megan Browne, Coll-2010, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

wanted to come!... She came up for an interview last week and has been staying with me, till this morning. I think, as she does, that the partnership will be a good one. She is more academically able than I am and has had to do a major operation on her own personality, getting herself sorted out, so there's not much in the way of emotional difficulties that she can't appreciate.<sup>501</sup>

During her career at the Department of Social Study, Megan Browne primarily oversaw the PSW Certificate course and taught courses including Human Growth and Development. In her teaching, she utilised role play, employing her acting abilities, much to the horror of her former colleague Vivienne Triseliotis (née Laughton), who remembered being caught off guard one day when Megan burst into tears while pretending to be a client during one such exercise in front of students. Vivienne also recalled that she placed great weight on psychodynamic and psychoanalytic thinking and theory. In an interview with me conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, Vivienne spoke about going to a psychoanalyst herself for five years, which she personally found interesting and useful. However, she stated she did this primarily because 'it was one way of keeping upside with Megan'.<sup>502</sup>

Other interviewees, who were all students of the specialist courses in the department, recalled Megan Browne's focus on psychodynamic teaching, particularly in the Human Growth and Development course. As one informant said, this course was 'totally psychodynamic and particularly based on the theories of Melanie Klein'.<sup>503</sup> An Austrian psychoanalyst who moved to the UK in 1926, Melanie Klein developed theories around the importance of early childhood experiences for adult mental health (these were based on

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<sup>501</sup> Personal Papers of Stella Waldron, Private Collection. Used with permission of the owner.

<sup>502</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

<sup>503</sup> Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

beliefs including that it was important for infants and young children to experience loving attention, and that they were sensitive to the environment they were growing up in) and was also a pioneer of psychoanalytic interventions with children.<sup>504</sup>

The interviewees all said that they had seen the emphasis on psychodynamic and psychoanalytical theories on the specialist courses as positive and helpful for understanding their clients. One noted that while they were not being taught to be therapists, psychodynamic and psychanalytic thinking offered ‘a serious development of personal skills’.<sup>505</sup> But another interviewee, Jane Aldgate, was critical of its prominence, remarking that structural issues, such as poverty, were dismissed. This could result in clients not being given the material help they needed because their difficulties were attributed to their ‘inner child and the inner world’,<sup>506</sup> an allusion to the centrality of the focus on early childhood experiences as an explanation for difficulties in adulthood, as advocated by Melanie Klein.

By the 1960s, Edinburgh University offered three specialist Certificate courses in the department – the PSW course, the Medical Social Work (MSW) course and the Child Care course. Megan Browne does not seem to have been involved with the teaching of the more general Social Studies courses – this was where Marjorie Brown was active – but, as noted, her role lay instead with the teaching of the specialist courses, and in particular with the PSW Certificate course. The teaching of these specialist courses was an area where hierarchies were in evidence in social work education, with an air of elitism being attached to the PSW course and students, in particular.<sup>507</sup> This issue will be returned to and explored

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<sup>504</sup> Meira Likierman, *Melanie Klein: Her Work in Context* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013).

<sup>505</sup> SA, interview with Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>506</sup> Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>507</sup> Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.'

in more depth in chapter 8, because it arguably demonstrated the desire to protect (and advance) the status of social work education.

The previous chapter has already explored Marjorie Brown's encouragement to departmental staff to be involved in work and organisations outwith the university, with a view to extending its influence. The work that Megan Browne undertook in relation to the 1968 Act demonstrates her wider influence on social work and social work education, and this will be discussed in depth later in this chapter. This was not, however, her only contribution to the world outside the university. She was an active member of professional organisations, lecturing, advising social work organisations and mentoring former students. For example, she sat on its Standing Committee on Training and Registration for the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (APSW) and was on the Executive Committee for its Disciplinary Board.<sup>508</sup> Records relating to the SERU in Pilton (discussed in the previous chapter) noted that Megan Browne gave a lecture in 1961 to the Pilton Central Committee entitled 'the psychology of the young person'. In the leaflet for this lecture, she was described as having 'had long experience of psychology; but she is no mere theoretician, her first-hand knowledge of the young person makes her one of the most sought after speakers in Scotland'.<sup>509</sup> The veracity of being one of the 'most sought after speakers in Scotland' is hard to confirm, although there are notes for other speeches amongst her papers in the CRC.

What is clear though is that Megan Browne was presented as an expert in this field. Certainly, her expertise appeared to be widely recognised. For example, she advised Edzell

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<sup>508</sup> The Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, *Annual Report 1969* (London: Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1969).

<sup>509</sup> Residents Association, 1960-1962, EUA IN1/ACU/S3/1/10, Social Environment Research Unit, 1953-1964, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

Lodge, a children's home in Edinburgh run by the (then) Guild of Service, in relation to residents who were experiencing social or behavioural difficulties. One care experienced adult I spoke with (who has recently been collaborating with Professor Vivienne Cree, one of my supervisors, in order to explore his understanding of his upbringing in a children's home) remembered Megan Browne coming to visit him at a time when he was on the verge of being asked to leave, and advocating for him to be given another chance.<sup>510</sup> Evidently, her expertise held sway, because he was allowed to stay. Megan Browne also shared her experience with newly qualified social workers, acting as a mentor for some, while advising others on roles which may be suitable for them. Advising organisations and former students was an important aspect of the leadership demonstrated by all three women, and their use of this through their professional networks will be examined in depth in chapter 8. For now, let us turn to the area where Megan Browne had the greatest influence over the development of early social work education – government policy.

Shortly after her appointment at Edinburgh University, Megan Browne was invited to become involved with the oversight of probation in Scotland, becoming a member of the Scottish Central Probation Council (SCPC) in March 1952.<sup>511</sup> Exploring her role as an advisor to the Scottish Office, first in relation to training for probation, and then with regard to the reorganisation of social work services, enables us to examine the role Megan Browne played in influencing social work education and policy at a national level in Scotland. It also provides an opportunity to explore and challenge some of the gendered roles for women in social work and social work education which were discussed in chapter 2. First, we will

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<sup>510</sup> Vivienne E. Cree and Robert MacKenzie, 'Forming a new and unexpected relationship through digital technologies: Lessons for child and family social work,' *Adoption & Fostering* 47, no. 3 (2023): 312-325.

<sup>511</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1943-1964, ED20/661, Probation Service Files, National Records of Scotland.

explore the gendered construction of probation and roles for women in social work. Then we will examine Megan Browne's involvement with probation training, and then the reorganisation of social work services at a national level in Scotland.

### Gendered constructions of probation:

We saw in chapter 2 that social work was (and arguably continues to be) constructed as an inherently female pursuit. Women were deemed to be naturally more caring and nurturing, and this was aligned with the belief that many social work clients required this – for example children, or working-class people, who were essentially treated as though they were children who needed guidance. Whilst undertaking my research I found that this narrative was evident throughout this time period and was constantly being reinforced, including by the social work profession itself. For example, a report by the British Federation of Social Workers entitled *Salaries and Conditions of Work of Social Workers* in 1947 stated that 'it is also true, **of course**, that women have a particular aptitude for many kinds of social work, particularly in casework and the care of children'. [emphasis added]<sup>512</sup>

While a predominantly female pursuit, it was acceptable for men to work in social work. However, as discussed in chapter 2 this was framed as being appropriate in specific areas which related to control rather than care. This includes, for example, probation, now referred to as criminal justice social work, which has always been constructed as an area of social work where men work and which is 'control' focused. However, this gendered division of social work roles needs to be viewed critically. While it is the case that, along

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<sup>512</sup> British Federation of Social Workers, *Salaries and Conditions of Work of Social Workers* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1947): 48

with residential child care, we find the highest number of male social workers working in criminal justice social work, women do work in probation, and have done since it began.<sup>513</sup> It is not, therefore, as straightforward as men and women occupying different gendered, roles. While these gendered constructions were in evidence, the reality was less stringently divided, as we see when we explore the development of probation and training in Scotland, which we will now do.

#### Development of probation in Scotland:

Probation began in Scotland towards the end of the nineteenth century and was first enshrined into legislation in the UK-wide Probation of Offenders Act 1887.<sup>514</sup> The development of probation has been attributed to religious and charitable objectives, where middle-class citizens sought to save the lower classes from their sinful lives and vices.<sup>515</sup> However, Fergus McNeill has critiqued this narrative, arguing that while there may have been an element of this in its very early years, probation quickly became a means to curtail the large number of people being sent to prison for defaulting on fines, which were frequently used by the courts as disposals.<sup>516</sup> Seeking alternatives to this system, representatives from the local authorities examined different approaches, including those from America. The first probation officers were appointed in Glasgow in 1905. These officers were men and women. Women were recruited to work with children and

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<sup>513</sup> Vivienne E. Cree, Fiona Morrison, Mary Mitchell and Jackie Gulland, 'Navigating the Gendered Academy,' *Social Work Education* 39, no. 5 (2020): 650-664.

<sup>514</sup> Scottish Home Department, *The Probation Service in Scotland: Its Objectives and Organisation* (Edinburgh: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947).

<sup>515</sup> Scott Grant, Jamie Buchan and Alex O'Donnell, *Probation in Europe* (Utrecht: Confederation of European Probation, 2020).

<sup>516</sup> Fergus McNeill, 'Remembering Probation in Scotland,' *Probation Journal* 52, no. 1 (2005): 23-38.

juveniles.<sup>517</sup> Yet, this was in fact the vast majority of those subject to probation as, prior to 1968, probation was primarily used in relation to those aged under sixteen. Therefore, arguably the role female probation officers fulfilled was a mainstream one during this period.

The role of the probation officer was described in the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as someone ‘appointed so that courts should have qualified persons to “advise, assist and befriend” offenders whom the courts decided to release on probation’.<sup>518</sup> During this period probation officers could be employed by local authorities, as in Glasgow, but also by voluntary organisations,<sup>519</sup> including churches, such as the Church of Scotland.<sup>520</sup> The work of probation officers was similar to the work of criminal justice social workers today – they gathered background information about the offender, submitted this to the judge to inform sentencing and supervised the offender in relation to their disposal.

Probation officers were viewed as undertaking skilled work with offenders, and this required appropriate training, although there was no official requirement for any training or qualification for the role.<sup>521</sup> The Probation of Offenders (Scotland) Act 1931 required each local authority to appoint a Probation Committee and established the SCPC, which had a role in assisting local authorities to identify suitable candidates to work in probation services. Cree, Steve Kirkwood, McCulloch and Eve Mullins have demonstrated that women worked in probation since it began, arguing that historically ‘the sheer number of women [working in probation] challenges any simplistic assumption that this was a male-dominated

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<sup>517</sup> Grant, Buchan, and O’Donnell, *Probation in Europe*.

<sup>518</sup> Scottish Home Department, *The Probation Service in Scotland*: 5

<sup>519</sup> Christine Turnbull, ‘Probation in Scotland,’ *Howard Journal* 3, no. 2 (1931): 87-89.

<sup>520</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>521</sup> Scottish Home Department, *The Probation Service in Scotland*.

service'.<sup>522</sup> In analysing the student records in the CRC, I found women working in probation in Edinburgh, and students – the vast majority of whom were women – having placements in probation settings.

McNeill argues that by the 1920s probation was being influenced by theories from psychiatry, which led it to transition from a focus around punishment to treatment, underpinned by concepts of understanding and treating delinquency. A pamphlet by the Scottish Home Department regarding the probation service in 1947 stressed this, stating that the qualifications for probation officers included 'acquaintance with the work carried on in Child Guidance Clinics and the theories underlying this type of work'.<sup>523</sup> This explains why Megan Browne would get involved in probation work, given her training as a PSW, her experience in CGCs and her interest in psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis. Indeed, one of the interviewees commented on precisely this point, stating that in her extensive work in the penal system considering the issue facing young people there, Megan 'probably used her psychiatric social work understanding to inform how she understood, how she saw the experiences of people, and how she would help them'.<sup>524</sup>

Furthermore, like Marjorie Brown, she travelled to America during the 1950s to further develop her knowledge and skills, with the departmental report of 1957/58 recording that:

Miss Megan Browne spent the spring term in America on a study tour of universities and institutions concerned with delinquency and corrections services. Her increased

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<sup>522</sup> Vivienne E. Cree, Steve Kirkwood, Trish McCulloch and Eve Mullins, *Criminal Justice Social Work: Exploring Gender Issues: Reflections on the 1968 Act* (Edinburgh: Social Work Scotland, 2018): 6

<sup>523</sup> Scottish Home Department, *The Probation Service in Scotland*: 19

<sup>524</sup> Wendy Paterson, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

knowledge of the treatment of young offenders is most relevant to developments in this country. Miss Browne has continued to hold discussions with the staff of the Borstal Institution Polmont, and serves on the Probation Council and on the Selection Committee of the Central Register for Probation Officers.<sup>525</sup>

Therefore, we see that Megan Browne was not only furthering her own knowledge regarding the latest developments in relation to theories and practices relating to delinquency, young offenders and correction services (borstals and prisons), but that she then used this knowledge to advise services and to inform policy back in Scotland. This was particularly evident in relation to the training of probation officers.

#### Involvement in training for probation officers:

The SCPC had appointed a Training Committee in December 1954 'to consider the training of probation officers. Miss Browne consented to act as Chairman'.<sup>526</sup> No training scheme existed in Scotland, and this needed to be remedied. Scottish Office documents in the National Records of Scotland (NRS) show that Megan Browne was someone with strong views on the subject of training for probation officers, and was effective in bringing these to fruition. As we will see, the theme of professionalisation was present throughout, and the need for this was consistently emphasised.

The draft of the *Proposed Training Scheme for Probation Officers*, which the committee produced in 1957, stated that it aimed to ensure probation officers in Scotland

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<sup>525</sup> Department of Social Studies Advisory Committee, 1933-1961, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/2, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>526</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1956-1957, ED20/715, Probation Service Files, National Records of Scotland.

had the same professional standing as those in England. The need for the stringent selection of candidates was part of this process, as 'the council consider it to be essential that only those persons who attain the desired standard should be eligible to undertake the duties of the probation officer'.<sup>527</sup> This was not just in relation to the training of officers themselves, but also the oversight of those doing the training. Megan Browne argued for consideration also to be given to the training of tutors for probation officers as 'it was, in her view, essential that a person who was to supervise the case-work of others should have his own case-work supervised first'.<sup>528</sup>

The theoretical and practical content of the course was discussed at length in the committee, as was the salary of tutors and training officers. Finally, the involvement of universities as the organisers, and deliverers, of this training was deemed essential.<sup>529</sup> Analysing the minutes of the Committee meetings, Megan Browne's authority was evident throughout. At one point she admonished other committee members for a lack of commitment to meetings – something which she did not need to repeat. On another occasion, the Minute of the Training Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1955 noted that 'Miss Browne considered the time had come to approach the Universities to see what they could offer in the way of training'.<sup>530</sup> And that is exactly what happened at a meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1955. The documents also provide insight into the way Megan Browne worked. She advocated for informal discussions, and the use of these is clear from the documents. She also utilised professional relationships and networks in the departments of social studies at the University of Glasgow and Edinburgh to expedite the development of

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<sup>527</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1956-1957, ED20/715, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1955-1956, ED20/714, Probation Service Files, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

the Scottish Probation Training course, which began in 1960 at the University of Glasgow, with a woman – Vera Hiddleston – as its Director.

Megan Browne's involvement with probation showed that women could, and did, work in this area of social work. Gendered constructions of the roles women (and men) played in social work therefore need to be viewed with a critical eye, as the reality could be much more fluid. Megan Browne's role as the Chairman of the committee that led on the training of probation officers in Scotland also demonstrated that women could be involved with, and influence, social work training and policy at a government level. Megan Browne pushed for the development of probation training that was professional, with a strict selection process, that had a high level of academic and practical training elements, and was provided by a university. Her experience on the SPCS Training Committee, and her relationship with the Scottish Office civil servants, was a spring board for her involvement with the re-organisation of social work services, as we shall now see.

### Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the reorganisation of services in Scotland:

#### Background to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968:

Megan Browne's role in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (henceforth referred to as the 1968 Act) will now be examined. The 1968 Act fundamentally changed social work services and education in Scotland. It is commonly suggested that Megan Browne and her fellow advisors were central to this process.<sup>531</sup> Yet, my research found that civil servants at the

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<sup>531</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services: The Scottish Dimension*; Penelope Ravenscroft, "'Punish and be Damned" – Judicial Discretion in the Juvenile Courts: The Welfare and Punishment Dichotomy in England/Wales and Scotland,' (PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, 2011).

Scottish Office were far from impartial in this process and indeed, orchestrated these changes, exerting influence in a covert manner. This led me to question the role Megan Browne and the other advisors actually played in this process. This will be examined, but first it is necessary to explore the genesis of the 1968 Act, and why it constituted such a monumental shift for social work and social work education in Scotland.

Several factors led to the development of the 1968 Act. These included the move towards professionalism, a greater sense of unity among social workers, a growing recognition for the importance of social work for individuals and communities and a growing impetus for preventative work. However, the 1968 Act's immediate precursor was *The Kilbrandon Report: Children and Young Persons in Scotland*, published in April 1964. This set down the findings of the Kilbrandon Committee, which had been headed by the Scottish judge James Shaw, Baron Kilbrandon.

