The Empowerment of the Women in the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club

Movement

PhD Thesis

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<u>Declaration of Authorship</u>

I   hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is

entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Date: _____

Abstract

This thesis explores the empowerment of women in a social movement, the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement, in Japan. The discourse on women's empowerment has tended to concentrate on projects in the development context and has usually focused on personal empowerment, even when collective empowerment is taken into account (Rowlands, 1997). However, this research shows that women's involvement in a social movement can be a powerful mechanism for their empowerment because of the generation of collective empowerment, even though this is not the purpose of the movement. It also highlights the fact that not only are there positive interactions between the different dimensions of empowerment, personal, relational and collective, but there are also conflicts between them.

Interpretations of women's movements based on their traditional roles and identities as wives and mothers are divided as to whether they reinforce or challenge the position of women. The Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement is almost forty years old and most of its members are full-time housewives. It provides an excellent opportunity to show how activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities can empower women over time. This thesis develops an analytical explanation, based on a discussion of the public/private dichotomy, to show how the contradictions inherent in this activism can push the women beyond or pull them back to their existing gender roles and consciousness.

In this context, the internal dynamics of a movement, which depend on its power politics, can determine which direction the women will take and have an impact on their empowerment. Women are not a homogeneous group and a dominant group, from a specific class or who have a particular ideology, can come to determine the movement's policies. A further point of interest is that the Kanagawa Seikastu Club Movement was created by a group of men who have played an important part in empowering the women. However, these men have also played on the differences between the women resulting in alliances which can disempower other women.

The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods, including a membership survey along with sixty-four interviews and seventeen focus groups. I also conducted participant observations. It reveals the complex processes and interactions which contribute to the empowerment of women in a social movement. It seeks to understand who is empowered and what this means for the wider society. It also shows how the movement is affected by changes in the wider society and how the response to these challenges can affect its members' empowerment.

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Boxes

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List of Abbreviations

GMO	Genetically modified organism
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GGI	Gender Gap Index
HUF	Homemakers' Union and Foundation
JCCU	Japanese Consumers' Co-operatives Union
KSC	Kanagawa Seikatsu Club
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Net	Seikatsusha Network Movement
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NSM	New Social Movement
SC	Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative
SCCU	Seikatsu Club Co-operatives Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WCCB	Women's and Citizens' Community Bank
WE21Japan	Women's Empowerment Twenty-First Century Japan
WNJ	Workers' Collectives Network Japan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Why the women of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement?

I first heard about the Seikatsu Consumers' Club Co-operative (SC) in 1997 when I was working for a South Korean NGO. In the second half of the 1990s the success of the SC in Japan had attracted the attention of those who were working in Korean social movements. At that time I came across Yoshiuki Satō's book on the Tokyo SC (1988). I was amazed to learn about the life changing experiences of the women in the SC and the changes in their consciousness which had resulted from their involvement in the movement. In the light of my own experiences of Korean social movements I was interested to know how the women had been empowered to achieve this.

Social movements in Korea, which have a broad vision, are usually dominated by men in terms of both leadership and membership. Women tend to be marginalised in these movements. But the SC appeared to break this rule. It was a leading social movement and, in addition, it was a mass movement of housewives. Furthermore, whilst NGOs often struggle with financial instability, the SC Movement appeared robust because of the economic foundations of the co-operative. All this made me think the SC was close to being an ideal movement. In fact, the SC Movement had been widely acknowledged as a prominent New Social Movement (NSM) since the 1980s combining as it does environmental and local issues with its radical vision of reforming Japanese society (Right Livelihood Award Foundation, 1989; Amano, 1995; Satō, 1996; Lam, 1999; Jung, 2004; Avenell; 2010, Park, 2010). The movement has engaged in politics through its political arm, the Net, as well as in economic activities through its enterprises, the Workers' Collectives.

During this time, in the mid to late 1990s, eco-feminism was introduced to South Korea. It was very appealing because in South Korea the environmental movement was the rising star amongst social movements. I had not come across such a prominent social movement in which women made up the vast majority of the members, which raised a question about the connection between women's traditional gender roles and the environmental movement. This challenged my long standing disregard for women's movements based on women's traditional roles and identities as wives and mothers. Again the SC seemed to match this development

and provide a model of an environmental movement led by women.

Following this first excitement I later read Lam's book 'Green politics in Japan' (Lam, 1999). Lam was more critical of the SC. I learned from him that men had played a key role in founding and leading the SC. His work was very insightful and helped me examine the SC more closely, particularly in relation to gender issues. In many respects the SC still seemed to be a fantastic success story and I remained fascinated by the range and depth of its activities and achievements.

I was particularly drawn to the Kanagawa SC Movement because it was very innovative in creating a variety of diverse organisations in response to the changes in Japanese society and decided to focus my study on this branch of the movement.

As a leading part of the SC it raised a number of questions about women's activism which I wanted to explore further. The fact that for the most part the women members were housewives, that the organisation had been started by men who continued to play a key role in determining policy, that it had diversified into so many different fields whilst the women continued for the most part to uphold their traditional identities, all raised questions about what impact the organisation had had on these women and their consciousness.

2. Research objectives

2.1 Aims of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to examine women's empowerment in a social movement, what kind of empowerment has occurred and how it happened. I link feminist studies into social movements with the debate on the empowerment of women in development studies. Feminist studies into social movements, which discuss the empowerment of women, cover a wider range of circumstances and include developed countries and the middle classes. However, in these studies into social movements the concepts of empowerment and the discussion of the strategies for its achievement are not well articulated and there is an absence of systematic analysis. To address this deficiency this thesis borrows from the debate about the empowerment of women in development studies which provides extensive discussions on the

concepts and processes of empowerment. However, within the realm of development studies research on women's empowerment focuses on empowerment at an individual level in projects. Women's empowerment in social movements takes place in a very different context. In particular, it is necessary to understand the group dynamics of the movement as social movements pursue their goals through collective action. In most social movements women's empowerment is not the purpose of the movement but occurs as a by-product. So why and how does it happen and what kind of empowerment results? The spontaneous empowerment of women in this different social context will provide insights into these more complicated features of empowerment.

When considering strategies for women's empowerment, the debate has centred on the binary notion of distinguishing practical needs/interests, based on women's roles and identities as wives and mothers, from strategic needs/interests, which seek to undo the division of labour between the genders (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1993). Whilst there are variations in how these positions are presented, this binary notion of two needs or interests remains fundamental to the argument and results in two different perspectives in feminist studies on social movements regarding women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities. One perspective considers activism based on practical needs (or interests) and on women's traditional gender roles and identities is inherently limited or regressive and reinforces 'androcentric politics' (Jackson, 1994; Bru-Bistuer & Cabo, 2004, 222). However, another finds it has great potential for women's empowerment and empirical studies, particularly in Latin America, have supported this argument (Blondet, 1995; Lind & Farmelo, 1996; Stephen, 1997; Hays-Mitchell, 2002).

My thesis will examine whether women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities as wives and mothers and their practical needs or interests provides a strategy for women's empowerment. If so, what are the processes which further their empowerment based on this kind of activism and what are the constraints? By using feminist arguments on the public/private dichotomy I provide an analytical explanation of this process, which overcomes these binary disputes.

The Kanagawa SC Movement falls into this category of activism arising out of women's traditional gender roles and identities. With a history of almost forty years the KSC

Movement provides an opportunity to examine what has actually happened to its members over a considerable period of time.

To study the empowerment of women in a social movement like the KSC Movement requires further theoretical consideration. Because it is a long standing movement with a vast membership there will be differences between women in terms of their generation, class, occupation, ideology and level of participation. Little work has been done in studies on women's empowerment into differences between women in large organisations or even in small communities and how these result in different empowerments. The KSC Movement provides an excellent opportunity to understand how these differences between groups of women interplay and generate different empowerments.

2.2 Research Questions

This thesis investigates the empowerment of women and how it occurs in a social movement through an examination of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement, which is a branch of the SC Movement in Japan. This thesis explores five key questions:

i) What is the background to the Kanagawa SC Movement and how does this impact on the empowerment of the women in the movement?

ii) How does empowerment occur in a social movement like the KSC Movement?

iii) What kind of empowerment has been experienced by the women in the KSC Movement?

iv) How do the women of the KSC Movement experience the public sphere and how does the transformative process of gaining gender consciousness occur in the KSC Movement?

v) How and why do different groups of women in the KSC Movement experience different empowerments?

2.3 Methodology

I used mixed methods in my research combining secondary materials, quantitative and qualitative research. I conducted a survey of the KSC Co-operative membership from June to September in 2005 in my first fieldwork. The survey was designed, firstly, to gather information about the composition of the membership in terms their social status and background such as their job, class, age, education and housing. Next, I wanted to learn more about their material and non-material resources, their availability, networks, education and skills and their income. Thirdly, I asked questions designed to explore their involvement in the KSC Movement and about their outlook and the impact of their involvement on their relationships with their family members.

My second fieldwork trip to Japan was delayed due to health problems so it was conducted between August and December 2008. I had to master Japanese sufficiently to conduct interviews during that period. In the second fieldwork I conducted qualitative research through interviews with sixty-four people and seventeen focus groups as well as participant observations to find out how collective empowerment occurs in the movement and what impact it has on its members. I also wanted to see how empowerment may be different for different groups of women. I met members who work in all areas of the Kanagawa SC Movement including the KSC Co-operative, hereafter referred to as the KSC, the Net and Workers' Collectives. I also met some women who had left the KSC Movement. I met not only leaders but also lay members. In addition I met men who worked in the movement, staff, both male and female, and grown up children and husbands of KSC members. Further details on the methodology are provided in Chapter 3.

2.4 Contributions

This research aims to contribute to debates on women in social movements and women's empowerment. My contributions concern the analysis of the process of empowerment as well as the diversity and complexity of women's empowerment experiences in social movements.

In this thesis I consider the systematic understanding of women's empowerment in a social movement and articulate what needs to be taken into consideration for this. First of all, whilst I appropriate perspectives from feminist studies on women in social movements in order to understand a movement from a gender point of view, existing studies seldom investigate women's resources, probably because it is assumed that women are deprived of resources. I started from the position that all women have resources and I wanted to explore women's gendered resources be they material, availability of time, individual skills or social networks, to see how they facilitate empowerment. While different women will have different resources, this study explores the resources of middle class women in a developed country, in this case Japan. However, the fact that these women control economic resources in their households does not, on its own, result in the empowerment of the women although these are useful in facilitating that empowerment. This empowerment occurs as a result of their involvement in the movement.

Second, previous studies have tended to assume that the different dimensions of empowerment, collective, relational and personal empowerment interact positively with each other. This research into the Kanagawa SC Movement will address not only how these three dimensions of empowerment are inter-connected but also how, rather than producing positive results, they may conflict with each other. It will seek to show more of the complexity of these interactions.

Third, this thesis uses the example of the KSC Movement to bring the class and ideological differences between women into the discussion about empowerment. I explore how these class and ideological differences cause different empowerments and even disempowerment and create tensions between different groups of women.

Fourth, the fact that the KSC Movement was created and is still strongly influenced by men also provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between the role of men in a social movement and women's empowerment and the complexity of men's contribution to their empowerment. The relationships between some of the women and the male leaders have created particular complications which have affected their empowerment. I also explore how,

through their dominance of ideology and policy making in the movement, the empowered have an impact on the wider society.

Last, this thesis is one of the few studies written in English on the empowerment of women in social movements in Japan and one of the few studies into the KSC Movement.

Disputes about the strategy for the empowerment of women

This thesis engages with three disputes in studies regarding the strategy for empowering women. In fact, the three overlap with one another and can be seen as three aspects of the same dispute. Firstly, there are two contrasting views about women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities. One values this activism as having the capacity to deliver change in women's lives. For example, most studies on women's neighbourhood and community activism and environmental and peace movements tend to appreciate the impact of this activism in changing women's consciousness and lives through the mass mobilisation of ordinary women. The other is sceptical of its impact on women. These studies consider that because this activism stems from women's traditional gender roles and identities it has limited impact on the women involved or it may reinforce women's traditional roles rather than liberate women from them. These contrasting views on women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities appear to be irreconcilable (Davis 1991; Radcliffe; 1993; Stephen, 1997; Ackelsberg, 2009).

In a similar vein, the second dispute concerns the empowerment approach. While Moser (1993) advocated a strategy of moving from practical needs, based on women's traditional gender roles and identities, to strategic needs, which deny these gender roles, in order to achieve equality with men, Wieringa (1994) argued against this route saying that women can revalue their gender roles socially through gender based activism based on practical needs.

The third ideological dispute is between equality and difference feminists. Equality feminists tend to disregard the women's realm, or women's traditional gender roles, as oppressive, while difference feminists like Daly or Collard hold it in high regard and argue that it has to be re-valued rather than denied (Humm, 1995). These contrasting views also exist not only amongst scholars, but also among activists within the women's movement, notably in

America (Davis, 1991). The first will tend to argue for strategic needs and against activism based on traditional gender roles and identities while the second will tend to argue for practical needs and for activism based on those gender roles. Some feminists, particularly from Latin America, have challenged the binary notion of these sets of concepts. As Freedman (2001) has pointed out they turn up in other variations of the arguments between different groups of feminists. In fact, Japanese versions of the disputes have repeatedly appeared, notably in the 'housewife debate' between 1955 and 1972 (Takeda, 2006, 121) and the 'eco-feminism debate' in the 1980s and 1990s (Dales, 2009, 31). According to Takeda, 'equality/difference is still at the heart of discussions of women's political participation both in and outside Japan' (Takeda, 2006, 195).

Rather than taking sides I have tackled these disputes between these sets of binary views by explaining the mechanism arising from activism based on women's traditional gender roles and identities, which can, on the one hand, limit women's activism, but on the other can develop it further. In particular I advance the concept of the 'transformatory threshold' in which, when faced with opposition or conflict around the expectations placed on them to fulfil their existing gender roles, some women may limit their activities or even withdraw from public life while others may overcome these hurdles and gender norms. In other words, activism based on practical needs/interests or women's traditional gender roles and identities can limit women's empowerment, but it can also move women's empowerment beyond the boundaries of their gender sphere and can go further to encompass women's equality.

In explaining the discontinuity and continuity between these binary categories, practical/strategic, difference/equality and opposed views on gender based activism, I suggest that the continuity between them can be used for further empowerment because women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities can also require the achievement of gender equality.

3. The structure of the thesis

In this chapter I have explained how I chose the KSC Movement and described the aims and contributions of the thesis, my methodology and my research questions. Below I describe the structure of the rest of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature review. In this chapter I review the literature on 'gender and social movements' and 'women's empowerment' to identify issues of importance in the empowerment of women in social movements, to understand the nature of empowerment and how it occurs. I will also discuss the public/private divide regarding the transformation of the women in social movements.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter sets out the principles and design of the research and discusses the methods used. It deals with issues such as concerns about working with an NGO, positionality and ethics.

Chapter 4: The background to the KSC Movement. I examine the background to the KSC Movement in the wider Japanese context which conditions women's empowerment and analyse the resources of the women which are available for the movement. I will discuss how the position of Japanese women has been changing, which creates a great challenge to the KSC Movement.

Chapter 5: Understanding the empowerment of the women in the KSC Movement. I will seek to explain the general characteristics and process of the empowerment of the women in the KSC Movement. While special attention is paid to the central place of collective empowerment, personal empowerment and relational empowerment with the women's family members are also discussed.

Chapter 6: Different empowerments in the KSC Movement, including disempowerment, and their interactions. I will explain the different empowerments in the context of the power structure of the KSC Movement, which tend to cause it to remain a movement of full-time housewives, in spite of its efforts to change.

Chapter 7: Conclusions. I set out my key findings, contributions, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

Chapter 2: The empowerment of women in social movements

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the relevant body of literature which engages with women's empowerment in social movements as a grounding for understanding what empowerment has occurred and how it has happened in the case of the Kanagawa SC Movement. I will review the literature on 'gender and social movements' and 'empowerment approaches' and I will also discuss the public and private divide regarding the transformation of women in social movements.

In the first section, I examine feminist studies on social movements, which provide a framework for understanding women's involvement in social movements in three categories: (i) gendered opportunity structure (ii) gemdered resource mobilisation and (iii) ideology, framing and identity with regard to gender. Such a comprehensive understanding of social movements is a prerequisite to discussing the empowerment of women in a social movement because unlike projects or programmes, which are run with clear targets for women's empowerment, social movements are not focused in this way and any empowerment that occurs is a by-product of the movement's organisational dynamics and the way the movement interacts with its wider social environment.

Most of these feminist studies on social movements have not paid much attention to the resources which women already have. Their attention is more focused on the need for women to get more resources or control of resources, usually because women's and men's resources are not equal. Despite this, it should be acknowledged that women do have resources, which are often different from those of men. Thus, I intend to highlight the fact that women have resources like skills and social networks and, in some cases, money, knowledge and other assets which vary depending on class and culture. Therefore, I suggest that it is necessary to pay attention to women's material and non-material resources. In the case of the KSC Movement, which I will study, its members, who are mostly affluent women living in a developed country, have considerable resources in terms of education, qualifications and money.

In the second section, I will focus on debates regarding women's empowerment. For the most part this has been conducted around the issue of the best strategy for empowering women in projects and programmes in a development context. The focal point of the debate has concerned women's interests/needs arising from their traditional gender roles, described as practical gender interests/needs, and whether these practical gender interests/needs have the potential to empower women or whether they inherently constrain women's empowerment.

In the third section, I focus on the issue of 'transformation', the gaining of gender equality consciousness, to see if this can arise out of women's traditional gender roles and identities, including their practical interests, by addressing feminist arguments on the public/private dichotomy. Unlike previous studies into women's activism arising from their traditional gender roles, which have seen transformation as a contingent process and dependent on some form of feminist input, I argue that this process is inherent in this activism. I explain this through the intrinsic contradictions of the liberal patriarchal system. Women face a dilemma as housewives when they find that they have to enter the public sphere to argue about private matters which concern their families, such as the price of food or health and welfare concerns. Their existing gender roles and identities motivate them to become involved in the public arena but in the process they find themselves infringing its usual boundaries and drawn into further activism. This can lead to a considerable change in their lifestyle and priorities.

In the last section, I discuss the conceptual issues and necessary components for understanding women's empowerment in social movements by combining the theories from social movement studies and studies on the measurement of empowerment. Whilst empowerment literature exists for the most part in the context of development projects and programmes it provides useful conceptual tools for identifying women's empowerment in social movements. However, in order to construct conceptual tools which fit the case of social movements some issues need to be addressed to understand women's empowerment in these movements.

2. Feminist[1] research on social movements

Women have been involved in all kinds of social movements throughout the world. These have included groups campaigning on gender equality issues, movements focusing on traditional women's concerns and those with no specific female interest, such as human rights or religious organisations. West and Blumberg argue that women's involvement in social protest could be categorised according to four types of issues 1) economic survival protests, 2) nationalistic and racial/ethnic protests, 3) broad humanistic/nurturing protests, and 4) women's rights protests (West & Blumberg, 1990, 13-20). In addition to these, when it comes to the definition of social movements[2], women's involvement in conservative or reactionary movements, such as fundamentalist religious movement or far-right movements, also needs to be considered.

Amongst the type of movements referred to by West and Blumberg, Ray and Korteweg (1999) point out that women in the Global South tend to participate in social movements in which 'gender interests' are only part of a broader social vision of social justice or democratisation. In keeping with this, in Latin America even feminists, in contrast particularly with white middle class feminists in Western countries, tend not to pursue single issue, particularistic interests but instead to be concerned with advancing a broader project of social reform and see the achievement of women's rights as a part of this wider goal (Molyneux, 2001, 172).

Women everywhere also participate in movements with particularist agendas dealing with

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[1] Attempting to define 'feminism' or 'feminist' is inevitably difficult because 'feminism is an historically diverse and culturally varied international movement' (Humm, 1992, 7). Despite having a variety of visions, feminists share at least some understandings, one of which is the belief that the 'existing relationship between the sexes in which women are subordinated to men ought to be changed', 'although they differ enormously over what could constitute women's liberation' (Ramazamoglu, 1989, 8). We can use the terms 'feminist' and 'feminism' based on this broad common ground but the concrete visions and strategies put forward can be very different.

[2] Snow et al. (2005, 6) define social movements as being based on three or more of the following 'characteristics': collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organisation; and some degree of temporal continuity. Touraine and Castells see social movements as one form of collective action but one which is seeking radical social transformation (Castell, 1982; Touraine, 1984, quoted in Bennett 1992, 241-242). According to these definitions, West and Blumberg's term 'social protest' would largely overlap with the concept of 'social movement'.

issues like the environment, human rights and welfare. These may be in autonomous women only organisations or mixed gender organisations. Just as women choose to participate in various types of social movements with a variety of motivations, so the process and the nature of their empowerment is also complex.

