

## **Aspects of agency: change and constraint in the activism of Mary Sumner founder of the Anglican Mothers' Union**

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*Abstract: This article defines agency as the ability to act towards the realisation of aims within and across the permeable boundaries of private and public space. Agency relates to both empowerment and constraint as the aims of certain groups may be realised by dominating others. This article explores the agency of Mary Sumner as founder of the Mothers' Union (1876), which by 1921 had a transnational membership in excess of 390,000 and thus constituted the largest women's organisation in the Anglican Church. In this article Bourdieu's concepts of reproduction, habitus, field and capital frame the analysis of Sumner's agency in relation to her own empowerment and constraint, and as an activist for the patriarchal and socially stratified Church of England. It locates Sumner's activism in the context of clerical networks and identifies strategies she deployed to establish her own pedagogic authority and advance her organisation. Focusing on the years 1876 to 1916, the article argues that Sumner promoted opportunities for women within her temporal and socio-cultural context in ways that were complicit with patriarchal Anglican notions of womanhood and upheld class stratification yet were simultaneously innovative in achieving a voice for an organised body of women within Anglicanism.*

### **Overview Mary Sumner and the early Mothers' Union**

In 1876 Mary Sumner, the wife of the Rector of Old Alresford in Hampshire, introduced innovative membership cards for her parish mothers' meeting. Nine years later at the 1885 Portsmouth Church Congress, she took the opportunity to address an audience of women on her aspiration that mothers should lead the moral regeneration of the nation.<sup>1</sup> This event was the catalyst for the recognition of the Mothers' Union as an official Anglican Church organisation. The MU grew rapidly. Branches were instigated by upper middle and upper class Anglican women who drew on traditions of philanthropy and patronage as a mandate for activism.<sup>2</sup> By 1887 fifty seven branches had been established and two years later the *Mother's Union Journal*, first published in 1888, had a circulation of 46,000.

In 1892, the Winchester Diocesan Mothers' Union Committee, invested with authority as the home diocese of the 'Foundress', resolved that a central organisation was needed to ease the administrative burden on Mary Sumner, who to this point had dealt with all enquiries relating to the society which now had 60,000 members across 1,500 branches.<sup>3</sup> By 1896 a formal constitution

enabled the Mothers' Union to take a corporate stand representing the opinion of Christian mothers, on issues perceived to relate to morality and family life, notably in its opposition to easier access to divorce and support for denominational education.<sup>4</sup>

Mary Sumner served as Mothers' Union Central President from 1896 until 1909 and remained as the Winchester Diocesan President until 1915. Despite relinquishing official positions in the MU, she continued to intervene in its affairs through correspondence with MU officials.<sup>5</sup> On her death in 1921 the Mothers' Union had a membership of 391,409 extending across the British Empire and beyond, encompassing branches for British expatriates, settler colonialists, and indigenous women frequently in association with missionary activity. According to the obituary in *The Times* newspaper, her funeral in Winchester Cathedral was attended by 4,000 mourners.<sup>6</sup> Today Mary Sumner is remembered as the founder of an organisation with 4 million members worldwide.<sup>7</sup> The development of the MU as an organised body has been comprehensively documented in Cordelia Moyse's official *A History of the Mothers' Union: Women Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876-2008*. Although women in Anglicanism have been explored by Sean Gill and Brian Heeney,<sup>8</sup> Moyse redresses the lack of attention to the MU within histories of the Church from an Anglican faith perspective and positions the MU as a global presence within the contemporary Anglican Communion.<sup>9</sup>

Focusing on Mary Sumner who dominated the MU in its first four decades, this article defines agency as the capability to act towards the realisation of aims within and across private and public space which as Mary P. Ryan, and Simon Morgan have noted are permeable boundaries.<sup>10</sup> In putting Sumner at the centre the article seeks to unpick her activism vis-à-vis change and constraint and locate her relative to what Yeo terms 'paradoxes of empowerment'.<sup>11</sup> As Sarah Jane Aiston notes subjective capability and capacity to exercise agency involves 'the negotiation of social and cultural circumstances and internalising or performing to received stereotypes' and so concerns constraint as well as empowerment.<sup>12</sup> Thus agency relates not just to the ability to act but to the claims of value relating to activities and qualities that may be drawn on to validate actions and identities. Notions of women's roles and esteemed attributes framed and legitimised by religion has been encapsulated by Jenny Daggars in the term 'spiritual womanhood',<sup>13</sup> and the significance of religion in relation to women's gendered identities and contingent agency continues to offer opportunities for enquiry.<sup>14</sup>

In this article I draw on the 'thinking tools' of Pierre Bourdieu as a framework for conceptualising the contextual circumstances, networks of association, assumptions of value, opportunities and strategies for the negotiation of authority and power that play out in Mary Sumner's negotiation of constraint and agency. I use Bourdieu's analytical categories of habitus, field and capital,<sup>15</sup> which as Joan Scott, Beverly Skeggs, Toril Moi and Beate Kraus have demonstrated

accommodate class and gender as constructs that mediate, but not exclusively determine, access to authority and power,<sup>16</sup> to explore Sumner's formative social and religious milieu, her networks and the fields in which her activism was realised.<sup>17</sup> To locate Sumner's activism in relation to change and/or constraint in the context of social structures (such as family and class) and institutions, notably the Anglican Church where power is invested, I also draw on Bourdieu's concept of reproduction which envisages how advantaged groups seek to perpetuate and legitimise their dominant position, to position her agency in relation to sites of power.<sup>18</sup>

### **Thinking Mary Sumner and Agency with Bourdieu**

As a sociologist Bourdieu is interested in how individual agents negotiate their lives in a social world. His rejection of both a deterministic view of individual agency and the notion of the individual as entirely autonomous place the negotiation of constraint and agency as central to his enquiry. Bourdieu's intersecting analytical categories of habitus, field and capital are his response to analysing the factors that play out in an individual's negotiation of their life trajectory within a context of other agents, social structures and culturally determined assumptions of value. This accords with Barbara Caine's assertion of the value of looking at individuals in the context of their familial and social networks to illuminate the intersecting boundaries of private lives and public action. Bourdieu is also in accord with Caine in insisting that contextualising the individual avoids the potential distortion of a focus on an individual exceptional subject, and contributes to an understanding of the circumstances applicable to others of a like category.<sup>19</sup>

Bourdieu uses habitus to conceptualise the location of individual agents against cultural constructions, mediated by personal associations that inform identities, sense of purpose and opportunities for action. The embodiment of social practices and cultural messages within group habitus is referred to by Bourdieu as the doxa. Habitus encapsulates the unthinkingly assumed habits of mind that the individual acquires through socialisation within their contextual back ground. Habitus implies an accumulation of collective understandings, which are durable dispositions that are embodied in individuals or collectively. Habitus works to structure and normalise unconscious, unquestioned assumptions of how the world is, and thus orientates the agent towards preferences for action in a horizon of possibilities.<sup>20</sup> I deploy habitus as a 'thinking tool' to unpick Sumner's assumptions of belief (both social and religious) and contingent conception of 'a horizon of possibilities' and to locate her in relation to upholding or realigning the doxic assumptions characteristic to her Anglican and socially advantaged group habitus.<sup>21</sup>