The Kilbrandon Committee had been established as early as 1961 to examine the juvenile justice system in Scotland. Such scrutiny was deemed necessary due to a growing recognition that the care and support given to children needed to improve. The recommendations of the committee were progressive. It was argued that different groups of children who were dealt with by the juvenile justice system – that is, those who committed offences, who truanted, who needed care and protection and who were outwith parental control – were all the same, in that they had not experienced a usual upbringing. They needed to be seen in the context of their families, to be viewed in need of care and support and their welfare needed to be paramount. The Committee heard submissions on how the existing system could be modified, but it decided instead to recommend a whole new system. This system largely dispensed with courts and, instead, panels made up of lay

people would be convened. Children would be referred to the panels, which would receive reports from social workers and make recommendations about care and support. Social workers would then oversee the implementation of the panels' recommendations. The report recommended that new Social Education Departments be set up within local authorities, with existing services re-organised accordingly. In order for the new services to be most effective, they needed to be staffed by trained social workers. The committee's report argued that this was necessary in order to provide a good service, but also to promote the professionalisation of social work.<sup>532</sup>

The committee's recommendations were almost universally accepted by the Scottish Office. Given the conservative nature of Scottish society at the time, commentators have suggested that it was astounding, not only that a radically different system was proposed, but also that it was accepted.<sup>533</sup> It was also surprising because Scotland, until this point, had usually followed the precedent set by England and Wales in relation to juvenile justice and care and protection (previously, legislation relating to juvenile justice had first been passed in England and Wales, and then introduced in Scotland with minor changes).<sup>534</sup> Then the fact that the legislation that introduced the reforms passed through the UK parliament (as this was before Scottish devolution) without any significant opposition was also remarkable, especially as England and Wales had recently decided against adopting a similar system

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<sup>532</sup> Scottish Home and Health Department and Scottish Education Department, *Children and Young Persons Scotland: Report by the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964).

<sup>533</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services: The Scottish Dimension*.

<sup>534</sup> Andrew Lockyer and Frederick H. Stone, 'Foundation and Development,' in *Juvenile Justice in Scotland: Twenty-Five Years of the Welfare Approach*, ed. Andrew Lockyer and Frederick H. Stone (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998).

themselves.<sup>535</sup> The Kilbrandon Committee recommendations, and the 1968 Act which brought them into being, therefore represented a significant step change for Scotland in terms of policy.<sup>536</sup>

That this could happen in Scotland was arguably due to the belief among professionals in the justice system that, although juvenile courts were possible under current legislation, they had not been utilised effectively (only four had been set up).<sup>537</sup> While there was some opposition among probation officers and sheriffs, the Chief Constables (Scotland) Association gave the Kilbrandon proposals its backing. Crucially, no professional organisation argued against the recommendations (the Magistrates Association had opposed the proposition of similar measures in England and Wales). Consequently, the proposed measures were accepted, bar one.<sup>538</sup> The recommendation that was not deemed appropriate was the formation of new Social Education Departments to oversee social work services. Instead, the Scottish Office wanted a different administrative outcome. My research identified evidence that, in fact, this had been planned this for some time **before** the final recommendations of the Kilbrandon committee were published.

The Kilbrandon Committee published their report in April 1964. The Scottish Office then invited and received comments on the recommendations from local authorities, professional associations and public bodies. The majority were in favour of the

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<sup>535</sup> David J. Cowperthwaite, *The Emergence of the Scottish Children's Hearings System: An Administrative/Political Study of the Establishment of Novel Arrangements in Scotland for Dealing with Juvenile Offenders – 1960-1982* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1988).

<sup>536</sup> Phyllida Parsloe, *Juvenile Justice in Britain and the United States: The Balance of Needs and Rights* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

<sup>537</sup> David Smith, 'Official Responses to Juvenile Delinquency in Scotland During the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History* 18, no 1 (2007): 78-105; Christine Kelly, *Juvenile Justice in Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

<sup>538</sup> Angela Bartie and Louise A. Jackson, *Policing Youth: Britain, 1945-70* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

recommendations, and on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1965, the Secretary of State for Scotland, William Ross, announced that the Scottish Office would accept the Kilbrandon Committee's recommendations and introduce legislation to bring them into effect. Whilst an opportunity to change the juvenile justice system in Scotland, the Scottish Office also saw this as a chance to reorganise social work services, and it was in relation to this that Megan Browne became involved, as we shall see.

#### Need for reorganisation of social work services:

Civil servants in the Scottish Office believed that reorganisation of social work services had been necessary for a long time. In an internal report entitled 'The Future Organisation of the Local Authority Social Work Services' dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1965, they attributed this belief in the need for reorganisation to a number of factors, including that developments in social work practice had led to casework methods being increasingly used, with a move away from services simply providing for people's material needs. Alongside this, they argued, there was a growing emphasis on early intervention and preventative work, and these changes meant that as services developed there were overlaps in provision, which led to inefficiency. Compounding this was the fact that highly skilled workers were not deemed to be utilised effectively, and often families were sent between different departments to receive different services, when ideally they should go to one place for everything. The report presented these issues as factual reality, which could not be argued with. However, no evidence is presented to support these arguments. Finally, one issue which would become more

pressing as a result of reorganisation was the dearth of trained social workers in Scotland.<sup>539</sup>

This had been a known issue for years which, as we saw in chapter 5, Nora Milnes had highlighted in the 1930s. Reorganised services would require far more trained social workers.

The Scottish Office decided to push ahead with the reforms, knowing that there would need to be a rapid training and recruitment drive in its wake – the opportunity to take ‘advantage of the Kilbrandon “springboard”’<sup>540</sup> was too good to miss. Yet, there was a recognition that reorganising services was far from straightforward, as social work was carried out in numerous settings by a myriad of statutory, voluntary and charitable organisations.<sup>541</sup> In order for its recommendations to be turned into legislation, as was customary, a discussion document, known as a White Paper, was commissioned by the Scottish Office.<sup>542</sup> Scottish Office papers held at the NRS demonstrate how the White Paper – *Social Work and the Community. Proposals for reorganising Local Authority Services in Scotland (Cmnd. 3065)* – and the proposals it made, were developed.

### Social Work and the Community:

Those writing about the 1968 Act ascribe the role played by Megan Browne and the other advisors as being central to the development of proposals to reorganise social work services. Yet, through my analysis of documents held in the NRS, alongside others in the

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<sup>539</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, Social and Community Service Files, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>542</sup> Scottish Home and Health Department and Scottish Education Department, *Children and Young Persons Scotland*.

LSE, CRC and University of Glasgow, it has become evident that the Scottish Office civil servants played a much more active and influential role than has previously been recognised. In fact, they were, arguably, the people driving the direction of the developments, but did so, as will be demonstrated, in a covert manner. We will now explore this, by first considering how the process for developing the White Paper began, how Megan Browne and the others were chosen as advisors, and how this process then unfolded.

The minister who oversaw the development of the proposals for reorganisation, and the White Paper, was Judith Hart, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (and MP for Lanark). Judith Hart had grown up in Lancashire, joining the Labour Party as a teenager in response to the poverty she saw around her during the 1930s. She gained a place at grammar school then went on to the London School of Economics (LSE), where she attained a first class degree. Her tutor there was Richard Titmuss.<sup>543</sup> Penelope Ravenscroft, who researched contrasts between the English/Welsh and Scottish juvenile justice system reforms in the second half of the twentieth century, argues that it was William Ross and Judith Hart who rejected the formation of a Social Education Department recommended by the Kilbrandon Committee.<sup>544</sup> However, she does not cite any evidence for this statement, nor have I found any in the archives. What is present in the NRS archives is a document dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1963 to David Cowperthwaite (senior civil servant, Home and Health Department, Scottish Office) which stated that: 'I do not accept the view that the education

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<sup>543</sup> Paula Bartley, *Labour Women in Power: Cabinet Ministers in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

<sup>544</sup> Ravenscroft, "'Punish and be Damned.'"

authority is appropriate to have the preventative social work service [...] The family welfare service proposal is in my view sounder and should be the long term aim'.<sup>545</sup>

The signature of the author is illegible, and it is not clear who wrote the document. It pre-dated both William Ross and Judith Hart's appointment's as Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, which occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October 1964, respectively. Together with subsequent documentary evidence it demonstrates that, early on in the process, civil servants in the Scottish Office had a firm view as to the most appropriate mechanisms to bring in both the Kilbrandon recommendations and the subsequent reorganisation of social work services. This pre-dated both William Ross and Judith Hart, as well as the subsequent advisory Joint Working Group (made up of local authority representatives) and study group (the three advisors including Megan Browne). This is not to judge whether the outcomes they worked towards were appropriate or not, rather it is an argument that this process was not entirely open from the start. Consequently, the role that Megan Browne and the other advisors played was circumscribed from the beginning. We will now examine why Megan Browne was appointed as an advisor, and why this is relevant.

#### Megan Browne's appointment as an Advisor:

In reorganising social work services, the Scottish Office aimed to create distinct social work departments within local authorities, which would facilitate the expansion of social work across Scotland. They believed they needed to push for this to happen because local

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<sup>545</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, National Records of Scotland.

authorities ‘had shown no great eagerness for social work’<sup>546</sup> and consequently were unlikely to invest in and develop services without some legislative impetus. My research found that Megan Browne shared the same views as the Scottish Office regarding reorganisation. A copy of a speech given by Megan Browne on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1964 – after the Kilbrandon Committee published their recommendations, but before the Scottish Office stated that they would accept them – is held in the CRC. Who the speech was given to was not specified, but its content indicates it was the National Association of Probation Officers in Scotland. The speech is significant because it provides insight into Megan Browne’s opinion on the reorganisation of social work, and the need for probation officers to be part of it:

The present time I see as a crucial point for you – a moment of truth – are you, or are you not, primarily social caseworkers – will you be true to yourselves, and incoming colleagues in future, by adhering rigidly to your present functions, or by joining in the wider developments towards a profession of social work? [...] This could be a tremendous opportunity for developing the unity of a profession of social casework – a Department of social work in the local authority.<sup>547</sup>

The implication of these words are that Megan Browne considered this to be a critical moment for social work in Scotland as a whole. There was the possibility to become more unified, to strengthen their claim to be a profession and to establish their own departments in local authorities. Elsewhere in the speech it was clear this was by no means the guaranteed outcome at that time: ‘Your Association may have spoken about this already –

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<sup>546</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>547</sup> Papers of Megan Browne, Coll-2010, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

it's not too late to speak, not just once, but twice or thrice – Social work would be the poorer without you'.<sup>548</sup>

The civil service was aware that Megan Browne held these views. She had expressed them, not only in the speech detailed above, but directly to civil servants in May 1964, stating explicitly that she was against the Kilbrandon Committee's proposal for the formation of Social Education Departments to oversee social work.<sup>549</sup> Finally, we know that she expressed her opinions clearly again, as recorded in another document located in Richard Titmuss's papers at the LSE. This document recorded 'an informal discussion' on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1965 'on the organisation of social work services in the future and the training of the necessary staff'.<sup>550</sup> The meeting had been arranged by John Mack (Glasgow University) and was held at the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. Judith Hart attended, along with civil servants, as well as representatives from the universities and training bodies of social workers in Scotland, including Megan Browne. The minutes of that meeting recorded, at length, Megan Browne's views on the future organisation, including that:

Miss Megan Browne suggested that the best objective of policy would be complete integration of the social work services. This would facilitate the most efficient use of the staff likely to be available. An integrated service would be able to deploy its highly trained staff in the key positions, and would also be able to make the best use of those staff with training at a lower level and indeed with no training at all.<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> Papers of Megan Browne, Coll-2010, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>549</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1943-1964, ED20/661, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>550</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, Titmuss, Richard Morris (1907-1973), Professor of Social Administration, London School of Economics.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

Aside from the opening comments from John Mack and Judith Hart, Megan Browne is the only other attendee whose views are explicitly recorded. Her opinions were completely in accord with the Scottish Office – she argued for a single social work department within local authorities, which would make the best use of staff, and therefore operate in the most efficient way.

Arguably, therefore, Megan Browne's appointment as an advisor in the reorganisation of social work services can be attributed to the fact that her views on reorganisation – first, on the way social work services should be reorganised, and second, on the aims and objectives which the reorganisation should achieve for social work services in Scotland – were completely in agreement with the objectives of the Scottish Office. In addition to this, she had an existing professional relationship with the Scottish Office through her chairmanship of the SCPC Training Committee. Furthermore, her experience serving in advisory roles extended beyond the SCPC, as she had also served on Scottish Advisory Councils on Aftercare and Child Care. So, we have seen why Megan Browne was appointed as an advisor, but what about the other two – Richard Titmuss and Kay Carmichael?

#### Other members of the Study Group:

Alongside Megan Browne, Kay Carmichael (Lecturer in Social Casework, University of Glasgow) and Richard Titmuss (Professor of Social Administration, London School of Economics) were appointed as advisors to the Scottish Office. Together they formed the Study Group, which in turn advised the Joint Working Group (JWG), made up of representatives from local authorities and the Scottish Office. As noted already, Richard

Titmuss had been Judith Hart's tutor, and they clearly knew each other quite well. A letter in the LSE archive sent from Judith Hart addressed him as 'Dear Richard' and signed off 'Yours ever, Judith'.<sup>552</sup> Richard Titmuss had been an adviser to the Labour Party for a number of years and had been highly influential in developing their approaches to welfare, including their social security policies.<sup>553</sup> He was vocal in his belief that social services needed to continually develop, in terms of staffing, structure and costs, to ensure they met the needs of society as it changed.<sup>554</sup> A well-known figure, his biographer noted that he deliberately cultivated a media presence, through radio programmes and newspaper articles, and increasingly through television.<sup>555</sup>

The other adviser was Catherine 'Kay' Carmichael, a lecturer in the Department of Social Study at the University of Glasgow. Kay Carmichael had been a student of Megan Browne's when she studied for the PSW Certificate, at Edinburgh University, during the late 1950s/early 1960s. She and Megan Browne became close friends. As Kay Carmichael explained in a series of oral history interviews she gave in 2008, 'we were very fond of each other, and I was privileged, I was privileged to know her'.<sup>556</sup> Kay Carmichael was married to Neil Carmichael, Labour MP for Glasgow Woodside during the 1960s, and was heavily involved with the Labour Party. John Murphy, and his co-author Gill McMillan, interviewed Kay Carmichael and Judith Hart about the 1968 Act, reporting that Kay Carmichael was chosen as an advisor because of her connection with the Labour Party, and with Judith Hart

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<sup>552</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, London School of Economics.

<sup>553</sup> John Stewart, *Richard Titmuss: A Commitment to Welfare* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2020); Ray Jones, '1970-2020: A Fifty Year History – the Personal Social Services and Social Work in England and across the United Kingdom,' *Social Work & Social Sciences Review* 18, no. 1 (2020): 15-30.

<sup>554</sup> Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019).

<sup>555</sup> Stewart, *Richard Titmuss: A Commitment to Welfare*.

<sup>556</sup> Kay Carmichael, interview by Louise Brodie, *National Life Stories: Pioneers in Charity and Social Welfare* (2008), last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, <https://www.bl.uk/national-life-stories>

(both Judith Hart and Neil Carmichael were Labour MPs for constituencies geographically close together).<sup>557</sup> Having considered the appointment of the advisers, let us now examine how they operated, and their relationship with civil servants in the Scottish Office.

The Study Group's role and operation, and its relationship with the Scottish Office:

As noted in the chapter introduction, the study group's contribution to the formulation of the 1968 Act is uniformly credited as being significant. However, their actual input to the process has not been examined in any depth. My research has sought to explore their specific involvement – particularly in regard to Megan Browne. The role of the study group, as envisaged by the Home and Health Department of the Scottish Office, was ostensibly to advise the JWG. Made up of representatives from local authorities and the Scottish Office, the JWG was convened with the task of 'the working out of practical arrangements which could form the basis of legislation'<sup>558</sup> for the reorganisation of social work services. This statement implied that the role of the JWG was pivotal to the process.

Analysis of documents in the NRS reveals, however, that it was the intention of the Scottish Office that they, along with the study group, would steer the decisions of the JWG. This was evident both from the text of the documents, and from the actions of the civil servants throughout the process. One internal Scottish Office memorandum written by J. J. McCabe, civil servant at the Scottish Office Home and Health Department, on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1965 – **four months** before the JWG met – stated that:

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<sup>557</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services: The Scottish Dimension*.

<sup>558</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, National Records of Scotland.