There is broad agreement in current social movement studies on the three broad categories used in the theoretical framing of social movements. They can be categorised as opportunity structure, mobilising structures and cognitive factors like ideology, framing and identity, all of which are interrelated (Ferree & Mueller, 2004, 587; McAdam et al., 2006, 14-15). These categories are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of social movements. Feminist scholars have also tried to establish the gender dimensions of the three main categories listed above and to examine each area from these perspectives (Taylor, 1999; Kuumba, 2001; Ferree & Mueller, 2004).

Feminist scholars have criticised social movements for being gender blind while pretending to be gender neutral. They consider all social movements as a 'gendered process' and explore the gender dimensions of the movements' development (see, for example Naples 1992; Vargas, 1992, Schirmer, 1993; Stephen, 1997; Adbulhadi, 1998; Ferree & Roth, 1998; Irons, 1998; Stall, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Taylor & Whittier, 1998; Taylor, 1999; Thomas, 1999; White, 1999; Einwohner, Hollander & Olsen 2000; Huiskamp, 2000; Molyneux, 2001; Kuumba, 2001, 2002; Culley & Angelique, 2003; Ferree & Muller, 2004). These scholars seek to explain why and how women become involved in social movements. Most of these studies are concerned with the impact of these movements on their women participants in terms of their empowerment.

Gender and New Social Movements

When it comes to New Social Movements (NSMs) like the KSC Movement, we need to examine women's participation in terms of opportunity structure, resources and ideology as it is understood in NSM theory. In NSM theory the emergence of the environmental, peace and women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s reflects the demands of the new middle class in post-industrial societies for an improved quality of life (Habermas, 1981; Offe, 1985; Inglehart, 1990). Offe, in particular, places housewives on the periphery of the labour market

along with the unemployed, students and the retired and sees them as being one of the main forces in NSMs. These people have a lot of resources in terms of time for political activities. He also considers the old middle class to be a force in NSMs. When the labour movement became conservative opportunities opened up for both the old and new middle class to become active on issues which it had abandoned and that, along with these peripheral groups, it started to resist the increasing bureaucratic control over their lives (Offe, 1985). In line with this, NSM theory explains the women's movement as the resistance of women to the control and invasion of daily life by the market and bureaucracy (Melucci, 1980; Habermas, 1981; Offe, 1985) and as an attempt to re-define their lifestyle (Giddens, 1991) and identity (Melucci, 1980; Offe, 1985; Giddens, 1991). In doing so, NSMs often create 'democratic public spaces and transform private domains into social arenas for the creation of their collective identities and demands' (Cohen, 1985, 670).

Gendered opportunity structure

Social movements are born in and respond to social and political circumstances. Some circumstances provide a favourable environment for movements while some do not. 'Political opportunity' refers to the political system which may facilitate or constrain a social movement (McAdam et al, 2006, 2; Porta & Diani, 2006, 17). Ferree and Mueller suggest an alternative concept 'opportunity structure', which includes not only political but also cultural circumstances which facilitate or hinder social movements (Ferree & Mueller, 2004, 588). They see women's gendered opportunity in mobilisation around their traditional roles and identities and in the division of labour between the sexes which legitimises their political claims. They also point out that women find their political causes and allies in 'apolitical' institutions such as communities and grassroots civic organisations, social work and service, and because women are disadvantaged institutionally in formal politics even activists tend to distance themselves from politics. Nevertheless, this activism can lead women into formal politics (ibid, 589).

Certainly, women can derive some particular advantage from these social and political circumstances. For instance, when opposition to the government was forbidden in Chile under Pinochet or in Brazil during the military dictatorship women were able to demonstrate under the Pinochet dictatorship or in Brazilian squatter movements because they were

perceived to be innocuous (Neuhouser, 1995; Noonan, 1995). In the case of the British Miners' Strike in the 1980s, because women were not subject to the punitive legal action which undermined the miners' action, women, wives and female family members became involved in the struggle and took a leading role (Maggard, 1990, 96; Beckwith, 1996, 1060). On the other hand, such 'opportunities' can also turn out to be unfavourable. For instance, the West Berlin day care workers strike faced a sudden loss of media interest when the Berlin Wall fell. Under those circumstances the local and 'domestic' concerns about the working conditions of day care workers were ignored (Ferree & Roth, 1998, 634-5).

Similarly, other studies have adopted the concept of 'structural availability', which argues that women are able to participate in neighbourhood and local activities because of their presence at home and in the local community in contrast to men who are absent at their place of work. For instance, women's involvement in environmental and tenant movements is explained by this availability in the locality (Pardo, 1990; Cable, 1992; Adams, 2002). This is certainly pertinent in the case of the KSC Movement, considering the majority of members are housewives and they are involved in a variety of activities on a local basis which include not only 'women's concerns' but also other issues of general interest. The issue for this thesis is to understand how this structural availability changes over time and how it impacts on the KSC Movement.

As Narayan suggests in her empowerment framework 'societies are always stratified to a greater or lesser degree' and these 'social and political structures' will mediate empowerment outcomes (Narayan, 2006, 9). It should be borne in mind that these circumstances are not constant so, particularly when discussing a longstanding movement like the Kanagawa SC Movement, it is necessary to see how changes in social and political circumstances impact on the movement.

Gendered resource mobilisation

Social networks can provide an important basis for participation in social movements (Coleman, 1988, Diani, 2005). In this context I prefer to use the term 'resource mobilisation', which is developed by Edwards and McCarthy to describe the importance of organisation building in mobilising labour and money, as it is a broader concept than mobilisation

structure (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004, 118). I emphasise the importance of the material resources of the KSC Movement's women in understanding their empowerment and later I will consider the different resources available to the members of the movement and how they facilitate the organisation's development. Women's social networks and mobilisation in social movements, whether in mixed sex or women's organisations, tend to differ from those of men. Whilst men tend to recruit and mobilise through formal routes, women rely more on informal networks and kinship relationships. As women are usually locally based they tend to rely on community, self help and church groups which allow them greater influence and freedom to act (Kuumba, 2001). Women use their local and family resources. For instance, African women in Durban organise in the township and the family in particular. Carby uses the case of the Durban women to argue that for black women the family was the most important and supportive place for resistance against racism (Carby, 1982, in Beall et al., 1989, 45).

To meet the demands of caring for their households in the context of extreme poverty women participate in informal networks of households, which help them to stabilise fluctuating income by sharing resources across households. On the other hand men, who are less embedded in these networks, create formal associations and legally instituted clubs (Neuhouser, 1995, 50-51).

Women also play a crucial role as 'bridge leaders', providing an intermediate layer of leadership. They play a role in connecting leaders to the grassroots and community as well as being a bridge between organisations as, for instance, in the case of African-American women in the Civil Rights movement and workers' strikes (Robnett, 1996; Fonow, 1998, 723).

However, it should be noted that the pattern of women's mobilisation can vary according to the context and background of the women. For example, in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement black women were typically recruited through local grassroots organisations and churches whereas, in the case of white women, they were recruited through networks like college campuses and national religious institutions like the YWCA (Irons, 1998).

Feminist research on social movements tends to focus on women's informal networks when analysing women's resources, but other resources are less well explored. Petesch et al.

consider 'economic resources, skills and good health' important to agency regarding empowerment, although they only refer to this in terms of poor people in general (Petesch et al., 2006, 42). Middle class women, especially in developed countries, can have considerable resources. Considering the fact that the history of women in social movements shows that not only working class women or women in developing countries but also affluent women have been actively involved in a variety of movements from suffrage, civil and welfare rights to environmental movements (Rowbotham, 1992; Basu, 1995), their resources have often not been recognised or analysed, as if they do not exist.

Much feminist research on the environment is concerned with particular kinds of resources, like common land and forests, to which women are related through their gender role rather than in terms of ownership (Argarwal, 1995). However, women's resources, not only material resources like money but also skills and knowledge, are seldom explored properly. Women may also face competition from men for control of resources or be disadvantaged by policies and decisions made by external agencies (Agarwal, 1995; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Whilst acknowledging the fact that there is an asymmetry between women and men concerning resources in absolute terms, it should be noted that the genders have different resources.

However, there are a few studies which show how resources, such as women's household skills like cooking, caring and child education, are actually used in facilitating social movements. For instance, Shiva emphasises how women in developing countries use their skills and local knowledge to sustain their local environment (Shiva, 1993). Noonan acknowledges that housewives' and mothers' centres were important resources in the protests against Pinochet (Noonan, 1995). All this confirms that, depending on their class and culture, women have different resources, skills and knowledge which can make positive and active contributions to social movements.

The case of the KSC Movement, where the majority of women are well-educated and middle–class, provides an excellent opportunity to examine the role of material like money and non-material resources such as time, human networks and skills, within the development of a social movement in a developed country.

Ideology, Framing and Identity with regard to gender

Just as women have found political opportunities exist for them because their status in society makes them less threatening to repressive governments and traditional roles in the community and kinship networks provide them with the means to mobilise effectively and overcome exclusion from leadership, so women have also relied on their identity and ideology as mothers and wives as a basis for action. For example, in both the United States and South Africa women appealed to their responsibilities to their children and families to argue for their civil rights or to resist pass laws. As Ferree and Mueller comment 'Gender ideologies, no less than those of race, class and nation, are core arguments that movements develop and on which they depend for frames that will resonate with socially institutionalized values' (Ferree & Mueller, 2004, 596).

According to the literature, women's mobilisation around human rights issues in the face of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes was explicitly grounded in their identity as mothers as can be seen in the cases of Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, in the Mutual Support Group in Guatemala and the Group of the Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Chile (Femenia, 1987, 1999; Schirmer, 1989; Noonan, 1995). Other authors make the same point where women's environmental and community activism is concerned, pointing to the importance of women's identity and responsibility as a justification for action (Rocheleau et al., 1996; Naples, 1998; Culley & Angelique, 2003).

Other cognitive responses like the strategies, tactics and attitudes towards third parties adopted by social movements and the women involved in them are gendered (Taylor, 1998; Ferree & Roth, 1998). In the case of tenant movements in Caranguejo, Brazil, women carried out small–scale disruptions of the social order through acts like the physical occupation of city offices or streets, which were the most successful mobilisation strategies (Neuhouser, 1995, 51). Women have used culture, art and theatrics in creative strategies of collective protest (West & Blumberg, 1990, 27). During the British miners' strike women supporters and their friends constructed union booths at community fairs, they also held a pride festival, a local street fair featuring exhibits by community and voluntary organisations, crafts, ethnic food, carnival rides, music, fireworks and a parade (Fonow, 1998, 721).

Gender identities and gender roles are both formed in a social context (Laurie et al., 1999). Identity can be described as the understanding of who you are while roles can be understood as the way you work. As such they are interrelated (Holloway, 1999, 91). Both contribute to the way women become involved in a social movement and both reflect social realities. The division of labour, which is reflected in gender roles, also affects the relations between the genders, which I discuss further in the next section. The KSC Movement provides an opportunity to examine these three issues, identity, gender roles and relations and how the women of the KSC Movement have responded to them. One of the contributions of this study will be to see how a group of Japanese women have adopted an ideology and a particular framing to enable them to act within the wider Japanese society, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Gender relationships in mixed gender organisations

Feminist studies on women in social movements have paid special attention to gender relationships in mixed gender organisations. One fear has been that women could be used for mobilisation without a proper appreciation of their contribution whilst their gender interests and agenda were ignored (Molyneux, 1985; Kuumba, 2002).

First of all, in mixed gender movements women's issues are often regarded as a distraction. Such an attitude has pervaded groups involved in nationalist or labour struggles. The classic socialist position is that women's oppression will end with the transition to socialism. In South Africa, for example, challenges to gender subordination had long been considered a threat to labour unity and gender issues were subsumed under the banner of national liberation, thereby avoiding discussions of gender subordination that might split the popular movement. Only in the late 1980s did women's groups start to articulate a gendered perspective within the wider nationalist movement (Seidman, 1993). Even in particularistic movements, like the environmental movement, women's concerns may be ignored as it is argued that if environmental problems are solved then women's problems will also automatically disappear (Rootes, 2005).

West and Blumberg point out that in mixed gender organisations contradictions between ideals of equality and the reality of traditional gender arrangements often emerge leading to a

new gender consciousness amongst women. Workers' uprisings, wars, rebellions and revolutions tend to create new opportunities for women to expand their boundaries into previously all-male arenas. However, even though these role boundaries may dissolve during the crisis they tend later to be rapidly reinstated. Renewed constraints within the movement and within women's families, as well as women's own attitudes, seem to provide the necessary pressure to bring about the return to normalcy. For example, during the Mau Mau struggle in Kenya women not only received little recognition after gaining independence from the British, but faced a new call for 'patriotic motherhood' to serve their country by being mothers and producing the new generation (West & Blumberg, 1990, 24).

Social movements are not immune to the division of labour between the sexes or discrimination against women and women participants can often find the situation disempowering. Men often play a more visible part while women tend to perform routine tasks in the background (Thorne, 1975, 179-80; Kummba, 2001, 17). In the national environmental justice movement in the United States most of the grassroots activist work was done by women, while the men acted as leaders (Di Chiro, 1992, quoted in Kurtz, 2007, 409). Thorne relates how in the Boston Draft Resistance Group (BDRG), an anti-draft movement in America in the late 1960s, men would lead discussions of strategy and ideology and represented the organisation to the public and the media while women played a more subordinate role (Thorne, 1975, 189). Fonow provides another example from the steel workers' strike in Wheeling, at Pittsburgh Steel, in 1985. The women union members were more likely to be assigned kitchen duty behind the scenes (Fonow, 1998, 718).

Styles of leadership can also differ between men and women. The presence and contribution of women is largely invisible in mixed gender organisations because they are often denied formal positions of leadership. Women may play an important role but are often not given a formal title (West & Blumberg, 1990, 16-25). Payne notes that in the civil rights movement in and around Greenwood, Mississippi, in the 1960s, women were more active in demonstrations and in registering to vote than men. Within the movement women provided a different style of leadership with some women acting as a focus at the heart of a social network enabling its organisation, mediating conflicts, disseminating information and coordinating activity. Women visited door to door in their neighbourhoods and organised through their churches providing a largely invisible leadership (Payne, 1990, 163).

However, gender inequality in mixed gender organisations is often overcome over time. To start with women might lack organisational skills and knowledge and be unsure about strategising and public speaking (Lawson & Barton, 1980). However, later as they develop these skills women may take over leadership. For example, as the male founders of a tenants' movement in New York moved on to pursue political careers women, who had developed sufficient skills and access to networks, were able to take over leadership positions (Lawson & Barton, 1980, 246).

Women often directly challenge these situations. Cubitt and Greenslade argue that creating autonomous spaces in social movements is vital for women to ensure further empowerment by addressing gender issues in the movement. In the National Council of the Urban Popular Movement, CONAMUP, Mexico's national neighbourhood organisation, when women found the organisation was run undemocratically, with a hierarchy between men and women in the movement in which the women were ignored, they established a women's section (Cubitt & Greenslade, 1997).

An egalitarian ideology in a social movement can give an impetus to women to expand their concern for women's equality issues. Various feminist scholars have observed that women-centred political consciousness frequently evolves through women's participation in gender integrated struggles, whether revolutionary or reformist, which have a strong egalitarian theme (Thorne, 1975, 175; West & Blumberg, 1990, 20). For example, the Women's Christian Temperance Union in the United States did not support women's suffrage, but later it became a powerful place for consciousness raising by challenging women's traditional roles (West & Blumberg, 1990, 20). Women begin to see the contradictions in ignoring their own oppression while fighting against other injustices. They also gain leadership training in the political arena that expands their skills and confidence. Finally, attacks by men or those who ridicule their ideas and behaviour can contribute to greater consciousness and solidarity amongst activists (ibid, 21).

On the other hand, Ray and Korteweg (1999) and Molyneux (2001) warn that being autonomous does not guarantee the success of women's organisations and that autonomous organisations may be marginalised and have little influence on society as a whole. Similarly, the Women's Caucus of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP/LA) created an

autonomous space and managed to draw attention to women's needs but it ended up being 'compartmentalised' and isolated from the Coalition (Roth, 1998). Sholkamy argues that in the Arab world 'To realize women's empowerment in this context means to recognize that major social and political movements have delivered more rights and entitlements to women than women's movements have ever been able to achieve.' She points out that for grassroots women 'all help is welcome' in achieving transformation in their lives (Sholkamy, 2010, 257).

The impact women have in particular struggles varies according to the movement. Being involved with men may be either empowering or disempowering. Empirical evidence shows that it is difficult to generalise as to whether autonomous women's organisations are necessarily more favourable to women's empowerment than mixed gender organisations (Ray & Korteweg, 1999).

However, even in these cases the tendency is to see the presence of men in black and white terms, as being either good or bad. This fails to explain why women continue to work in social movements with men. The situation may not be clear cut as there will be advantages and disadvantages. In some cases women still choose to work with men because there are advantages in doing so, even if they are unhappy with the men's attitudes. When they encounter these situations women will bargain with men just as they do in their households. The relationships between women and men in an organisation are likely to be more complicated than being just 'good' or 'bad'.

In the development context, Gender and Development (GAD) has been paying more attention to men's roles and identities because the tactic of Women in Development (WID) of focusing exclusively on women has failed to bring about a fundamental change in women's status (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, 269-270). Men are not a homogeneous group but differ depending on their class, sexuality and culture. They will have different relationships in the family, for example as father, brother or husband or in other social situations. Their identities and their status have also been challenged as women have increasingly entered the labour force (Cornwall, 2000; Pearson, 2000; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Esplen, 2006). A more sophisticated understanding of men's roles and identities is called for, rather than taking for granted the 'women as victim, men as problem' discourse (Cornwall, 2000, 21), which

excludes the possibility of creating alliances with some men, especially when men's attitudes to women vary and there are men who support the equality of women (Datta, 2004).

Strictly speaking the KSC Movement is a mixed gender organisation, therefore the insights from this study provide an important opportunity to examine the role men play in terms of women's empowerment or disempowerment. In relation to this it would be relevant to question whether there is a gender structure in terms of leadership, the division of labour and the distribution of power in the KSC Movement and, if so, what impact this has had on the women and their empowerment.

3. Disputes about the strategy for the empowerment of women

Molyneux's work 'Mobilisation without Emancipation?' (1985) asks the most critical questions about the strategies for women's empowerment in social movements. It has ignited a vigorous debate among those who have adopted the empowerment approach, which has been influential in development projects and programmes for women led by feminists in the development context.

3.1 From 'practical' to 'strategic'?

In her analysis of the Nicaraguan revolution Molyneux (1985) divided women's gender interests into two categories, practical gender interests and strategic gender interests. She argued that women's strategic gender interests, the achievement of which she considered critical when it comes to achieving fundamental change, can be damaged by attempts to meet short-term practical gender interests. Moser revised this formula into practical gender needs and strategic gender needs for the purpose of planning. The core strategy of women's empowerment is the transformation from practical gender needs to strategic gender needs. 'It utilizes practical gender needs as the basis on which to build a secure support base, and the means through which strategic needs may be reached' (Moser, 1993, 77).

It is important to identify the different views in terms of the categorisation of practical gender needs/interests and strategic gender needs/interests and their hierarchy. Strategic gender needs are the needs related to women's subordinate position. They are related to the gender

division of labour, power and control such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Moser writes 'Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position.' It includes, as she quotes from Molyneux (1985, 233), 'The abolition of the sexual division of labour; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care'. Moser defines 'practical gender needs' as the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. They are about immediate necessities and practical in nature, concerning living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment, which are formulated from the concrete conditions women experience (Moser, 1993, 39-40). In a similar vein, Young (1993) replaces those two categories with practical needs and 'strategic interests' instead of strategic needs.

It should be noted that Molyneux distinguishes 'interests' from 'needs' because they are 'more intentional' and they 'belong within a political vocabulary' (Molyneux, 2001, 157). Moser uses 'needs' instead of 'interests' because her focus is on 'the means by which concerns are satisfied' (Moser, 1993, 37). For this study I have decided to use the term 'interests' which I consider is more appropriate for a social movement which has a political aspect.

Moser explains the reason why this approach is relevant saying that 'experience to date has shown that the most efficient organisations have been those that started around concrete practical gender needs relating to health, employment and basic service provision, but which have been able to utilize concerns such as these as a means to reach specific strategic gender needs' (ibid, 78). Thus, practical gender needs are the basis on which to build a secure support base and a means through which strategic gender needs may be reached. However, Moser, with others, warns that without external intervention women's activism arising out of practical interests can serve to sustain and reinforce the sexual division of labour (Moser, 1993; Molyneux, 1998; Huiskamp, 2000, 390). Thus, transformation will be delivered through feminist intervention by means such as a consciousness raising programme (Moser, 1993; Batliwala, 1994; Molyneux, 2001).