Bourdieu conceptualises the political, economic or cultural arenas in which identity is established and agency is enacted as fields. Fields determine who and what is within them and are locations for the production of value, knowledge or symbolic goods. Fields assert value for the purpose of legitimising and upholding their ascendancy, and in so doing, fields construct an epistemology of social reality, that is how the world 'is' and what counts as preferred knowledge.<sup>22</sup> They are sites for the acquisition of advantages and of competition for them. They concern, 'the struggle for, and rival claims to truth'.<sup>23</sup> I perceive Sumner's activism as realised within the field of religion specifically in the subfield of Anglicanism, a denomination in competition with other religious groups for the allegiance of believers, seeking to assert the superiority of its beliefs and thus the legitimacy of its authority, and I position her activism against this context.<sup>24</sup>

Drawing on a game analogy Bourdieu conceptualises the individual agent negotiating a life trajectory as playing for advantage within fields, and I apply this notion to Mary Sumner's activism. Bourdieu's category of capital refers to attributes valued in fields accruing to individuals or groups that they may transact (within or between fields) for advantage.<sup>25</sup> Symbolic capital relates to attributes other than material goods and can be embodied, objectified or institutionalised. Embodied capital is that which is vested in agents. Embodied attributes such as gender may serve to mediate capital. It could appertain to attributes such as piety, taste or being 'of good family' to draw examples from Mary Sumner, for which the agent may receive recognition and secure advantage. Objectified capital is associated with prestigious things or places invested with meaning and value. Institutionalised capital is vested in structures or in organisations such religious bodies which have the authority to bestow advantage or prestige.<sup>26</sup> Thus association with these sites of prestige and power may be a source of capital for the individual agent. Individual agents possessing abundant capital achieve what Bourdieu terms 'distinction'. They are recognised for their pedagogic authority and secure the right to speak in, or on behalf of the field.<sup>27</sup> In this paper I explore Sumner's embodiment of capital and her accumulation and transaction of capital towards pedagogic authority in the Church and the achievement of a position in the Anglican field for the MU.

According to Bourdieu, individuals, organisations or interest groups invested with power and authority seek to retain dominance through 'reproduction'.<sup>28</sup> Ascendancy is maintained through 'pedagogic work' that may serve to uphold the interests of some groups to the disadvantage of others. Successful pedagogic work through institutions such as the Church habituates agents to, in Bourdieu's terminology, 'misrecognise' the authority of the dominating structure and legitimacy of its doxa.<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu terms this symbolic violence because the cultural preferences of the dominant group are arbitrary and imposed. The notion of misrecognition applies to both the dominated and those exercising domination, who may engage in pedagogic action as agents of symbolic violence on

behalf of a dominating structure whilst also being subject to domination. This resonates with Aiston's claim that agency may be realised by agents who have internalised stereotypes or assumptions of value.<sup>30</sup> Compliance to the dominant doxa is reinforced by sanctions, or rewarded by the bestowal of capital that secures material, cultural or social advantage. I apply these concepts to unpick aspects of Mary Sumner's agency in the field of religion and position her in relation to change and constraint.

### **Mary Sumner: dispositions of habitus and notions of gendered religious and social capital**

Mary Sumner's dispositions of habitus were informed in the context of a kinship network that prioritised cultural, educational and religious capital, in particular that of the Established Anglican Church. Notions of women's desirable attributes accrued around domestic roles and religious sensibility. Evidence of these dispositions of habitus and gendered notions of desirable capital comes from Sumner's manuscripts *Account of Her Early Life at Hope End 1828-46* and *Account of the Founding of the Mothers' Union and Parochial Work at Old Alresford* that informed the 1921 official biography *Mary Sumner her life and Work*, and her publications *Our Holiday in the East* (1881) and *Memoir of George Henry Sumner, D.D. Bishop of Guildford* (1910).<sup>31</sup> Further corroborating evidence on religious practice and the role of women in family life is evident in George Sumner's *Life of C. R. Sumner, D.D., Bishop of Winchester and the Reminiscences of Sir Thomas Percival Heywood* Mary Sumner's cousin (and brother in law).<sup>32</sup> As material produced with public consumption in mind, 'thinking with Bourdieu' I interpret these sources as field manoeuvres in asserting claims to the possession of desirable social, cultural and religious capital.<sup>33</sup>

Mary Sumner (then Heywood) spent her childhood at Hope End, the country estate belonging to her father Thomas Heywood (1797-1861) the antiquarian and former banker who was appointed High Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1840.<sup>34</sup> In her *Account of Her Early Life* Sumner presents a picture of a loving family with religion embedded in home and public life. She recorded her father's philanthropy in endowing the Anglican Church and school in the 'neglected' parish of Wellington Heath and asserted his piety by noting that: 'in his last days, his whole mind was set upon the future world'.<sup>35</sup> Both parents engaged with the cultural education of their son and daughters, but Sumner emphasised the active role her mother Mary (nee Barton) played in their religious education through daily study of the Bible. Sumner celebrated her mother's 'very decided religious convictions' which 'moulded her whole tone of thought and manner of life and were an influence to those with whom she came in contact',<sup>36</sup> and encapsulated the symbolic capital embodied by her mother by using Coventry Patmore's image, to describe her as the 'Angel in the house to us all'.<sup>37</sup>

Mary's marriage in 1848 to George Sumner, the youngest son of Charles Bishop of Winchester and nephew of the Archbishop of Canterbury John Bird Sumner, placed her in close proximity to noted evangelicals in the Anglican hierarchy, dedicated to revitalising the Church of England, at a time when census figures identified the allegiance of significant numbers of worshipers to other denominations (or none at all), and changes in legislation reflected an acknowledgement in law of their claims to legitimacy.<sup>38</sup> Although 'Britain remained a profoundly religious society', what Bourdieu terms the 'ownership of the goods of salvation', that is notions of what constituted superior religious capital and who possessed it, were contested.<sup>39</sup> As a member of Charles Sumner's household at Farnham Castle between 1849 and 1851, where George served as his father's domestic chaplain, Mary Sumner would have encountered the bishop's perception that dissent should be actively countered; for 'others in the field are ready to pick up gleanings'.<sup>40</sup>

The Sumners, like the Heywoods, esteemed the capital of the educated woman 'of cultivated mind...not a mere intendente de maison' as religious exemplar and companionable helpmeet to her husband.<sup>41</sup> George Sumner's memoir of his father included a eulogy for his mother Jennie (nee Manoir) signed by 684 clergy commending her as 'an affectionate parent', 'a faithful promoter of peace and charity' and 'truly a helpmeet' which were 'manifold instances of her labour in the lord'.<sup>42</sup> Evidence that her performance of behaviour framed by the religious doxa was recognised and enlarged the religious capital of the family.