It will be important for us to have a fairly clear idea from the outset of the conclusions which we [the Scottish Office Home and Health Department] wish the working group to reach. For this purpose we shall have to keep in close touch with the consultants to review, at each stage, where we have got to and whether any modifications can be introduced to meet the views expressed by other parties without seriously impairing the value of our provisional solution.<sup>559</sup>

Convening meetings of the JWG was controlled by the Scottish Office. They utilised the time before the first meeting, and then between subsequent meetings, to liaise with the study group members. As J. J. McCabe noted, this gave them ‘an opportunity to work out beforehand with the consultants the direction in which we propose to try to lead the group [the JWG]’.<sup>560</sup> The fact that the civil servants wanted to ensure that the JWG came to certain conclusions – which were pre-agreed with the consultants – implied that the consultant’s views on how social work services should be reorganised were potentially very influential indeed. But my analysis of the documents, and examining the pre- and post-text of each document, shows that the study group was also being managed by the civil servants.

The JWG rarely met the study group, undermining somewhat the assertion that the study group was advising the JWG. When they did meet, their interaction was closely managed by the civil servants. For example, the second meeting of the study group took place in Edinburgh on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1965. A meeting of the JWG had been arranged for the same day, and ended with lunch at 1pm. Mr J. O. Johnstone, civil servant with the Scottish Home and Health Department, informed the JWG that ‘Professor Titmuss, Miss

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<sup>559</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1963-1968, ED39/518, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

Browne and Mrs Carmichael will also attend at lunch, and after lunch there will be an opportunity for a short informal discussion with them'.<sup>561</sup> The study group then met after lunch, and the chairman of the meeting – Mr J. O. Johnstone – summarised the JWG's earlier discussion. The power of the civil servants was evident. They could choose what information to convey between the two groups, and could emphasise (or chose not to emphasise) certain issues.

The majority of interactions between the study group and the JWG was through briefing documents. These documents were administered and distributed by the civil servants. When the study group and JWG did have the chance to meet and speak with one another, this was also managed by the civil servants – who only allowed for a short informal discussion. It is unclear what Megan Browne and Richard Titmuss thought about the separation of the study group and JWG. However, Kay Carmichael, from the very beginning of the process, found it peculiar:

On the proposed methods of structuring the discussions I find it difficult to comprehend the apparent segregation of the two groups. At least there should be an initial meeting, possibly of an informal nature, even a tea party where we can meet and talk as flesh and blood creatures and not as words on a piece of paper.<sup>562</sup>

After the initial meeting in December only one further meeting of the JWG and the study group was recorded. Arguably, the separation of the two groups was something which the civil servants wanted to maintain.

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<sup>561</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, London School of Economics.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

It was not only in relation to the JWG that the input of the study group was managed. All of the study group's input was entirely filtered through the civil servants, who controlled the flow of the comments, discussion and arrangements for meetings (which the civil servants also attended) between the members of the study group. The members of the study group were based in Edinburgh (Megan Browne), Glasgow (Kay Carmichael) and London (Richard Titmuss) respectively. They did have meetings, which occurred in Edinburgh and London. However, the majority of the group's work was done by examining and suggesting amendments to draft papers, which were written by civil servants. These draft papers were sent through the post and, crucially, these communications went through the civil servants.<sup>563</sup>

There was no evidence the study group sent documents to, or corresponded directly with, each other. The fact that Megan Browne and Kay Carmichael were friends means they may have been in contact with each other independently, although there is no evidence of this. However, certainly Richard Titmuss did not have direct contact with Megan Browne or Kay Carmichael. We can be sure of this because he quite literally kept every shred of paper, now held in the archive at the LSE, and it contains no documents between them.<sup>564</sup> The fact the advisors did not communicate independently is not controversial. It does however imply that the civil servants were in control of what the study group knew of each other's opinions. Arguably, it was the civil servants who wielded the greatest level of influence in the process of developing the White Paper.

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<sup>563</sup> Documents in the LSE archive show Richard Titmuss received draft papers from civil servants, read them and sent them back with comments.

<sup>564</sup> His papers in the LSE archive – TITMUSS/2/211 – show that he did keep every document, including scrap pieces of paper with handwritten notes on them – some with only a couple of words. I also found copies of documents there which had not been retained in the Scottish Office archives in the NRS.

We have already touched on the issue that the views of the study group members seemed to be aligned with the views of the civil servants. This leads us to question the role and relevance of the JWG. We have seen that the role of the JWG was ostensibly to work out the practical arrangements for the new service. The extent to which they were really free to do this has already been questioned, and we have seen the civil service wanted to steer them in a certain direction, and planned to utilise the study group to assist in this.

However, it is all very well to say they are going to do this, but did they actually do it? There is evidence that they did. For example, at a meeting of the JWG on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1965 the group discussed a number of types of services and whether they should be included in a new social work department. The probation service was discussed, and while pros and cons were mentioned for splitting, or maintaining, a single service it was finally agreed that 'the provisional agreement was that the service should be split and that the service for under-16s should be included in a reorganised service'.<sup>565</sup>

Yet, Megan Browne held a contrary opinion – and this was clearly recorded and conveyed to the JWG (by the civil servants). She stated that the probation service did not want to be split up and that 'she herself felt that the service should remain one'.<sup>566</sup> The JWG went on to recommend in its Revised Draft of Tentative Conclusions in February 1966 that the probation 'service as a whole should belong to the new social work department'.<sup>567</sup> The study group evidently were influential enough to steer decisions of the JWG.

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<sup>565</sup> Social Work Services Group, 1965-1967, MH4/65, Department of Health: Miscellaneous Scottish Files, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>566</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, London School of Economics.

<sup>567</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1966-1967, ED39/490, Social and Community Services Files, National Records of Scotland.

Challenges following reorganisation:

As noted above, civil servants were aware that any new structure would require a significant number of trained social workers – and these were not available in Scotland.<sup>568</sup> Within local authorities there were few staff working in social work, and even fewer of them were trained. For example, there were 181 staff employed in statutory social work in child care services in Scotland in 1965 – a number which seems almost impossibly small. Yet, the range of work they were employed to cover was wide: ‘The functions of these departments embrace the whole range of child care; prevention of neglect, boarding-out, adoption, provision of children’s homes and so on’.<sup>569</sup> Out of the 181 staff only seventeen had a professional child care qualification and 108 members of staff, were noted to have ‘no relevant qualifications’.<sup>570</sup> There were 225 staff working in social work in Health and Welfare departments across Scotland, of which twenty three had a professional qualification.<sup>571</sup> For probation it was slightly different as a higher proportion of probation officers had a qualification (111 out of 228), either the Scottish Probation Training Course or an English alternative.

Figures for medical and psychiatric social workers were not recorded, but both these groups had a stronger professional identity, and had worked to develop stringent training requirements and professional associations which maintained registration requirements.<sup>572</sup> However, both medical and psychiatric social workers tended to be based in hospitals and

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<sup>568</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, London School of Economics.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> These figures are taken from a draft paper prepared by the Scottish Office for the study group entitled ‘Local authority social work services: Organisation and Staffing – the situation now’. It noted that, for the purposes of the paper, a professional qualification included all forms of professional training, including University Social Studies qualifications, Scottish Probation Training Course certificates, ‘Younghusband’ social work certificates etc.

<sup>572</sup> Henning, ‘Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.’

so this contributed to the fact that community area offices tended to be small and have a small proportion of the trained social workers in Scotland.<sup>573</sup> The scarcity of trained workers had been acknowledged throughout the development of the proposals for reorganisation. As noted earlier, faced with this challenge the Scottish Office decided to push ahead with the reforms knowing there would need to be a rapid training and recruitment drive soon after.

In addition to the need for a substantially higher number of trained workers, the creation of distinct social work departments also required those social workers to be used efficiently. Consequently, structures needed to be in place to delegate work to less skilled staff where appropriate. This necessitated social workers being trained to fulfil the more administrative aspects of their evolving role, within the hierarchy of the new departments. It also required that those leading the departments needed to be able to do this within the wider local authority structures. Social work education, in its current state, was not thought to be training social workers adequately for their new roles. The need for social work education to expand, both in terms of quality and scale was therefore crucial. The members of the study group were aware of this and Megan Browne, along with others in the study group and key civil servants, worked to promote the expansion of social work education in Scotland as part of the 1968 Act.

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<sup>573</sup> Alison Campbell, 'The Origin and Implementation of Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968,' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1978).

Influencing the universities:

At a meeting of the study group in January 1966, the need for more trained workers was discussed. It was noted that 'a major contribution to the problem of finding enough social workers in Scotland was the attitude of Scots at all levels'.<sup>574</sup> Scots, it went on to say, did not recognise the value of the social work role, nor did young Scots see it as a potential career. The universities were already aware of these issues, and recognised that societal attitudes, as well as the courses themselves, needed to change if more social workers were to be trained, recruited and then employed effectively. The meeting minutes noted that Edinburgh University recognised that social workers were likely to be involved in a greater administrative role within the hierarchy of the local authorities when the new departments were established. Consequently, it was going to establish a Chair of Social Administration. The study group felt this demonstrated a new attitude to the necessity of this area of training for social workers.

The study group and civil servants discussed their view that the universities needed to be advised about how to develop their social work education courses. Parallels can be drawn here with the process of managing the JWG and the recommendations it made. They agreed that the advisory bodies that already existed in Scotland should be involved in discussions, but caution was noted about how to deal with the universities themselves. As they saw it:

The Universities are sensitive about their academic independence, and we should recognise that any advice offered to them by official sources might, however helpfully it is intended, easily be resented as an improper attempt to influence them.

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<sup>574</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1966-1967, ED39/490, National Records of Scotland.

For this reason the method by which such advice could be best presented should be considered very carefully.<sup>575</sup>

Consideration was given as to how to go about this, and ultimately it was decided not to approach the universities directly. Instead, a section on training was to be included in the White Paper, which could then be acted upon by the universities. The changes which they thought were necessary included both the expansion of courses to train more social workers, but also the need to incorporate techniques from other disciplines, and likewise to encourage other relevant disciplines to utilise concepts and practices from social work.

By March 1966, the JWG had made tentative conclusions for the reorganisation of social work services. They were reluctant to make firm recommendations because they had not taken evidence from advisory bodies or organisations, something which the civil service had firmly steered them away from.<sup>576</sup> The proposals for setting up the children's panels and the reorganisation of social work services were then drafted into a White Paper *Social Work and the Community*, published in October 1966. The White Paper recommended the formation of new social work departments in local authorities. These departments would bring together social work services, provide a single point of contact, and work with communities as well as individuals to address difficulties and undertake preventative work. Services included in the new departments would include child care, probation, community care for people with disabilities and older adults. The departments would be expected to work closely with other services such as schools and health. The changes would require an expansion to training courses and the number of social workers employed by the new

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<sup>575</sup> Social Work in Scotland, 1965-1967, TITMUSS/2/211, London School of Economics.

<sup>576</sup> Reorganisation of Social Work Services, 1966-1967, ED39/490, National Records of Scotland.

departments.<sup>577</sup> The White Paper noted that universities had started to expand their training but that 'a great deal remains to be done'.<sup>578</sup>

### Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 – enacted:

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 gained Royal Assent on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1968. It was a hugely significant piece of legislation for social work in Scotland. The 1968 Act signalled that social work in Scotland had achieved a new level of recognition, as until this point social work in Scotland had largely been a rudimentary service, which was undervalued and under resourced by local authorities.<sup>579</sup> The new departments established by the 1968 Act presented an opportunity for social work to inhabit a greater role in the community, not just in working with those already in need, but also in preventative work, and in promoting welfare in general. However, this opportunity also came with a challenge. Social work needed to assert itself and ensure it had the necessary infrastructure – good numbers of well trained staff, physical offices in the communities, and leaders who could hold their own within local authority hierarchies – to fulfil its new role.

At Edinburgh University this meant a complete overhaul of the Department of Social Study's curriculum. The 1969/70 academic year was the last time which the Certificate, Diploma and specialist Certificate course were taught. From 1970/71 onwards a Diploma in Social Work as offered. The Diploma was an intensive one-year course which continued to encompass both theoretical, and practice placement, elements. There were courses in

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<sup>577</sup> Scottish Home and Health Department, *Social Work and the Community. Proposals for Reorganising Local Authority Services in Scotland, Cmnd. 3065* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966).

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*: 12

<sup>579</sup> Campbell, 'The Origin and Implementation of Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.'

Human Growth and Development, Social Policy and Administration, Social Work Method, Psychiatry and Personal and Social Aspects of Illness. While the department had moved to a generic course, there was a period of transition away from the old specialist courses, and initially students were also required to choose take one of the following courses: Special Aspects of Child Care, Medical Information and Social Work in the Medical Field or Social Aspects of Mental Disorder. However, by 1974/75 the courses focuses on child care, medical social work and psychiatric social work were no longer offered as part of the Diploma. The focus on generic training, and in turn generic qualifications for social workers has been held onto in Scotland in spite of the fact that specialisms have edged back in to social work practice through different waves of reorganisation.

#### Social work unity:

The passing of the 1968 Act demonstrated that social work as a profession had reached a stage where it could come together as one united entity, ready to meet the requirements of reorganisation. Alison Campbell, who undertook research examining the implementation of the 1968 Act, argues that social work not just in Scotland, but across the whole of the UK, had been largely fragmented prior to this time, with many different types of workers fulfilling different roles across many different types of organisations. An attempt had been made in 1934 to form one professional association – the British Federation of Social Workers, which Nora Milnes had been involved with. This had failed due to a lack of common identity and the inability to make decisions in a timely manner.<sup>580</sup> However, there had been a gradual shift towards a more common viewpoint, a recognition of shared

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<sup>580</sup> Campbell, 'The Origin and Implementation of Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.'

working approaches, and an emphasis on promoting a higher standard of training and practice across all areas of social work.<sup>581</sup> This included, for example, the establishment of the journal *Case Conference* in 1954, which was a general social work journal, not solely aimed at one specialism.<sup>582</sup>

The Cope Report of 1951 had seen almoners assert that they were not simply medical auxiliaries, but rather their knowledge and skills lay in the social sciences and their identity was located with social work, not the medical profession. PSWs asserted something similar in the MacKintosh Committee of 1951. Both of these examples demonstrated that social workers saw themselves as specialists located within a wider social work profession, and that was their primary identity. Finally, as the White Paper was prepared in Scotland, Judith Hart gave social workers an opportunity to have their views taken into account – and this made them actually speak to each other, often for the first time.<sup>583</sup> They recognised they had more in common than they thought, and this led to a greater professional sense. A lobbying group which was set up became a Standing Committee. Social work was emerging as a united profession. We see evidence of this not only in the formation of these departments but also in the formation of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in 1970, and the move to generic training for social workers which began around this time across the UK, and at Edinburgh University specifically in 1970/71.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> Jones, '1970-2020: A Fifty Year history.'

<sup>582</sup> Campbell, 'The Origin and Implementation of Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.'

<sup>583</sup> Ibid.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

Influence of civil servants and study group:

Murphy and McMillan argue:

It was the study group, with its strong social work bias, which concentrated on the argument for social work reorganisation, leaving officials to set out the measures required to implement the children's hearing proposals. In contrast, the local authority representatives on the Joint Working Group made a minimal contribution.<sup>585</sup>

This is accurate in relation to the role of the JWG, whose members were not, by and large, social workers. Rather they were mainly representatives of the local authorities, including Provosts and Bailies, and as such did not have in-depth knowledge of social work. Yet, I would argue that analysis of the documents demonstrates that the role of the civil servants was not simply to set out the measures to do with the hearings system. Rather, they had a clear vision of the changes they believed were necessary to reorganise social work services in Scotland before the Kilbrandon Report was even published. They worked together with the study group to achieve these aims.

Arguably, the process for these proposals being reached is immaterial. The evidence strongly suggests that Megan Browne was in agreement with all the reforms made under the 1968 Act. She believed in the need for reform, for the unity of the social work profession, for increased status and professionalisation, for preventative and early intervention work and for social work education to become more integrated with other

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<sup>585</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services: The Scottish Dimension*: 145-146

subjects. The key point is that Megan Browne's involvement, and the involvement of the other advisors, lent the process legitimacy which meant these changes could happen.

#### Retirement and the Scottish Institute for Human Relations:

Megan Browne was the acting Director of the Department of Social Study from 1966 until 1968 when John Spencer, who had been appointed Professor of Social Administration in 1967, was appointed Head of the Department. The first male to lead the Department, he was also the first person to be appointed to a Chair. The biographies of the three women demonstrates their considerable abilities in terms of leadership of the department, in research and academic work, and in influencing policy in Scotland for the development of social work and social work education. They were all vociferous in their push for the professionalisation of social work, and worked to ensure that new methods and theories were adopted by the department. In spite of this, the first person to be appointed to a Chair in the Department was a man. That none of the women were awarded a Chair, and what this tells us about gender in early social work education, will be examined in chapter 8.

After John Spencer became Head of the Department Megan Browne stayed on as a Senior Lecturer in Psychiatric Social Work until her retirement in 1973, aged sixty-two. She had been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday honours in June 1971. Her interest in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis remained strong throughout her career in social work education, and at the beginning of the 1970s she became involved with the Scottish Institute for Human Relations (SIHR). Established in 1971 and led by Dr Jock Sutherland (a psychiatrist and former Director of the Tavistock Clinic, London), the SIHR aimed to 'make psychodynamic insights more widely available to the caring professions and others in

Scotland'.<sup>586</sup> Megan Browne was involved with the SIHR for the remainder of her life, until her death in 1993, aged eighty.