However, this process 'from practical to strategic' is challenged as being simplistic and rigid. A variety of routes for the empowerment process have been suggested. Rowlands proposes,

on the basis of her experience with Honduran NGOs, that strategic needs may come first followed by practical needs, quoting the words of an NGO worker Deborah Eade:

> "'it's a commonplace that very poor people haven't got time and energy to do social organization work. They've got to have their basic needs met first and then they can give themselves the luxury to think about human rights. In my experience it's totally the reverse. That it is precisely when people had nothing – for example, those suffering extreme repression and hardship, such as in El Salvador - that they would insist that ensuring respect for their human rights, their social, civil, and political rights, was the guarantee without which their material needs couldn't be met in a sustainable way."'

Rowlands also referred to another NGO worker who was sceptical about small income generating projects and preferred to help women develop their capacity and confidence in running larger projects. Her purpose was to provide opportunities for women to develop organisations or learn how to run events without having to meet special targets set by the project (Rowlands, 1997, 97-9).

Similarly, Batliwala suggests strategic needs may come first. She calls it 'the consciousness raising approach'. This approach focuses on education as a process of creating a new consciousness resulting in greater self-worth, an analysis of society and gender and the development of skills and knowledge. The initiating NGO needs an understanding of the complex causes of women's subordination and should seek to enable the women to become independent and to determine their own priorities. The approach should be open-ended and non-directive. This approach is successful in enabling women to address their position and strategic needs, but may not be as effective in meeting immediate needs (Batliwala, 1994, 136).

In another variation Young points out that in some cases what would be considered a 'strategic need' could in fact be a 'practical interest'. She raises the issue of women who cannot work outside their home or village without fear of being physically abused and asks how, as mothers, they can ensure their families' welfare and how their economic contribution can be realised either at the family or the community level (Young, 1993, 369-370). If women are suffering domestic violence or are the victims of so-called honour killings their very survival will be threatened and they will not even be able to fulfil their gender role. Strictly

speaking, in this case, the strategic need comes first in priority. That is, when the strategic need is met then women may be able to think about practical needs. Thus, the empowerment process would involve movement from strategic need to practical need.

Young warns that such a categorisation could be a dichotomy which cuts between two categories. Instead of 'strategic need' she adopted the term 'strategic interest' (Young, 1993, 369). In order to bridge the two categories she suggests a third concept called 'transformatory potential'. 'The idea here is to allow the investigation of practical needs (by women themselves) to see how they can become or be transformed into strategic concerns. For example, how a need for a cash income, a practical need, can have transformatory potential in forming a locally based co-operative. In comparison with providing piece-work to isolated women within the home this would be a better way of providing the conditions for a more empowering experience' (Young, 1993, 370). She suggests a space is needed for discussing their experiences and the roots of women's poverty.

Wieringa rejects any categorisation of gender needs as well as any linear process from one stage, practical needs, to another, strategic needs. She considers that women's realities in developing countries are too complex to be put into abstract categories. Women are located at the crossroads of many intersecting and, at times, contradictory relationships. Gender is only one aspect among many, such as race, class and age, so different interests are prioritised at different times. She suggests that instead of a priori categorising 'women's gender needs' their needs should be defined with the participation of the women concerned (Wieringa, 1994).

In conjunction with this, she argues 'any project can potentially include a transformative element from practical to strategic needs'. She argues that 'instead of disassociating any gender project from feminism, such a project concerned with women can potentially entail a transformative element. Sewing courses, literacy programmes and cooking lessons can be given in a way that allows for discussion of gender division of labour, of women's control over their finances, of sexual violence' (Wieringa, 1994, 843). So any need contains possibilities for raising gender consciousness without requiring a delay until the practical needs are fulfilled to a certain degree.

Just as Wieringa suggests 'any programmes' should be made as 'feminist' as possible Scheyvens also sees programmes, like literacy and agriculture classes, as the starting point for understanding strategic needs (Wieringa, 1994, 843; Scheyvens, 1998). If so there is no reason why these programmes cannot be used as vehicles for consciousness raising.

Another approach to the empowerment process allows for the possibility that practical needs and strategic needs could be pursued at the same time. Not all women are poor, but among the poor women are the poorest because of their oppressed gender position, which means that women's practical needs and strategic needs overlap and in many cases of women in developing countries they are difficult to disentangle. For example, as Agarwal points out, environmental degradation resulting from development policies tends to have a disproportionate impact on women because women are ignored as a result of their oppressed situation. Poor women have to struggle harder to survive than men. Finding firewood and getting water is becoming more difficult as a result of development (Agarwal, 1992).

Scheyvens proposes a need for 'subtle strategies' which are 'any strategies that attempt to achieve profound, positive changes in women's lives without stirring up wide-scale dissent'. These are needed for women's empowerment in planning for effective grassroots development particularly in strongly male–biased social structures (Scheyvens, 1998, 237-240).

In spite of these different views, this process 'from practical to strategic' has received broad support amongst feminists in the development context. For instance, Kabeer argued 'women's ability to organise around more strategic concerns is likely to be most firmly grounded when it emerges out of the organisational strengths acquired through meeting their more practical interests' (Kabeer, 1994, 255).

Molyneux argued that while, contrary to her intentions, the two concepts have been used in too rigid a binary formulation in the planning context, the distinction between the two concepts is useful and necessary 'to reveal how much more complex reality is' (Molyneux, 2001, 155). Rowlands agrees that it enables 'deliberate and strategic thinking about what is required to tackle gender and development issues in a programmatic way in the context of existing programmes and projects, without losing sight of the fundamental changes requires

to truly tackle gender in inequalities' (Rowlands, 1998, 16-17). Batliwala sees that, although other formulations are used, the strategy of moving from practical to strategic needs continues to be widely used (Batliwala, 1994).

3.2 Women's activism arising out of their traditional gender roles: community/neighbourhood, environmental and maternal activism

The strategy of moving from practical gender interests to strategic gender interests is also criticised in that it does not correspond to empirical evidence from women in social movements. Firstly, it is argued that women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities can change the meaning and value of those roles. Instead of denying or refusing to accept these gender roles there are cases where women make use of them as a basis for activism thereby redefining and revaluing them. For instance, Wieringa argues that the determinant of the character of a movement is not the nature of the 'practical gender need' but the ideological context in which it is rooted. In her study of two Indonesian women's organisations, Gawani (Indonesian Women's Movement) and PKK (Family Welfare Guidance), she argues that the social and political implications of movements based on practical needs and womanhood can differ depending on their political ideology. Although neither organisation sought to challenge women's roles as wife and mother the outlook of the two movements was fundamentally different. Whilst the PKK strengthened women's subordination, Gawani threatened the existing order and women's subordination (Wieringa, 1992).

Taylor looked at the Depression After Delivery (D.A.D) and Postpartum Support International (PSI) self-help groups which were formed in the 1980s in Pennsylvania and California, finding that, although these self-help movements were based on the conventional role of motherhood, the women not only gained social consciousness through their activities but also challenged fixed ideas about motherhood which assume mothers have intrinsic traits of caring (Taylor, 1999).

Secondly, the dichotomy between practical and strategic gender interests has been criticised because there are many cases in which women's strategic interests have developed out of practical interests. Stephen considered it unhelpful to oppose strategic and practical interests.

She argued that in Latin America 'feminismo popular' ('popular feminism') had overcome this division by integrating 'feminist' and 'feminine' movements (Stephen, 1997, 11-12). In these movements strategic interests grow out of practical interests (Blondet, 1995; Stephen, 1997; Huiskamp, 2000). Moreover, in the case of the Chipko women in India, although they became involved in the movement on the basis of their gender roles and responsibilities they developed their gender consciousness by fighting against male villagers, because men and women had different interests in protecting the forests (Argawal, 1992).

Activism along these lines includes maternal or motherhood movements, informal politics, women's community and voluntary welfare activity and participation in local politics on ecological, housing and educational issues. In terms of gender and empowerment this activism falls into the category of 'practical needs'. Popular grassroots activism in Latin America also 'evolved largely through mobilization around, and politicization of, women's role-based needs and identities' (Molyneux, 2001, 172).

This kind of political participation has attracted attention because of women's involvement in ecological movements. Studies on gender and the environment by those from the Feminist Political Ecology school also conclude that 'the activism of women most often arises in connection with their social roles, particularly in defence of family and community, and most often for resources of livelihood, security, health and safety, as well as a sense of place' (Rocheleau et al., 1996). However, others point out this activism varies according to class, culture, race, region and national identity (Agarwal, 1992, 1995; Green et al., 1998).

Women often become politically conscious while they are involved in community activities based on 'practical needs' and in some cases the women involved managed to enter the political arena by introducing traditional 'women's issues' into the political discourse (Miller et al., 1996; Ackelsberg, 2009). Furthermore, activism arising out of women's traditional gender roles and identities is not just limited to community activism. On the basis of this activism many women have been able to enter politics. Women are increasingly visible in local politics (Agarwal, 1995; Gluck et al., 1998). During the 2000s there was a remarkable increase in the participation of women in national politics in all countries in Latin America (Campo, 2005, 1716-7).

Thirdly, gender awareness can be developed from activism. Stephen illustrates how women's movements based on motherhood developed strategic interests in Latin America countries. For example, the women in the Committee of the Mothers Monsignor Romero, CO-MADRES, developed their gender awareness as a result of their experiences campaigning for the disappeared. 'CO-MADRES has expanded to embrace a much wider definition of human rights – one that incorporates the rights of women. This change has not been a sudden move from a 'motherist' agenda to a feminist agenda, but a nuanced process in which women's detention, rape and torture at the hands of police and military authorities, their domestic conflicts with their husbands and children, and their contacts with human rights organizations and with self-identified feminists have combined to give 'human rights' a new meaning for the women in CO-MADRES' (Stephen, 1997, 45). Similar things have happened in other parts of the world. Women running communal kitchens in Peru not only got involved in community and national issues like political violence and urban poverty but also women's rights (Lind & Farmelo, 1996, 10-11; Hays-Mitchell, 2002, 76). SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association in India, has been transformed from being a trade union organisation for the well-being of women to becoming a co-operative and women's movement dealing with social issues like alcoholism and domestic violence (Datta, 2003, 352).

It should be noted that although I have focused on activism arising out of women's traditional roles and identities women's activism is far broader than this. Ferree and Mueller provide a useful corrective when they argue that because 'all women's movements are rooted in gendered structures of oppression of opportunity....all have some actual or potential relation to feminism, whether this is currently a primary goal for them or not' (Ferree & Mueller, 2005, 579). Thus, many women's movements expand their goals to include explicitly feminist goals after starting out and moving from 'a non-gender directed goal, such as peace, antiracism, to social justice and gradually acquire explicitly feminist components; other, originally feminist mobilizations, expand their goals to challenge racism, colonialism, and other oppressions…' (ibid, 577). The process of being involved in activism empowers women to examine and dispute their existing gender relations.

It can be seen, therefore, that there are numerous cases of social movements which show that women have gained gender consciousness through activism which moved from practical interests to strategic interests in an evolutionary manner as a result of their empowerment

though participation in social movements. Studies of women in social movements make it possible to identify how the women involved have gained gender awareness.

However, some feminists are more cautious about the nature of women's movements based on their traditional gender roles and identities, especially those with a motherist ideology, which may reinforce the division of labour between the genders (Feijoo & Gogna, 1990, quoted in Radcliffe, 1993, 110-111; Jackson, 1994; Dietz, 1985). Michel refers to the difficulty maternalist reformers had in campaigning for day nurseries as this undermined the notion of motherhood. However, they were effective campaigners for mothers' pensions which reinforced their outlook on women's place in the home (Michel, 1993). Certainly the German women's movement both before and after the Second World War would be a typical example of a movement which propagated the virtues of women's domestic role and of traditional femininity resulting in the reinforcement of the division of labour between the genders (Leck, 2000) .

3.3 The dispute between Equality and Difference feminists

The two different views on women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities and their practical needs/interests are reflected in the dispute between equality and difference feminists. The former advocate women's equality with men while the latter insist sexual difference should be given special consideration. Pateman says that 'it appears that women are forced to choose, and have always been forced to choose, between the two (Pateman, 1992, 17).

The classic disputes have occurred between radical feminists. While equality feminists, like Kate Millet and Shulamith Firestone, have seen gender differences, including biological and cultural traits and social roles, as the chief mechanism of women's oppression, difference feminists, like Mary Daly and Andree Collard, have argued these same features should be re-valued. Equality feminists advocate equal opportunities for women, difference feminists argue women should not become like men so that their culture, values and roles need to be respected and re-valued (Humm, 1995). A more recent version of this dispute has arisen between eco-feminists and their opponents. While the former emphasise the connection between nature and women, the latter argue that making this connection is not only

reactionary but also ignores the differences between women (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Jackson, 1994, 1995; Molyneux & Steinberg, 1995; Mellor, 1996; Green et al., 1998)[3].

The history of the women's movement also reveals a constant tension between difference feminists who supported women's traditional roles and identities and equality feminists who denied them. According to Davis (1991), difference feminists in the United States argued that mothers sometimes required special treatment, so in some respects gender-neutral laws were a trap in which women's needs were disregarded. However, equality feminists were concerned their counterparts might reinforce women's gender roles rather than liberate them. Their views were in conflict on a number of issues. One important case was the ERA (the Equal Rights Amendment) which difference feminists opposed because the ERA would overthrow labour laws designed to protect women workers. Other instances included difference feminists wanting to ensure divorce laws should favour women and equality feminists wanting to extend the draft to women during the Vietnam War.

As the Japanese women's movement has been largely maternalist the dispute between equality and difference has been placed at the centre of the discussions between Japanese feminists (Takeda, 2006, 195). In the 1950s, there was the housewife debate as to whether housewives should aim at 'economic participation' or whether they should contribute through domestic responsibility or through social activities (Takeda, 2005, 124). 'This scheme of discussion has been utilized again and again by Japanese feminists up to the present day' (ibid, 124). In the 1980s the feminist debate about motherhood took place around the issues as to 'how motherhood should be valued and whether women's participation in the labour market could really liberate women' (Eto, 2005, 318). Then in the 1990s there was the eco-feminism debate, in which the main players were Ueno and Aoki. While eco-feminists argued that women's and Japanese notions of harmony with the environment were inherently ecological, Ueno and other feminist opponents of the eco-feminism argued against this essentialism (Dales, 2009).

I would argue that difference and equality are not always in conflict. On many occasions it would be difficult to achieve the revaluation of women's work without securing equality.

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[3] Eco-feminists are broadly divided into cultural eco-feminists, who emphasise women's essential connection to nature and their feminine attributes, and social eco-feminists, who link the exploitation of nature to that of women in capitalist society and focus on the social and political structures.

That is difference will be achieved through equality, so that both are incorporated, as was seen in the suffrage movement, in which suffragists argued that in order to fulfil their domestic roles women needed equal political rights. However, difference feminists have not taken this kind of continuity between difference and equality into account.

More recently, however, there has been an important development in eco-feminism. Buckingham and Kulcur (2009) call for environmental justice for women, who are likely to be more susceptible to pollution but tend to be under-represented in decision making processes on environmental policies. They argue that gender mainstreaming should be introduced in environmental organisations like NGOs and government decision making bodies, in which grassroots women's opinions tend to be marginalised. This will make a difference because women's responses to environmental problems have been found to be different to those of men. For example, female professionals working in waste management in the UK, Ireland and Portugal tend to favour reduction and reuse, in contrast to men, who tend to favour disposal through landfill and incineration, mainly relying on engineering and technology (Buckingham, 2007). According to Johnsson-Latham, while men prefer technology women prefer changing lifestyles and consumption patterns. Women's representation in policy making is likely to have important effects (Johnsson-Latham, 2007, quoted in Buckingham & Kulcur, 2009, 671).

Gender mainstreaming is certainly a way to input women's views and revalue 'women's realm' in society, as eco-feminists claim, although whether this will lead to an alternative society, based on women's views, to current capitalism is questionable. Brú-Bistuer and Cabo are critical of these claims for gender mainstreaming saying women's presence 'by itself does not lead to major change in the technical and scientific management model'. Furthermore they point out that in so far as eco-feminists' alternative model to the mainstream development model is based on women's traditional domestic attributes their approach serves to 'reinforce androcentric politics' (Brú-Bistuer & Cabo, 2004, 222). However, when Buckingham argued that gender mainstreaming is necessary in order to overcome prevalent discrimination practices against women in environmental organisations and decision making bodies, she made the point that 'revaluation' would not be achieved without women's equality, 'justice' as she put it, in the public arena (Buckingham, 2004). As a matter of fact, women face discrimination and constraints not just in environmental organisations and government

decision making bodies and in other public spheres but also in the home.

On the other hand, equality feminists often appear to disregard the revaluation process of women's work which is taking place in women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities. Moser (1993), who considers that the process has to start with practical needs before being moved to strategic needs, does not take account of the continual process of revaluation through the socialisation and politicisation of practical concerns, which occurs in movements based on women's traditional gender roles. The empowerment process which occurs in these movements with these women, who take their practical needs into the public social and political arena, does not appear to be taken into account in their analysis of empowerment.

However, around the world what was women's unpaid work in the household has now been socialised and politicised, so that much of this work is now paid and professionalised and has gained political importance. In this sense, the women's realm has already been revalued. Women's movements based on their traditional gender roles and identities have made a great contribution to this revaluation by putting this area into the social and political arena.

4. Public/private dichotomy and women's activism

The public/private dichotomy is usually represented as the division between the public or male political realm and the private or female domestic realm. Women's activism crosses this boundary and challenges this dichotomy and many years of feminist research has questioned the construction of this boundary.

4.1 Dismantling the dichotomy

Gender awareness arising out of women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities provides an opportunity for transformation. This transformatory potential is created by the contradictions in this public activism and private domestic roles and the possible opposition it may arouse in the home or in the wider society. Another way of approaching this is to examine the debate around the public/private dichotomy.

Feminists like Pateman (1989) consider the public/private dichotomy to be a source of structural oppression arising from Western Liberal ideology. The distinction between the 'public' political realm and paid work and the 'private' domestic realm and unpaid work is intertwined with the division of labour between men and women and women's exclusion from politics and economics.

Martin (2004) sums up of the political implications of this ideology in three ways. First, the idealised universal citizen is seen as male, which excludes women from politics. Second, the liberal democratic discourse of equality and justice does not extend into the private sphere of the household, which remains a realm of patriarchal relationships. Third, the marginalisation of the private familial sphere in political theory is linked to the devaluation of domestic and thus female work. This in turn creates unequal access to resources between the genders. Therefore, feminists have sought to dismantle this public/private dichotomy in both theory and practice.

Ferree argues that the ideology of dual spheres is only 'a phenomenon of the late industrial era'. The idea of a male breadwinner and a wife at home became a working class ideal with the social construction of a blue-collar 'labour aristocracy' of white men with 'skilled' and secure jobs (Ferree, 1990, 872). In fact, throughout history women always contributed significantly to the household economy. Black women and working-class immigrant women were especially likely to be economically active, as well as women in the newly industrialising areas of the 'Third World'. Today daughters and mothers make up an important part of the household economy (ibid).

Much research shows that, in reality, the two spheres are flexible and overlap. For instance, in Durban, South Africa, women street vendors living near factories use their home kitchens, sharing their space with other vendors, for the preparation of street foods as such as half-cooked food (Wardrop, 2006). For women working in agriculture their private spaces were also major work sites which were used for both caring and farming (Fincher & Panelli, 2001). The same would also apply for women who are involved in home based work.

Some feminists consider that the public and private spheres represent a continuum (Mies et al., 1988). Through the sexual division of labour productive work in the men's realm is

underpinned by women's reproductive work within the wider system of male domination. This 'camouflages men's dependence upon women for care and servicing' (Lister, 2003, 120). Agarwal's study shows that gender relationships in the household in India are closed related to women's status in the public sphere, such as the state and the market (Agarwal, 1997). Yeoh and Willis also demonstrate that the private and public arenas are interlocked. The 'go-regional' economic policy of Singapore, pursued by both state and private companies, assumes the gender division of labour in the household and its family strategy reinforces this gendered division of labour. Companies tend to send their male staff to mainland China while women workers tend to quit their jobs to support the family on their own (Yeoh & Willis, 1999).