Between 1851 and 1885 at Old Alresford in rural Hampshire, where George was Rector, Mary Sumner, conforming to gendered notions of estimable womanly behaviour, accrued social capital as a hostess<sup>43</sup> and symbolic religious capital through discharging her duties as a mother and acting as the helpmeet to her husband in philanthropic initiatives in the parish.<sup>44</sup> According to the *Account of the Founding of the Mothers' Union and Parochial Work at Old Alresford* George 'greatly approved' of the mothers' meeting that was the genesis of the Mothers' Union. The Church choir and a meeting for married men were also under Mary Sumner's direction. In 1875 she widened her philanthropic activism by became a Founding Associate of the Girls' Friendly Society, the first officially recognised Anglican organisation run by, and for, women.<sup>45</sup>

In 1879-1880 travel with her husband George and other family members, via Egypt to Palestine Syria and Lebanon, gave Sumner an opportunity to enlarge her cultural and religious capital. She drew on this experience as to assert the superiority of Christianity and estimable qualities vested in Christian women of distinction.<sup>46</sup> In her published account of the journey, which Sumner referred to as 'our pilgrimage to the Holy Land', she emphasised her religious sensibility; 'Good Friday in Jerusalem was a day never to be forgotten... It seemed wonderful and solemn to be commemorating the great central fact of our holy faith in the very place where Our Blessed Lord laid down his Life.'<sup>47</sup> Sumner also

recounted contact with missionary women workers who exemplified valorous religious capital, such as Mrs Bowen Thompson who ran a school in Damascus where, 'the sphere is one of great difficulty and danger, and requires much tact as well as Christian Courage'<sup>48</sup> and the 'brave, indomitable' Miss Whatley, who had been 'abused insulted and cursed in the streets by fanatical Moslems'.<sup>49</sup> Anecdotes of visits to zenanas which, according to Sumner, kept women in in 'ignorance and practical imprisonment,' provided a further opportunity to assert the exalted status accorded to women by Christianity contrasted with the 'vacant and debilitating [...] dreary, useless, childish [and] inane lives' lead by 'eastern' women.<sup>50</sup>

Mary Sumner's trajectory towards activism and agency was bound up to with her husband's career. The beneficiary of patronage from his father, which secured him the substantial living of Old Alresford, George's further progress in the field was signalled by his election as proctor in convocation in 1866, a role that involved representing the views of other clergy, his role as a canon of Winchester cathedral from 1873 and lastly his appointment as Suffragan Bishop of Guildford in 1888. George's promotion to Archdeacon in 1885 and move to the prestigious Cathedral Close at Winchester provided Mary Sumner with opportunities to advance her own field position. It was this year that she became president of the Church of England Temperance Association Juvenile Section and the Vice President of the Diocesan Girls' friendly Society, moves that reflect the recognition of her embodied social and religious capital. With over thirty years of parochial work to her credit, social contacts amongst local gentry and titled landowners, high status churchmen as relatives and a network of contacts with clergy and their wives, Sumner was well positioned to move towards increasing her pedagogic authority.

### **Mary Sumner and the Mothers' Union: field manoeuvres, capital and pedagogic authority**

Mary Sumner's presence on the platform at a meeting for 'working women' at the 1885 Portsmouth Church congress was as the consort of her husband George. The Church Congresses had been instigated in 1862 by John Bird Sumner as a means of Church outreach and a forum for lay participation in Church affairs, and it was customary for clergy to be accompanied by their wives. Although women were seen beside their menfolk, for them to address an audience from the platform was unusual. Sumner was invited to speak 'on the inspiration of' family friend Ernest Wilberforce the Bishop of Newcastle following his own address. Sumner's speech asserted the role of mothers in reforming the morals of the nation but the rhetoric reported in her 1921 biography and official history of the MU was an 'improvement' on the words she delivered from the platform.

My friends, as wives and mothers we have a great work to do for our husbands, our children, our homes and our country, and I am convinced that it would greatly help us if we could start a Mothers' Union, wherein all classes could unite in faith and prayer, to try to do this work for God. With His help and inspiration we can conquer all difficulties and raise the Home-Life of our Nation.<sup>51</sup>

However her speech did result in the agreement, at a social gathering following the meeting, to instigate the Mothers' Union as a diocesan organisation sanctioned by Bishop Harold Browne, the wife of Elizabeth a member of the original central committee of the Girls' Friendly Society and father-in-law to Mary Sumner's eldest daughter Louisa.<sup>52</sup> Sumner visualised the Mothers' Union extending the preventive moral agenda of the GFS which aimed to prevent unmarried working-class women and girls from 'falling' (the loss of symbolic capital occasioned by loss of chastity).<sup>53</sup> Former GFS girls after marriage could form the constituency of MU. Sumner's intention to mobilise mothers as the religious educators of their children echoed the emphasis on the home as a site for religious education expressed in Evangelical Anglican Hannah More's *Strictures* (1745-1833),<sup>54</sup> and the methods of home teaching by firm but loving example advocated by Sumner in her writings accords with views expressed in Unitarian Harriet Martineau's (1802-1876) *Household Education*.<sup>55</sup> The MU motto 'train up a child in the way he should go' was borrowed from Anglican educator Charlotte Mason's 1886 *Home Education* which advocated the spiritual empowerment of the child and the fostering of learning by example and enquiry.<sup>56</sup>

Mary Sumner drew on her contacts amongst 'ladies', many of whom were also active in the Girls' Friendly Society, and mobilised them to initiate Mothers' Union branches and recruit rank and file members at parish level.<sup>57</sup> The *Hampshire Chronicle* of February 1886 reported a typical meeting which combined a social event under the patronage of a distinguished hostess (in this instance the celebrated author and GFS activist Charlotte Yonge) with communicating the message of the MU:

OTTERBOURNE Mothers' Meeting - On Tuesday last Miss Yonge entertained about 60 'mothers of young children' at tea in the school room. After the tables had been cleared a meeting was held, at which an earnest and impressive address was delivered by Mrs Sumner, wife of the Archdeacon of Winchester.<sup>58</sup>

Mary Sumner's position in a network that included high status clergy was instrumental in the spread as well as in inception of the MU. Her friends Emily Wilberforce, Ellen Bickersteth and Frances Atlay wives of the Bishops of Newcastle, Exeter and Hereford respectively secured diocesan recognition for the MU following the Portsmouth Church Conference.<sup>59</sup> According to Sumner's biography 'Very rapidly other dioceses followed the lead given by Winchester and they generally accepted the Winchester organisation.'<sup>60</sup> As the wife of the Archdeacon, and having secured recognition from the



Bishop of Winchester, she had the authority to approach not only personal acquaintances but others in the Anglican field.

In 1887 The Winchester Diocesan Mothers' Union (following a pattern established by the GFS) instigated a diocesan conference, a practice followed by other dioceses. Conferences endorsed by clergy and socially distinguished speakers served to communicate the MU agenda and reward attendees with an opportunity for socialisation and the capital of participating in Church work. Following Mary Sumner's debut speech at Portsmouth, MU speakers were represented at every Church Congress between 1887 and 1921 and their views recorded for dissemination to a wider audience through the published records of Congress.<sup>61</sup> Sumner herself spoke at Hull in 1890, Liverpool in 1904 and Southampton in 1913. Her Hull speech demonstrates her negotiation of the paternal authority vested in both family and Church: 'we could hardly summon fathers of all ranks and classes, as well as mothers to our meetings we should be considered presumptuous and impertinent if we were to do so. It would be outside our province as women.'<sup>62</sup> However she sought the presence of what she termed 'powerful' clerics and laymen invested with pedagogic authority to endorse the Mothers' Union message at conferences and mass meetings.<sup>63</sup> Sumner also pursued a gruelling programme of travelling and speaking, at the York Mothers' Union Conference in 1913, after an extensive tour of northern towns her visit was likened by her biographer Mary Porter to a royal progress.<sup>64</sup> In addition to face to face encounters Sumner produced an enormous volume of correspondence to promote the Mothers' Union, create a sense of personal connection with individual members and secure endorsement from high status clergy for its campaigns. Letters exchanged with Princess Christian, Patron of the Diocese of London Mothers' Union, who 'gladly' supported Mary Sumner's opposition to divorce provide an example of the success of this strategy.<sup>65</sup>