### Conclusion:

Megan Browne's career demonstrated that women in early social work education could, and did, play influential roles in advising government on policy and informing legislation. Although she acted as Director of the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University for a short time, her impact on social work, and social work education, in Scotland was wide reaching. This was primarily through her involvement developing proposals for the reorganisation of social work services, and the changes to social work education which were necessary as a result. But this was also demonstrated through her role in developing the first training programme for probation officers in Scotland, as well as through her teaching on the specialist courses at the Department of Social Study, and her role advising practice organisations.

Kay Carmichael's papers in the University of Glasgow archives include the order of service from Megan Browne's memorial service, and a copy of Kay Carmichael's personal reminiscence. This noted that 'Megan Browne had no time for professional snobbery but she was adamant about the need for professional skills'.<sup>587</sup> Like Nora Milnes and Marjorie Brown before her, Megan Browne was firm in her belief for the need for professionalisation of social work. The importance of this theme, and several others which emerge once the

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<sup>586</sup> Megan Browne: Pioneer in Social Work, *The Scotsman*, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1993: 10

<sup>587</sup> Papers of Kay Carmichael, ACCN 4115/4/2, Archives & Special Collections, University of Glasgow.

women's biographies are examined collectively, will be examined in depth in chapter 8, as will the relevance of these themes in relation to gender in social work education.

## Chapter 8: Discussion chapter

### Introduction:

The early lives and careers of Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne have been explored separately in the preceding three chapters. Their career biographies show the different ways each woman contributed to the development of social work education at Edinburgh University. The biographies have also demonstrated that these women were successful and proactive leaders in the field of social work education, contradicting the representation of women in early social work education as occupying lower status roles in universities and in being focused on the practical, rather than academic, aspects of training. As this thesis is a collective biography this chapter will now bring together and explore common themes which arose from their biographies relating to gender in early social work education. These themes are professionalisation, leadership roles, use of professional networks and protecting the status of social work education.

### Professionalisation:

We saw in chapter 2 that dominant narratives around gender and social work during this time period (1918-1968) included the characterisation of social work as an inherently female pursuit, undertaken by middle-class women as a charitable and philanthropic endeavour, out of a desire to contribute to society. Women were deemed to be more caring and practically minded than men, who were considered more administratively and academically able. Because social work was a philanthropic pursuit, which was deemed to

be practically focused, it could be done successfully by suitable individuals naturally without any training being required.

In contrast to this, professionalisation -and the promotion of social work's professional status – was a central preoccupation during the period covered by my research, and a number of approaches were employed to achieve this. In relation to social work education and professionalisation specifically, we saw in chapter 2 that placing importance on formal training, standards of selection for social work students and the adoption of theories from other disciplines were approaches used to bolster social work's academic credibility.

When we examine the biographies of the three women collectively we find that all three women promoted professionalisation in social work; social work education was, in turn, central to this. We will now examine in detail how they did this. First, we will consider their promotion of university-based training for social workers, at both local and institutional level at Edinburgh University, and nationally. Second, we will examine the importance which Nora Milnes, in particular, placed on social work as a paid career which middle-class women could engage in. Through doing this, we can explore how all three women challenged existing narratives about gender and social work.

#### University training for social work:

Nora Milnes was well aware of the cultural presentation of social workers as 'Lady Bountifuls', untrained middle-class women who went about doling out charity, and she consistently sought to challenge this. The fact that she did so by articulating her views

publicly has meant I have been able to access and analyse her opinions first-hand. As we saw in chapter 5, she regularly gave speeches to civic societies on the topics of citizenship, social work and its role as a career for women. The fact that she was regularly asked to speak demonstrates that these were popular subjects at this time (when there was an interest in nation rebuilding after the First World War), and that Nora Milnes was deemed to have important opinions on these topics. Not only did Nora Milnes reach the audience present at these events, but she used newspapers, in particular *The Scotsman*, to reach a wider public with her arguments through their reporting of these speeches. In addition, she used newspapers by writing letters to editors for publication, and by giving interviews. Clearly, newspapers thought her views were worthy of being printed and that readers would be interested in them. For Nora Milnes, her use of newspapers was a conscious strategy, and she was aware of the reach which it afforded her and her views. She referred to this herself in a speech in 1931, noting that a lady who was introduced to her remarked 'Oh, you are the woman who always seems to be appearing in 'The Scotsman' (a paper very kind at reporting its local speakers)'.<sup>588</sup>

When we analyse the content of these articles, Nora Milnes was evidently seeking to counter the idea that social work could be done by anybody who was caring and kind, and had charitable intentions. We see this from the beginning of her career in Edinburgh, in her inaugural address at the school in October 1918. She argued that a better understanding of social work needed to develop and 'in order that the work might be successfully carried on, a serious training was needed'.<sup>589</sup> Clearly, she felt that social work

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<sup>588</sup> Milnes, 'Public Health and the Family.': 148

<sup>589</sup> Development of Social Work, *The Scotsman*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1918.

had been misunderstood by the public, and only those with training would be able to do it 'successfully'.

In the Annual Report of the department for 1937/38, reported in the Dundee newspaper *Evening Telegraph and Post*, Nora Milnes argued that the Department of Social Study 'has still to contend in Scotland with the somewhat general impression that social work is a field chiefly suited to those who have failed to gain a University entrance qualification'.<sup>590</sup> Nora Milnes emphasised that, in fact, the reverse was true, stressing that the department was selective in accepting students:

Insistence on a certain academic standard is essential, since the trainee is to become a member of a team, and it is important that her training and experience should be such that she will be regarded as a colleague and not as 'a superior bottle-washer'.<sup>591</sup>

Nora Milnes's rhetoric constantly emphasised the need for serious training, academic standards, and the importance of having the right kind of student. Her argument was that this was necessary because the social worker was a professional, and an equal to other professionals whom they worked alongside. This evidently supports the argument discussed in chapter 2 that those in social work utilised certain approaches when seeking to gain status as a profession including the regulation of who could enter, and what training was necessary.

At the same time that she was speaking about this publically, Nora Milnes was reinforcing this construction internally within the school, and later department, and the wider institution of Edinburgh University. As we saw in chapter 5, at the start of Nora

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<sup>590</sup> Plea for School Careers Teachers, *The Evening Telegraph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1938: 2

<sup>591</sup> Woman's Outlook: A New Career: Psychiatric Social Worker, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1946: 7

Milnes's career in Edinburgh she pushed for the school to become part of the university. She had to work to achieve this through a two-pronged approach, pushing first for the university to issue Certificates and Diplomas to the school's students, then once this had been agreed to, for the school to become a department.

Furthermore, documents including the Director's Reports, Social Study Advisory Committee Minutes, and Board of Studies Minutes demonstrate Nora Milnes's consistent rhetoric regarding the need to ensure that the department, and its students, met and maintained academic standards. Former students who obtained prestigious roles or opportunities for further study were lauded. The implication was that these were achievements of the department, and they were used to encourage other students – demonstrating that professional positions and well-paid jobs were attainable. In relation to the wider university we saw that Nora Milnes's push for funding for research, and her recognition that undertaking research was a means to raise the academic status of the department, was further evidence of this. All of these factors aimed to position social work as a serious academic subject which deserved to be part of the university.

Even after she had retired, Nora Milnes continued to argue for professional standards. In 1962, she wrote to *The Times* newspaper in response to a letter from Dame Irene Ward about proposals for training programmes for social workers being established outside universities.<sup>592</sup> Nora Milnes noted that she had been involved in emergency training for social workers during the Second World War but had always maintained that this kind of short course, outside universities, should be a one-off. She wrote: 'This experience led me to believe that the multiplication of Courses outside the Universities could but be a threat to

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<sup>592</sup> Dame Irene Ward (1895–1980) was a Conservative MP.

professional standards, so hardly won'.<sup>593</sup> Social work education, if it was to produce professional workers, needed to take place in universities.

Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne did not make use of newspapers or speeches in the way that Nora Milnes did, so there are few available documents which record their views. It follows that this has implications for my research, as there are less documentary data to analyse. However, in relation to Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne the interviews I undertook have been an important source of data. While less public in their approaches, data derived from institutional documents and the interviews demonstrate that Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne also emphasised professionalism and the requirement for university training for social workers.

Marjorie Brown focused on conveying this message internally to Edinburgh University as an institution. She recognised that the university was ambivalent towards social work as a subject and sought to change this by emphasising the professional nature of social work, the academic aspect of social work education, and the rigorous selection standards for students of the department. This is evident in internal Department of Social Study documents, which mirrored the approach used by Nora Milnes, emphasising academic standards and roles former students had been appointed to. Marjorie Brown also highlighted research being undertaken by staff members, as well as staff activities outwith the department in consultative roles, lecturing and academic capacities. By doing so she tacitly demonstrated the academic capabilities of the department and its staff.

We see a clear example of this in one of the few articles Marjorie Brown authored, entitled 'The Department of Social Study', written for the *University of Edinburgh Gazette* in

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<sup>593</sup> Brushed Aside, *The Times*, 15th May 1962.

1955. In the article, she stated that 'for centuries social work was an activity for which a kind heart and leisure were sufficient qualifications' but recently, in the UK, there had been a recognition of the need for 'adequately trained social workers' and social work education had moved into universities.<sup>594</sup> The article detailed the courses offered by the department, fieldwork requirements, specialist courses and research undertaken by staff. In a section entitled 'Other Staff Activities', Marjorie Brown noted that staff from the department lectured in other departments in the university, served on committees and 'all members are used by different social agencies in Edinburgh in a consultative capacity. The staff, in fact, play an important part in social policy-making in Edinburgh and indeed in Scotland, and their commitments tend to increase'.<sup>595</sup>

The *University of Edinburgh Gazette* was essentially the staff magazine of the university. As such, Marjorie Brown was speaking directly with her wider colleagues in the university, and used this opportunity to make the argument for social work as a profession and an academic subject. Emphasis was placed on the academic elements of social work that the research the department was involved in and the contributions which the department played in wider society through providing consultation (implying therefore, that its staff were viewed as experts). The article concluded with Marjorie Brown arguing that social work should be taught at universities. She stated that, social workers needed a university education to equip them, equating them with doctors and lawyers. They required this education, she argued, because of the expectations and responsibilities they would face in their professional roles.

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<sup>594</sup> Marjorie Brown, 'The Department of Social Study,' *University of Edinburgh Gazette* 17 (1955): 15

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*: 20-21

Marjorie Brown also sought to convey this message by fostering relationships across the wider institution. In her interview, Vivienne Triseliotis recalled that, as Director, Marjorie Brown encouraged staff to attend faculty meetings because 'it was thought most faculty people would think that it was a rather sub-standard subject'.<sup>596</sup> It was clearly important, therefore, for staff of the department to demonstrate otherwise. Seemingly, this had some success. There is a letter in the archives of the APSW from 1965 written by Dominica Legge, a lecturer, and later professor, in the Department of French at Edinburgh University. In it she described the transformation which Marjorie Brown has brought in the Department of Social Study:

It is now a proper Department with a full-time teaching staff who behave as colleagues should in a University, and Social Study is at last an academic discipline instead of being part of a sort of finishing school curriculum.<sup>597</sup>

Clearly, social study as an academic subject had been viewed pejoratively by some at Edinburgh University. Yet, Marjorie Brown's efforts to promote the image of social studies at an institutional level were successful in altering this, at least in the eyes of some.

Turning to Megan Browne, it has already been argued that her role in advising the Scottish Office on probation training and in the reorganisation of social work services in Scotland demonstrated how much stress she placed on professionalisation and university education for social work. She consistently fought for stringent selection processes for those training to be probation officers, for probation training to be provided by universities,

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<sup>596</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

<sup>597</sup> Marjorie Brown, Jan 1965–Oct 1966, MSS.378/APSW/P/4/4/1-44, Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1928-1975, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

and for probation courses to have an academic curriculum, just as PSW and MSW courses already had. Theoretical courses were to include criminology, penology, physiology, probation case work, sociology and social administration, along with practical training in casework duties, court procedure and law, recording and placements in borstals and prisons. As we saw in chapter 7, Megan Browne was clear that 'only those persons who attain the desired standard should be eligible to undertake the duties of a probation officer'.<sup>598</sup>

This applied not only to students – she also argued that: 'It was, in her view, essential that a person who is to supervise the case-work of others should have his own casework supervised first'.<sup>599</sup> In addition, Megan Browne viewed the reorganisation of social work services as a means by which social work as a profession could be unified, and therefore strengthened. She recognised, and encouraged, the rapid expansion of university training for social workers in response to the 1968 Act. She deemed this necessary to ensure social workers were skilled and effective workers in their own practice, and in the new positions of power social work departments would hold in local authorities.

From the interview data, we find that both Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne actively demonstrated and promoted professional standards to the students of the department. The interviewees spoke about the way Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne behaved; for example, through maintaining boundaries with students, pushing them academically, and providing excellent academic and practice learning opportunities. The department also supported students to develop professional skills, including collaborative

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<sup>598</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1955-1956, ED20/714, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

working skills, interpersonal skills, and skills around gathering information and undertaking assessments. The interviewees discussed the use the department made of experts, who were invited to lecture to students, both from within social work and accompanying disciplines (including for example, John Bowlby who developed attachment theory) in order to ensure that the highest quality of both academic and practice learning was available to the students, and to support further staff development.<sup>600</sup> Jane Aldgate remembered that 'We had the best of everybody [...] some people were world experts'.<sup>601</sup>

Students were encouraged to behave in a professional manner, including developing specific attitudes and preparing for visits. This included consideration being given to the ways students presented themselves while on visits to organisations for learning, with Wendy Paterson remembering Megan Browne talking to them ahead of a trip to an approved school, saying to students 'of course we will think carefully wouldn't we [sic], about how we dressed for an occasion like that. For instance, we would not wear low cut [tops]'.<sup>602</sup> These were all important aspects of conveying that social work was a profession, with professional staff and students, and that the Department of Social Study had a rightful place at Edinburgh University.

### Career for women and salaries:

Another approach in which Nora Milnes, in particular, sought to promote professionalisation and counter gendered narratives around social work, was by framing it as a paid career for women. When Nora Milnes spoke about social work, both publically

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<sup>600</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

<sup>601</sup> Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>602</sup> Wendy Paterson, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

and in internal Edinburgh University documents, she used the terms 'career' and 'profession'. Nora Milnes positively advocated for school-age girls to be told about social work as a career, arguing that career masters and mistresses should be appointed to all schools in order to advise female students on social work as a career.<sup>603</sup> In this, she characterised social work as a paid role.

As noted, gendered narratives during this period around social work and salaries reinforced constructions that even if social work was being done as a paid role, it did not need to be well-paid because it was still being done out of a kind of civic duty. Even some of those in social work appeared to hold these views. To quote from the British Federation of Social Workers 1947 report into salaries:

Many people regard it [social work] as the kind of occupation which makes it possible to supplement an income derived from private sources; it is also partly due to the fact that women do not have the needs of possible dependents in mind when they plan their careers on leaving school or university. Many are content to enter occupations with only the most slender chances of earning more than enough to satisfy their own basic needs, whereas the majority of men reject such occupations out of hand.<sup>604</sup>

Women are portrayed here as being 'content' with the low level of pay. Men on the other hand would not countenance a role with such low pay, presumably because they needed to support not just themselves, but their family, with their wages.

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<sup>603</sup> Plea for School Careers Teachers, *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1938: 4

<sup>604</sup> British Federation of Social Workers, *Salaries and Conditions of Work of Social Workers*: 48

Nora Milnes, however, was concerned to counteract this idea. As we saw in chapter 5, salaries for social workers was an issue which concerned Nora Milnes, and she spent time researching the pay and conditions of her former students. For her, not only was social work a career – a paid role – but it should adequately support women, and men, financially. Nora Milnes publically bemoaned the fact that, as she understood it, the chief social worker at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital was unpaid (in 1946), and was quoted in *The Scotsman* as saying: ‘While we may honour her for undertaking so arduous a task for no financial reward, it must be recognised that not many are so fortunately placed as to be able to take on full-time voluntary work’.<sup>605</sup> The actions of the chief social worker were only serving to reinforce the idea of social work as a role which could be done as a charitable endeavour – which was at best unhelpful, and at worst unrealistic, in Nora Milnes’s eyes.