To combat this public/private division Duncan suggests that a new and much wider political arrangement is needed to include the private sphere, which should be opened up in spite of the risk of undue state intervention. Because the home has traditionally been the realm of the patriarchal authority of the husband and father, the private sphere needs to be redefined and problems like domestic violence should be subject to public scrutiny (Duncan, 1996).

However, for women in other social contexts bringing the private into the public sphere does not appear to be an attractive strategy. Eastern Europeans, who suffered the consequences of their former communist governments' policies and interference, tend to want to keep the public and private spheres separate as they have little interest in formal politics. For these women their immediate needs like employment and contraception are more compelling. However, Heinen suggests that it would be more appealing for these women to participate in local civic organisations like NGOs, which provide social services like health. These organisations play a role in an intermediary sphere which connects private and public by influencing the state to help the most deprived (Heinen, 1997).

Staeheli (1996) says that we should not conflate the content of activity and physical space when talking about the two spheres. It is more important to think about the content of the action than the physical space. Private acts can be conducted in public and vice versa. For instance, politics can be discussed in private spaces, like smoke-filled room populated by male politicians in the United States. Home can be a space for dissidents' political activities as in the former Soviet Union and Central European nations. Thus, it should be understood

there is permeability between private and public spheres (Staeheli, 1996).

Similarly, Radcliffe argues that we need to distinguish between the spatial and metaphorical dimensions of the two spheres. Moving their activities from the private to the public sphere does not in and of itself transform women's identity. Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo moved their mothering duties to the public sphere without transforming them. Las Madres generally did not voice any gender issues other than their desire to be 'good mothers' (Radcliffe, 1993, 110).

There is also continuity between the two spheres. Public policy in areas like welfare, health or inflation directly affects private well-being. Women at Greenham Common, in the UK, or in the environmental justice movement highlight this continuity. Grassroots activism often arises from the notion that private concerns are not separate but are closely related to and affected by public policy.

Squires calls for attention to be paid to privacy claiming that post-modernity is characterised by the erosion of many of the spaces and places in which privacy was previously grounded (Squires, 1994, 387). Conversely, Minton calls our attention to the control of public spaces, like streets, by the privatisation of former public buildings. A host of activities are banned including begging, selling the Big Issue, handing out political leaflets and holding political demonstrations. They are routinely monitored by CCTV and security personnel in London (Minton, 2009).

Whatever their emphasis, these studies reveal the oppressive nature of the existing public/private dichotomy. In line with this, they have pointed to another sphere, the community/neighbourhood, which may be called a third sphere between the public and private spaces, in which this dichotomy may be overcome and in which women are able to extend their private sphere and develop their political activities.

4.2 Community and neighbourhood

There are different nuances in terms of the conceptualisation of community. Milroy and Wismer described community work as a 'third sphere in that community work arises from the

concerns of both spheres and community work deals with problems from both spheres. However, there is a unique area which is not wholly 'captured' or 'co-opted' by the private or public spheres, for instance church organisations with their strong domestic flavour (Milroy & Wismer, 1994, 82).

On the other hand, Martin saw community/neighbourhood as a blurred sphere which integrated the public and private in the experience of everyday life. Her study demonstrated that private sphere problems of household and family extended into the public sphere of the broader community. At the same time some women developed a sense of and concern for the neighbourhood, through their public sphere work identities (Martin, 2002).

Similarly, Staeheli's study shows that women who work in non-profit, community-based organisations providing human and social services have different understandings of the meaning and goals of community work. Their motivation for choosing such work reflects a different public or private perspective, depending on the person. Some see it arising from their private sphere, but others from their public sphere. However, they all think they are connecting the two (Staeheli, 2003).

In spite of these diverse conceptualisations, it is generally agreed that the community/neighbourhood space is where civil action and citizenship are nourished. Women often start to be involved from family concerns and then come to understand that these concerns occur in a broader societal/structural context. Women extend their maternal interests to other people's children in their communities and develop an identity as 'community-mothers', which blurs the line between private, home-based concerns and broader community-based concerns (Kurtz, 2007, 412).

However, there are also differences and tensions between the public and private spheres in the community. The community is a conflictive space within which contesting discourses and different tactics compete. Anderson and Jacobs' study (1998) of residential activism in Sydney in the 1970s shows that the concept of private and public is used differently depending on the place and the agency. In The Lock, where poor people in public housing campaigned against redevelopment, their attempt to preserve their space was seen as the expression of self-interest against the public interest. But in Hunters' Hill, when affluent

private homeowners fought against a developer who wanted to build houses in a nearby wooded area, they were able to portray their struggle as a campaign for the public good by broadening the grounds of their privacy claims, which effectively gave them proprietary rights over an extended 'neighbourhood' space, by claiming to be protecting this woodland for the community. Thus the terms 'public' or 'private' can be used in different ways in different situations.

In Kurtz' study on the environmental justice movement in the United States, environment officials in the St James' parish, Louisiana, tried to marginalise female protesters by portraying them as hysterical housewives, who were irrational and emotional women by comparison with the rational public officials. Women in the community are not necessarily a homogenous group, just as female community activists and other women do not necessarily have similar political opinions. In this case, the female protesters visited the homes of the environment officials and tried to persuade their wives to support them, but the wives 'did not understand' and refused to co-operate with the protesters (Kurtz, 2007, 419). Reed's study on the Canadian forestry community showed how different women like female forestry employees, the wives of loggers, female environment experts and female protesters held different opinions on the environment. Similarly, some women, including feminists, are not interested in the environment while others make it the main focus of their activism. So it can be seen that women's activism, both individual and collective, is heterogeneous and complex (Reed, 2000).

4.3 Spaces, women's activism and transformation

Feminist geographers have pointed out that spaces are gendered, in which gender norms apply, so that some people are included and others excluded (Staeheli & Kofman, 2004; Nelson &, Seager, 2005). Staeheli and Mitchell noted that many feminists have argued that the private sphere is a place of patriarchal privilege in which men dominate women (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2004, 148). In the private sphere women are likely to be expected to behave according to certain norms and roles underpinned by the gender division of labour.

Women frequently face opposition to their activities from their husbands and families. This disapproval may lead to violence, as was seen in Nagar's study of women's grassroots

organisations in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh, in north India (Nagar, 2000). However, in some instances this experience of domestic violence can provide the momentum for women to alter their thinking and incorporate gender issues in their movement. For instance, the women's section of the Women's Regional Council of the CONAMUP, Mexico's first national network of urban popular movements, was born because 'as women became more involved in the movement tensions within the home became increasingly apparent' (Cubitt & Greenslade, 1997, 58). One woman said "women were beaten just for going to meetings." They argue that by confronting domestic issues and addressing these collectively women began to shape their own political agenda (ibid, 59). However, in other cases these conflicts can discourage women's further progress in public life and constrain their further empowerment (Bellows, 1996; Campbell with the Women's Group of Xapuri, 1996; Miller et al., 1996).

The public sphere is normally regarded as men's space. In some parts of the world, by stigmatising women in the street as prostitutes women's sexuality and activities are controlled (Wright, 2005). When women are allowed to be in public there are usually norms and rules. In some cultures women's mobility is very restricted. They may not be allowed out without a companion and must wear a veil and are not allowed to talk to other men, so that their social life is seriously limited. So the community can be a patriarchal space, although there are different degrees depending on the culture.

As Ackelsberg says when 'women have acted outside their homes, their activities have often been ignored or ridiculed, defined as lying outside the domain of politics properly construed' (Ackelsberg, 2009, 29). Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo were labelled as mad women (Feijoo & Gogna, 1990)

However, these experiences of discrimination may provide them with opportunities to develop a new awareness. Lawson and Barton point to the case of a tenant movement in New York in which men have often been promoted by sponsoring organisations to hold key positions in the movement and have been assisted in gaining skills and access to networks through experience in organisations that have been closed to, or more restrictive towards, women. Housing officers often prefer to talk to men rather than women thinking women are less expert in these matters (Lawson & Barton, 1980, 241-243). Huiskamp argues, regarding Latin America women's community activism, that after women faced overt antagonism from

local leaders and other male community members against their collective work 'the women are now able to see their former position in a new light' (Huiskamp, 2000, 412-3).

Ackelsberg notes how these experiences can allow women to develop not only gender but also social awareness saying 'their confrontations with specific institutions help them to recognize broader patterns, including the role that assumptions about gender and class may have played in the response they received' (Ackelsberg, 2009, 33). However, it should not be assumed that community activism is automatically empowering. Ackelsberg goes on to warn that 'some communities seem simply to reinforce powerlessness, and failed resistance often leads to increased frustration and even resignation (ibid, 37). Even within social movements these restrictions can apply and in these cases the experience of the sexual division of labour and subordination can result in disputes and conflict from which a feminist consciousness can develop in mixed gender organisations (Thorne, 1975; Kuumba, 2001).

Wherever women go, whether it is at home, at work, in the community, in the street or in social movements, the norms and restrictions of their gender accompany them. This is very important when we consider women's activism. I argue that when women trespass in the public sphere, and face conflict as a result even at home, is when they experience outright gender constraints and discrimination. This is when their eyes may be opened. The more they get involved in public affairs the greater their opportunity to gain gender and social awareness. Women sometimes have to face their husband's antagonism to activities outside the home. Other women have to struggle with their male colleagues' attitudes which may control women or ignore women's interests. In some cases the patriarchal culture in the community prevents women being heard. However, this does not necessarily lead to greater awareness or empowerment. It may also cause discouragement and retreat.

These contradictions and conflicts arising from women's activism have transformative potential, which otherwise is not manifested but latent in daily life. Only when women become involved in activism does it become salient. I will argue that these conflicts have transformative potential but, strictly speaking, they are thresholds which may lead to either encouragement or discouragement, to further empowerment or to disillusionment.

On this point, it should be noted that this denies, theoretically, the dichotomy between

difference and equality. Women find that to fulfil their maternal role they need to get equality in both the household and public spheres. This follows the same logic as that of the suffragists, who justified their activism by saying that in order to do their work well as women they needed the right to vote (Freedman, 2001). In order to 'revalue' the women's sphere they needed recognition, politically, socially and economically, and to be included equally with men in the sphere from which they were excluded. They could not become community mothers without facing obstacles which were underestimated in much feminist literature.

Here, I would like to consider what pushes women past this threshold and what holds them back. I argue that both powers, restraining and pushing, are embedded in the structural contradictions of social systems. These intrinsic contradictions are often manifested when women are involved in social movements based on their traditional gender roles. Women are mothers as well as individual consumers and citizens, whose daily lives are incorporated in the market and in politics. As I mentioned earlier, in many cases women's private concerns have an inherent continuity with public affairs and this drives women's social activism in areas like the cost of food, housing, the environment or welfare. Yet, activism arising out of their traditional gender roles and identities creates a sharper contradiction for women activists because, ironically, the more serious mothers are in seeing themselves as safeguarding the family in the face of these problems, the more likely they are to get involved in activism. The deeper they are involved the more likely they are to be in conflict with their families and the more likely they are to experience discrimination in public.

The dilemma for these women is that they move into the public sphere on account of their existing gender roles and identities. Therefore, the more deeply they get involved the more they possibly see the problems they face are embedded in the social structure. The contradiction is that their household obligations are the source of their activism while at the same time they are what constrain them. They do not just feel constrained by their family's opposition, but they may also have their own feelings of guilt. This may well explain why activism arising out of women's traditional gender roles and identities will often fail to deliver transformation or involvement beyond a certain degree.

We have already seen that there are, broadly speaking, two different points of view in studies

of women's social movements based on their traditional gender roles and identities. Some take a positive view of their activism emphasising the transformation in the women's gender consciousness and in their role in the division of labour between sexes. Others are more sceptical, considering that they may reinforce traditional gender roles and identites. I have attempted to show there are thresholds for transformation and that women are pulled in two different directions, leaving aside the argument on the revaluation of women's sphere which I discussed earlier. Which direction will prevail depends on the internal and external circumstances in the movement concerned.

One thing which clearly facilitates this transformation is when women share their experience with other women in the movement and cope with the conflict with their husbands and children collectively. The women of CO-MADRES shared the experience of domestic violence which prevented them continuing with their activities. Women visited other women's houses and persuaded or told the husbands off about their behaviour (Stephen, 1997, 48-50). In Mexico, the members of CONAMUP realised that unless they dealt with the problem of domestic violence many women's activities were impossible, so they organized the women's section to confront domestic violence, as a result of which the women began to develop their political agenda (Cubitt & Greenslade, 1997, 58-60). Thus, we need to take into consideration the internal dynamics of the movement when trying to understand the nature of transformation.

To further develop this point, social movements are organic societies which have to adapt to changing circumstances. The process is collective as well as individual. This does not just affect individual members but also the whole movement at an institutional level. As social movements face new challenges they may have to adapt their policies and attitudes, as for example when they need to recruit new members from different sections of society and then have to meet the needs and expectations of these new members. This in turn can cause an alteration in the consciousness of members as they grapple with the new agendas which result. It can also cause changes in the structure and internal dynamics of the movement. The Kanagawa SC Movement provides an example of how there has been a gradual alteration in its policies to meet the child care needs of working women and in its goals to include objectives like gender equality and how there has been a shift in the power structure from the male leadership to the female membership. Transformation can occur in a collective as well

as an individual sense.

Another factor which may facilitate women's gender consciousness and which may enable the women to learn more about the situation of women in society at large is that, in the course of their public activities they are likely to encounter a broader range of women. Among others they may meet feminist scholars, other women activists, or women who face gender issues. For instance, at a time when women in the anti-Draft movement were very unhappy with their male colleagues' discriminatory practices some of them met a Women's Liberation organiser at the National Resistance conference in 1969 and, after communicating with other women in the Boston area, they created a separate caucus which focused on the promotion of women's issues (Thorne, 1975, 194). Similarly, when women's movements are developing they are more likely to get attention from feminist scholars and activists (Stephen, 1997; Campo, 2005). There is also a greater possibility for them to get to learn about or know other women who are suffering as their range of activities broadens and they become more sensitive to social issues. In this event it should be clear that this external input is a consequence of their developing public activities and empowerment. In the case of the KSC Movement contacts have occurred with feminists and have led to joint programmes as for example with the South Korean Women's Link, which is a feminist movement. In addition, the Kanagawa SC Movement has developed programmes to work alongside Third World women whose situation is very different from their own.

Earlier I argued that there is an inherent process of transformation regarding women's gender based activism. As I explained above, women are likely to face conflict in their home and outside. The more they are active in the public sphere the more likely they will experience contradictions between their public and private roles and experience serious conflict which will raise the question of their gender status. I call the decisive point at which they face this contradiction the 'transformatory threshold', the point at which they can push on with their activities and revalue or reinvent their social roles and create a new gender consciousness. This transformation may be facilitated or hindered by the movement of which they are a part for, as I point out above, social movements also undergo changes as they adapt to new circumstances.

The KSC Movement shows all the hallmarks of women's activism arising out of their

traditional gender roles and identities, such as neighbourhood/local action and environmental activism, as it will be discussed in Chapter 4 in detail. In Japan women's activist culture has focused on women's traditional gender roles and identities and even feminists have based their activism on this, rather than seeking to achieve equality with men, in a way which can be compared to their Latin American counterparts rather than to western feminists (Khor, 1999; Gelb, 2003). This may partly reflect the fact that Japanese women, including feminists, do not envy men their lifestyle and are critical of the values of male society (Khor, 1999), which echoes difference feminist ideas.

With a history of almost forty years history the KSC Movement provides a useful case for exploring the potential of, and the constraints on, the empowerment of women based on women's activism arising out of their traditional gender roles and identities. This thesis pays special attention to the women's transformation in the process of their empowerment, how their experience of the public space, the social and political arena impacts on them and the movement and how collective empowerment is the crucial facilitator of this transformation.

5. Questioning empowerment

Whilst the term 'empowerment' tends not to be clearly defined in studies of social movements, studies on women in the development context have not only discussed the concept extensively but have also developed analytical tools to understand it.

5.1 The development of the concept of empowerment

For the most part, the term 'empowerment' was used in western literature. However, since the 1980s it has been applied particularly in the development context involving women and has become a popular term outside the small circle of planners and practitioners. The remarkable growth in the Southern women's movement in the 1980s was responsible for this. At the DAWN conference, which was held in India in 1984, Southern women presented their ideas about women and development criticising the western development model. These concepts developed by DAWN and other Southern organisations regarding women and development were named the 'Empowerment Approach' by Moser (Braidotti et al., 1994, 146). In this context the term was used in relation to alternative approaches to development, against the

mainstream top-down development policy, with an emphasis on local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart et al., 2002, 3).

At the same time, the language of empowerment has been adopted by mainstream development agencies and neo-liberal governments in Southern countries. The restructuring policies of governments, since the economic crises of the 1980s, resulted in reductions in public spending and a reliance on NGOs to fulfil the role of public service providers (Staudt, 2002; Nagar & Raju, 2003). The language of 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'social capital' was often employed to suggest a new direction was being taken but, in reality, this only served to conceal an increase in women's burdens (Rankin, 2002; Nagar & Raju 2003; Molyneux, 2006). Many NGOs simply ended up as government contractors without questioning the broader system and the power structure, thereby tarnishing the original radical objective of empowerment approaches and the purpose of facilitating the struggle for social justice and women's equality through social transformation (Mohanty, 1995; Parpart et al., 2002).

In order to re-establish the radical implications of the concept of empowerment feminists have tried to develop ways to analyse and debate the empowerment of women. For the most part, two different approaches have been tried. The first is to expand the scope of the research. Because women's empowerment has been trapped in projects or localism the area of research has been expanded to include the impact on women of meso and macro level policies and institutions, in order to learn about their impact on women or to discover strategies to change the policies and institutions (Kabeer, 1995; Afshar, 1998; Parpart et al., 2002). More recently The Pathways of Women's Empowerment Research group have criticised the concept of empowerment as having become 'individualistic (and) instrumental' rather than transformative, which merely serves neo-liberal projects. They emphasise women's mobilisation and collective action for political change (Cornwall & Anyidoho, 2010, 145). In line with this they have sought to critically assess 'collective action and institutionalised mechanisms that are aimed at changing structural relations as well as individual circumstances.' They seek to look 'beyond deliberate and planned intervention to try to gain a better understanding of what is happening in women's lives as a result of cultural, economic and other changes' (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010, 1). These impacts encompass quota systems in national politics, access to education, religious practices and new technologies like mobile

phones and television. For example, Priyadarshani and Rahim studied the impact of television on poor urban women in Bangladesh and found the women actively engaged with programmes implying that the TV output may bring about moral changes in the women's lives (Priyadarshani & Rahim, 2010). Huq, who investigated the impact of rising religious practice and discourse among Bangladeshi women, argues that they also reinterpret religious ideas and thereby challenge existing gender norms (Huq, 2010). In a similar vein, an important recent development in the empowerment discourse is that researchers are incorporating social and political factors, including institutional environments, in their studies (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Pradhan, 2003; Mosedale, 2005; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2006). For example, Petesch et al (2006) and Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) include the social and political context for measuring empowerment in the name of 'opportunity structure', a concept borrowed from social movement theory.

Another approach emphasises the role of women as agents of social change through collective action. Sardenberg states that the objective of women's empowerment is to transform patriarchal domination and for this we should focus on women's organising or collective action (Sardenberg, 2010, 235) and Connell suggests one of the strategies for women's empowerment is 'nurturing the activists' (Connell, 2010, 173). Mwaura-Muiru points out that development aid and government programmes have impacted negatively on the collective organising of grassroots women. Their top-down pre-designed projects and programmes have been imposed on communities resulting in a failure to prioritise grassroots women's own needs. She also considers that gender mainstreaming has diverted resources from local women's organisations and that women's movements and institutions have become too highly professionalised and bureaucratic (Mwaura-Muiru, 2010, 198-199). She stresses that it is critical to meet grassroots women's diverse needs and incorporate their perspectives and donors should support them with adequate resources (ibid, 199).

Studies into the empowerment of women by the Pathways of Women's Empowerment group have also focused on women's collective action in different contexts to show the diverse dimensions of empowerment, the different strategies employed and the contradictions which can result. Kabeer and Huq pointed out the importance of friendship between women and how, in the case of the Bangladeshi women's NGO Saptagram, this proved to be a great strength in maintaining and reviving a 'failed' organisation (Kabeer & Huq, 2010). Another example, this time of the contradictions in empowerment, is of how the organisation of

domestic workers in Brazil was obstructed by their employers, upper and middle class women who, in their capacities as teachers, civil servants and bank workers, were members of the same Central Union (Gonçalves, 2010, 62-69). In Bangladesh, Nazneen and Sultan investigated the strategies employed by three different women's organisations in building alliances, going to court, using the media and engaging with political parties and the state in order to achieve their goals (Nazneen & Sultan, 2010).