Mary Sumner also disseminated the agenda of the Mothers' Union via publication. She produced numerous pamphlets that communicated sympathy with the challenges faced by mothers on topics such as negotiating the trials of married life and keeping children from corrupting influences. These were circulated as inclusions in her correspondence and distributed at branch meetings. Her 1896 book *Home Life* represents a reprinted selection of this output.<sup>66</sup> The *Mothers' Union Journal*, published initially in 1888, to which members were required to subscribe, was conceived as a newsletter from Sumner to working class mothers.<sup>67</sup> It featured guidance in childrearing that emphasised the expertise of mothers as educators, religious instruction, advice on mediating the behaviour of husbands, practical guidance on health and housekeeping and fiction with a moral message. Sumner also used printed material to address, in an appropriately modulated 'voice', the 'educated mothers' of the middle/upper class. In 1888 she published *To Mothers of the Higher Classes* which urged them: 'To give a helping hand in spreading the principles of the Mothers'

Union, each in her own circle among her equals, and among her poorer neighbours'.<sup>68</sup> However she chastised 'worldly' mothers, 'busy with society - paying visits, yachting, receiving large shooting parties or going abroad for weeks and months', for neglecting their children to the detriment of their religious education.<sup>69</sup> 'Educated' mothers were also addressed from 1891 through the magazine *Mothers in Council* edited by Sumner's friend Charlotte Yonge. Yonge's reputation as the author of wholesome novels and journalism served to endorse *Mothers in Council* with religious and educational capital.<sup>70</sup> Like the *Mothers' Union Journal*, *Mothers in Council* gave advice on childrearing and educational methods such as those of kindergarten pioneer Friedrich Froebel, in its advocacy for active mothering. But one significant difference was that the topic of the management of husbands was avoided for whilst mis/recognition of the legitimacy of social stratification authorised the patronage of working class men, mediating the views of men of higher class had to be more cautiously negotiated by securing their male peers to speak on behalf of the Mothers' Union.

Mary Sumner's assertion of the capital value of motherhood was complicit, with and was accomplished within, notions of desirable womanly capital predicated on the mis/recognition of the legitimacy of the Anglican/Christian religious doxa. This legitimised patriarchal dominance by asserting the authority of men over women as divinely ordained. The notion that religious authority was unwomanly was rooted in scripture and the interpretation of St Paul.<sup>71</sup> Sumner, misrecognised this gendered doctrine as legitimate and affirmed her agreement that women should 'be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children. To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed'.<sup>72</sup> 'Power in the human father is intended to express and typify in each home the greater rule of the Almighty'.<sup>73</sup>

Mary Sumner saw marriage as sacrament, the only way to negotiate the transmission from innocence to sexual experience without loss of religious capital and contingent social capital. In her insistence on chastity and the imperative of preserving it Sumner exemplifies a controlling discourse of motherhood.<sup>74</sup> Yet her writing on marriage celebrates the symbolic (but also practical) rewards of conforming to religiously authorised gendered conduct.<sup>75</sup> In her assertion that: 'Boys should be modest and pure quite as much as girls',<sup>76</sup> Sumner was in accord with the purity agenda expounded by Ellice Hopkins which sought an equal moral standard for men and women.<sup>77</sup> She exhorted wives to make home inviting so that husbands would wish to participate in family life. Writing '*To Fathers*' Sumner asserted that men had a duty of respect, love and fidelity to their wives and they also had a role as exemplars of religious living to their children.<sup>78</sup> Habituated to misrecognise the symbolic violence of patriarchal domination masked by provision for material needs, protectiveness, and considerate behaviour, it was Sumner's view that 'true religion' would 'inspire men with Christian chivalry, and make them good and tender and sympathetic husbands and fathers ready:

to cheer with kind words the suffering weary hearted mother, and even through the night to relieve her sometimes of the fretful baby or the sick child, and set things to rights in the morning before he starts off to work again.<sup>79</sup>

The Mothers' Union treated landmarks in family life as occasions for religious thanksgiving and in the case of prominent figures, adopted them as shared corporate events that were reported in MU publications.<sup>80</sup> Mary Sumner's golden wedding anniversary was celebrated with a special service in the Cathedral and 'tea under an enormous tent' was attended by 1,200 Diocesan MU members.<sup>81</sup> The Sumners' diamond wedding was also celebrated with the presentation of a screen endorsed with royal signatures.<sup>82</sup>

The possession of gendered religiously framed symbolic capital was an essential pillar of Mary Sumner's personal claim for pedagogic authority. Women as 'spiritual mothers' could demonstrate their possession of symbolic religious capital by demonstrating piety through prayer, church attendance and in encouraging children in Bible study. Capital was also to be acquired by protecting children from the sins of intemperance and blasphemy, and in so doing, raising them to uphold religiously authorised standards of morality. Sumner's views also exemplify a controlling discourse of motherhood in the proscription of behaviour perceived as transgressive. Foremost amongst the capital of the Christian woman was chastity, which Sumner considered (in common with her co-workers in the Girls' Friendly Society) an absolute marker of the capital of women collectively as well as individually, that differentiated them from the corrupting influence of the sexually transgressive woman. It was: 'needless to say that no unmarried mother could ever be a Member of the Society.'<sup>83</sup>

Mary Sumner's field manoeuvres involved drawing authority from the institutional capital invested in the established Church and positioning the Mothers' Union as working for the Church. Anglican identity was promoted by the insistence that the 'Subscribing Members' who formed the leadership of the MU at local, diocesan and central level should be communicants of the Church of England. Roman Catholics were not admitted to the MU but Protestant Nonconformists could join as ordinary members as long as they accepted the sacrament of infant baptism.<sup>84</sup> The Mothers' Union drew on the forms and language of the Anglican Church to substantiate its claims to pedagogic authority,<sup>85</sup> although it did not, in keeping with its misrecognition of the superiority of paternal clerical authority, engage with intellectual theological debate.<sup>86</sup> Sumner's formula for enrolment into the Mothers' Union specified the use of a prayer and a ritual question and answer format, reminiscent of the catechism, to affirm the member's intention to uphold the MU rules. The ceremony was to be conducted either by a clergyman in church or an Enrolling Member.<sup>87</sup> Physical presence in the Church was also claimed through the display of banners in parish churches and annual diocesan services were held from 1888 in Winchester, and Annunciation day (March 25<sup>th</sup>), an

anniversary marked in the Church calendar, was adopted by the Central Council in 1897 as a 'Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving'.<sup>88</sup>

Network contacts with The Church Missionary Society, The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and Church of England Zenana Mission Society were cultivated as a means of aligning the Mothers' Union with organisations invested with missionary capital. Correspondence with missionary Gertrude King, concerning her Malagasy MU members, published in the *Mothers' Union Journal* reinforced the message that MU members were part of an elite network of Christian women with a 'civilizing mission' whether at home or overseas.<sup>89</sup> The Pan-Anglican Conference of 1908 provided the Mothers' Union with the opportunity for a conspicuous demonstration of their contribution to, and presence alongside, the Church overseas.<sup>90</sup> Mary Sumner joined other representatives of the MU including the current Central President Lady Chichester on the Women's General Committee of the conference.<sup>91</sup> Following the conference a mass meeting was held at the Royal Albert Hall in London where Sumner's address to an audience of 8,000 MU members was received with a standing ovation.<sup>92</sup> The success of Sumner's field manoeuvres to secure the Mothers' Union's recognition as a Church body is also demonstrated by the instigation of an annual service at St Paul's Cathedral, and the objectification of her personal capital in the eponymous Mary Sumner House, the purpose built MU headquarters, opened in 1917 by Princess Christian and the Bishop of London.<sup>93</sup>