As discussed in chapter 5, Nora Milnes made a concerted effort throughout her career at Edinburgh University to investigate salaries in social work. She did this both to gain a picture of what salaries were being paid, for what jobs, and where, but also to inform her arguments regarding the need to increase salaries across the profession. Nora Milnes believed that higher salaries benefitted not only individual social workers but also bolstered the image of social work as a profession, and reflected the status it was accorded by society. Having higher salaries would attract men into social work too, which was important because: ‘Until more men decide to take up the work, Miss Milnes points out, salaries are not likely to improve and until they have improved, men will not be attracted – a vicious circle indeed’.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> Woman’s Outlook: A New Career: Psychiatric Social Worker, *The Scotsman*, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1946.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*

Nora Milnes was not alone in her aim to attract more men into social work. However, the terms in which she constructed the rationale for this were different to others. Nora Milnes argued that social work needed more men because they would encourage higher salaries and status for all working in the profession – which ultimately would benefit women, as well as men. Others, conversely, argued that men were able to contribute to the development of social work in a superior way to women – and without them this development was not possible. To quote again from the 1947 report by the British Federation of Social Workers:

The fact remains that the proportion of men entering social work is a small one, and this can only be expressed with deep regret. If women have a special contribution to make, so have men, and it is the absence of this contribution which may be thought of as one of the main causes preventing the development of social work technique in the ways which our times demand.<sup>607</sup>

The report did acknowledge the need for better salaries to be paid. Partly this was in order to attract ‘educated and intelligent women’,<sup>608</sup> but the report viewed this as necessary primarily to attract men to social work.

From the literature it is evident that during this time period the promotion of social work’s status as a profession was important. My research has found that all three women also engaged in doing this throughout their careers. The manner in which the women did this varied, but the key concept was the same – social work was a profession that required

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<sup>607</sup> British Federation of Social Workers, *Salaries and Conditions of Work of Social Workers*: 48

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*: 49, quoting from ‘Report of the Feversham Committee on the Voluntary Mental Health Service’ (1939), para. 321.

workers who, having been stringently selected, had undergone university training. As such they merited good salaries and working conditions.

An important aspect to this was that men should be encouraged into social work. This was not however because they were in any way more capable than women. There is no evidence that the women agreed with concept that one sex was naturally more suited to certain areas of social work. This is an important point to make, as this belief was widespread throughout this time period, evidenced in a number of documentary sources I read whilst undertaking my research. However, in relation to the three women I did not find any examples of rhetoric that singled out men or women for certain areas of social work practice. Nor did their actions imply that they held these views. In reality, as we saw in chapter 7, Megan Browne personally contradicted these gendered constructions through her involvement in probation work and training.

All three women were keen for more men to train as social workers because this would boost the profession's standing in the eyes of universities and society, and consequently status and conditions would be better for all those working in social work and social work education. The women also sought to counter the ambivalence Edinburgh University showed towards social work education through their promotion of professionalisation, and by seeking to emphasise that social work education deserved, and required, to be situated in the university. We will now go on to explore the theme of the women's ability to exercise leadership.

### Leadership roles:

The second theme relates to leadership and the roles women could occupy in early social work education. As discussed in chapter 2, there were gendered constructions of the roles men and women played in early social work education in the UK. Men were characterised as academic and the leaders of departments, with this leadership commonly inherently equated with holding professorial status. Women were characterised as holding lower status and paid posts in university departments, and they were not characterised as leaders. In contrast to this, the findings from the collective biographies demonstrate that, while they were never professors, there was a myriad of ways in which Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne acted as leaders – and did so very successfully. We will now examine the manner in which they did this. Doing so allows a broader understanding of the roles women played in early social work education.

### Head of department:

It is accurate that none of the women were professors. I would argue, however, that between 1918 and 1968 the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University afforded the three women extraordinary status and positional authority as head, or acting head, of the department. When the school became part of the university in 1928 Nora Milnes became the Director of a university department. No other woman was head of a department at Edinburgh University at that time. In 1954 Marjorie Brown was still the only woman heading a department at the university. At this point the Department of Social Study numbered ten members of staff, comprising two senior lecturers, six lecturers and

two assistants – a moderately sized department.<sup>609</sup> It was not until 1956 when another woman was appointed as head of a department (Miss Elsie Stephenson as Director of the Nursing Studies Unit, created in 1955).

Although often ambivalent towards the Department of Social Study, the university evidently supported the fact that women could run the department. We see this in evidence when Nora Milnes retired in 1951 and it was time to appoint her successor. Out of the fourteen applicants to replace Nora Milnes as Director, the vast majority of them were men. Out of the five applicants selected for interview, four were men. Marjorie Brown, the only woman interviewed, was the interview panel's first choice, and she was appointed.<sup>610</sup> I would argue that this demonstrated the university as an institution was supportive of a woman being in a leadership position in this department – if she was the best candidate for the job.

Finally, after the death of Marjorie Brown in post in 1964, the acting heads of the department were both women – first Mary F. Gregor, then Megan Browne – until a permanent head was appointed (John Spencer, who was appointed as a professor). That the university believed women could lead the department is clear. In addition to being the head of department, the women also demonstrated their leadership through their work to develop themselves professionally, as well as their work to develop social work education through the courses and curricula offered by the department, as we will now go on to explore.

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<sup>609</sup> University of Edinburgh, *Edinburgh University Calendar 1954-55* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1955).

<sup>610</sup> Social Study: Directors, 1950-1951, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/67, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

### Professional development:

Chapter 2 discussed the work of Turner, who has argued that there are numerous ways women can act as leaders in academia as well as being appointed to top academic positions.<sup>611</sup> This included their opportunities and abilities to develop professionally. From their individual biography chapters, we have seen that all three women took opportunities to engage in professional development during their careers at Edinburgh University. All three travelled to America to visit and learn from Schools of Social Work and associated practice settings. Nora Milnes visited America from June to September 1929, spending the majority of her time in Chicago, but also visiting Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Cleveland and Washington. The itinerary for her trip shows she visited a wide range of practice settings, including hospitals, CGC, children's aid societies, and juvenile courts, and she met with Directors of institutions and Chiefs of social service departments.<sup>612</sup> Her trip was funded and arranged by the Commonwealth Fund of America, as was Marjorie Brown's 1956 trip to tour Schools of Social Work and practice settings. Megan Browne also visited American Schools of Social Work and penal institutions in 1958.

These trips were significant for several reasons. They demonstrated that the women all sought to develop their own knowledge. The women recognised America was at the forefront of developments in social work practice and theory at this time, and they needed to go there in order to learn about the latest developments. The women utilised the knowledge and professional connections gleaned from these trips to further develop social work education at Edinburgh University. We saw, in chapter 6 that Marjorie Brown ensured

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<sup>611</sup> Turner, *The Leadership Development of Women*.

<sup>612</sup> Program for Mental Hygiene in England – Observational Trips – Observer (Milnes, Nora), Commonwealth Fund records, Subgroup 1, Series 16, Rockefeller Archive Center.

she continued to develop her own professional knowledge around casework, for example, and that, in turn, she focused on the development and integration of casework skills into the department's teaching, in order to benefit students. Furthermore, we saw in relation to Megan Browne that 'her increased knowledge of the treatment of young offenders is most relevant to developments in this country',<sup>613</sup> as she used it to advise staff at Polmont Borstal and the SCPC.

In addition, it is important to recognise that the women were successful in their ability to secure the funding necessary to pay for these trips. Finally, these trips demonstrated that Edinburgh University supported the women in their professional development. Their absence for these trips (which lasted several months) needed the approval of the University Court, and this approval was given to them. This is an important point. As has already been noted, while in many ways the university was ambivalent towards social work education, at the same time it could also be supportive.

#### Development of courses:

When we examine the collective biographies of the three women we see that the establishment and development of specialist courses was an arena in which they were all active and successful. Nora Milnes established the Certificate of Psychiatric Social Work at the department in 1944. This was only the second course training PSWs in the UK at the time, after the course at the LSE, and was established in spite of opposition from the professional body for PSWs, the APSW. Documents in the APSW archive reveal that the

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<sup>613</sup> Department of Social Studies Advisory Committee, 1933-1961, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/4/2, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

association opposed Nora Milnes doing this, partly because it had concerns about sufficient training opportunities in Scotland, but also because it was being done outwith their control, and seemingly without consultation. Members were also displeased that the course had been initiated by Nora Milnes, who was not a PSW, and were concerned that its standards – academic, practice placement, and the selection of students – would not be stringent enough. Nora Milnes, however, was not deterred by their concerns, establishing the course in spite of their objections. The APSW seem to have reluctantly come to the conclusion that if the course was going ahead anyway, it should at least have some involvement with it. It therefore accepted its existence and sought to regulate it (as will be discussed later).<sup>614</sup>

Marjorie Brown established the Certificate in Medical Social Work in 1954 and the Certificate in Child Care in 1960. Establishing and developing these new courses required significant time commitments, as documents in the NRS show. For example, the department first approached the Scottish Office in 1957 to begin discussions around establishing the Child Care course – the first in Scotland – to ensure it would be equated the same status and resources as other courses operating in England and Wales.<sup>615</sup> It took three years of negotiation and deliberation for the course to be established. But Marjorie Brown was successful in ensuring it received equivalent status and resources.

These courses are significant because they show that Nora Milnes and Marjorie Brown were concerned to continue to develop social work education. They also demonstrate that they were able to marshal the resources necessary to establish and run these courses. All three courses required new members of staff for the department, so they

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<sup>614</sup> Edinburgh University, 1943-April 1969, MSS.378/APSW/P/12/13, Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1928-1975, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

<sup>615</sup> Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, 1968, ED11/782, Child Care Files, National Records for Scotland.

needed to secure increased financial resources from the university and the Scottish Office. In addition, they needed to arrange the availability and co-operation of practice placements and practice supervisors to facilitate placements and specialist learning. Their successful establishment demonstrated that Nora Milnes and Marjorie Brown had the leadership skills and authority to bring new developments to fruition. While Megan Browne did not establish specialist courses at Edinburgh University in her own right, it must be remembered that, as the Chairman of the Training Committee of the SCPC, she was central to the establishment of the Scottish Probation Training course at Glasgow University – the first training programme for probation officers in Scotland. All three women were therefore active leaders in the development of social work education.

#### Committee Roles:

The three women also demonstrated their leadership through holding positions of authority on numerous committees relating to social work organisations, professional training for social work, government bodies and educational organisations. These roles afforded them influence and a degree of leadership in both social work and social work education, in Scotland and throughout the UK. Nora Milnes was a member of the Social Work Education Committee (SWEC) of the JUC, the General Nursing Council for Scotland and a member of the Appeals Tribunal for Scotland under the Further Education and Training Scheme.<sup>616</sup> She also sat on the Committee of the Edinburgh Branch of the Association of the British

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<sup>616</sup> Nora Milnes, *Who's Who and Who Was Who* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Federation of University Women, and was appointed Convenor of its Advisory Committee.<sup>617</sup>

Marjorie Brown sat on numerous bodies which advised on, and developed policy for, social work education, including the Council for Training in Social Work, its Scottish Advisory Committee and the National Institute for Social Work Training.<sup>618</sup> She was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Scottish Social Services Council, a member of the APSW Scottish Branch, and a member of the Policy sub-Committee of the Social Administration Committee of the Joint University Council for Social and Public Administration.<sup>619</sup> As Stella Waldron succinctly summarised it, she 'was a member of innumerable other committees and anyone less habituated to hard work would have been overworked'.<sup>620</sup>

Megan Browne was the Chairman of the Training Committee for the SCPC<sup>621</sup> and sat on both the Standing Committee on Training and Registration and the Executive Committee for the Disciplinary Board of the APSW.<sup>622</sup> It is conceivable that the three women were members of other committees, but these are the ones I have been able to identify. Vivienne Triseliotis noted in her interview that all the staff in the department were encouraged to be on committees by Marjorie Brown, both in relation to training but also for local social work organisations, and she herself sat on the Scottish Council of Probation Advisory and Training Council.<sup>623</sup> It was recognised that, by doing this, members of the department could influence the wider sphere of social work and social work education in Scotland, and the UK.

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<sup>617</sup> University Women, *The Scotsman*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

<sup>618</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.'

<sup>619</sup> Welfare of Old People: Voluntary Agencies: Scottish Council of Social Services, ED39/63, Social and Community Services Files, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>620</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.': 5

<sup>621</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1956-1957, ED20/715, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>622</sup> The Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, *Annual Report 1969*.

<sup>623</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

We saw how this influence could operate, for example in chapter 7, when Megan Browne used her position on the SCPS to push for stringent standards around selection of students and practice supervisors for probation training in Scotland.

### Mentoring:

As noted in chapter 2, women can also operate effectively as leaders through mentoring other women. It was evident from both documentary and interview data that the three women acted as mentors for numerous students and former students. By mentors I mean that they were experienced professionals who advised, guided and directed students (both current and former) with the aim of supporting them to develop their careers. While the term 'mentor' was not used in relation to their actions (its use as a term has become more widespread since the late 1970s), it describes attitudes and behaviours that would have been well-known to the women.<sup>624</sup>

We see this in correspondence held in the CRC between Nora Milnes and former students (discussed in chapter 5) who wrote, asking her for advice or guidance, and to whom she sent details of suitable vacancies. In addition, she also met up with them in person to discuss their careers. For example, one former student wrote to Nora Milnes in 1949 to thank her for sending a job advert she may be interested in, and finished the letter: 'I would like to have a talk with you some time. After the heavy work of this term is over perhaps we can plan for you to come and have tea in my garden one day'.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Jeremiah H. Barondess, 'A Brief History of Mentoring,' *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association* 1 (1995): 1-24.

<sup>625</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

For Megan Browne the mentoring she offered former students seems to have taken on an almost supervisory aspect in some cases, in addition to giving advice and guidance. For example, Kay Carmichael recalled that: 'I had supervision from this marvellous woman Megan Browne, whom I had got to know and Megan offered me what I was offering the girls [girls Kay worked with at an institution], if you follow me'.<sup>626</sup> One of the interviewees also spoke about Megan Browne offering this kind of support, and it being very welcome:

I had this ongoing experience when I was in the prison service. I was a bit on my own from a social work point of view and she said to me 'Oh well, you know if you want to we'll meet up occasionally and you can, we can talk about it together', and so I did that from time to time. Entirely professionally focused.<sup>627</sup>

Interestingly, while the majority of references to mentoring by the women were positive, they were not always experienced as such. In the same interview quoted above, Kay Carmichael also said that 'looking back, I saw she [Megan Browne] wanted me to move on in certain ways' – she recognised that Megan Browne was potentially pushing her career in a certain direction, which may not have been where she wanted to go.<sup>628</sup> One of the interviewees made a similar comment stating that Megan Browne had advised her to apply for a certain job, but she realised the motivation for this was not to benefit her but rather someone else (consequently, she did not apply for it).<sup>629</sup> Therefore, we see that, while it seemed the mentoring offered by the women was generally positive, there was the potential for it to be experienced unfavourably.

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<sup>626</sup> Kay Carmichael, interview by Louise Brodie.

<sup>627</sup> SA, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>628</sup> Kay Carmichael, interview by Louise Brodie.

<sup>629</sup> TR, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

My research has found that the three women acted as leaders in numerous and varied ways during their careers. This included being head or acting head of the department, through their engagement with professional development opportunities, and using these to develop courses for social work education, through their roles on committees which ensured they had a wide reaching influence on social work and social work education and through their mentoring of student and former students.

It is important to highlight that the three women were not unique in respect to the influence and leadership they exercised in their careers. For example, Eileen Younghusband, who was mentioned in chapter 6, worked for many years in the Department of Social Administration at the LSE and produced a seminal report on social work education for the Carnegie Trust in 1947, which led to the establishment of the first generic social work training course (at the LSE).<sup>630</sup> She later went on to be the President of the IASSW. She was never made a professor, and was not even the head of the department at the LSE. However, she was able to act as a highly influential, respected and successful leader in social work education in the UK, and internationally. Therefore, we see that, contrary to the characterisation of the roles women and men could play in the literature on early social work education, women could, and did, act as leaders.

In examining the ways in which the women could act as leaders it became apparent that, in order to do this effectively, they drew heavily on professional networks. We will now examine these professional networks, and how the women used them to act as

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<sup>630</sup> Her follow-up report, on the same topic, was published in 1951.

leaders, but also to achieve numerous other professional accomplishments – both for themselves and to support others to do so.

The women's use of professional networks:

She knew all the relevant people, that was clear!<sup>631</sup>

This quotation, from one of the interviewees, relates to Megan Browne. However, my research found this to be the case for all three women, and their collective biographies demonstrated that professional networks played a significant role in the three women's careers. For the purposes of my research I have been interested in the women's professional networks, as my focus is on their careers in social work education as opposed to their personal lives. The women were professionally connected to many key people in social work and social work education, as well as in wider government, voluntary and professional associations in Scotland, and across the UK. Through my research, it became evident that all three women made significant use of these professional networks throughout their careers. Examining their use of networks enables us to gain further insights into how they worked, and through this we find further examples of their capacity to be effective and capable leaders in the Department of Social Study and in social work education more widely, and of their ability to facilitate professional accomplishments, both for themselves and others.

While they all worked effectively with men, the networks which were most beneficial to them were predominantly female. As we know, this reflected the nature of social work,

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<sup>631</sup> SA, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

and social work education – the majority of those involved were women. These networks were central to the three women in their own careers and development, but they also utilised their networks to support and mentor other women in social work, and social work education, and to promote social work as a profession. These networks, while professional in nature and orientation, could also become personal, and some of these relationships developed into friendships.