New studies into women's empowerment have expanded their scope geographically to include Arab, East European countries, Russia and Japan (England, 2000; Tsuya, 2000; Grootaert, 2006; Lokshin & Ravallion, 2006). England argues that women's empowerment should be talked about in the North as well as the South, because the attainment by women of living standards and power equal to men is a matter of basic human rights which apply in all nations (England, 2000, 37). Ali discussed the implications of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for Asian and Islamic women in the context of empowerment (Ali, 2002). Youngs and Barber studied empowerment at the global and international level in terms of cyberspace and immigration (Barber, 2002; Youngs, 2002). The UNDP has produced cross-national comparisons of women's empowerment and ranked each nation in terms of this[4]. As the scale of studies is diversifying and expanding researchers have sought to develop ways of measuring empowerment, to evaluate the impact of projects and policies. There are attempts to measure empowerment using objective indicators, with the purpose of getting a tangible statistical result. One of the best known measurements of women's empowerment is the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure, which uses indicators like the number of seats in Parliament held by women and the ratio of estimated female to male earned income.

Likewise the boundary of research on empowerment has been expanding beyond projects and programmes as well as beyond poor women in developing countries, although the

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[4] The work by the UNDP is criticised in that this fails to take into account the social context by applying universal 'objective' indicators. Thus, what these indicators show may be superficial. For instance, the number of seats held women in Parliament can be sheer tokenism or have nothing to do with the representation of women's interests (Rai, 1997). Whether women are able to access higher education also may have no meaning for women's empowerment unless social and cultural norms support gender equality. For instance, in Kerala in India highly educated women tend to be subjected to more violence from their husbands and have higher rates of suicide (Mitra & Singh, 2007). Kabeer argues against relying on simple empowerment indicators by themselves, as is typical of organisations like the UNDP, when attempting objective measurements (Kabeer, 1999).

mainstream of empowerment studies has remained focused on these areas. Few attempts have been made to analyse women's empowerment in social movements and a subject like middle-class women's activism in a rich country like Japan has not yet been explored.

5.2 Questioning the empowerment of women in social movements: conceptual issues and framework

What should be taken into consideration when trying to understand the empowerment of women? When it comes to social movements it is necessary to examine empowerment from a different perspective to that adopted in development projects. As has already been stated, for the most part, women do not necessarily participate in these movements to empower themselves. The process of women's empowerment in such movements is likely to be unpredictable depending on the movement's own internal dynamics and its spontaneous response to the social environment.

Basically, empowerment in social movements cannot be 'measured' with a certain expectation of the outcome or against a pre-made check list. Here the main concern is not just 'how much' but 'whether', 'what' and 'how' it occurred. Yet, in order to identify the empowerment we need certain conceptual tools to capture it. Studies into women's empowerment in the development context have provided analytical tools to facilitate assessment, which are useful for understanding women's empowerment in social movements.

Kabeer's formula can be adopted as a skeleton as it provides general categories to consider. She considers empowerment as the ability to exercise choice and she suggests a more holistic approach to evaluating empowerment is in terms of agency, resource and achievement, which are inter-related, as conceptual tools within the context of the culture concerned (Kabeer, 1999, 2005). The ability to exercise choice can be thought of in terms of these three interrelated dimensions: resource as the situation in which choice occurs, agency as its content and achievement as its consequence (Kabeer, 1999, 435). In this framework agency is defined as 'including processes of decision making, as well as less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation'. She also includes in agency the meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their agency. She defines resources as being 'not only access, but also future claims to both material and human and

social resources' (ibid, 435-8). Achievement means 'the extent to which this potential is realised or fails to be realised; that is the outcome of people's effort' (ibid, 15).

5.2.1 Agency

The central concern of empowerment is agency. Other elements like resources and achievements are material and non-material conditions which affect or support the change in agency as long as the change in agency is not merely psychological. Rowlands' categories of empowerment, 'personal', 'relational' and 'collective' empowerment are more pertinent, because not only do these encompass different dimensions of empowerment but also because Rowlands' category of collective empowerment is crucial to understanding women's empowerment in social movements.

Collective empowerment

Although collective empowerment has gained more attention recently because of feminist efforts to recover the radical implications of the empowerment concept there has been little in-depth analysis as to how it occurs and its relationship with other dimensions of empowerment. One of the few to address this subject is Rowlands, who defines collective empowerment as 'where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone' (Rowlands, 1997, 15). This is an important area of my thesis as social movements like the KSC are built around collective action and it is vital to understand how this impacts on the empowerment of the women involved in the movement. In Rowlands' understanding the three dimensions of empowerment, personal, relational and collective, reinforce each other. She considers collective empowerment arises from personal empowerment but notes that while there is an interaction between the two empowerments her emphasis is on the key role of personal empowerment (ibid).

I have taken Rowlands' concept and placed it at the centre of the empowerment process in social movements. The women who join the movement do not join or are not selected to be part of an empowerment programme. The process is unintended and as such occurs as a result of their involvement. It is therefore critical to examine the internal dynamics of the movement and its activities to see how empowerment occurs.

At the heart of a social movement's activities is its collective action. Rowlands' definition of collective empowerment is very useful in setting out the importance of the greater impact a group can have as opposed to the impact of individuals. But this impact is felt not only outside the movement but also inside it, in the way it changes the women's consciousness and their confidence enabling them to acquire new skills and to feel a closer relationship with those around them.

This change occurs through collective agency rather than individual agency. It is difficult to assess personal empowerment in such movements without reference to the collective. Whereas in a project, such as a credit union, participants may have minimal involvement with others and the project will have a very specific focus, social movements like the Kanagawa SC Movement are multi-faceted, the organisation has its own dynamics and character. The greater the collective agency the more likely it is that the members will achieve personal empowerment. It is also true that individual empowerment has an impact on collective empowerment. It is vital, therefore, to examine what facilitates collective empowerment and how collective empowerment acts as the engine which generates other empowerments such as personal and relational empowerment.

Personal empowerment

Rowlands defines personal empowerment as 'developing a sense of individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression' (Rowlands, 1997, 15). Moser sees this aspect of personal empowerment in terms of self-reliance and internal strength as being at the heart of empowerment (Moser, 1993, 74-75).

Other skills and abilities also need to be taken into account. When women first become involved in social movements they often lack organisational skills, knowledge and strategising abilities. As campaigns develop mass meetings become vital for reaching people and women often lack confidence and skill in public speaking at such events (Lawson & Barton, 1980, 40). If they fail to develop these skills and gain this knowledge they run the risk of reinforcing the gender division of labour in their organisation.

In the case of the Seikatsu Club, previous studies of the SC women show that they achieved a

greater feeling of agency through involvement in the SC not only in terms of feeling more confident but also in their growing social awareness and changed outlook on life (Satō, 1988; LeBlanc, 1999). It is important to examine these personal empowerments and how they are gained in terms of the collective empowerment achieved by the women of the KSC Movement.

Relational empowerment

Rowlands also considers relational empowerment to be a critical aspect of empowerment (Rowlands, 1997, 14). She defines relational empowerment as 'developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it' (ibid, 15). Women's personal empowerment may be seriously constrained by their close relationships. For instance, Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK), a residential school in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh provided feminist training for women, but failed to tackle their relationship with their family, including their mothers-in-law, which resulted in disempowerment. One woman says "Everything we learned at MSK seems unreal…. The only thing that is different in my life because of MSK is that I get a lot more depressed than I would have been if I hadn't gotten my hopes up at MSK" (Nagar & Swarr, 2005). Even gaining more material resources often had little impact. There are cases when women's access to credit resulted in domestic violence from their husbands (Schuler at al., 1996). Relationships with men are an important issue for women who participate in social movements, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, not only in terms of their relationship with their husbands but also with male colleagues. Batliwala, especially, places an emphasis on the change of gender relationships by seeing this as a key manifestation of empowerment (Batliwala, 1994, 129-130).

Most attention has been paid to intra-household gender relationships, especially to the relationship between women and their husbands. However, feminist studies of social movements have also been concerned with gender relationships within the movements. The Kanagawa SC Movement provides an opportunity to examine both areas. It is possible to see how the women's collective and personal empowerment affects their family relationships and the impact they have on their families, how the division of labour and difficulties in the family impact on the women's involvement in the movement, whether the movement acts collectively to overcome conflicts in the home and how the women choose individually to

negotiate the difficulties they encounter at home. It also provides an excellent opportunity to look at the relationships between men and women in a social movement, to examine the power relationships between the genders in the movement, to look at the contributions made by men to the empowerment of the women and the way they constrain it, to see how a movement develops over time and how gender relationships can change or remain constant during that time.

It should be noted that the change in relational power between men and women is not necessarily a zero-sum game. It is often assumed that a gain in power for one is a loss for another and that such a loss must be undesirable. Rowlands questioned these assumptions when she wrote 'men's fear of losing control is an obstacle to women's empowerment, but is it necessarily an outcome of women's empowerment that men should lose power or, crucially, that a loss of power should be something to be afraid of?' (Rowlands, 1998, 13)

Conflict between different dimensions of empowerment

Finally, when considering these three dimensions of empowerment, collective, personal and relational empowerment it is worth noting that they can also conflict with one another. As Molyneux (2002) and others have pointed out individually empowered women in credit schemes may simply become competitive business women who undermine group solidarity. On the other hand, collectiveness in a group can be oppressive and even disempowering for some individuals, implicitly or explicitly. So, while this thesis will be exploring the important role of collective empowerment in creating other dimensions of empowerment it will also take into account the complexity of these relationships.

5.2.2 Resources

Resources can be an important supportive base for greater agency among poor people. However, this depends on the context. Gaining more material resources may not bring a greater sense of agency. For instance, among Bedouin women in southern Egypt it is considered to be disempowering to go to market. Women who are relatively wealthy choose to withdraw from economic activities to do domestic work, which is considered more respectable, even if they may lose potential income (Sharp et al, 2003). This tendency also

appears among women in other societies like Chilean shanty towns (Adams, 2002).

In the case of Japan, full-time housewives tend to belong to higher educational and income groups so that women who have to work often envy them (Ueno, 1987). On this point, gaining resources and economic empowerment may or may not be an important condition depending on women's goals in the movement and their class and culture. When considering social movements, rather than projects, women's motivations for being involved are much more diverse. For instance, in the case of a women's movement based on economic survival gaining or controlling material resources would be crucial, but in other cases, such as religious, nationalist or ethnic struggles, concerns about livelihood and the quality of life will not necessarily be the focus of the movement.

However, other aspects of personal and collective resources need to be investigated. Intellectual resources, including knowledge, information and ideas, are likely to play an important part in women's empowerment. Batliwala argues that 'control over ideology is the ability to generate and sustain specific sets of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour' (Batliwala, 1994, 129). Mies also points out the importance of intellectual resources in enabling women to hold on to the gains they make during their struggles. She writes 'the reason women fail to hold on to the gains achieved during national liberation struggles is the fact that although women participated in these struggles in large numbers they left the development of theory and strategy to male experts' (Mies, 1982, quoted in Beall et al., 1989, 38). Gaining a broader social and political consciousness and acquiring the capacity to develop ideology are crucial aspects of women's empowerment in a social movement.

In addition, building collective resources like offices and funds may facilitate collective empowerment through collective action. Social networks and individual skills also contribute to the development of the movement. The Kanagawa SC Movement provides an excellent opportunity to examine how women use their different resources to build their collective assets and advance their movement. How women use their resources will also depend on the structure and dynamics of the movement so that it may be the case, as in the KSC Movement, that women will still leave certain tasks, such as policy making, in the hands of male leaders which may in turn limit or slow their empowerment.

5.2.3 Achievement

In Kabeer's empowerment formula 'achievement', meaning individual 'women's well-being', (Kabeer, 1999) is not relevant for this study as, first, the women of the KSC Movement already enjoy considerable material advantages and, second, her formula applies to projects which have the specific objective of empowering women, which is not the case in a social movement like the KSC, where empowerment is not the goal of the movement. Instead Rowlands' concept of 'achievement' which relates to collective goals is more appropriate when considering women's empowerment in social movements. She considers this achievement arises out of their collective action and reinforces the agency of collective empowerment by giving the women greater confidence in their ability to act together (Rowlands, 1997). This is also a reflection of their success as a social movement and their impact on the wider society.

Personal and relational empowerments may not produce any achievement or collective empowerment. For instance, Gelb argues that feminist organisations in Britain are radicalised and emphasise consciousness raising and personal change but are fragmented into small autonomous organisations, which have less social impact by comparison with their American counterparts which focus on political action (Gelb, 1989).

It should be noted that although Kabeer (1999) argues that any one dimension of these three dimensions of empowerment, agency, resource and achievement, leads to other dimensions of empowerments, others argue that this is not always the case. Mahmud argues that in reality there are discrepancies between agency, resource and achievement. For instance, the women concerned can feel great agency but they may not gain more resources or achievement, or vice versa (Mahmud, 2003). Similarly Parpart et al point out that 'involvement in the politics of subversion is thus empowering in itself, even if it fails to transform immediately dominant power relations' (Parpart et al., 2002, 7). They warn that the achievement of goals should not be seen as proof of individual or group empowerment, because the empowerment process is a fluid, often unpredictable process and attention must be paid to the 'specificities of struggles over time and space'(ibid, 4).

The Kanagawa SC Movement provides a further opportunity to test these propositions and to examine the part played by achievement, most importantly the part played by collective actions and achievements in inspiring the women and empowering them collectively, personally and relationally. Achievement is likely to mean different things to different women. Women who have been involved in a movement for a long time will have experienced failure as well as success and may be less inspired by a new success than a new member who has just found the confidence to speak up publicly for the first time.

5.2.4 Different empowerments: whose empowerment?

The possibility that empowerment may vary between different groups of women needs to be considered. The level and depth of participation will vary among different groups of women which may result in varying rewards and benefits. Some women may be excluded or disempowered because they are not able to participate or find they are at odds with the ideology of the organisation.

Feminist scholars have called for attention to be paid to women's diverse identities and interests. They have pointed out that women's gender identities intersect with other categories like race, class, religion and different women have different experiences, so that to see women as a homogeneous group is in fact to prioritise a particular category of women, often white-middle class women, which in turn marginalises others (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Yuval-Davis 2006; Valentine 2007). When mentioning lesbian relationships Corrêa pointed out that 'The failure to discuss the power imbalances and tensions among women is one blind spot in the gender discourse' (Corrêa, 2010, 186).

Gonçalves' study, which was discussed earlier, clearly shows the tension between different classes of women. Domestic workers in Brazil face obstacles in pursuing their rights because their employers are affiliated in the same Central Union (Gonçalves, 2010). In America women's organisations such as the National Organization of Women and the National Women's Studies Association experienced serious internal conflict over the lack of black and working–class women in leadership positions (Buechler, 1990, and Leidner, 1991, quoted in Poster, 1995, 660). Shadmi (2000) reports how, in the Israeli Women in Black movement, white women marginalised women from other ethnic groups, Mizrahi and working-class

women.

Ostrander's study illustrates the complex interactions between race and gender and reveals the tensions between the white and black staff and the black and white male staff and the white and black female staff (Ostrander, 1999). It can be seen how empowerment can be complicated by internal political tensions between groups as well by power structures in an organisation. It often seems that projects are immune to these problems, although this may be because they operate in a more controlled environment than social movements. However, Fernando (1997) and Mayoux (2001) have pointed out that often the poorest of poor women in credit schemes are marginalised and excluded. This is particularly relevant when considering empowerment in social movements, because the membership is likely to include people from different genders, classes, age groups and ethnic groupings in a movement whose membership is not carefully selected.

In the case of the KSC Movement, which is just under forty years old and a mixed gender organisation including women and men from different backgrounds, generations and classes, it is likely there will be differences in terms of the empowerment of the women. We need to explore the power relationships between different women and the implications for their empowerment. In addition, the KSC Movement includes an important group of male leaders who have played a key role in the development of the movement and their interactions with the women is of particular interest to my thesis and I will develop this in order to understand more about how empowerment occurs and how different groups of women are affected.

5.2.5 Social change as an outcome?

It is often unclear whether empowerment is regarded as a process, a means to an end, or an outcome, an end. Narayan (2006, 16) argues that 'it is an end in itself. Feeling self-confident, walking with dignity, feeling respected, living without fear, is of value in itself. Empowerment is also important as means of achieving specific development outcome.' However, in order to conduct specific evaluations 'it is important to specify whether empowerment is conceptualised as a means or an end or both'. When it comes to defining what is meant by 'process' there is a considerable spectrum of opinion. Process can be both a means and an end. For instance, Staudt sees empowerment as a process of changing power

imbalances and as an outcome with concrete achievements (Staudt, 2002, 97). On the other hand, Rowlands defines the process of empowerment as 'power from within' and 'power to', whilst the outcome of empowerment is gaining power to control or 'power over' (Rowlands, 1998, 12-13). Khawaja's study shows how different evaluations of empowerment class it as an end and a means to an end (Khawaja, 2006).

When considering empowerment in social movements like the Kanagawa SC Movement there is no certainty the empowerment that is achieved as a by-product of the movement's activities will necessarily result in broader social change. The empowered women do not necessarily contribute to enhancing women's position in society. Participants in a movement may well be happy to compromise with personal and group rewards. Conversely, a defeated social movement, such as a peasant land rights campaign, may still bring about great social change despite the participants' personal and collective discouragement.

In addition, the movement's goals may be very conservative but the women involved may still be empowered. Pitanguy points out how in both conservative Christian and Muslim communities many women feel they achieve recognition as citizens and are valued as human beings by belonging to such communities, even though they may be seen as second-class citizens and denied many rights, particularly in the sphere of sexual and reproductive rights. Women in these religious movements gain a sense of empowerment through a feeling of belonging and of being valued as mothers, wives and dutiful women. She warns, therefore, that is important to be careful with the concept and recognise that empowerment can occur in many different contexts and is not synonymous with progress for women (Pitanguy in conversation, Harcourt, 2010, 157).

Women in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) upheld women's equality with men although the objectives of the KKK could hardly be described as beneficial to a large section of the community (Blee, 1996). Similarly many affluent women, who were politically conservative, nevertheless became involved in the feminist movement, including the suffrage movement (Davis, 1991). Women who supported the Nazis and campaigned against America's involvement in the Second World War showed great ability at organising women around America (Jeansonne, 1996). If women get greater agency, including a feminist consciousness and organisational skills and abilities as a result of their involvement, how can we say this is

not empowerment? Pitanguy argues that 'Empowerment and leadership are neutral concepts in the sense that they are not necessarily attached to progress… We automatically give the terms empowerment and leadership a sense of goodness and progress, but they are not necessarily so. So, we always have to add: empowerment for what?' (Pitanguy in conversation, Harcourt, 2010, 157).

Similarly, in itself the empowerment of the poor is not necessarily progressive. Assumptions may be made that different groups of disadvantaged people will have shared interests. However, different groups may well be at odds. White working class people, for example, may hold racist opinions and they may mobilise, as occurred in tenant associations on housing estates in Britain, to exclude other ethnic groups (Yuval-Davis, 1993). The history of women in social movements also shows a very complicated picture of the relationship between the process of empowerment and its outcome as well as between different outcomes.

Empowerment could also be very limited depending on the movement or project's goals. It has to be noted that one dimension of empowerment does not necessarily lead to other dimensions of empowerment and depending on the scope and time span, short or long term, of the project the goals for women's empowerment will be different.

To make matters more complicated empowerment may not always be a zero–sum game. In terms of redistributing power, Lokshin and Ravallion (2006) examined the relationship between subjective well-being, subjective power and household incomes in Russia. Examining changes over time they found that the number of people moving up the power ladder exceeded the number of people falling down, an indication that gaining power should not be considered a zero-sum game. Knack argues for understanding empowerment of the poor within a positive-sum framework rather than by focusing on gaining power, an approach that tends to lead to zero-sum game perspectives. Policy changes need to be assessed to see if they add more value to society than they subtract. Bringing about change often requires the support of elites and the middle class so Knack (2006) argues that it is important to identify policies that will make the poor better off without making others worse off. He provides examples of two reforms that may benefit the poor as well as other groups, namely improving the security of property rights and encouraging political participation which focuses on the public interest rather than individual benefits.

Against this, it has to be pointed out that the individual pursuit of empowerment can create a 'critical mass' thus inducing a change of national policy. For instance, in Japan women increasingly postpone marriage while pursuing their careers, which has resulted in a very low birth rate of Japan. This has led to the conservative government taking dramatic action to improve policies on child care to encourage women to have children while still being able to work (Tsuya, 2000; Takeda, 2008).