### Mary Sumner and the Mothers' Union: power, agency change and constraint

The Church of England, as the established Church had a privileged relationship to the state. State and Church power were personified in the monarch as its titular head. Authorised by temporal power, Anglicanism, in turn, legitimated monarch, state and imperial rule by association with divine authority and Christian values.<sup>94</sup> With, senior clergy politically appointed and the disposition of rural clerical livings under the patronage of the gentry, Anglicanism represented the interests of the dominant social group with which Sumner identified. Perceiving England as the foremost exemplar of a Christian country Sumner positioned the Mothers' Union as a patriotic organisation.<sup>95</sup> For Sumner social ills indicated moral failings rather than systemic disadvantage, so conformity to, and complicity with, religiously approved standards of behaviour, such as sexual continence and temperance, would alleviate the misery of prostitution, violence and poverty and thus served the interests of the state. In 1895 she claimed: 'Every man in the land who is ruling himself and his home in accordance with the faith and obedience of Christ is a tower of strength to his country'.<sup>96</sup> Social

wellbeing was also promoted by the acceptance of existing hierarchies of power that the Church of England endorsed.

The connection of every class of society is [...] necessary to that maintenance of authority, respect for the public law, and stability of government on which the safety of property to individuals and the continuance of the national prosperity alike depend.<sup>97</sup>

Prioritising the Christian family as the bulwark of well-ordered society, Sumner's understanding of women's citizenship was delineated by her notion of the appropriate sphere of women as wives and mothers. Whilst focusing on home duties rather than the achievement of civil rights, the emphasis on mothers' contribution to social wellbeing as religious educators, was a claim for their worth as pedagogic agents for Church and country. Yet for Sumner public matters overlapped with issues of concern in the home and this stance permeated the rationale and practice of the Mothers' Union. Key examples being the mobilisation of support for denominational education threatened by a 'dangerous wave of infidelity', and sustained campaigning against legislation to facilitate divorce, which according to Sumner 'caused 'the degradation of parents, widespread misery and cruel injury to the character training of children' which would lead to 'fatal results' in national as well as home life.<sup>98</sup>

Gail Malmgreen's identification of 'the central paradox of religion as opiate and embodiment of institutional sexism and religion as transcendent and liberating force' is applicable to the life of Mary Sumner.<sup>99</sup> Thinking Sumner with Bourdieu, deploying the categories of habitus, field and capital and the concepts of reproduction, pedagogic work and symbolic violence provides a means to account for these paradoxes. According to Bourdieu:

Religious institutions work permanently, both practically and symbolically to euphemise social relations, including relations of exploitation (as in the family), by transfiguring them into relations of spiritual kinship or of religious exchange [...] Exploitation is masked.<sup>100</sup>

This analysis is evident in Mary Sumner's activism set against the temporal social context that informed her 'horizon of possibilities'. Sumner's understanding of religious capital and contingent notions of the behaviour of 'good women' was informed in (and reinforced by continuing immersion in) a kinship and social network that prioritised Anglican doxa. She also represents a category of conservative Anglican woman who considered that religious capital legitimised the dominant position of those with temporal power. Habituated to upholding the social doxa of class stratification these women perceived that their social prominence required, and qualified them, to exercise moral responsibility for those of lower social status. The Mothers' Union offered these women opportunities for the acquisition of symbolic capital through religious activism. In exchange for misrecognising the legitimacy of arbitrarily ascribed gender roles and the indices of capital that they

sought to perpetrate, it offered a channel for activism, and the opportunity to develop expertise and reputation in a field of their own, dedicated to lobbying on issues relevant to the lives of women and the nation. In establishing the Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner both exploited and mediated doxic assumptions on the role of women. Whilst the capital asserted as desirable was framed within the existing gendered religious and social doxa, the worth of this capital was championed as significant to national life. Through drawing on the authority conferred by institutional attachment to the Church and royal endorsement, the Mothers' Union made the presence of women as speakers on public platforms including the Church Congresses, not only familiar but respectable. The Mothers' Union created a space for an organised body of women within the Church. It also normalised the collective action of women in relation to public issues by lobbying to influence policy before women had yet to achieve full civil rights.<sup>101</sup>

The voices of individual rank and file members of the organisation are elusive in Sumner's archive and early Mothers' Union records, which as Moyse notes, are weighted towards an institutional perspective.<sup>102</sup> Yet evidence of support for the pedagogic work and recognition of the pedagogic authority of Mary Sumner can be seen in the rapid expansion of the organisation nationally and overseas. For Bourdieu, symbolic religious capital, which he terms the 'goods of salvation', includes a sense of legitimisation and non-material well being acquired through membership of a recognised congregation which promises salvation and this analysis can be applied to the MU.<sup>103</sup> In exchange for the misrecognition of the legitimacy of a religious doxa which upheld patriarchal and class domination, and enforced absolutes in gendered standards of behaviour, joining a Mothers' Union branch offered tangible advantages and symbolic gifts. Members were promised the spiritual reward of 'leading their families in purity and holiness of life' a discourse of motherhood that valorised the daily challenges of raising children and the pragmatic negotiation of married life: 'Even the poorest mother will remember her life is of infinite value'.<sup>104</sup> MU members could accrue the social honour of belonging to an organisation given celebrity endorsement by titled ladies and members of the royal family. They were also given a space for 'respectable' socialisation and offered entertainment and education through its magazines. In Mary Sumner members could identify with a leader who combined a distinguished public profile with the ability (via her writing, speaking and correspondence) to give members a sense of sympathetic personal connection. She appeared to embody the capital assets and symbolic gifts that she asserted as a reward for upholding religiously authorised notions of spiritual womanhood.

In relation to agency, change and constraint Mary Sumner simultaneously occupies several positions. In securing the recognition of women as an organised body representing the perspective of Christian women Sumner opened the way for the further enlargement of women's horizons of

possibility and engagement with public affairs, so evident in the issues engaged in by the contemporary MU.<sup>105</sup> In so doing she may also be perceived as agent of change. Conversely the field position conceded to the MU by the Church may be regarded as constraining in that the women's voice it articulated was subject to upholding a religious doxa fearful of women's sexuality and theological authority.<sup>106</sup> In upholding religiously framed notions of womanhood reflective of patriarchal domination and class differentiation Sumner was an agent of symbolic violence and constraint but also, subject to it. Yet as an activist recognised worldwide who exercised control towards the achievement of self-defined goals Mary Sumner was an empowered individual agent. She was, according to Bourdieu's analogy a highly effective 'player' in the field of religion who accrued and transacted her capital to be highly innovative in achieving lasting personal distinction worldwide in the Anglican religious field.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Mary Porter, Mary Woodward and Horatia Erskine (1921) *Mary Sumner her Life and Work and a Short History of the Mothers' Union* (Winchester: Warren and Sons).