Exploring the networks of the three women has been extremely enlightening in demonstrating the ways they promoted themselves, and others. However, as noted, the data relating to the women have their limitations, and this also applies to their networks and professional connections. While evidence of networks existed – in documents and interviews – some connections are only fleetingly referred to, and others presumably lost completely. Many of these networks were overt, but some operated tacitly. The interviewees spoke about networks in operation, and recognised, only years later, that some had been operating in the background, without their knowledge at the time.

While there is substantial evidence of some networks, through correspondence in particular, it is important to recognise that this was not the only way networks were maintained. Government committees, professional organisations and practice agencies were all places where women met with each other, and developed and maintained networks. However, evidence for these forums does not always exist, or exist in enough detail to tell the researcher about the extent, or significance, of the network. Consequently, the evidence relating to the three women's networks does not offer a complete picture of all their connections, and the implications of these. Yet, the evidence that is available demonstrates clearly that the networks the three women were part of were significant to

their own careers, and to the careers of other women they supported, and mentored, in social work and social work education. Several key themes relating to the way the women utilised their networks to facilitate their role as leaders, and to attain other professional accomplishments for themselves, and others, emerged from my research, and these will now be examined in turn. These themes are access to jobs and career development opportunities, access to international developments in social work, professional associations and government and policy.

#### Access to jobs and career development opportunities:

My research found that all three women utilised professional networks to access jobs, specialist training and career development opportunities for themselves and for their students. In the individual biography chapters, we saw that Nora Milnes gained her first lecturer's job at the LSE due to her connection with Sir Charles Loch (Secretary of the COS), who recommended her for the post. Megan Browne used her connection with Stella Waldron when applying for the lecturer's post on the PSW Certificate course.<sup>632</sup> Marjorie Brown utilised networks in relation to career development opportunities, for example through relationships she developed during her visit to Schools of Social Work in America in 1956. This was evident in her relationship with Professor Grace Coyle, whom she met during this trip. As noted in chapter 6, Grace Coyle was a key figure in the development of group work for social work. After she returned to the UK, Marjorie Brown maintained contact and, in time, the two women grew to be friends. Their relationship 'further

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<sup>632</sup> Waldron, 'Personal Papers of Stella Waldron.'

stimulated' Marjorie Brown's interest in the field of group work for social work.<sup>633</sup> As a result she developed skills and knowledge in this field and, as we saw, this was an area of social work education which the Regional European Seminar of the IASSW in Edinburgh in 1962 focused on, organised by Marjorie Brown.<sup>634</sup> This learning was therefore disseminated widely as a result of this relationship.

In addition to benefitting themselves, there is substantial evidence the women utilised their networks to identify and promote jobs and career development opportunities for their current and former students. For example, correspondence between Nora Milnes and former students reveals that social work agencies contacted Nora Milnes to make her aware of their vacancies, and she then identified former students who would be interested in, and suitable for, these roles.<sup>635</sup> Nora Milnes then corresponded directly with these former students regarding the vacancies. Her actions had a dual purpose. They ensured that professionally-qualified people were employed in social work positions, which further bolstered the status of the profession. Her actions also ensured that former students were supported to access good quality paid roles – further cementing the construction of social work as a viable career for women (and men). Former students who benefitted from this support recognised its value, with one writing to Nora Milnes: 'I can't even try to say thank you for the interest you have taken and the encouragement you have given me, I only hope you have some idea of how much I appreciate it'.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.': 5

<sup>634</sup> European Regional Seminar, EUA IN1/SCU/S2/13, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>635</sup> Social Work Department: Graduates and Leavers, 1939-1972, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8/2, Social Work Department, 1918-1957, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>636</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

Nora Milnes also used her networks to support students to identify, and apply for, specialist training opportunities. We see an example of this in correspondence between Nora Milnes and Mildred C. Scoville, Administrator of the Commonwealth Fund, in New York. Nora Milnes knew Mildred C. Scoville through the mental hygiene movement. They corresponded with each other regarding the establishment and staffing of further child guidance clinics in Scotland. Nora Milnes used this connection to try and expedite a scholarship for a student in the department to study psychiatric social work in America. Unfortunately, the student was not successful, but Nora Milnes was not perturbed, informing Mildred C. Scoville that the department had then recommended the student for a Child Guidance Council scholarship.<sup>637</sup> Clearly she was willing to pursue multiple possibilities on behalf of a student.

Nora Milnes also used her connections with former students in the recruitment of staff for the Department of Social Study. This included one former student, who Nora Milnes wrote to in 1942, informing her that she had requested another assistant from the university 'and I am wondering whether you would consider taking the job, for which I consider you are very well qualified'.<sup>638</sup> This former student was subsequently appointed, and worked for the department for a number of years. Similarly, in 1945, Nora Milnes wrote to another former student, outlining details of a potential post in the department, explaining that 'I am communicating with two or three people rather than advertising'.<sup>639</sup> Arguably Nora Milnes preferred to approach particular people she already knew, as opposed to openly advertising posts, because as she wrote in the letter 'It is important that

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<sup>637</sup> Program for Mental Hygiene in England – General Correspondence (J-M), Box 21, Folder 237, Rockefeller Archive Center, New York.

<sup>638</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

we have in the University people who have a good academic approach and at the same time a real practical interest'.<sup>640</sup> Clearly she believed this former student had both of these attributes (she was also appointed, and worked for the department for a number of years). We see therefore that Nora Milnes used her networks and connections to benefit current and former students, but also to benefit the department.

The documentary evidence for Megan Browne and Marjorie Brown's use of networks in relation to accessing jobs and career development opportunities is not nearly as strong. This highlights again the precarious nature of documentary evidence. For example, we only know about Megan Browne's meeting with Stella Waldron because of one personal letter, which came to light through the connection of Professor Vivienne Cree with another social work academic (at the University of Huddersfield), who was Stella Waldron's niece. This letter is not held in any archive, and without it, this connection would not have been made known. For data relating to Megan Browne and Marjorie Brown and their professional networks, my research relied more on the interviews. For example, the interviewees spoke about Megan Browne using her professional networks to identify and advise former students of job opportunities. Interviewees spoke about Megan Browne contacting them regarding roles she thought they were suitable for, including jobs in child and adolescent mental health units, and in the university. Another spoke about Megan Browne contacting them, on behalf of the department, regarding an opportunity for a scholarship to undertake a PhD.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>640</sup> Student Records, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/8, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>641</sup> TR, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022; Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

Access to international developments in social work:

Marjorie Brown, in particular, developed and utilised networks in international social work, although there is clear evidence that Nora Milnes and Megan Browne also travelled abroad to participate in social work conferences and, as we have seen, to visit Schools of Social Work in America. These international networks benefitted the women individually, as they supported the development of their knowledge and skills, but they also benefitted students of the department more widely, as the women applied this learning in their own teaching and practice, passing this on to the next generation of social work students and educators.

As we have seen, Marjorie Brown became active in the IASSW. Membership of this association enabled her not only to access conferences as a participant, but also to become an organiser and host. We saw that she acted as Convener of the Planning Committee for the European Regional Seminar held in Edinburgh in 1962, and was Chairman of the Programme Committee for the Twelfth International Congress in Athens in 1964. The ideas propagated at these events had a wide reach and influence on the development of social work globally. We see the scope of this in relation to the Athens Congress, where attendees numbered 284 people from forty-two countries, across five continents – ‘This was indeed the greatest number that had ever gathered at the previous congresses [sic]’.<sup>642</sup>

As we saw in chapter 6, Marjorie Brown was approached to plan these events by Eileen Younghusband (President of the IASSW) and Dr Katherine Kendall (Secretary of the IASSW, and of the Council of Social Work Education, USA). Her role planning and organising these events required her to correspond at length with social work educators and

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<sup>642</sup> Box 47 Folder 189: Meetings, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, Athens, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

academics across the world. This correspondence established connections, and through this she also gained widespread access to experts in social work education. The correspondence also demonstrated that networks of personal relationships were being called upon to secure prestigious speakers for the conferences – for example Katherine Kendall told Marjorie Brown that she could call upon social work pioneer and educator Helen Perlman to speak at the Athens Congress: ‘This is definitely one place for which I can co-opt Helen Perlman. She has already promised me that she will do anything we wish within the period of the Congress’.<sup>643</sup>

Marjorie Brown utilised the professional relationships she established through her networks in international social work to benefit the staff and students of the Department of Social Study. Vivienne Triseliotis, who worked at the department from 1958, spoke about Marjorie Brown arranging for international academics to come to Edinburgh, in order to impart knowledge on the latest social work theories and develop practice for students, staff and practice supervisors.<sup>644</sup> These included visits by Muriel Cunliffe (Associate Professor of Social Work, University of British Columbia) in 1956 and Eleanor Cockerill (Professor of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh) in 1959 to provide week-long seminars on supervision for social workers who were going to take students on placements. So we see that, as well as benefitting staff and students of the department, professional social workers in practice also gained a great deal from these international networks through development of their own knowledge and skills.

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<sup>643</sup> Box 47 Folder 189: Meetings, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, Athens, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

<sup>644</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

Professional associations:

Professional social work associations also provided important networks for the women. Prior to the formation of the BASW in 1970, which represents all social workers, eight separate professional associations had represented the interest of different branches of social work.<sup>645</sup> These were the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, Association of Child Care Officers, Association of Family Caseworkers, Association of Moral Welfare Workers, Society of Mental Welfare Officers, the Institute of Medical Social Workers, the Association of Social Workers and the National Association of Probation Officers.<sup>646</sup> These associations had differing levels of organisation and status. Some were arguably more powerful and influential too, with the most powerful being the APSW.

The APSW was highly organised and active. From its establishment in 1929, it set out to ensure that stringent standards were met in the training and registration of PSWs, and that its interests were proactively represented and protected. The manner in which it did this will be examined (in the hierarchy section) later in this chapter. Here it is important to note that its level of organisation and desire to protect its status meant that it created an effective UK-wide professional network which provided its members with opportunities to meet and develop their practice at a number of general meetings, special interest meetings and courses arranged throughout the year. Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were both well-known and respected figures within the APSW, with both holding positions on committees. Following her death in 1965, it was the APSW who instigated the Marjorie

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<sup>645</sup> The one exception to this was Probation Officers in England and Wales, who chose not to join. This however reflected the separation of probation in general from social work which occurred at this time, although the situation was different in Scotland with probation opting to be part of the new Social Work Departments.

<sup>646</sup> Malcolm Payne, 'The Role and Achievements of a Professional Association in the Late Twentieth Century: The British Association of Social Workers 1970-2000,' *British Journal of Social Work* 32, no.8 (2002): 969-995.

Brown Memorial Fund alongside Edinburgh University. The Memorial Fund instituted a biennial lecture in memory of Marjorie Brown, and the APSW was heavily involved in the administration and organisation of the fund and its lectures.<sup>647</sup>

One of the interviewees recalled that Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne used the APSW network to facilitate and support practice learning opportunities across Scotland. This included visits to institutions including the Crichton Royal Hospital in Dumfries (where Marjorie Brown had previously worked as a PSW), Polmont Borstal and hospital units in Aberdeen. The APSW held national meetings across Scotland two or three times a year and these meetings provided forums for developing practice, as well as opportunities to build and consolidate professional networks. Students of the specialist PSW Certificate course attended these conferences, with one of the interviewees reflecting that their attendance was the beginning of the process of their being adopted into the network too. The outcome of this was that the APSW network was constantly being embedded and reinforced in the professional lives of successive generations of PSWs. In order to aid the network, the APSW published a directory of members.<sup>648</sup> This allowed members to keep abreast of where others were working and provided their contact details.

One of the interviewees talked about a hidden aspect of this network, which she only recognised years later. She spoke about completing her certificate course in Social Studies at a university in England, and then applying for the specialist PSW Certificate course at the LSE and Edinburgh. She only realised years later that staff at the two courses were in touch with one another, with the interviewee implying that they decided between them

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<sup>647</sup> Marjorie Brown, Jan 1965-Oct 1966, MSS.378/APSW/P/4/4/1-44, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

<sup>648</sup> SA, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

who should be offered a place and where. This is important, as it demonstrates that not only were the women concerned with the quality of student that was accepted onto their course, but that they were also concerned with the quality of PSW Certificate course students in general. Therefore, we see that the APSW network aimed to support students, but it was also used as a means to exclude those who were not deemed suitable from gaining entrance to individual institutions.

We see that, through their membership of the APSW and the network it created, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were able to access a support system which assisted members to develop professionally through meetings and conferences, and which protected its members' (and its own) interests and status. In relation to the Department of Social Study Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne used the network to identify and facilitate practice learning and academic opportunities for students, to make decisions about which students to accept onto courses, and to ensure that their students had access to this same network and the professional benefits that came with it.

#### Government and policy:

Finally, all three women sat on government advisory bodies with Scottish and UK-wide remits, as noted in the section on leadership above. Through these positions, the women exercised influence on the development of social work education, and the development of social work legislation, policy and practice. Networks played a central role in this, as Megan Browne's career demonstrates. Chapter 7 documented her role in advising the Scottish Office on the reorganisation of social work services in the 1960s, and how she became involved with this. It is worth reiterating here that professional networks were central to

facilitating her involvement. In turn, she successfully utilised these networks to influence the process, and ultimately to ensure her vision of a strong and unified social work profession in Scotland emerged.

These professional networks included her close connection with Kay Carmichael, her former student, who became a personal friend. Several of the interviewees commented on Megan Browne's connection with Kay Carmichael, and the potential it had to influence social work policy in Scotland, with one commenting that 'Megan had a lot of respect for Kay Carmichael as a student' and that 'she [Kay] was pretty influential in social work education in Scotland'.<sup>649</sup> We saw that Kay Carmichael taught in the Social Studies Department at Glasgow University, and was married, at that time, to Neil Carmichael MP who was a colleague of Judith Hart, MP, Under-Secretary for Scotland. It was Judith Hart who selected both Kay Carmichael and Megan Browne as advisors to the Scottish Office on the reorganisation of social work services, as well as selecting her former university tutor, Richard Titmuss, to become the final advisor. These networks of professional/personal relationships were central to this process.

Megan Browne, as we have seen, had been serving as the Chairman of the Training Committee of the SCPC since 1954. Consequently, she was well connected to those working in probation in Scotland. We saw that Megan Browne appealed directly to probation officers about their decision to join generic social work departments in Scotland preceding the 1968 Act. Arguably this is a demonstration that she had a professional relationship with many of those listening and felt that her views would carry weight with this professional group. Indeed, while we cannot assess to the extent to which her appeal did sway members

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<sup>649</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

of the organisation, probation officers did join with social service departments in Scotland, while in England and Wales they did not.

As Chairman of the SCPC Training Committee, Megan Browne also knew David Cowperthwaite, one of the senior civil servants involved with proposals to reorganise social work services in Scotland, as he attended the SCPC meetings as ‘an assessor’.<sup>650</sup> Consequently, he was another person in Megan Browne’s professional network. Analysing these professional networks demonstrates strong evidence that Megan Browne was, at least partly, chosen for the role of advisor because she was known to influential individuals within the Scottish Office – both Ministers of State and civil servants – and that she in turn utilised networks to pursue an agenda which developed and strengthened social work education and standards. Evidently, she was very effective in utilising professional networks to achieve her desired outcomes.

My research has found that professional networks were central to the three women as they helped facilitate their ability to be successful leaders, and to attain other professional accomplishments, for themselves and others. We will now explore the final theme to have emerged from the collective biographies and relating to gender in early social work education at Edinburgh University – the women’s protection of the status of social work education.

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<sup>650</sup> Scottish Central Probation Council, 1955-1956, ED20/714, National Records of Scotland.

### Protecting the status of social work education:

We have already seen that the three women developed and utilised strategies to positively promote social work as a profession, which could provide women with paid employment, countering constructions of social work as a charitable endeavour which could be undertaken by benevolent, untrained individuals. Through doing so, they challenged wider ideas about the roles women could play in society. Yet, as well as positively promoting social work, my research identified that the women also engaged explicitly and implicitly in strategies which sought to protect the status and position of social work education at Edinburgh University. As we have seen, its place in the academy was hard won, with the university as an institution often being ambivalent towards social study as a subject.

However, by their very nature, the strategies the women used to protect its status were exclusionary. This was a finding which I had not anticipated. Nor, as has been noted, does it sit easily with the rest of the findings, which have been largely positive about the three women. As I have undertaken this research my esteem for the three women has continuously grown, and it has therefore been uncomfortable to recognise that their actions excluded some people from accessing social work training. However, this was the case. We will now examine this theme – the women's protecting of the status of social work education through their use of credentialist strategies and hierarchies.

### Credentialist strategies:

We saw in chapter 2 that social work during this period sought to justify itself as a profession, using a number of approaches to do so. One of these was credentialist tactics,

identified by Anne Witz in her work on professions as 'patriarchy' as one of a number of strategies that were utilised in order to close, or protect, the characteristics of certain professions, often to stop women joining them. Credentialist tactics require that certain credentials are necessary to gain access to a profession, such as educational attainment and training.<sup>651</sup> We have already seen, in chapter 2, that this was a strategy which social work utilised to bolster its claim to be a profession in the early years of the twentieth century. In the case of the three women, their collective biographies demonstrate that they all used this strategy to protect the status of social work as a profession, and social work education. The women exerted control over who could access social work education, and were vocal about doing so. However, in their case, it was arguably other women who were negatively impacted by their use of credentialist strategies, given that social work and social work education, as we know, was a female dominated arena.