Some scholars remain sceptical and consider that empowerment is an inherently limited concept. Pieterse argues that empowerment fosters self-confidence and self-assertion but it may have conservative implications, through adaptation and conformity to established rules, or be politically neutral (Pieterse, 1992, 10). As he puts it 'empowerment may relate to emancipation as a necessary but not a sufficient condition: emancipation implies empowerment, but not every form of empowerment is emancipatory' (ibid, 10-11). Herrick (1995) and Pieterse see the concept of emancipation, rather than empowerment, as containing the idea of social transformation and a moral dimension.

Therefore, when looking at women's empowerments we should be aware of these discrepancies between empowerment as a process or a by-product and social change. We should be careful not to assume that women's empowerment automatically results in social progress but be open to all kind of possibilities like the unexpectedness, contradictions and complexity of social movements. As has already been discussed, different groups of women are likely to experience different empowerments and some may be disempowered as a result of the actions of a movement. Likewise, alliances and power struggles within a movement may produce peculiar results and distortions in the empowerment of members. The KSC Movement provides an opportunity to examine some of these disparities and for more deliberate thinking about the social impact of women's empowerment.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have made a number of key points regarding the studies relevant to this thesis. First, while there is a limited discussion of women's resources they tend not to be closely examined in feminist studies on social movements, but it is my contention that they should be taken seriously. Another key issue concerns the relationships between men and

women in mixed gender social movements which tend to be described in black and white terms, but I argue that these are likely to be far more complex.

Second, the controversies around difference and equality feminism, practical and strategic needs/interests and the potential of activism based on women's traditional roles and identities, which to my mind can be seen as the same argument in three different forms, have been reviewed. By examining the literature on the private/public dichotomy I explain how women's gender based activism based on practical needs/interests can produce a change in gender consciousness and to show how the binary notion of equality and difference can be challenged, whereby difference can encompass equality in the process of empowerment. I also explain why it is difficult for this to occur.

Third, as social movements operate differently from projects and programmes it is important to consider the different understandings of how empowerment occurs. The broad context of the social movement and the three dimensions of opportunity structure, resources and ideology, framing and identity will be explored.

Fourth, the nature of personal, relational and collective empowerments and how they occur will be investigated. Key to this has been an examination of the nature and role of collective empowerment and the part this plays in generating other forms of empowerment. However, possible conflicts between different dimensions of empowerment, especially between personal and collective empowerment, also need to be taken into consideration.

Finally, I have taken into account the fact that the achievement of empowerment by some women is not necessarily beneficial to all women and how relationships between women and men in the organisation affect these different empowerments. I will also investigate the impact of women's empowerment on the wider society in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Researching Empowerment

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the methodology I used in my research. I will discuss some of the problems I faced and the lessons I learned when undertaking my two fieldwork trips. I conducted a survey of the membership in the summer of 2005, during my first fieldwork trip, in order to learn about the situation of the members of the Kanagawa SC Movement and the personal and relational empowerment. I also conducted a few interviews during that period. My second fieldwork trip, which used qualitative research with interviews and participatory observations, took place between August and December 2008 following a period of ill health. This focused on investigating collective empowerment and the different empowerments experienced by the members. In all, I conducted sixty-four interviews and seventeen focus groups.

In the first section, I will explain why I chose the SC Movement, in particular the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement, for my study. In section two, I will briefly describe the research design while, in the third section, I will describe the actual implementation of the research plan and explain my first and second fieldwork trips along with some problems I encountered. I will address the ethical and positionality issues arising from my qualitative research carried out during my second period of fieldwork period.

2. The choice of the Kanagawa SC Movement as a case study

There are thirty branches in the Seikatsu Club Co-operative Union (SCCU) in Japan. Three of the largest are the Tokyo, Kanagawa and Chiba branches all of which are in the Tokyo Metropolitan area and were the earliest to be set up in 1968, 1971 and 1976 respectively. For my case study I wanted to find a branch which would provide members who were involved in as wide a range of activities as possible, where the principles of the SC were put into practice most effectively and where the challenges facing the SC were being discussed and faced.

I was particularly inspired by the information on the Kanagawa SC Movement in Lam's study (1999). Not only is the Kanagawa branch one of the largest and oldest in the SC it is also

widely regarded as being in the vanguard of the organisation and its most innovative branch. In Chiba they say 'the wind is from the west' meaning they follow the example of Kanagawa and Tokyo and Kanagawa has indeed led the way in pioneering the development of new areas of work and new organisations.

The KSC has devolved power to local Co-ops and developed its collective buying system to take account of the needs of working women. Kanagawa paved the way in the creation of Workers' Collectives and these were in turn the first to provide care for the elderly, an example which has been followed not just by other SC branches but also by other Japanese Co-ops seeking to emulate the SC. Kanagawa has also been among the leading branches in developing the SC's political party, the Net.

Simply speaking, there are three pillars in the Kanagawa SC Movement, the Co-op, referred to here as the KSC, the Net and the Workers' Collectives. In addition there are several other subsidiary organisations which have been developed to extend the SC's work and to meet the challenge of Japan's changing demographics, as is outlined in Chapter 4.

Key amongst the challenges facing the SC movement is the changing demographic of Japanese society, notably the decline in the number of full-time housewives, who make up its core membership. The Kanagawa branch has led the way in seeking to involve other social groups like working women, the elderly and men and in further diversifying its organisational base, as is described in Chapter 4. The SC Movement has sought to create an alternative social model for Japan and the Kanagawa SC Movement has led the way in developing new organisations and expanding its area of activities providing an example for other branches to follow.

3. Research Design

Using multi-methods is often desirable as it can make it possible for researchers to uncover a wider range of information from different sources and gain a deeper understanding of a research question (Valentine, 2001, 45). By using both quantitative and qualitative methods researchers can generate material from each technique which reinforces or validates material collected from the other. Even though there may be inconsistencies and contradictions

between the findings gained using different methods these inconsistencies should enable a deeper questioning as to the differences and allow a deeper appreciation of the complexities of reality (Valentine, 2001, 45; Hoggart, Lees, & Davies, 2002, 73).

First of all, I needed to get baseline information about the women of the KSC Movement, to discover who they are and what resources they have. In addition, in terms of the women's empowerment, I needed to understand 'how much is happening to how many people?' This required the use of quantitative methods (Mayoux, 2006, 117). Further, in order to get an idea as to what is happening to the women in terms of empowerment I had to rely on qualitative methods, using open questions. To this end I decided using a survey would be the most effective method as surveys can accommodate both quantitative and qualitative data (Narayan, 2006, 26).

Second, I needed to explore the process of empowerment. This is best understood through the use of qualitative methods because women's empowerment is measured and interpreted by the women concerned and qualitative methods enable the researcher to understand life changes (Malbotra & Schuler, 2006). Qualitative methodologies such as interviews, discussions or participant observation enable the researcher 'to explore some of the complexities of everyday life in order to gain a deeper insight into the processes shaping our social world' (Dwyer & Limb, 2001, 1).

One of the problems with examining processes is that they occur over time. Malbotra and Schuler point out that, whilst it may be desirable to capture empowerment as a 'process' and to follow it over time 'there is an enormous problem with regard to the availability of adequate data across time' (Malbotra & Schuler, 2006, 80). In this instance many KSC members will have been involved in the movement for as long as thirty or even forty years. To try and overcome this problem the questions in both the quantitative and qualitative research sought to establish in what ways and how much the women have changed in different respects since they joined the KSC and how the movement had had an impact on their empowerment. A particular set of questions sought to understand this process over time by comparing the women's own estimate of their empowerment in terms of their length of membership and the depth of their involvement, to see how this varied.

The fieldwork was planned to take place in two phases. The first fieldwork visit, between June and September in 2005, was intended to gain an understanding of the general social background and resources of the KSC women together with how and to what extent KSC members have experienced personal and relational empowerment by becoming involved in the organisation. For this I used a survey which combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies by using questions which allowed both open-ended and closed-ended answers.

Building on the information gained from the survey the second fieldwork period focused on qualitative methods, such as interviews and participatory observations, to further examine and understand the process of collective empowerment in detail, as well as the power structure and culture of the KSC and how empowerment might differ between groups of women.

4. Secondary Data

In order to gain an understanding of the Japanese context I read about social movements in Japan, the Japanese women's movement, the status of Japanese women and Japanese co-ops in both Japanese and English languages which is discussed in Chapter 4. Further background information on the position of Japanese women and about the SC was gained from official statistics from the Japanese government, the UN and the Japanese Co-operative Union (JCCU). The UNDP and the World Economic Forum provide indicators on the empowerment of women (GEM) and the gender gap index (GGI) in Japan.

The KSC Movement, the Co-op, Workers' Collectives and Net publish a considerable amount of booklets, reports, magazine, leaflets and annual reports. The Kanagawa Net's activities were well documented so I was able to get an abundance of material about them. Most of the KSC Movement organisations run websites from which I was able to learn more about their activities, structure, history and ideology and the opinions of its members. I checked the main KSC Movement organisations over time so that I learnt about any changes which had been happening. In addition, I was able to get some internal discussion papers from the KSC which gave me an insight into the gender structure of the KSC Movement. These committee papers covered the period 2000 to 2010 and were very revealing as they did not just include public relations material but discussions about problems facing the movement and strategies for reforming and updating the organisation.

It is important to check information put out by organisations, particularly the organisation being studied. Unsurprisingly, organisations will tend to highlight their successes and achievements. So while it is important to read material put out by organisations and other official sources it is also vital to remain critical and to check the information against other sources or studies. For example, when I discussed statements about women's empowerment and gender policies which appeared in KSC and Net reports I found that top leaders I spoke to regarded these as 'decoration' and having little substance. I had to rely on interviews to get a clear picture of what was happening in the movement in this regard.

The same applies to other secondary sources, such as government information. Macdonald points out that public statistics are a 'social product' as much as any other document and a report or account may be designed to enhance a reputation, in this case of a state (Macdonald, 2001, 196-205). For example, recent Japanese government documents about the status of Japanese women give the impression that the position of Japanese women has improved considerably. However, closer examination of the documentation showed this only applies to the public sector rather than to the society overall. Cross checking with international assessments revealed that the position of Japanese women, in relation to other countries, had deteriorated.

5. Quantitative research

5.1 Design of the Survey

I decided I needed to ask both closed and open questions in my survey. There were occasions when a choice between given options was adequate to discover information. However, given the complexity of the subject I felt I needed to allow space for the women to express their opinions or provide further explanation. Simon made the same point when arguing that questionnaires should be set out in a semi-structured manner with some questions to elicit 'basic information with others that permit more flexible answers to convey ideas or perceptions in an open-ended manner' (Simon, 2006, 166). The majority of the questions provided choices for answers, but a considerable number of questions allowed for open answers. In addition, many closed-ended questions included a space at the end of the answer section where the respondent was asked 'Please specify………..' so as to allow her to provide

further explanation of her chosen answer.

Roughly speaking my survey can be divided into two parts. Firstly, it was designed to discover the background and resources of the KSC women in terms of their age, level of education and household income, see Appendix 1 for a sample of the questionnaire in English. I wanted to establish how they used their material and non-material resources which, I argue in Chapter 2, have contributed to their empowerment. For example, I wanted to see how they had recruited new members, to see what networks they had developed for this purpose. To understand their material resources I wanted to establish what access they had to household funds or what money they had of their own and how they used these different funds.

Secondly, the survey sought to discover how the KSC women have experienced personal and relational empowerment both in terms of personal changes as well as changes in their relationships with their families. To understand more about their personal empowerment questions were designed to discover, for example, how they had been affected by their involvement in the KSC, how their outlook had changed and how their understanding of the purpose of the KSC had altered. These answers could be cross referred against their length and depth of membership to see whether these changes varied according to these factors. Answers to one question could be compared with answers to another. For example, how the women understood the goals of the KSC could be compared with their reason for joining the KSC and these answers in turn could be checked against their length and depth of involvement. These changes in outlook and their gaining knowledge, skills and confidence could then be seen in terms of their empowerment. I also wanted to understand more about the KSC as a gender based social movement and how this impacted on the women's consciousness and empowerment. Questions about the goals of the KSC and why the women joined the KSC showed how their original reasons for joining could be rooted in their domestic roles and their practical concerns, while an alteration in their understanding of the goals of the KSC could indicate that the women had moved on to a new understanding of their roles and to a new social consciousness.

To understand relational empowerment I asked a series of questions to establish what changes had occurred in their families. These were designed to see how they had altered their families' attitudes to them, their work for the KSC and to the world outside. However, I also wanted to

see whether they had experienced conflict in their families, both to establish how this had affected them and possibly constrained them and to see how they had coped with this conflict. I also included a question as to whether they discussed problems in the home with other KSC members to discover whether these contradictions had any wider consequences in stimulating a collective response within the KSC.

Third, on the issue of collective empowerment, I did not expect to discover much about this from the survey. However, by leaving it open to members to provide further information for different questions I hoped to discover more about their involvement, about the KSC's activities and about how they had been affected by the KSC, all of which would provide some pointers as to the impact of the collective activities of the KSC on individual members. I did get some interesting responses which helped show how the members were collectively empowered.

It should be noted that I decided to focus the survey on the KSC, although the Kanagawa SC Movement is composed of several different organisations. I have used the abbreviation KSC to describe the Co-op as opposed to the wider movement and it is used here because the survey focused on the Co-op. The KSC is a kind of mother organisation which has produced the Net, Workers' Collectives and other groups so memberships often overlap. Consequently, it is almost impossible to separate out the members of each organisation and a survey based on the Co-op will cover members from other parts of the movement. It is also very difficult to visit and get permission from each organisation in order to cover their different memberships.

5.2 Conducting the survey

Prior to conducting the survey, I wanted to get advice from experts and people in the KSC. Approaching an organisation in a foreign country poses a number of questions about protocol which will vary from country to country. I was not familiar with Japan and was keen to learn the best way to contact the KSC. Japan has a very particular culture and I was concerned I would cause offence if I went about things in the wrong way. I had tried to make contact with the KSC through a retired male member of staff whom I had contacted on the internet. But even the best laid plans do not always work out and I found when I arrived in Japan he had gone abroad!

I then thought an academic like Professor Satō, who had written books on the SC, would be able to provide me with good advice on how to go about this and I arranged to meet with him. At that time I could only speak very basic Japanese, although I had been taking lessons before going and continued to do so while I was in Japan. So on this occasion I took an interpreter who was a Korean PhD student at a Japanese university, to help me explain my project to Professor Satō and get advice. I had some difficulty finding a suitable person and had relied on a contact provided by the owner of the place I was staying. I had little experience of using an interpreter and only later realised that this involved a lot more than simply good language skills. My interpreter's language skills were good, but I found he was untrained and his presence was actually very disruptive as he insisted on asking his own questions rather than just assisting me in my discussions with Professor Satō.

Fortunately, Professor Satō was very helpful and the problems with the interpreter did not prevent him assisting me. He not only talked with me and offered me good advice on the KSC but he also arranged for me to meet with key members of the KSC, both female leaders and male staff. Later, when I had gained more confidence in speaking Japanese I met him without the interpreter and he then provided me with advice on drafting and wording my survey. Many of the questions on personal empowerment were inspired by his studies into the women in the Tokyo SC, which described the changes in the Tokyo SC women's outlook. I showed him the draft of the survey and got permission to use the information from his studies for my questionnaire.

Professor Satō took the trouble to phone me to tell me about a meeting of leaders and staff of the KSC where I could be introduced to these people. Following that meeting I met the General Secretary of the Participatory Research Centre, the KSC think tank, along with KSC leaders at which I discussed the draft survey. Both Professor Satō and the KSC staff were uneasy with the open-ended questions as they felt they would be 'turai', which means hard and painful in Japanese, for the respondents to answer and that some might be discouraged and not return their questionnaires. It seemed they thought that in Japan people, both researchers and respondents, prefer closed questions which provide a clear numerical result.

Having worried about the possibility of a low level of response we decided to attach a letter from the Chair to the front page of the survey with a short explanation about the survey and

asking for the members' co-operation. In addition to this they suggested putting the questionnaire on their web-site although in fact I only got one response from this. When it came to selecting people to receive the questionnaires 300 addresses were taken at random from the KSC membership list and these were sent by post. The leaders and staff also suggested that a further 200 questionnaires should be distributed by executive committee members, as those who received questionnaires from the committee would be less likely to decline to respond. After collating the questionnaires the Chair of the KSC showed me around various facilities. As we went from place to place she handed out questionnaires to members she met. When she handed them out she did not address members by name so this process of distribution also appeared to be random. However, I cannot be sure that this applied in all cases and it may be there was a tendency to distribute to people known to the leaders who were handing out the questionnaires.

They kindly organised the distribution of the survey including collating and putting the questionnaires into envelopes, although I worked with them on this and paid the cost of postage. I was even helped to collate the survey by the Chair of the KSC. For the postal survey they printed out addresses at random from their membership list, which I was not able to access because of the Japanese information protection law. Unfortunately during this process I lost track of which questionnaires had been posted and which were distributed by the committee. I should have kept details of which questionnaires were distributed by post and which by the committee so as to compare the results for possible differences.

It should be noted that there is the possibility of bias in the survey results because there were many open-ended answers, which may have discouraged those who are not so attached to the KSC. In other words, there may be a bias towards loyal or established members. As I do not have a record of which questionnaires were posted or which were delivered I cannot assess this possible bias. However, it is worth noting that, despite the anxieties of Professor Satō and the KSC leaders, many of the respondents did include answers to the open-ended questions and provided valuable statements to further explain their feelings. The KSC staff were interested to know the results of the survey and I sent them the results in due course.

The survey was conducted in July 2005. The total number of questionnaires was 500 of which 300 questionnaires were sent out by mail and a further 200 questionnaires were distributed

directly by the KSC executive committee. I received one response from the internet site. The number of respondents was 187, 35.5% of the total contacted. I allowed four weeks for members to reply. They were returned to the KSC from where I collected them.

6. Qualitative research

First of all, the purpose of the qualitative research was to investigate in detail the process of the KSC women's empowerment by following up the survey which had provided information on 'what kinds of empowerment have happened'. Surveys are inadequate for understanding the process by which people come to adopt certain attitudes and values (May, 2001, 112). To achieve this different qualitative research methods are needed. Interviews and other forms of discussion allow the researcher to probe into specific circumstances, experiences and feelings, which is not possible in a survey.

Second, in order to understand the nature and process of collective empowerment it was necessary to learn from the experience of KSC Movement activists and leaders. I also wanted to learn more about the impact of collective empowerment on personal and relational empowerment. I conducted both individual and group interviews and participant observations to learn more about this collective empowerment.

When conducting interviews to learn about collective empowerment, I tended to use the term 'Minna no chikara' rather than 'collective empowerment'. I had found the women used this expression when responding to the survey in the first fieldwork and I felt it was more suitable and sympathetic and less academic for these Japanese women. I had asked a KSC leader how to translate 'collective empowerment' in a colloquial form but she had not been able to provide a clear answer. 'Minna no chikara' is literally translated as 'we, everybody's power' which corresponds to Kabeer's description of collective empowerment as a sense of 'we can' or a feeling of 'collective self-confidence' (Kabeer, 1994, 252).

Third, I also wanted to examine the changes in 'close relationships' over time including:

a) The power relationships between women and men in the KSC Movement, including those between male leaders and female leaders and male and female staff, which were hardly

investigated in the membership survey;

b) The changes in the relationship between the KSC Movement women and their husbands;

c) The changes in their children's understanding of their activities and the changes in their attitudes, both of which topics were raised in the survey.

Regarding changes in the gender relationships of the KSC Movement women with their male leaders and husbands, I wanted to learn more about what enables and what prevents change in gender relationships and the women's strategies for coping with the difficulties they encounter.

In fact, it was difficult to find out about the changes in the relationship between the members and their husbands and their strategies for overcoming problems in interviews because this was a sensitive matter. After a few interviews I felt the women were reluctant to say anything about their spousal relationship so I decided not to pursue this matter in this way. In fact I discovered more about these issues from open answers in the survey, which suggested that the women felt more at ease supplying answers in this less intrusive context.

Fourth, I wanted to consider how levels of participation and empowerment may vary between different groups of women in the KSC Movement, as for example between full-time housewives and working women as well as between elderly and younger members. In the survey I investigated the core members' age and employment status to establish whether the KSC Movement favours the participation of middle aged full-time housewives. To learn more about this both qualitative research and factual information were needed to establish the level of participation of working women, both full and part-time, in the major committees and study groups and Net sub-groups. For this I also interviewed staff and members in different parts of the KSC Movement and through attending events and meetings.