<sup>2</sup>Frank Prochaska (2002) *The Angel out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press); Diana Kendall (2002) *The Power of Good Deeds: Privileged Women and the Social Reproduction of the Upper Class* Boston: Rawman Littlefield, 2002; Gerard, Jessica (1987) 'Lady Bountiful Women of the Landed Classes and Rural Philanthropy.' *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 2, pp.183-210.

<sup>3</sup>Mothers' Union, *Minute Book* (Lambeth Palace Library MU/CC/1/1) ; Horatia Erskine, *A History of the Mothers' Union* Lambeth Palace Library MU/MSS/1/5.

<sup>4</sup>Cordelia Moyse (2009) *A History of the Mothers' Union: Women Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876-2008* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press) pp. 69-77.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Sumner, Letters to Lady Chichester 1909-1911; Letters to Mrs Wilberforce 1916-20; Letters to Mrs Maude 1909-1921, Lambeth Palace Library MU/CO/PRES/5/7.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times* (August 12th, 1921) Obituary of Mary Sumner.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mothersunion.org/about-us/how-we-work/our-governance-> accessed 20.2.2016.

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<sup>8</sup> Brian Heeney (1988) *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850 -1930* (Oxford: Clarendon); Sean Gill (1994) *Women and the Church of England; from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London: SPCK).

<sup>9</sup> Moyse *A History of the Mothers' Union*, pp. xii, 6. For MU as validating maternal citizenship and identities see also Catriona Beaumont (2013) *Housewives and Citizens; Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-64* ( Manchester: Manchester University Press). Anne O'Brien (2000) *Militant Mothers: Faith Power and Identity in the Mothers' Union in Sydney 1896-1950*, *Women's History Review* 9, pp.35-53.

<sup>10</sup> Mary P. Ryan (2003) *The Public and the Private Good across the Great Divide in Women's History*, *Journal of Women's History* 15, pp. 10-27; Simon Morgan (2007) *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies). See also Sue Morgan (2009) *Theorising Feminist History: A Thirty Year Retrospective*, *Women's History Review* 18, pp. 381-407; Linda Kerber (1988) *Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place; the Rhetoric of Women's History*, *Journal of American History* 75, pp. 9-39; Amanda Vickery, "'Golden Age to Separate Spheres' a Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," in *Gender and History in Western Europe*, ed. Robert Shoemaker and Mary Vincent (London: Addison- Wesley Longman, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo (1998) *Some Paradoxes of Empowerment*, in Eileen Janes Yeo (Ed.) *Radical Femininity; Womens' Self Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press) pp. 9-17 p.13.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Jane Aiston (2010) *Women, Education and Agency, 1600-2000: an Historical Perspective*, in Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston and Maureen Meikle (Ed.) *Women, Education and Agency* (London and New York: Routledge) p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Jenny Daggers (2001) *The Victorian Female Civilising Mission and Women's Aspirations Towards Priesthood in the Church of England*, *Women's History Review* 10, pp. 651-670.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (Ed.) (2010) *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London: Routledge); Midori Yamaguchi (2014) *Daughters of The Anglican Clergy Religion, Gender and identity in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity) pp.7-26.



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<sup>16</sup>Joan Wallach Scott (1999) *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press); Beverly Skeggs (2004) Context and Background: Pierre Bourdieu's Analysis of Class, Gender and Sexuality, *The Sociological Review* 52, pp 19-34; Tori Moi (1999) *'What Is a Woman?' And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Beate Kraus (1993) Gender and Symbolic Violence: Female Oppression in the Light of Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Practice," in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (Ed.) *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge Polity); Pierre Bourdieu (2001) *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

<sup>17</sup>For Bourdieu and networks see Joyce Goodman and Jane Martin (2007) Networks After Bourdieu: Women Education and Politics from the 1890s to the 1920s, *History of Education Researcher*, 80, pp. 65-75.

<sup>18</sup>Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1990) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage).

<sup>19</sup>Barbara Caine (1992) Feminist Biography and Feminist History, *Women's History Review* 3, pp. 247-260.

<sup>20</sup>Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An invitation*, p. 124.

<sup>21</sup>Pierre Bourdieu (1990) *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity) pp. 20, 53, 54.

<sup>22</sup>Pierre Bourdieu (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production; Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity) pp. 78, 121, 189; Bourdieu *Logic of Practice* p.68

<sup>23</sup>Helen M. Gunter (2002) Purposes and Positions in the Field of Education Management, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 30 no.1 pp 7-26, p.11; See also Helen M. Gunter *Leaders and Leadership in Education*. 'Social processes are structured by a hierarchy of fields: political field, economic field, cultural field and education and so positions and positioning is about domination, subordination or equivalence' p13.

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (1991) Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field, *Comparative Social Research* 13, pp. 1-44;

<sup>25</sup>For transactions of educational capital to secure social and economic advantage see Andrea Jacobs (2007) Examinations as Cultural Capital for the Victorian School Girl: Thinking with Bourdieu *Women's History Review* 16, pp. 245-264.

<sup>26</sup>Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation* p.119.

<sup>27</sup>Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice* ,p. 139

<sup>28</sup>Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, pp. x-xii, 31-32, 38-39, 10-11.

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<sup>29</sup>Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation*, p. 162. Frank Poupeau (2000) Reasons for Domination: Bourdieu Versus Habermas, in Bridget Fowler (Ed.) *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture*, ed. (Oxford Blackwell), pp.71, 72.

<sup>30</sup> Sarah Jane Aiston (2010) Women, Education and Agency 1600-2000, an Historical Perspective, in Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston and Maureen Meikle (Ed.) *Women, Education and Agency* (London and New York: Routledge) pp. 1-8.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Sumner (undated) Account of Her Early Life at Hope End 1828-46, Lambeth Palace Library MU/MSS/2/12.; Mary Sumner (undated) Account of the Founding of the Mothers' Union and Parochial Work at Old Alresford, Lambeth Palace Library MU/MSS/1/2. These were written to inform the official biography by Mary Porter, Mary Woodward, and Horatia Erskine (1921) *Mary Sumner Her Life and Work and a Short History of the Mothers' Union* (Winchester: Warren and Son); Mary Sumner (1910) *Memoir of George Henry Sumner, D.D. Bishop of Guildford: Published for His Friends by Special Request* (Winchester: Warren and Sons), pp. 54,67,78. Mary Sumner (1881) *Our Holiday in the East* (London Hurst and Blackett).

<sup>32</sup> George Henry Sumner (1876) *Life of C. R. Sumner, D.D., Bishop of Winchester, During a Forty Years' Episcopate* (London: John Murray); Isabel Mary Heywood and Sir Thomas Percival Heywood (1899) *Reminiscences, Letters and Journals of Thomas Percival Heywood, Baronet. Arranged by His Eldest Daughter (Isabel Mary). With a Preface by the Rev. George Body* (Printed for private circulation: Manchester).

<sup>33</sup>See June Purvis (1992) Using Primary Sources When Researching Women's History from a Feminist Perspective, *Womens's History Review* 1, pp. 273-306 for a discussion of perspective in relation to archival sources.

<sup>34</sup> C.W. Sutton and Alan G. Crosby (2010) Thomas Heywood (1797-1866) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford; Oxford University Press) (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13191> accessed November 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Sumner, Account of her Early Life; Sumner, *Memior of George Sumner*, p27.