The credentialist strategies the women used have, to a large extent, already been discussed in this chapter in the section on professionalism, where we saw there that the women focused on the need for social workers and social work students to be academically able, to pass through a selection process, and to be trained to a high level, which produced professional workers. However, the emphasis on these factors was also exclusionary, and meant to be so. We see an example of this in the article Marjorie Brown wrote for the *University of Edinburgh Gazette*. In it Marjorie Brown emphasised the rigorous selection process which applicants to the department underwent. The article cites the qualifications applicants needed, the interview process and the need to provide sufficient references. Marjorie Brown went on to note that: 'Dedication to the service of others may appeal to the

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<sup>651</sup> Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*.

less stable and may be an over compensation for personality defects: in the interests of future clients as well as of the candidates themselves, such applications are rejected'.<sup>652</sup> This statement implied that the rigorous standards for applicants were not simply academic, but also based on personality. Yet again, the idea that social work required only good intentions on behalf of the practitioner was dismissed. Not only that – Marjorie Brown wanted to be clear that these applicants were identified and 'rejected'. This correlates with what has been discussed already, from an interviewee's statement that potential students for the PSW course were being discussed and rejected by Edinburgh, in partnership with other institutions, in order to maintain standards.

In addition to rejecting some applicants, others were unable to access social work education at Edinburgh University through the – arguably unintentional – actions of the women in relation to social class. Hall encourages researchers to analyse how discourses were embedded in 'an historically specific set of ideas and practices about gender, race, class and ethnicity'.<sup>653</sup> We have seen that the women's actions and discourses responded to historically specific ideas about gender by challenging norms about the roles of women in society, the workforce and higher education. However, they did not do this in relation to social class. Rather they seemed to accept norms around class and access to university education and professional roles, and through their acceptance they arguably reinforced these.

The women themselves, as we have seen, were all middle-class and had all received academic educations at fee-paying girls' schools. Each had the academic

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<sup>652</sup> Brown, 'The Department of Social Study.': 15

<sup>653</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*: 30

qualifications and financial means to attend university. However, the situation during this time was not the same for working-class women. Working-class girls and women in Scotland faced significant challenges during this time in accessing university level education. This was because, while access to education in schools had broadened significantly, it remained the case that there were significant challenges curtailing their capacity to gain entry to universities. These included school curricula, which tended to focus on domestic rather than academic subjects for girls, the tendency for them to leave school earlier than boys, and the lack of funding and other necessary infrastructure, such as access to affordable accommodation, to enable them to attend university.<sup>654</sup>

For this thesis, the crucial point is that, while the three women did not have control over issues such as school curricula, they did not always challenge ideas or take action in areas which they *could* influence. We see this in the fact that there was an almost complete absence of discussion of grants for prospective students to the department. We do find evidence in the documents that grants were pursued and secured by the Department of Social Study in 1949, by Stella Waldron, who held discussions with the Department of Health for Scotland 'which had resulted in the promise of a grant of £1,000 to be used for maintenance grants to students training in Psychiatric Social Work'.<sup>655</sup> However, prospective PSW students were required to have a Diploma or Certificate in Social Study, and so were highly likely to be middle-class if they had been able to afford to undertake an initial undergraduate, and possible postgraduate, course.

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<sup>654</sup> Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Working-Class Girls in Victorian Scotland: Gender, Education and Identity* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005).

<sup>655</sup> Board of Studies in Social Study and Training: Minute Book, 1928-1951, EUA IN1/ACU/S2/3, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

The ability to access funding to attend university was crucially importance for working-class students. Dyhouse discusses the experience of Jennie Lee, the Labour MP who was a coalminer's daughter, who attended Edinburgh University in the early 1920s. For Jennie Lee, although she received a maintenance grant from Fife Educational Authority, attendance remained a financial struggle. Expenses for accommodation, food and clothing had to be carefully planned and widely sourced. Her father, for example, cycled twenty miles each week on his day off to bring her food and clean laundry.<sup>656</sup>

I have not analysed the socio-economic backgrounds of the students at the Department of Social Study during this period. However, from my role as research assistant in the archiving project, my work cataloguing the student records gave an incidental impression that the vast majority of students came from middle-class families, and had attended fee-paying schools. The overwhelmingly middle-class make up of social work students and the fact that the three women did not seek to challenge ideas and practices around working-class women attending university is evidence of their implicit acceptance, and therefore reinforcement, of social work and social work education as an arena for middle-class women. The women were, perhaps unwittingly, utilising another credentialist strategy through limiting access to social work training to working-class women. We will now move on to examine the hierarchies that were in place in the courses of the department during the 1950s and 1960s and their significance.

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<sup>656</sup> Carol Dyhouse, 'Going to University in England between the wars: access and funding' *History of Education* 31, no. 1 (2002): 1-14.

### Hierarchies:

The presence, and relevance, of hierarchies within social work education is barely discussed in the literature. However, this topic was explored in previous research I undertook on the PSW Certificate course at Edinburgh University. I found that there was a strong perception that PSWs viewed themselves as having higher status than other specialisms, for example medical social workers or child care social workers.<sup>657</sup> Given this earlier finding, it is perhaps not surprising that analysis of the interview data identified that some people believed hierarchies were operating within social work, and within the Department of Social Study, during the 1950s and 1960s.

When I use the term hierarchies I mean that they 'are an implicit or explicit rank of individuals or groups with respect to a valued social dimension'.<sup>658</sup> Hierarchies are in operation all the time, and there is a spectrum of how aware people are that they are part of different hierarchies.<sup>659</sup> Certainly in relation to PSWs, this perception of hierarchies within social work was propagated by the APSW, through their use of credentialist strategies. Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne, as has been noted, were qualified PSWs, and members of the APSW. It was arguably because of their association with the APSW that this hierarchy developed in the department most perceptively during the period they were leading it in the 1950s and 1960s.

To the APSW, professional standards were sacrosanct, and the APSW gave itself the role of monitoring and maintaining standards regarding PSWs in the UK. Analysis of

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<sup>657</sup> Henning, 'Psychiatric Social Work Training: Justifying a Profession.'

<sup>658</sup> Joe C. Magee and Adam D. Galinsky, 'Social Hierarchy: The Self-Reinforcing Nature of Power and Status,' *The Academy of Management Annals* 2, no. 1 (2008): 351-398: 354

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

documents in the APSW archive reveals the manner in which the APSW sought to gain, and then protect, its power and influence through its vehement defence of the status of PSWs. They focused heavily on employing credentialist strategies which included establishing strict membership requirements and the assertion that only qualified PSWs, who were APSW members, could work in psychiatric social work. They strongly discouraged organisations and local authorities from employing social workers in mental health roles who were not members of the APSW.

The APSW archive contains letters from the APSW to employers reprimanding them for employing people who were not its members, arguing they did not have a PSW Certificate. These people, in the APSW's eyes, were not properly qualified. Noel Timms, in his book on psychiatric social work in Great Britain, gives the example of an untrained worker who was calling herself a PSW in 1946. The APSW Executive found out about this, and wrote to hospital employing her highlighting that she was not trained, and setting out exactly what was meant by the title PSW, and its significance. They also wrote to the worker herself, and to her local APSW branch requesting its Chairman visit her to discuss the matter.<sup>660</sup>

The archive also holds letters from the APSW to universities, including Edinburgh, requiring them to verify that they were employing stringent standards in relation to applicants for their PSW courses.<sup>661</sup> Documents also detail the inspections that the APSW carried out of departments teaching PSW courses, and which the universities allowed to occur. This is in spite of the fact that there was no legal requirement for PSWs to be

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<sup>660</sup> Timms, *Psychiatric Social Work in Great Britain (1939-1962)*.

<sup>661</sup> Edinburgh University, 1943-April 1969, MSS.378/APSW/P/12/13, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

qualified at this point in time, or the university courses to be regulated by the APSW. These requirements were set down by the APSW to protect its status and the status of PSWs as a specialism. Clearly, universities, and employers, were concerned to appease the APSW. With the exception of Nora Milnes – who set up the Edinburgh PSW Certificate course in spite of the APSW's opposition – other social work educators and employers appeared to be at pains to fall in line with the demands of the APSW, including Megan Browne.

It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that some believed a hierarchy of courses and students existed at the Department of Social Study in the 1950s and 1960s. In the article for the *Edinburgh University Gazette* by Marjorie Brown, after noting that some prospective students are rejected it goes on to state that 'an even more stringent selection process is applied at the specialised training level'<sup>662</sup> - the PSW and MSW Certificate courses. This assertion demonstrated that even within those who were deemed acceptable to study social work, a hierarchy of specialisms and students existed. These students needed to be even better. Marjorie Brown further reinforced this idea of a hierarchy in social work when, as we saw in chapter 6, she responded to Wootton's critique of social work by implying that some workers were justified in seeing themselves as 'an elite group'<sup>663</sup> because they had been subject to more stringent selection and further training.

Vivienne Triseliotis, who was a Medical Social Worker before coming to work in the department, remembered in her interview that 'when I came to Edinburgh there was a distinct feeling that there was a hierarchy'.<sup>664</sup> Students from the specialist courses were taught as a large group for some subjects, and split into their specialist groups for subjects

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<sup>662</sup> Brown, 'The Department of Social Study.': 17

<sup>663</sup> Marjorie A. Brown, 'Reform and Therapy,' *Sociological Review* 3, no. 1 (1955): 55-63: 60

<sup>664</sup> Vivienne Triseliotis, interview by Sarah Henning, 2019.

specific to their specialisms. Jane Aldgate, who was a student on the Child Care Certificate course remembers that:

There were three groups of us, six to eight each, we had six in our Child Care group. And there were psychiatric social workers and medical social workers, and we were the bottom of the heap! There was a hierarchy.<sup>665</sup>

One interviewee, a PSW student, framed this in different terms, however noting that PSW and MSW training had been established for longer, and so there were more trained specialist workers, while Child Care workers were 'not universally well trained at that time'.<sup>666</sup> Another interviewee, also a PSW student, remembered that she in fact became close friends with one MSW student and one Child Care student, whilst undertaking the course, and she did not think the courses had been hierarchical in nature. It is interesting to note that, both the students who did not feel hierarchies were important were PSW students – those who were seen by others to be at the top of this hierarchy. They may have had less of a sense of a hierarchy or be less inclined to recognise one which was favourable to them was in operation.

What purpose did this hierarchy or perceived hierarchy perform then? While recognising negative factors which can arise from hierarchies, Meredith Vanstone and Lawrence Grierson have also highlighted the beneficial roles they can play in educational settings. Hierarchies have the potential to create roles for those in higher positions as models of good practice and mentors. When those in higher positions are seen as credible (which they achieve through demonstrating their knowledge, skills and authority) those in

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<sup>665</sup> Jane Aldgate, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

<sup>666</sup> SA, interview by Sarah Henning, 2022.

lower positions within the hierarchy – students – have people to emulate, and are more likely, Vanstone and Grierson argue, to take on board feedback from them which in turn assists them to develop their own knowledge and practice.<sup>667</sup> For social work education and the Department of Social Study, arguably, this hierarchy did serve a positive purpose, which likely extended beyond the specialist courses. Psychiatric social work, and medical social work to a lesser extent, had achieved a level of professionalism and status in the UK which other areas of social work had not. Their achievement demonstrated that this was possible. This hierarchy was potentially motivating for students individually and collectively by showing that social work could achieve professional status more broadly.

With regard to people higher up in the hierarchy being models of good practice and mentors we have already seen that both Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were viewed by the interviewees as modelling professional skills and behaviour, and encouraging the students to develop these themselves. All three women also mentored students of the department, and through doing so these students were supported to gain knowledge, skills and opportunities to develop their careers. Of course, it must be acknowledged that the interviewees I spoke with may represent only those students who had a positive experience in the department. Others may have had a different experience.

### Conclusion:

Analysis of the women's collective biographies highlights key themes relating to the ways they challenged the social constructions of gender in social work and social work education

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<sup>667</sup> Meredith Vanstone and Lawrence Grierson 'Thinking about social power and hierarchy in medical education' *Medical Education* 56, no. 2 (2022): 91-97.

between 1918 and 1968. They did this, explicitly, through their active promotion of professionalisation in relation to social work and its role as a paid career for women, which countered narratives around social work being a charitable endeavour which could be undertaken by well-meaning, but untrained, individuals. They also did this more implicitly through their roles as effective and strong leaders in social work education. Although none of them were professors (a role equated with leadership in the current literature) they successfully led the Department of Social Study. Their leadership runs counter to the characterisation of women in early social work education as holding lesser status (and therefore less authoritative and influential) roles in departments.

The diverse areas in which they demonstrated their leadership have been explored, including their roles as heads of the department, professional development, the development of new courses for social work education, their committee roles in social work and social work education and through mentoring other women. The women were able to operate so successfully as leaders, but also achieve professional accomplishments for themselves and others, in part, through effectively utilising professional networks. These enabled them to access jobs and career development opportunities, for themselves and their students, to access international developments in social work education, to have roles in professional associations and to influence government policy. We see therefore, that the roles women could, and did, play in early social work education were much more varied, influential and significant than is reflected in the current literature.

However, their collective biographies also demonstrate that, having fought to raise the status of social work and social work education at Edinburgh University, the women engaged in strategies to protect it. Part of this involved exclusionary strategies which

prevented some from being able to gain admission to the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University. Again, this was through both explicit and implicit actions by the women. While they all promoted the opportunities which social work offered middle-class women for a paid, professional career, the women did not push for access to social work education to be significantly widened to working-class women.

The hierarchy in terms of courses and students in the department, which developed particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, also sought to protect and promote the status of social work, and social work education. This hierarchy arguably accentuated the professional status which had been achieved by PSWs and medical social workers, to show the wider student body that this was achievable for other branches of social work. Yet, it was negatively experienced by some of the student and staff who felt that their skills and specialisms were not as valued as others. The key points from my research will now be brought together and summarised in the conclusion chapter that follows.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

Thus the Edinburgh department gave an enormous boost to professional social work trainings within and without the university.<sup>668</sup>

The research set out in this thesis had its genesis in the celebration of the centenary of social work education at the University of Edinburgh. The centenary is important and offered me an opportunity to explore the history of social work education at Edinburgh. In general, there is scant recognition for the importance of the history of social work education, and a lack of research on this topic. The centenary, and the Wellcome Trust funded project to archive the material of the Department of Social Study, enabled a number of different themes to be examined, and it has also ensured that material is available for future researchers and projects. Thus, my research was made possible because of the centenary celebrations.

### Research objectives:

The research I have undertaken for this PhD has focused on three women who led the department in its first fifty years – Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne. My objectives for this research were two fold. The first was to undertake biographical research into the careers of these three women, examining their contribution to the development of early social work education at Edinburgh University, and in Scotland. No research had been undertaken regarding these women before, and very little has been done about women in

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<sup>668</sup> Waldron, 'Marjorie Brown: 1909-1964.': 4

early social work education in the UK in general. My research therefore begins to address a gap in our knowledge and understanding about women's achievements in this field.

The second objective was to examine the themes which emerged from the women's collective biographies relating to gender and early social work education. Women have tended to be characterised as holding lower status roles in university departments, and being focused on the practical aspect of training. Men are characterised as being the leaders of departments (often equated to being professors) and to being more focused on the academic aspects of training. My work sought to examine the seeming disjuncture between this characterisation, and the women I had encountered when initially looking through the CRC archives – strong, effective and influential leaders. Using a collective biography approach allowed me to research each of the women's early life and career biographies individually, and then bring these together to examine overarching narratives which emerged relating specifically to gender in early social work education. These two research objectives enabled me to explore the diverse roles women could, and did, play in early social work education. Doing so both broadens our understanding of the diverse roles women could occupy, and also recognises their work and contributions.

#### Key findings:

We saw that Nora Milnes, as the first Director of the School of Social Study and Training at Edinburgh in 1918, recognised the tentative situation social work education was in, given that it was associated with, but not officially part of, Edinburgh University. She understood that social work education needed to become part of the university officially, as this would bring both status and security, and she initiated and pushed for this to happen. We saw

that Edinburgh University was ambivalent about social work education, but that Nora Milnes was determined to make this happen, and the school became part of the university in 1928. Nora Milnes also recognised that social work offered middle-class women opportunities for paid careers, and consequently throughout her career she promoted the professionalisation of social work, the need for social work to provide adequate salaries and for more social work jobs to be created in Scotland. Nora Milnes understood that, by doing this, social work could genuinely be a role where middle-class women could have careers which supported them financially.