When it came to sampling, the KSC is very large with many different branches, which meant it was very difficult to properly represent every part of it. I took care to meet with staff, leaders and members from both the headquarters and the localities. I had to concentrate my efforts in two local Co-ops, Syonan and Yokohama Minami, which were the most accessible for me, as it was impossible to cover all the localities in the time I had available.

Regarding the Net I visited the headquarters of both Net Yokohama and the Kanagawa Net and one local Net Yokomaha and two local Kanagawa Net offices. I met representatives, leaders and members attached to these offices but I also met leaders from other local Nets. I also visited the Workers' Collectives' Union office, which is the Workers' Collectives' headquarters, and a number of local Workers' Collectives all over the Kanagawa Prefecture. I met leaders and ordinary members and attended a festival.

In addition I met leaders and members from WE21Japan and a leader from the Forum Associa. As mentioned earlier, the KSC Movement also includes the Welfare Co-op. This is an independent co-op which is a kind of hybrid of a welfare organisation and a food co-op. During my field trip I tried to establish why the KSC had created this branch which in many ways seems to duplicate the work of other parts of the organisation. I did not feel I had gained a clear picture of why or how this had come about from interviews. It seems to combine features of both the Co-op and the Workers' Collectives. I decided to exclude the Welfare Co-op from my analysis as it does not particularly add anything to the structure already set out above, including as it does features of other pre-existing branches of the organisation. However, I did have a deep interview with a member of staff working in the Welfare Co-op.

Regarding different levels of empowerment, it was important to meet people who had left the KSC Movement and were critical of it. I was able to meet former staff, former Co-op leaders, Net leaders and a former Workers' Collective leader during both my first and second fieldwork trips.

Last, I wanted to find out about the KSC Movement's activities and culture, such as the emphasis on participation and democracy, sharing and the system of rotating offices, to see how they promote women's empowerment. I also needed to understand the importance attached by the organisation to the training and consciousness raising of the members and to see how they educated and trained members. To do this I wanted to use various qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups and participant observations.

6.1 Focus groups

As a research method, the main advantage of focus group discussions is that both the researcher and the research subject can simultaneously obtain insights and understanding of particular social situations during the process of research (Goss, 1996, 116-117).

Madriz considers focus groups are a good method for feminist researchers, who are concerned about the power relationship between the researcher and the researched, because 'they minimise the control of the researcher over researched participants. The collective nature of the group interview empowers the participants and validates their voice and experiences' (Madriz, 2003, 368). She also suggests they fit in with women's 'gossip' culture in which 'these dialogues have traditionally been a major way in which women have faced their social isolation and their oppression' (ibid, 374).

In line with this, it is argued that using focus group methods can be empowering for the participants because they provide opportunities to explore and analyse social relationships and to reach an understanding of their situation together with researchers and develop critical thinking (Goss, 1996, 121).

Taking this into account, I planned to use focus groups as an important means of investigating collective empowerment by listening to the women's collective opinion about their experience of KSC Movement activities and working together on a range of activities including election campaigns, working on committees and devising policy. I had ambitious plans for focus groups. It is to be expected that recruiting members to participate in focus groups will be more difficult than for single person interviews, as there need to be negotiations regarding each participant as well as arrangements about time and place (Hoggart, Lees and Davies, 2002, 216).

However, I found that organising focus groups was very difficult and my attempts to set them up formally did not go according to plan. I only managed to hold two formal focus groups, one with local KSC Co-op Chairs which was disastrous because one of the purposes of the meeting was to learn about gender relationships in the KSC, but this was made impossible as the meeting was being attended by male staff. However, the other with some leaders from

Workers' Collectives was successful.

In the event, I was able to hold fifteen informal mini focus groups with between two and five participants which occurred without any planning. Usually they would develop when someone I was supposed to interview would bring along friends or co-workers and an open discussion would ensue. Often I had to abandon the interview format in these cases and see them as focus groups. In these cases the number of participants was not a problem. Hopkins (2007) found in his research with young Muslim men that focus groups ran well when there were fewer people and when the participants knew each other they interacted more and felt it was easier to disagree with each other. Although I asked questions the discussion would flow freely without needing much intervention on my part. It is necessary to be aware of how, within groups, some may dominate discussions. However, I found these were some of the most fruitful interviews I conducted and the participants did not prevent others making their points. There is a danger in focus groups that the interviewer may lose control of the group and it will waste time on irrelevant matters. However, in these cases I found all the participants were very keen on discussing the issues I wanted to raise and did not get sidetracked.

6.2 Interviews

I planned to conduct interviews and other qualitative research on my second fieldwork trip. However, I found opportunities to interview people associated with the KSC Movement arose during the first fieldwork visit which I discuss first.

Unplanned interviews on the first fieldwork trip

I had not expected to conduct interviews on this first fieldwork trip. However, while I was arranging the survey I met leaders and other KSC Movement members and ended up having interesting conversations. I took advantage of these opportunities and started to take notes of the meetings. I had decided to make use of my spare time once the survey had been sent out to look around the movement's facilities and collect materials. I was able to find a wide range of materials, especially books and leaflets published by the KSC Movement and related organisations. While I was doing this I had many opportunities to meet members and office

holders from all sectors of the KSC Movement, including the KSC, the Net and Workers' Collectives. Among them were some women in high positions in the movement. Sometimes, by accident, I met people who were prepared to be interviewed. For instance, when I visited the Kanagawa Net to collect its publications I met a Net leader who was eager to chat and give me relevant materials. I later met her again on two further occasions, once when she came to London to attend some lectures about alternative economics.

I not only met present members of the KSC Movement but also former members. On one occasion, when I was having lunch in a KSC restaurant, I met a woman who had left the KSC. She introduced me to another person who had been a leader in the KSC but had since left. I took these opportunities to interview these women later as, although I had not planned to carry out interviews on the first fieldwork trip, I felt it was important to gather as much information and hear as many points of view as possible to help me understand how the KSC worked. Because my Japanese was not fluent at that time I recorded these interviews. I considered these meetings and interviews would also help me prepare for the second fieldwork trip both in providing practice in conducting interviews and insights into the kinds of questions I needed to ask for the interviews I would then be conducting. Whenever I visited any facility or met people I asked questions and took notes. I regretted that my Japanese was not good enough to ask proper questions and fully understand their answers, although whenever I thought "this is an important point" I double checked with them as to whether I had correctly understood what they had said. After returning to my lodgings I wrote up a field diary about the meetings.

My experiences bear out the point made by Fontana and Frey when they comment that 'every study uses slightly different elements and often in different combinations' (Fontana and Frey, 2000, 654). For example, researchers can get information from informal interviewing in the field while participant observation enables researchers to ask questions and talk casually about topics (Fontana and Frey, 2000, 652-53).

In all I met with twelve people during my first visit to Japan in 2005, all but one was a spontaneous contact, but some of the interviews were of little value. However, I kept the notes or recordings of seven of the interviews. Another interview I have described as a mini-interview, for which I kept notes, only lasted a few minutes, see Table 1. The table includes all

the interviews I recorded on this fieldwork trip but I have not included details of interviewees from this fieldwork trip in the List of Interviews, see Appendix 3, if I did not use any material from the interview in the thesis.

Interviews	SCCU staff member: 1
	Workers' Collective leader: 1
	Net leader: 1
	KSC leader: 1
	Chiba Net leader: 1
	Former KSC leader: 1
	Former KSC member:1
Mini interview	Workers' Collective member: 1

Table 1: Interviews conducted during the first fieldwork

Interviews conducted during second fieldwork trip

Interviews are necessary to understand the complex nature and context of the empowerment because they make it possible 'to examine processes, motivations and reasons for success or failure' while surveys are limited in the extent to which they can provide explanations for attitudes and opinions (Willis, 2006, 146).

First of all, I wanted to gain an understanding of the way the KSC Movement worked by gathering detailed information about its management, particularly of the KSC, the material resources at the movement's disposal, the consciousness raising, training and mobilisation programmes and the movement's future prospects. For this I conducted interviews with the male members of staff who were in charge of either the executive or policy departments. I also wanted to learn more about the ideology, history and future direction of the KSC Movement through interviews with male leaders and the founding fathers. These interviews with the male staff were more structured in order to get information. Other interviews were less structured to allow greater flexibility and room for freer expressions of opinion.

Second, I wanted to learn more about the women's personal empowerment process over time

through in-depth interviews with members who joined at the time when the KSC was first established.

The interviews with former Net local representatives were designed to learn about their political experiences and their empowerment. The interviews with current Net leaders were designed to learn about the Net's current situation.

I interviewed members of Workers' Collectives about the nature of their organisations and how they empower women. Members of Workers' Collectives, unlike in the Net or KSC, are paid staff.

I used single person interviews, first, to learn more about the impact of collective empowerment on personal and relational empowerment, second, to learn about the particular issues facing members in full or part-time work and younger members and third, to see how gender relationships in the office affected female staff working in the KSC office.

I have described some interviews as 'in-depth interviews' and others just as 'interviews' even though all the interviews were conducted in the same way with me asking questions, recording the interviews. Prior to beginning each interview with members I always promised confidentiality. All the interviews lasted at least an hour. I have differentiated some as in-depth interviews because I met each of these interviewees more than once, see Table 2. As with the table of interviews for the first fieldwork trip I have included all of the interviews and focus groups I undertook in the second fieldwork trip, even though not all are used in the text or are listed in the List of Interviews and Focus Groups.

For the second fieldwork trip I had decided I needed to improve my Japanese as I thought it was crucial for qualitative research which involved interviews. While it would be possible to use interpreters I felt it would be much more effective if I could communicate directly and forge a rapport with my interviewees. So before the second fieldwork trip I worked hard to improve my Japanese and was able to conduct interviews without difficulty.

In-depth interviews (more than one interview)	- Former KSC staff: 1 - Former Workers' Collective Leader: 1 - Former Net leader: 2 - Net leader: 1 - Member of a Workers' Collective: 1
Focus Groups (2 formal and 15 informal)	- Former KSC members: 1 group - KSC members and leaders: 4 groups - Net leaders: 2 groups - Former Net leaders : 1 group - Workers' Collective members: 6 groups - KSC former and current staff: 1 group - Workers Collective leaders: 1 group - A local KSC Chairs: 1 group
Interviews	- KSC children now staff: 2 - Former KSC members: 2 - KSC leaders and members: 5 - Former Net leader: 3 - Net leaders: 6 - Workers' Collective leader and members; 10 - KSC related organisation staff: 2 - Men's group (Jao) leader : 1 - WE21Japan members: 3 - Scholar: 1
Mini interviews	- KSC members: 15

Table 2: Interviews from the second fieldwork

6.3 Participant observations

The researcher can get a broader understanding of a 'community' and the relationships within it through participant observation (Valentine, 2001, 44). Participant observation also enables the researcher to explore how a community 'produces and is produced by the social practices within it' (Hoggart et al, 2002). For this reason, participant observation is suitable for looking at the culture and practices of a community, in this case the KSC Movement. In addition to this, as a research methodology, participant observation has positive aspects in that firstly, it enables researchers to minimise the impact of their presence on the social group they seek to understand and secondly, during interviews there may be language or cultural differences which need explanation. In this instance, participant observers may record their own experiences in order to explain their cultural observations to a wider audience (May, 2001, 153).

However, the drawbacks of participant observation need to be borne in mind. It is time-consuming to immerse oneself properly in 'communities' (Valentine, 2001, 44) and, consequently, there will be a tendency to focus on a small group which in turn raises the question 'to what extent one can generalize from the small group that one has studied in depth?' (Dowler, 2001, 158). In order to cope with the danger of generalising in this way I attempted to attend as many KSC Movement programmes as possible.

My objectives were to understand the way the movement educates, involves and informs its members through its lectures and other programmes in the membership centres, to observe how they were organised, to see how consciousness raising takes place through these programmes and to learn about the KSC Movement's women's culture and values.

It should be noted that the KSC Movement has a very diverse range of activities. In order to capture an overall impression of their activities I visited as many places and events as possible in my first fieldwork visit in 2005, although these visits often only provided me with just a glimpse of these activities. These casual visits to a food delivery centre, a child care and an elderly care facility, a Depot and a homeless shelter and WE21Japan were useful in comprehending the Kanagawa SC Movement's activities.

In the second fieldwork trip I visited a broader range of facilities than on the first trip as I also

visited facilities for interviews and asked my interviewees to show me around and explain to me about the facilities and their activities. In addition to these visits I also went to events and meetings. I attended six KSC related programmes, including a cooking class and meetings as well as a Workers' Collective festival. I also went to three Kanagawa Net programmes called 'Seiji gakkō', or political school, and an educational tour looking around the KSC Movement's facilities in Atsugi city.

6.4 Attending seminars

While I was staying in Japan in 2008 I had two opportunities to attend the 'Ueno gender seminar' held by Chizuko Ueno, a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Tokyo University. Both the seminars were held at Tokyo University and were about Workers' Collectives. One was presented by some leaders of Tokyo Workers' Collectives the other was about Kanagawa Workers' Collectives providing services to the elderly. They focused on practicalities and provided me with useful insights and information.

6.5 Field notes

I wrote field notes almost every day which turned out to be a very useful and provided me with important material. There were many occasions when someone would tell me something or provide an opinion in a casual conversation or after an interview had ended, which would be of great interest. It was very important for me to take notes of such comments. I also found it was very useful to make notes after an interview to provide me with an impression of the interview or participant observation. Even when I recorded interviews I often found I quickly forgot details about what happened and other memories quickly faded away. In my field notes I also wrote about my feelings and impressions at the time which were useful not only for recording further information but also in helping me think about what had been said.

7. Researching an NGO: difficulties, positionality and ethical issues

After working on the inside for many years in South Korean NGOs and also having a researcher visit one of these organisations it was curious to find myself on this occasion as an outsider looking in. While I felt familiar with the way of working in the KSC Movement and the culture of the members and staff I realised that it was a much more established and

structured organisation. This familiarity enabled me to feel at ease in approaching the KSC Movement as an NGO, although I was not familiar with Japanese culture, something I have already discussed. My experience of working for South Korean NGOs provided me with an important entrée to the KSC as, after attending the first meeting to which I was introduced by Professor Satō, a member of staff at the KSC asked me for my curriculum vitae. Only after they had checked this did they invite me for further meetings. While I do not think it was essential that I had this background I do consider it smoothed the way for my research.

This issue of access is addressed by Campbell et al. (2006) who highlight the role of gatekeepers. They consider the literature portrays gatekeepers as either an obstacle or a facilitator to access. My main gatekeeper was the KSC itself, which played a key role in facilitating my research. However, in the field I felt there was a tension between my role as an independent researcher and my reliance on the co-operation of the KSC staff and senior members. Some help from the Co-op's officials was vital and unavoidable but at times, particularly during the second fieldwork trip, I felt my dependence on them slowed my work. As I have already pointed out, I could not access the KSC's membership list and the leadership greatly assisted me in distributing the survey. While I might have found a way to hand out some questionnaires it is hard to see how I could have achieved anything like the circulation without their help. As I pointed out earlier there could be a risk of bias in the distribution of some questionnaires by executive committee members, but this is a risk inherent in the dependence of the researcher on a gatekeeper.

When it came to arranging interviews in the second fieldwork trip, which was conducted between August and December 2008, I decided to wait for KSC officials to arrange meetings as I thought this would save time and, once again, I lacked the range of contacts. I was also aware of the emphasis on courtesy among Japanese people and the need to avoid giving offence by appearing rude. On the other hand, there was a risk in relying on the KSC to provide interviewees as this could result in meeting with a very limited range of members. Indeed this did turn out to be something of a problem as some meetings did not go according to plan as, for example, when the presence of male staff seemed to inhibit members from speaking or when members did not appear to understand the point of my research. In fact, it proved almost impossible to conduct formal focus groups as members were reluctant to discuss issues in this context within the organisation. However, I was able to make up for this

by meeting small groups of members or ex-members who were prepared to discuss the KSC Movement outside this formal context. A similar thing happened when I asked to visit the Net, the Depots or other facilities to look around or hold interviews. When they were arranged by officials I got the impression that they wanted to show me a picture of success. In my first fieldwork visit, between June and September in 2005, the Chair of the KSC took me to see the best Depot and other facilities. When I wanted to interview some unsuccessful local Nets where they were experiencing difficulties the staff in the Kanagawa Net were embarrassed and reluctant to introduce me to those groups. Because I thought it was important to learn about groups and organisations which had difficulties I tried to persuade them to allow me to visit them but I was unable to do so. Fortunately, I found one of my previous interviewees was a leader of a local Net which was struggling and I had another interview which focused on this situation. When I held interviews with people that were organised by KSC staff I found they refrained from talking about any trouble and difficulties in the KSC despite my assurances of confidentiality.

As it transpired KSC officials were less able to assist me in my second fieldwork trip, conducted between August and December 2008. I found I had to be proactive in contacting people independently and had to make use of whatever personal contacts I had. Consequently, there was little danger of the KSC unduly influencing the interviews I conducted and the only loss was in terms of time. Later, one of the KSC staff found out that I was arranging my interviews independently and complained saying "why didn't you ask me to arrange the interview with her?" "You should have asked me and you should have met her through me". In fact I had tried to avoid this situation as I was aware that Japanese society is very sensitive about any lack of courtesy and for that reason I had sought to arrange interviews through the organisation to avoid being seen to be rude. But in the event I had to pursue my own schedule to make sure I completed the research and ensure it was independent. It appears to be inevitable that a researcher will experience this tension.

7.1 Positionality

Feminist scholars argue that objectivity and neutrality do not exist, truths are not necessarily universal. They see that all knowledge is situated, specific and partial, with an inevitable bias (Mohammad, 2001). Furthermore they are concerned about the power relationship between

the researcher and the researched (McDowell, 1992, 405).

Although there has been an uncomfortable history between Korea and Japan in which Japan colonised Korea and Japanese discriminated against Koreans I heard from Korean friends in Japan that people in Japanese social movements do not discriminate in this way so I was not particularly worried about that. In fact, I felt surprisingly intimate with the women, they looked like me, most of them were middle-aged, in their forties, fifties and sixties, and what they wore, their attitudes and body language, were familiar to me. Koreans and Japanese share a similar culture based on Confucianism so it is not so surprising that in many ways I would feel at home. Yet, I could not also help feeling I was in the same situation as Reger who felt she was 'a parasite' who was taking advantage of somebody else's toil 'for my academic gain' (Reger, 2001, 608), because I was not sure if my thesis would be of any benefit to anyone in the KSC Movement in return for their assistance to me. Murphy and Dingwell point out that one point of view is that the researcher does not have to have too much concern whether their research is of use to the researched as long as the research contributes to the 'emancipation' of human beings, but it is unclear to them what exactly this emancipation consists of (Murphy & Dingwell, 2001, 347). When I faced my research subjects I still felt uneasy because of this feeling of guilt. This feeling was exacerbated as most staff and activists, if not all, tried to be kind and to help me, so I felt inferior on most occasions when I was conducting interviews. These experiences chimed with what McDowell said about researchers being vulnerable (McDowell, 1992, 409). The leaders of the KSC, Workers' Collectives and the Nets were very self-confident and chatty. Because they were highly educated and middle class I was not worried that I might be seen by them to be privileged because of my educational status, which is a concern raised by Kobayashi (1994, 76). However, there are different groups of women in the KSC Movement, which meant I needed to be aware of how they might perceive me when I met them. When I met members of Workers' Collectives, who could be from different class backgrounds, I tried to ensure I responded in the same way to everyone I met. Rather than trying to forge instant 'friendship' or 'rapport, which was essentially impossible and could represent a deeper deception (Murphy & Dingwell, 2001, 346) I just wanted them not to be nervous and to feel comfortable.

Another difficulty with the KSC Movement is the fact that, strictly speaking, it is a mixed-gender organisation. One of my purposes was to investigate gender issues in the organisation,

but this could create a tension in my relationship with the male staff. I needed their co-operation, but I wanted to find out if there were members who were critical of the male staff. I had to be careful about interviewing former members who had left the movement. Although I did not hide the fact that I would meet disaffiliated members, I did not want to draw attention to them. I was careful not to give the impression that I was poking around gathering bad stories behind the backs of the male staff and the KSC leaders. So, as McDowell advised, I decided not to tell them I would investigate gender issues in the organisation, because I worried that if I had told them they would not have co-operated with my research or might even have been hostile to it (McDowell, 1992, 408). I simply told them my research was on the empowerment of women in the KSC Movement and I wanted to know about the different empowerments amongst the women.

Whilst dealing with different groups in the KSC Movement, who may have had conflicting views and interests, I had to be very careful not to appear two-faced. One day I would meet one person, the next I might be meeting her opponent. I met male leaders and staff, as well as women who were critical of them. I had to cross different borders, which often left me with uneasy feelings.