<sup>36</sup> Sumner, Account of her Early Life.

<sup>37</sup> Porter, Woodward and Erskine, *Mary Sumner and Short History* p. 8; Sumner, Account of her Early Life.

<sup>38</sup> Key legislation included the Repeal of the Test and Corporations Act 1828, Catholic Emancipation Act 1829 and Irish Disestablishment 1871. See Nigel Scotland, *John Bird Sumner: Evangelical Archbishop* (Leominster:

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Gracewing, 1995). 67-80. for details of other legislation on the financial status of the Church and Sumner's response to social legislation.

<sup>39</sup>Gerald Parsons (1988) *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol 1*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press in association with the Open University) p.8; Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, p.126.

<sup>40</sup>George Sumner, *Life of R.C Sumner*, p. 17.6

<sup>41</sup>ibid. pp 25-26.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. pp. 12, 28. The notion of helpmeet derives from the Bible (Genesis 2. 18).

<sup>43</sup>Sumner, *Memoir of George Sumner*, pp. 22-25. Sumner claimed social capital by recording 'The Social Life' which noted friendships with the titled owners of local country houses and recorded encounters with cultural celebrities such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, John Ruskin and Charles Kingsley at the salon given by Lady Ashburton wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire.

<sup>44</sup>Mary Sumner, *Founding; Memoir of George Sumner*, pp. 15-22. 23-25.

<sup>45</sup>Mary Heath Stubbs (1926) *Friendships Highway: Being the History of the Girl's Friendly Society* (London: Girls' Friendly Society) p.6. See also Susan Mumm (2010) *Women and Philanthropic Cultures in Sue Morgan And Jacqueline de Vries (Ed.) Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* ( London: Routledge)

<sup>46</sup>Billie Melman (1995) 'A Prosopography of Travel, 1763-1914'; 'Evangelical Travel and the Evangelical Construction of Gender', in *Women's Orients:English Women and the Middle East* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), pp. 25-56 and 165-190. Melman notes the trope of travel writing as autobiographical in constructing, locating and affirming the identities of their protagonists as they responded to the 'other' in the 'imaginary geography' of a culturally constructed gendered and hierarchical 'orient' an oppositional binary to the 'occident'. See also Mary Louise Pratt (1992) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London:Routledge), p7. Pratt notes how travel writing may serve to 'produce' notions of distant space and construct conceptions of cultural identity for writer and readers.

<sup>47</sup>Sumner, *Our Holiday*: 143. See also 22, 37, 42, 72, 87, 90, 103, 110, 123, 151, 183, 193 for similar evocations of religious experience and sensibility.

<sup>48</sup>Sumner, *Our Holiday*: 273; Emma Raymond Pitman (1895) *Missionary Heroines in Eastern Lands:Woman's Work in Mission Fields* ( London:S.W. Partridge and Co.) pp. 40-72.

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<sup>49</sup> Sumner, *Our Holiday*, pp. 44-45; Pitman, *Missionary Heroines*, pp. 129-160. Miss Whatley was the daughter of the Archbishop of Dublin. She worked in Egypt from 1856 to 1889 having begun her mission work in Ireland during the famine of 1846 to 1851 on behalf of the Irish Anglican Church Mission among Roman Catholics.

<sup>50</sup> Sumner, *Our Holiday*, 266. See Guli Francis-Dehqani (2000) *Women Missionaries in Persia: Perceptions of Muslim Women and Islam, 1884-1934* in Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (Ed.) *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans).

<sup>51</sup> C. Dunkley (Ed.) (1885) Mrs Sumner Old Alresford Rectory in *Report of the Church Congress held at Portsmouth* (London: Bemrose) pp.448-449.

Porter, Woodward and Erskine, *Mary Sumner and Short History*, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Porter, Woodward and Erskine, 'Testimony of Mrs Wilbeforce, *Mary Sumner and Short History*, p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Agnes L. Money (1905) *History of the Girls' Friendly Society*. (London: Wells Gardner, Darton) pp. 4-6.

<sup>54</sup> Hannah More (1779) *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education; With a view of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune* (London: Cadell and Davies); See Jane Nardin (2001) *Hannah More and the Rhetoric of Educational Reform*, *Women's History Review*, 18, pp 211-228

<sup>55</sup> Harriet Martineau (1870) *Household Education* (London: Smith Elder and Co.) pp. 7, 46-48; Sumner *Home Life* pp. 30, 95, 124.

<sup>56</sup> Charlotte Mason (1886) *Home Education; A course of Lectures to Ladies, Etc.* (London: Kegan Paul and Co.), p.8;

<sup>57</sup> Notably Ellen Joyce of the British Women's Emigration Society See Julia Bush (1994) 'The Right Sort of Woman': Female Emigrators and Emigration to the British Empire, 1890-1910 *Women's History*, 3, pp. 385-340. Review See Sue Anderson-Faithful (2014) *Mary Sumner: Religion, Mission, Education and Womanhood 1879-1921* (University of Winchester Unpublished PhD Thesis) pp. 104-105 for women active in both the GFS and MU.

<sup>58</sup> Hampshire Chronicle, "Otterbourne Mothers Meeting," *Hampshire Chronicle*, Saturday 13th. February 1886..

<sup>59</sup> See Anderson-Faithful, *Mary Sumner*, pp. 106-107 for bishops as kin or friends.

<sup>60</sup> Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*: 107. Each diocese had a president, 'presiding members' for each rural deanery and enrolling Associates who headed parish branches.

<sup>61</sup> *Official Reports of the Church Congress, 1886 to 1921* (London: Bemrose).

<sup>62</sup> Mary Sumner (1890) Paper Read at the Church Congress at Hull, Lambeth Palace Library MU/MSS/2/1/4.

<sup>63</sup> Mary Sumner, Letters to Lady Chichester Lambeth Palace Library MU/CO/PRES/5/2.

<sup>64</sup> Joyce Coombs (1965) *George and Mary Sumner Their Life and Times* (London: Sumner Press), p.199 Appendix 8 List of Mrs Sumner's Engagements, January to June 1913; Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*: 52, 71-72.

<sup>65</sup> Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein, Letter to Mary Sumner, Lambeth Palace Library MU/CO/PRES/5/6 surmised date 1911 in the context of other topics discussed in the letter. Princess Christian was Helena Queen Victoria's fifth child. She was a 'Working Associate' of the Old Windsor Branch of the Girls' Friendly Society.

<sup>66</sup> Mary Sumner (1896) *Home Life* Winchester: Warren and Sons. Chapters included 'Marriage'; 'Purity'; 'Obedience'; Bible Reading'; and 'To Husbands' and 'To Fathers'.

<sup>67</sup> Mothers' Union (1926) *Fifty Years* (London: Mothers' Union) pp. 10-12. Published quarterly- it sold 8,000 in its first year or circulation.

<sup>68</sup> Sumner, *To Mothers of the Higher Classes*. p 57.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p.16.

<sup>70</sup> Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) was the editor of *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the Church of England* 1851-1890 and author of *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1850), *The Daisy Chain* (1854) and numerous other works. See Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski (1965) *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge* (London: Cresset Press), pp.205- 215 for bibliography. Yonge was literature correspondent for the Girls' Friendly Society which features in her 1885 novel *The Two Sides of the Shield* (London: Macmillan).