Nora Milnes led the school and then department for thirty-three years, and throughout this time was the only woman to be head of a department at Edinburgh University. During her career she undertook research, and wrote numerous academic books, articles and chapters. She was academically able and active, and understood the importance of research, not just for the development of social work practice but also to demonstrate that social studies deserved its place in the university. Her attempts to persuade the university to fund research in the department were unsuccessful, further demonstrating the ambivalence the university felt towards social studies. Finally, her application that her successor be given a Chair was also turned down, because 'the development of Social Science as a subject of study in this University has yet recognised the stage to warrant the institution of a Chair'.<sup>669</sup> Nora Milnes's career demonstrates that women could be leaders of departments, could drive forward developments at institutional as well as subject levels and could be academically active and able.

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<sup>669</sup> Social Study: Future Policy of Department, 1950-1952, EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/1/69, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

In the biography of Marjorie Brown, we saw that women in early social work education were involved in both undertaking as well as overseeing and facilitating social work research. Their roles however, have been negated and/or diminished – both at the time and since. In relation to Marjorie Brown, we see evidence that she worked on at least three research projects, and during her time as Director of the department at Edinburgh she facilitated a large social work research project. Exploring Marjorie Brown's role in research afforded the opportunity to examine how common her experience was by also researching other women working in social work research. My findings identified that hers was a common experience for women during this period – very few were accorded recognition for their work. These findings are new, as the role of women in the history of social work research in the UK has not been previously researched at all. They are important because they demonstrate that women were active in this area, and they help us to understand more about how gendered constructions and roles affected the opportunities offered to women and men in social work research.

The biography of Marjorie Brown's career also highlights the role she played developing social work education after the Second World War. This was a time when the State's provision of welfare and services was developing rapidly, and social work's remit expanded significantly. Social work, however had to demonstrate its effectiveness, and Marjorie Brown recognised that in order to meet these challenges, it needed to keep developing in terms of theories and practical skills. Marjorie Brown understood that the USA was at the forefront of developing social work theories and techniques and she visited there in 1956 to learn these new innovations first hand. She also actively cultivated relationships with social work educators across the world through her involvement in the IASSW, and used these relationships to incorporate the latest techniques into the

curriculum at Edinburgh, as well as to bring speakers to contribute to courses, for both students and practice teachers. Marjorie Brown was charming, intelligent and hard-working, and under her leadership the Department of Social Study strengthened and grew.

Through the biography of Megan Browne, we saw that women were able to influence government policy and legislation relating to social work education, and that developments which she helped to bring in still influence social work and social work education in Scotland today. Megan Browne's interest in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis and their uses in social work education and practice were evident throughout her career. Focused on the specialist courses in the Department of Social Study, she understood the potential which social work had to support clients to change their lives positively, no matter how adverse their early life experiences may have been – something she knew about first hand.

Megan Browne's involvement with training for probation officers (a branch we would call criminal justice social work today), began soon after she was appointed at the Department of Social Study. In addition to her lecturer's post, Megan Browne acted as chairman for the SCPC at the Scottish Office to advise and develop the first training programme for probation officers in Scotland. However, it was in her role as an advisor to the Scottish Office on the reorganisation of social work services in Scotland from 1965-68 that we see her at her most influential. The reorganisation of services saw the establishment of local authority social work departments for the first time in Scotland, elevating both its professional status and its position in local authorities. The remit of social work vastly expanded, and significantly more trained workers were required. Throughout the UK during this time, as well as in Scotland, social work came together as a profession –

as evidenced in the formation of the first professional association for social work, BASW, and the fact that social work education became generic, with the emphasis on specialist training fading away. Megan Browne played a key role in these developments in Scotland.

Collectively, the careers of the women have shown that they were academically active and able, that they engaged in research, that they were concerned to learn about the latest developments in theory and practice and incorporate these into the curricula at Edinburgh and that they led and influenced training bodies, social work organisations and government policy and legislation. These women did not fit into the characterisation in the (limited) literature to date which discusses women in early social work education. In fact, they contradict it. The roles these women played were much broader, much more influential and much more significant than is currently recognised. This research starts to broaden our understanding, a process which should continue, as there are many more women whose careers could be examined to uncover their contributions to the history of social work education.

Furthermore, the collective biography of the women reveals themes around the social construction of gender and early social work education. We have seen that social work was constructed as a role which middle-class women could legitimately engage in outwith the home, at a time when such roles were limited. However, although initially offering opportunities, social work was quickly constructed as a role which was voluntary and charitable, making its potential to offer middle-class women paid careers contested. Alongside this was the idea that as a charitable endeavour social work could be done by anybody who had good intentions and it was not a role which required training and skills. Those who did have paid positions were not paid adequately, as middle-class women were

expected to be financially supported by their husbands (marriage was the dominant ideal) and so salaries could be low, because the reward for their work was being a good citizen. This in turn meant men, who were expected to support their families financially, were less likely to enter social work, as its pay was so poor.

Social work, however was a role which some men did enter, but this was constructed in terms of men being leaders and administrators (in both social work practice and education) on working in roles which focused on control – probation or residential child care. Women, in contrast, were characterised as being nurturing and caring, which meant they should work in roles such as child care and almoning. In social work education, men were characterised as professors and heads of university departments, and focused on the academic aspects of training. Women were characterised as lower status lecturers, and focused on the practical aspect of social work education.

The collective biography of the three women reveals that they worked hard to promote social work as a profession, in order to counter the narratives that it was a charitable endeavour, which did not require training and could be poorly paid. The women used a number of explicit and tacit approaches to do this. They addressed this publically, at an institutional level in the university, and at a government level through policy relating to social work education. None of them were professors and, although the status of professor is equated with leadership in the literature and in popular culture, this construction gives little consideration to the challenges women faced in academia at this time, and the fact that they were at a significant disadvantage to men (who were far more likely to be made professors in the first place).

I would argue that we need to have a broader conception of leadership because all of the women demonstrated that they were able to be effective and strong leaders of the Department of Social Study. They did this in numerous ways, and were aided in this process by their use of professional networks. These networks also enabled them to achieve professional accomplishments for themselves and others in social work and social work education. Finally, the collective biography reveals that the three women worked hard to protect the status which social work education had won. They did this by using credentialist strategies and hierarchies. Unfortunately, this resulted in some people being excluded – and because social work was a female dominated profession, this exclusion primarily affected other women. Consequently, early social work education at Edinburgh University was both open to some women, but exclusionary towards others, and those who could gain access were predominantly middle-class. The three women were all middle-class themselves, and had all benefitted from academic educations at fee-paying girls' schools. They did not actively seek to enable women from working-class backgrounds to gain places at the Department of Social Study, for example through trying to ensure grants were available.

My research has shown that women could and did play far broader, more interesting and more influential roles in early social work education than is currently characterised in the literature on this topic. Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne were all important in the development of social work education, not just at Edinburgh University, but in Scotland, and indeed throughout the UK. Their individual achievements deserve to be recognised and remembered, but their role in educating countless social workers across the years is also significant. Social work plays an important role in our society, often working with those who face significant adversities and challenging circumstances. Social work

clients deserve to be supported by well trained professionals – something which the three women all recognised and advocated for in their consistent push for professionalisation throughout their careers.

Finally, while the three women have been the focus of my research, my work has also charted some of the developments of social work education in Edinburgh between 1918 and 1968. This adds to the small body of work which exists examining social work education in organisations and universities outside London. The quotation at the start of this chapter attests to the role which the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University was deemed to have played in the development of social work education. My own work has shown that it was possible for universities other than the LSE (as chapter 2 showed, so often the focus of the history of social work education in the universities) to develop courses, to produce academic work, to undertake research, and to be influential in regard to policy and legislation.

#### Building on this research – future areas of work:

The three women were all significant, but I do not believe they were unique. Though my research has focused on them, this process has introduced me to numerous other women who were involved in early social work education and research in the UK, but whose roles and biographies remain opaque. From the information I have found about them it is clear that there were many others whose work was also academic, who undertook research, who influenced policy and legislation, who acted as leaders and who developed social work theory and practice. Researching these women is an area where further work is required. Another is researching working-class women who worked in social work and social work

education. As discussed in chapter 2, this is an area which has been neglected at the expense of middle-class women's roles, with working-class women primarily being portrayed as recipients of social work services, rather than workers. Finally, there is significant scope for social work education in other universities and organisations throughout the UK to be researched. The current focus in the (albeit limited) literature leaves many stories and experiences untold. So much can be learnt about the social work profession today from its history, and these are all stories which deserve to be told.

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Appendix 1:

List of Archives:

British Library

Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh

Dumfries and Galloway Archives and Local Studies

Eliot Slater Archive (online archive)

Kendal Archive Centre, Kendal

King's College London Archives

London Metropolitan Archives

London School of Economics Archives and Special Collections

Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick

National Records of Scotland

North London Collegiate School Archive

Rockefeller Archive Centre

The Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota

University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections

University of Roehampton Special Collections and Archives

Wellcome Collection

Appendix 2:Consent and information forms for oral history interviews:**Consent form**

**Project:** Gender in early social work education: a collective biography of key women at the University of Edinburgh 1918-1968

**Name of Researcher:**

**Name of Participant:**

**Address:**

**Tel number/email address:**

I confirm that I have received and read the information sheet for this project and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the interview, use and storage of the information I give.

I confirm that I am willing to take part in the interview.

I understand that the interview will be deposited in the archive and that it can be accessed by members of the public, students and researchers. I understand that I will be identified by name or can choose to be anonymised. I understand that if I am identified by name my right to confidentiality remains in place and no confidential information about me will be made available.

I understand that I will be sent a copy of the interview transcript and will be able to amend, add to or request that sections be removed or not used for research purposes. This process will take place prior to the interview being deposited in the archive.

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time.

Please specify below any restrictions you wish to place on the use of the interview data:

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

To be named/anonymised (please circle as appropriate)

## ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT CENTRE FOR RESEARCH COLLECTIONS

The purpose of this deposit agreement is to ensure that your oral history contribution is added to CRC collections in accordance with your wishes.

1. Would you like us to change your name in any written reference to the recording, such as transcriptions or catalogue descriptions? YES / NO

2. Are you prepared to vest your copyright in the recordings to CRC? YES / NO

3. Can CRFC use short excerpts of the recording for educational purposes (personal names can be redacted if desired)? YES / NO

4. If you wish to apply a time restriction before your contribution is released, please state below:

**Not to be released until:**

If you wish to be anonymised or if your interview contains sensitive personal data on other parties, CRC will only grant access to the original recording to legitimate researchers on completion of a Data Protection Agreement, binding the researcher to anonymise sensitive personal data in any resulting research output.

**Interviewee:**

..... (name)

(signed) ..... Date .....

**On behalf of CRC:**

..... (name), ..... (post)

(signed) ..... Date .....

**Centre for Research Collections Archive**

**Oral History Deed of Gift**

I, ..... (name) of

.....

..... (address)

do hereby make a gift of the material specified below to the Centre for Research Collections Archive, Edinburgh University Library (hereafter "CRC"), and its successor organisations.

Being the sole owner of the material, I give this material, and any additions I may make to it, unencumbered to Centre for Research Collections Archive, Edinburgh University Library, and do declare that I make the gift of my own free will and without influence.

The material shall be made available to *bona fide* academic and other researchers subject to any relevant legislation and standard CRC access policies.

Any copyrights such as I may possess in this material are hereby assigned to CRC.

I agree that personal data provided in this form will be retained indefinitely by CRC to provide a permanent chain of custody for this donation.

Provided due acknowledgement is made to CRC, users of the material may, subject to any relevant legislation, quote unlimited text in any one single publication as long as the wishes of participants on anonymisation are respected and researchers sign appropriate Data Protection forms.

Any items which CRC may deem not worthy of permanent preservation **shall be returned to me / destroyed (delete as appropriate).**

**Schedule of material donated**

In full accord with the provisions of this deed of gift I set my hand,

(signed) ....., Donor Date .....

in the presence of ....., Witness

On behalf of Centre for Research Collections Archive, Edinburgh University Library, I,

..... (name), ..... (post)

accept this gift

(signed) ..... Date .....



## Information sheet for interview participants

### **The project**

I am an assistant researcher at the Centre for Research Collections and a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. I am collecting data for my research on gender in early social work education at the University of Edinburgh. I am researching 3 key women who worked in the Social Studies Department from 1918-1968: Nora Milnes, Marjorie Brown and Megan Browne. Part of this research will be carried out by interviewing people who knew these women – as their students, colleagues, acquaintances or friends and family members. These interviews will help me find out more about these women's lives focusing especially on how issues of gender impacted on their work and position within the university.

### **The interviews**

I will conduct the interviews at a mutually agreeable time and location. This could be a face-to-face meeting or using skype or other technology for interviewees who do not live in or near Edinburgh. The interviews will last roughly one hour in length and will be audio recorded. This research is being undertaken for a PhD but takes place in the context of the wider celebrations of the centenary of social work education at the University of Edinburgh (1918-2018). Resources which contribute to future research into the history of social work education are a key feature of the centenary celebrations. The interviews undertaken will be deposited in an archive and made available to the public and future researchers, and I may also use them for further publications.

Consent will be sought from interviewees firstly to the interview itself, and secondly to their interview being deposited in the archive. In line with oral history guidelines, interviewees will be named. However, I recognise that some interviewees may choose to be anonymised, or only to consent to their interviews being used for my research (not deposited in the archive). The accompanying consent forms enable you to place any restrictions on the use of your data. Transcripts of the interviews will be sent to interviewees so they can review what has been said and they can choose to amend, add to or state that any of the text should not be used for the PhD and/or deposited in the archive.

For further details, or if you have any questions please contact: Sarah Henning, PhD Student in Social Work, University of Edinburgh by phone on 07981170161, post at Sarah Henning, Social Work PhD student, c/o Graduate student office, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Chrystal McMillan Building, 15a George Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9LD or by email at [s0673820@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:s0673820@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Appendix 3:

Interview Schedule for oral history interviews:

- Can you tell me about how you came to work/study at the Department of Social Study at Edinburgh University?
- Could you tell me about how you knew Marjorie Brown/Megan Browne?
- Could you tell me what sort of person they were?
- Could you tell me about their job at the university?
- Could you tell me about their other colleagues?
- Did they get on with their other colleagues?
- Do you know anything about their relationship/the relationship of the department with the wider university?
- Can you tell me about their life before they came to Edinburgh?
- Can you tell me anything about what they did during the Second World War?
- Marjorie Brown: Can you tell me anything about her role in international social work?
- Megan Browne: Can you tell me anything about her work with Kilbrandon and the Social Work (Scotland) Act?
- Do you think they thought being a woman had any impact on their career/position at the university?
- Is there a lasting impression that you have of Marjorie Brown or Megan Browne?

Appendix 4:Chronological timeline for the three women:

- 1882 Nora Jessie Milnes born in London
- 1893 The first women students graduate from Edinburgh University
- 1905 Edinburgh University Settlement is established
- 1907 Marjorie Alice Brown born in Edinburgh
- 1908 University of Birmingham is the first university to admit social work students
- 1913 Margaret Edith Steel (Megan Browne) born in Oystermouth
- 1913 Nora Milnes appointed as a tutor at the LSE in the Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration
- 1917 School of Social Study and Training is established in Edinburgh under the auspices of Edinburgh University
- 1918 Nora Milnes is appointed as the first Director of the Edinburgh School of Social Study and Training
- 1922 Edinburgh University begins to issue Certificates and Diplomas to graduate of the School of Social Study and Training
- 1928 The School becomes part of Edinburgh University as the Department of Social Study
- 1929 Nora Milnes travels to Schools of Social Work in America
- 1935 Marjorie Brown enrolls in the Diploma course in the Department (graduating 1936)
- 1942 The Psychiatric Social Work Certificate course is established in the Department
- 1948 Megan Browne is appointed as a Lecturer in the Department
- 1951 Marjorie Brown is appointed Director of the Department upon Nora Milnes retirement
- 1954 The Medical Social Work Certificate course is established in the Department
- 1954 Megan Browne is appointed Chairman of the Scottish Central Probation Council Training Committee
- 1956 Marjorie Brown travels to Schools of Social Work in America

- 1958 Megan Browne travels to Schools of Social Work and penal institutions in America
- 1960 The Child Care Certificate course is established in the Department
- 1962 Marjorie Brown is Chairman of the European Regional Seminar for the IASSW held in Edinburgh
- 1964 Marjorie Brown is Chairman of the Programm Committee for the 12<sup>th</sup> International IASSW Conference in Athens (September)
- 1964 Marjorie Brown dies in Edinburgh at the age of 57 (December), Mary F. Gregor appointed Acting Head of Department
- 1965 Megan Browne is appointed as an advisor to the Scottish Office on the reorganisation of social work services in Scotland
- 1966 Megan Browne appointed Acting Head of Department
- 1966 White Paper with proposals for reorganisation of social work services in Scotland published
- 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 passed
- 1968 Professor John Spencer appointed as Head of Department
- 1972 Nora Milnes dies in London at the age of 90
- 1973 Megan Browne retires from the Department
- 1993 Megan Browne dies in Edinburgh at the age of 80

This timeline has utilised data from the SW Centenary website timeline: 'Social Work at Edinburgh University: Knowledge into Action since 1918,' <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/> and from other source material cited throughout this thesis.