<sup>71</sup> Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England*, 15.

<sup>72</sup> Sumner, Mothers' Work Outside the Home, *Home Life*, p. 127 .The biblical reference heading the chapter is Titus ii, 3, 4,5.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Sumner (n.d.) *To Husbands and Fathers*, Lambeth Palace Library MU/MSS/2/1/9 .

<sup>74</sup> Sumner, *Home Life*, p. 6, 80; Eileen Janes Yeo (1999) The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France 1750-1914." *Women's History Review* 8, no. 1, pp. 200-221.

<sup>75</sup> Sumner, Marriage, *Home Life*, pp.18-24.

<sup>76</sup> Sumner, Purity, *Home Life*, p. 44.

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<sup>77</sup> Sue Morgan (2000) A Passion for Purity; 'Faith Sex and Purity: The Religio-Feminist Theory of Ellice Hopkins', *Women's History Review* 9, pp. 13-34. Sumner's advice for the moral training of children drew examples from Ellice Hopkins' (1882) *On the Early Training of Girls and Boys. An Appeal to Working Women Etc.* (London: Hatchards).

<sup>78</sup>Sumner, To Fathers, *Home Life*, pp. 148-160. See (2009) Stephanie Olsen, The Authority of Motherhood in Question: Fatherhood and the Moral Education of Children in England, 1870-1900, *Women's History Review* 18, no. 5, pp.765-80.

<sup>79</sup> Sumner, To Husbands, *Home Life*, p. 150.

<sup>80</sup>Mary Sumner, *Letter to Mrs Maude Thanking Her for Birthday Wishes*. January 4th 1919, Lambeth Palace MU/CO/PRES/4. Sumner wishes her birthday greetings and her response to be published in the *Mothers' Union Journal*.

<sup>81</sup>Sumner, *Memoir of George Sumner* pp. 138-143; Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*, pp.42-43. London Diocesan President Horatia Erskine also had her golden wedding marked by the Society. *ibid.*,p.126.

<sup>82</sup>Sumner, *Memoir of George Sumner*, pp. 151-153; Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*, p. 53.

<sup>83</sup>Winchester Diocesan Mothers' Union Committee Minute Book 1886-1910, November 21st 1890 'In the case of immorality it would be best if the member resign her card.' Hampshire Record Office HRO WDMU Committee Minute Book 145/M85/C2/2RO.

<sup>84</sup>Subscribing members were 'ladies' drawn from upper/middle class who demonstrated their philanthropic patronage by paying a subscription (not less than one shilling a year) to Mothers' Union funds. Associates were subscribing members (married or unmarried) who participated in running Mothers' Union branches. Other 'ordinary' members were not required to subscribe. Sumner, *To Mothers of the Higher Classes*, p.65.

<sup>85</sup>Sumner, *Home Life*, p.4-7; *Mothers of Higher Classes*, pp.67-71.

<sup>86</sup>Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union* p.59. Discusses Higher Criticism and Theology referenced to MU Annual conference 1896 44-6 re Mary Sumner's views as in accord with mainstream Anglican liberal thought.

<sup>87</sup>Enrolling members were Associates with responsibility witnessing and countersigning the Mothers' Union card. Sumner, *To Mothers of the Higher Classes*, p. 66.

<sup>88</sup>Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*, p.109.

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<sup>89</sup>Gertrude King, *Letters to Mary Sumner*, Lambeth Palace Library MU/OS/5/13/08. 25 March 1902; See also Elizabeth E. Prevost (2010) Christianising Womanhood in Madagascar in *The Communion of Women: Missions and Gender in Colonial Africa and the British Metropole* (Oxford; Oxford University Press) pp. 123-155. Anna Davin (1978 (Imperialism and Motherhood History Workshop 5 pp.9-65.

<sup>90</sup>The Conference was instigated by the pro-imperial secretary of the SPG, Henry Montgomery Bishop of Tasmania (1889 and 1910). His wife Maud was MU Diocesan President for Tasmania. See Stephen Maughan (2003) Imperial Christianity? Bishop Montgomery and the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1895-1915 in A.N. Porter (Ed.) *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions 1880-1914* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B Eerdmans).32-57.

<sup>91</sup>MU members were strongly represented on the Women's General Committee of the Congress. Louise Creighton wife of the Bishop of London and joint founder of the National Union of Women Workers was in the chair. Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union*: 85.

<sup>92</sup>Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 110. 78. Mothers' Union, *Fifty Years*: 50-52.

<sup>94</sup>The association of temporal and spiritual power was reflected in the Anglican Church's endorsement of the army, which was symbolised in the ceremonial blessing of regimental colours, See Sumner, *Life of C. R. Sumner*, pp. 109, 124.293-294; Sumner, *Memoir of George Sumner*, pp. 5,61,62,85, 125.

<sup>95</sup>Mary Sumner used England interchangeably with, and to encompass, Britain. The Mothers' Union established Army Branches (1894) and later in 1918 Navy Branches, which were instrumental in spreading the organisation overseas. Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union*, p. 80; Porter, Woodward, and Erskine, *Mary Sumner*, p. 145; The Mothers' Union demonstrated its overt patriotism by publishing leaflets to support recruitment to the armed services in 1914. Mothers' Union (1914) *To British Mothers: How They Can Help Enlistment* (London: Mothers' Union); Mothers' Union (1914) *Brave Women* (London: Mothers' Union).

<sup>96</sup>Mary Sumner, *To Fathers Home Life* 161.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. p.160.

<sup>98</sup>Mary Sumner (October 1894) Secular Education, *Mothers' in Council*, pp. 193-202. Secular Education raised objections to the limited religious education offered in Local Authority sponsored Board Schools and urged parents to support Anglican sponsored Voluntary Schools; Mary Sumner (n.d) *The Home* (Winchester: Warren

and Sons); represents the Mothers' Union position on divorce. The Mothers' Union's ongoing opposition to the facilitation of divorce included the presentation of evidence to the Gorrell Commission in 1909. See Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union*, pp. 69-77.

<sup>99</sup>Gail Malmgreen (1986) *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930* (London: Croom Helm), p. 7.

<sup>100</sup>Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, p. 117.

<sup>101</sup> See Patricia Hollis (1978) *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1965-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon) for women's engagement in political office at local level.

<sup>102</sup> Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union*, pp. 3-4. Photographic evidence in the Hampshire Record Office gives a glimpse of the original members of Sumner's Old Alresford Branch. HRO Old Alresford Collection 207A07/A27.

<sup>103</sup>Pierre Bourdieu (1987) Legitimation and Structured Interest in Weber's Sociology of Religion in Scott Lash and Sam Whimster (Ed.) *Max Weber, Rationality, and Modernity*, ed. (London: Allen and Unwin), pp. 119-136; Pierre Bourdieu (1998) The Laughter of Bishops; Remarks on the Economy of the Church, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press), pp. 112-123, 124-126; See also Terry Rey (2004) Marketing the Goods of Salvation: Bourdieu on Religion, *Religion* 34, pp. 331--343.

<sup>104</sup>Mary Sumner, Object 3 of the Mothers' Union, p.8.

<sup>105</sup> Moyse, *History of the Mothers' Union*, p.252.

<sup>106</sup> Lucy Bland (1992) Purifying the Public World: Feminist Vigilantes in Late Victorian England, *Women's History Review* 1, no. 3, pp. 377-412.