7.2 Ethical issues

The most common ethical issues for researchers are the possibility that harm that may be done to participants. It is therefore important to gain consent, safeguard personal information and confidentiality, ensure just and equal treatment for the subjects, respect their autonomy and provide them with some positive benefits (Murphy & Dingwell, 2001, 339; Valentine, 2001, 49). I promised to respect confidentiality in interviews and focus groups with members. Ensuring anonymity was especially important for the people who had left the KSC Movement or were unhappy with it. I have used pseudonyms and only provided broad references to members' involvement in the KSC to preserve the anonymity of interviewees. Even though on many occasion they said they did not care if other people got to know about their identities, certainly ensuring confidentially made interviewees more relaxed when they criticised the KSC Movement.

Another important ethical issue I faced was that I took up the time and attention of staff and

members of the KSC. At the beginning of my second fieldwork trip I had to depend on their co-operation, but I found they were far busier than I had thought. Leaving aside meetings with groups of members, which I had hoped to hold as part of my programme of focus groups, even organising interviews with some key people took weeks. For such a big and well-established organisation my research was far from being a priority and could well become a burden. I could not avoid feeling guilty all the time that I was adding to their workload. While I was there I saw that the staff worked late into the evening probably because the time for preparing year-end accounts was approaching. Not only the staff but also the activists in the different parts of the movement and the Workers' Collectives appeared to be very hard working.

I wanted to minimise this burden although I could not be completely 'ethical' by avoiding being a nuisance. I tried not to ask for too much help from the staff and activists. Originally I had planned several focus groups for my second fieldwork trip. As result of the initial two meetings with KSC leaders and staff we concluded it was only feasible to conduct one of the planned focus groups. As it turned out the staff managed to organise another one later. Because most of the KSC people, especially the leaders, were very busy getting them in one place was very difficult. On top of that who could arrange these meetings? Staff seemed to be overloaded with work. Why would they take the trouble to help with something which was not vital for them?

One example of the difficulty of organising meetings and the extra workload this could create was in the case of the only focus group organised with local chairs which turned out to be a disaster. Considering the difficulty in organising additional meetings, they had suggested to me that I should hold a focus group with local chairs straight after a meeting which all of the local chairs would already be attending. They said they would get consent from the local chairs. In fact this strategy proved to be a mistake. When I got there people were just finishing a lengthy meeting and immediately began to leave except for two local chairs. It was obvious that they were not interested in the meeting.

8. Making the invisible visible

In researching different empowerments in an organisation, including disempowerment, it was vital to hear the voice of the disaffiliated. Because I was interested in gender issues not only in the KSC Movement in general, but also in the KSC office, I had to find female former staff. I contacted someone I had met during my first fieldwork and who had left the KSC. She introduced me to a woman who had worked for the KSC for a long time and she in turn introduced me to key figures who had left the KSC. I was very lucky to meet these women as it would have been very difficult to find them once they had left the scene and were otherwise invisible.

Those who were visible tended to be happy with the movement. Although they might have problems they appeared to hold back from discussing them possibly because they might have thought it was incorrect to reveal ugly things in front of an outsider. A similar thing happened when Marshall researched the people of Grand Manan Island in Canada, when abused native women 'became a collective defence against the curious intruder' (Marshall, 2002, 181).

This resulted in some confusion. For example, during the first fieldwork I did not understand what had happened when the Kanagawa Net split into the Kanagawa Net and the Net Yokohama. I was given the impression that this had been a considered decision rather than a result of conflict, because the people I met tended to avoid the issue or explain the split 'nicely' as if it was a practical matter. However, when I met women who had left the movement during my second fieldwork trip I was told what had really happened. In fact, the split arose out of a terrible conflict which people inside the Net later confirmed.

Thus, the information I got from those who had left gave me an invaluable insight. If I had not talked to them I would have ended up with only a 'happy picture' of the Kanagawa Net. As Hodge has pointed out 'how we see determines what we see'. Looking at the shadow enabled me to see whole picture (Hodge, 1995, 426).

Another problem is that it was difficult to hear the voice of lay staff or members. Whilst conducting interviews with women from Workers' Collectives I realised after a while that most of those I had interviewed were leaders. Whenever I went to a workplace I found it was

the leaders who turned up and were ready to be interviewed. In one case a leader even took over from a lay member, probably because she felt it was her responsibility to explain about Workers' Collectives. Whenever an interview was arranged with a Workers' Collective it was taken for granted that leaders would take charge of the interview. I tried to find a way to meet lay members of Workers' Collectives because I thought it was equally important to hear the voice of lay members, so I attempted to meet them independently rather than relying on formal means. However, this was extremely difficult because there is a rule that to conduct interviews the interviewees and interviewers should get permission from The Union of Workers' Collectives, the Headquarters of the Workers' Collectives. Although some people did not keep this rule I felt there was a psychological barrier to them talking candidly in interviews. I managed to get a few interviews by myself, but I felt I needed more.

Although I was very reluctant to get help from the formal structures eventually I felt I had no choice but to rely on them to find people to interview. They helped me out and provided me with three group interviews composed of 2-3 members. Apart from this I managed to arrange another group interview with two members of a Workers' Collective with the help of a previous interviewee. However, I have to take into consideration the fact that most interviews were organised by KSC staff and that it might be difficult for the interviewees to speak openly because the interviewees from Workers' Collectives were under contract to the KSC. Thus these KSC staff might effectively be their 'boss', as I found out later from the focus group with Workers' Collective leaders who were under contract with the KSC. This reminded me of the tension I felt when dealing with KSC staff and my dependence on their assistance in their role of gatekeeper. However, despite being aware of this, I did not have much choice in how I got these interviews.

Similarly, even when I had the opportunity to see a lot of members at KSC events loyal middle aged members tended to be conspicuous and chatty. Members who had only joined recently or were not deeply involved tended to be shy and they did not have much to say. When I was interviewing them they often could not articulate what they felt about their experience of the KSC. Often their answer was 'just…' and ended in an awkward silence and embarrassment. Whilst I tried not to embarrass them I would still try to probe for clearer responses by asking questions like 'what do you mean?' But later I began to think their ambiguous answers might be more honest and rather accepted these as they were. Thus, even

when I did not get much usable material from these people I still think it was important to meet these members, who did not have much experience of the KSC, to get a rounded picture of the KSC membership.

9. The importance of being flexible and spontaneous

As Miller et al emphasise, 'qualitative study design is a flexible, iterative process, allowing qualitative researchers to respond to unanticipated opportunities that arise in the course of research' (Miller et al, 2004, 329). My fieldwork was full of unexpected experiences, which required me to make considerable changes to my original plans. As I mentioned earlier, I had to abandon most of my original plans for focus groups. However, these formal groups were replaced by unexpected informal mini focus groups. I was often surprised to find my interviewees brought along other people, their current and former colleagues. Maybe it is women's culture to come along with friends rather than to come alone. Sometimes I had to abandon my original routine questions and instead I had to probe new interesting stories. For me this was a great advantage because we were able to enjoy a more relaxed and cheerful atmosphere which favoured chatting rather than hard talk. As a result of this I was able to meet far more people than I expected, which was also good for my research.

On one occasion the interview turned into a kind of open meeting, because my previous interviewee, who had introduced me to my new interviewee, also came along and brought other people who were interested in the new interviewee's experience. They asked questions of the interviewee and also talked to each other and asked each other questions, so actually I do not know to what category this interview might belong. It could be an interview or a focus group or even a symposium or it could be none of these. As for me, this was very good because they asked questions of the interviewee based on their concrete experience of KSC activities. Similar things happened on other occasions.

In another variation on this kind of meeting, participant observations often turned into fantastic opportunities to get interviews. Participant observation was not central to my original plan. In fact I felt reluctant about sitting in on meetings because I thought it would be too intrusive for the women. However, I was invited to a 'Comonzu Renraku Kai' or Commons meeting, a formal committee meeting which was of great interest. I discuss this meeting in

Chapter 5. I went to other events in local KSCs where anybody was welcome. I felt more at ease in these situations where I could keep a low profile. I visited a variety of KSC, Net and Workers' Collective events, like festivals, lectures and cooking courses, to get some sense of their public activities and the organisation's outreach. In most cases these events became fantastic opportunities to meet a wider range of people.

Like other researchers, I faced the problem "where are they?" For quite a while I had to depend upon the KSC staff and an interviewee who had left the KSC to introduce me to people and all I could do was wait, not able to do anything. Not until later did I find out that by attending events advertised on their websites and in leaflets I could always meet people, including lay members. I found these events presented lots of opportunities for interviews. I met people casually and introduced myself during breaks. When I spotted a suitable person I asked for a short interview or asked if I could have an interview with her later.

One important lesson came from the incident when a failed focus group turned out to be a wonderful chance for participant observation, which will be described in greater detail in Chapter 6. I was supposed to hold a group interview with top committee members, the Chair and five local Kanagawa Chairs. I was hoping to ask about gender issues in the KSC but found two senior male staff were sitting in the middle of the meeting and the Chair controlled the interview as if I was a guest. It seemed to me that it was a disaster. However, I phoned my housemate to have a chat about it. When I described the situation he said this sounded very different from what he would expect would happen in a British women's organisation. He asked "why don't you write about it?" I began to write about this experience and others like it in my field work diary thinking "what did it tell me?" Thanks to his tip it turned out to be a wonderful participant observation and provided me with an interesting insight into the contradictions in the workings of the KSC. I learnt that even if some activities did not fit into my plan or failed I might still be able to draw invaluable insights from the experience rather than just discarding it.

Finally, I found that for the most part leaders in the Net and Workers' Collectives are drawn from the KSC. Some leaders have had experience of all three parts of the movement. Interviewing these leaders could be difficult as it was often hard to separate out their experiences of the various parts of the movement as they often did not differentiate them as I

might have wanted them to. But it also meant that on many occasions I learned about two or three parts of the movement from just one person and I was able to take advantage of this to check what I had been told by other interviewees.

10. Being Empowered

Murphy & Dingwell (2001) argued that researchers are supposed to empower the subject they investigate. However, in my case I have to say I was empowered through the whole process of the second fieldwork. In the first fieldwork my research was focused on the survey of KSC members so I did not have many chances to meet many of the women. But in the second fieldwork trip I met some women who had bitter experiences of working with men in Japanese NGOs. I was familiar with situations like these in South Korea and was amazed by the similarities in another country. However, it was important not to be biased against male staff and leaders. In fact I found they were very dedicated to their work. In addition, it was wonderful for me to meet a lot of amazing middle aged women who are of a similar age to me who had a passion for bringing change to their society. In fact, they were so lively it was a quite a shock for me. Their attitude to life was so young. I thought most women in their fifties or sixties would think about settling back from life but these women were living as if they were on the front line. I began to find that I was being affected by their zest for life. For example, I found myself speaking, holding a mike, in front of others without fear. I had always felt shy talking in front of other people. When somebody suddenly asked me to comment about something I thought "all these women are able to talk freely in front of other people so why shouldn't I?" I was able to talk without reservation and without worrying about my Japanese.

Therefore, I think researchers are also affected by their subject. If the fieldwork is conducted over a long enough time this effect may in turn impact on the relationship between the researcher and the researched, because the relationship is reciprocal. In my case, I did not stay long enough and was not involved in their activities sufficiently deeply so it is difficult to know if I had any influence on them. But what I can say is I was definitely empowered by them in terms of inspiration and encouragement, something I had not expected before I started the research.

11. Putting data into writing: analysis and interpretation

I mainly used the SPSS programme to analyse and get statistical results from the survey responses which were focused on personal and relational empowerment. The programme was particularly useful when dealing with multiple answers to discover the frequency of each answer and to compare percentages with other answers. When I needed to find the association between two variables I checked this through a Chi-test, as for example with the association between the length of the membership and the changes members had experienced.

In the case of open-ended questions from which I had intended to get statistical results, answers were categorised according to similarities in the answers and were processed statistically. However, some responses were not clear cut and did not necessarily fit into set categories, that is, some answers embraced different categories and some answers were outside categories. In such cases I have quoted the statement as it is. Open-ended answers which members mostly noted below in the space 'Please specify ……..' were tremendously helpful in providing a deeper understanding. For instance, the answers about the women's relationships with their family members, especially their husbands, were invaluable because I could not get a clear picture of these through interviews as was mentioned earlier. Probably because of the almost compete anonymity of the survey in comparison with interviews the women were better able to express their feelings about their relationship with their husband.

Apart from discussing their family relationships, I did not have any particular problems in interviews because the women tended to express themselves clearly and candidly. They often disagreed but this was no problem as I was keen to learn as much about these as their points of agreement. However, there were parts of interviews which were difficult for me to understand clearly, so I contacted a volunteer organisation which helps foreign students with Japanese. I met three volunteers, retired people, and worked with them around twice a week on average, so that I was able to check the parts about which I was unsure or did not understand. In the interviews there was some rhetoric and some expressions that were difficult to understand without knowing the Japanese context and they helped me understand those parts.

As I conducted a considerable number of interviews and focus groups with different

categories of members I had to establish how their different experiences were connected. In fact on many occasions I found that the interviewees provided explanations and background information which helped to link these different empowerments. But on some occasions it was difficult to establish the link in a systematic way. In those instances I found the KSC's internal documents and other literature were particularly helpful in illuminating the context of the different experiences and explaining the workings of the organisation. In addition, because I had recorded most of the interviews I was later able to listen to them again several times in order to be sure of what had been said and to make notes and this meant that, while I developed my analysis, I found I discovered different points from the same interviews. Just as with looking at a tree, at first from a distance everything is blurred and it is only possible to make out its outline, the trunk and some large branches, but closer up the smaller branches and the leaves come into focus, so with the interviews I was able to get a clearer picture of the KSC Movement, its members and the reasons why some had become alienated from it. Furthermore, I was also assisted in my analysis by re-reading my field notes and diary which helped me remember the interviews and focus groups and to grasp the bigger picture of what had happened to the movement's women.

Researchers will often be anxious 'whether interpretation of the 'other' is ethically defensible' or 'even possible' (Ley & Mountz, 2001, 234). While writing this dissertation I have questioned whether I was getting the emphasis right. Not until a late stage in my writing up did I realise that I was being too critical of the movement. When I reflected why this had happened, I found that in order to make points clear I tended to present things in black and white. Comparing the thesis to a sketch, I was constantly unsure as to how much detail and shading I should include. To a certain extent a thesis will always be a rough sketch but it is vital to re-examine the work as it goes on to check whether the right balance is being struck.

The other reason I was too critical was that I came to think that my theoretical outlook had been too rigid. While I was writing my theory gradually changed and became more sophisticated as I applied the empirical material, but for some reason I was still following my earlier theoretical position. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to re-examine my theoretical understanding and was able to rework it. However, uncomfortable feelings about interpretation are likely to remain, as there will always be questions which cannot be answered so this will be a perpetual burden for researchers.

12. Conclusion

I used a quantitative research method, the survey, to assist in understanding personal and relational empowerment. I also used it to investigate the social background and resources of the members of the KSC Movement, for instance their jobs, housing and income. I consider it is important to take these factors into account when explaining the empowerment of women and to see how they may facilitate that empowerment.

Building on this survey I used qualitative methods, interviews, to investigate the collective empowerment of women in a social movement. The survey also included open ended questions and these provided insights into collective empowerment. I also intended to learn more about the personal and relational empowerment of the women. However, I found it was difficult to get much information about the member's relational empowerment through interviews, because this subject seemed to be regarded as too private a matter to talk about to a stranger. Instead the open ended answers in the survey provided considerable information on this subject.

As I studied the KSC Movement further I realised the importance of collective empowerment in understanding how empowerment occurred in the movement and how it stimulated other dimensions of empowerment such as personal empowerment. I used qualitative methods of interviews and participant observations to get a clearer picture of how collective empowerment occurred and how it impacted on other empowerments. In addition, I investigated how empowerment differed amongst the women, including how some were disempowered, through interviews with critical and disaffiliated members. Qualitative methods also helped me to understand how the KSC Movement worked as an organisation and how this affected the empowerment of the members. Some people were very happy and some people were not happy, raising the question of who should be believed. However, I did not find these disagreements prevented me from understanding the movement. On the contrary they provided a rounded picture of how a movement could have different impacts on its members depending on their circumstances and outlook.

Chapter 4: Understanding the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement

1. Introduction

The nature of empowerment and how it is achieved is likely to vary according to the social and political context as argued in Chapter 2. Japan is a particular society with a culture all of its own and this has helped mould the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement and shaped the problems facing its members. In this chapter, I will examine the profile and social and political background of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement. I will seek to explain the context of the movement, its opportunity structure, resource mobilisation, ideology and framing. This chapter consists of three sections and a conclusion.

Following a description of the Seikatsu Club and the Kanagawa SC Movement, I will move on to consider New Social Movements (NSMs) in Japan, especially with regard to the KSC Movement, to provide a deeper understanding of the origins and character of the KSC Movement.

Third, I will examine resource mobilisation in the KSC Movement on the basis of the survey which was conducted in 2005. As Jung stated, it is the combination of the co-operative business and the civil movement that is at the heart of the success of the Japanese SC movement (Jung, 2003, 276). My concern is to see how the Kanagawa SC Co-operative was established and how it was used for the wider benefit of the KSC Movement. In order to explain this it is necessary to identify the women's initial material and non-material resources including their networks, their freedom in terms of time and their intellectual resources, which have contributed to the creation and sustaining of the KSC Movement. This will also reveal more about the social status of the women of the KSC Movement.

2. Profile of the Seikatsu Club and the KSC Movement

2.1 The Seikatsu Club

The SC had a political character from the beginning. According to Lam (1999) Kunio Iwane, the founding father of the SC, had been active in the opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty[5], which was a watershed for New Social Movements in Japan. Later he was involved in but became disillusioned with the Socialist Party and decided to seek a new grassroots power base. He had created a study group with other male members of the Party who were similarly disillusioned. Initially he hoped to create a mixed gender movement in the localities of Tokyo but found that the only people available were the housewives who did not commute into work. In order to recruit them he focused on milk as an everyday issue around which to organise these women and with 200 housewives he established the Seikatsu Consumers' Club in 1965.

Other male leaders like Yokota Katumi, in Kanagawa, who belonged to the same study group, created other SC groups in neighbouring cities. Each group created an autonomous local organisation which co-ordinated its activities with the other SC groups. Building on this base the SC then focused on consciousness raising together with involvement in social issues to expand its membership. This also led to its participation in local politics through its political arm, the Seikatsusha Network Movement (Net), which was first launched in Tokyo in 1978 with other branches following suit and launching their own Nets. Another development, the creation of Workers' Collectives, was pioneered by the Kanagawa branch of the movement. In contrast to other consumer co-ops in Japan the organisation started as a 'club' which from the first had a political colour and only later became a co-op in 1968 in order to improve its management (Lam, 1999, 96-97).

Since its formation in 1965, the SC has become a formidable commercial enterprise providing organic products including food, soaps and toiletries to over 300,000 households. The SC only deals in about 3,000 general consumer items, of which 60% are basic foodstuffs

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[5] The Japan-USA Security Treaty (Anpo Jōyaku) was signed in 1951. It faced widespread opposition from the Japanese Communist and Socialist Parties and students in the 1950s and early 1960s. Their protests attracted wide support in Japanese society, but were largely unsuccessful. The Treaty remains in force (Kurokawa, 2010, 48-49).

such as rice, milk, eggs, frozen fish and vegetables. The small range of goods is to hold down costs and reduce waste. The SC places an emphasis on direct consumer/producer links to moderate and humanise the market as an alternative to mass production and consumption (SCCU, 2010).

The SC has pursued its goal through four principles: 1) Food self-sufficiency, through the mobilisation of consumers' purchasing power; 2) sustainability, through environmental campaigns like its practice of 3Rs, Reduce/Reuse/Recycle; 3) building an autonomous local society, by promoting both community and gender equality; 4) Co-operative values and principles, by promoting participation and transparency of information (SCCU, 2010).

Since 1968 the SC has campaigned against synthetic soap powder, which causes water pollution, following this with its development of a natural soap powder in 1973. In addition, the SC has practised recycling by collecting oil and wine bottles from its members and returning them to manufacturers demanding that producers reuse them. As a result of these efforts around 70% of members recycle their bottles. A dioxin monitoring campaign has also been started and the national position regarding dioxin pollution is being investigated through the analysis of pine needles. More recently, the SC has campaigned for the full compulsory labelling of products and the banning of GM rice in food and animal feed. The SC has also been involved in anti-nuclear and peace movements (SCCU, 2008).

In pursuit of its goals the SC has expanded into formal politics and created new business enterprises, run along collective lines, in keeping with its principles of democratic participation. The most important developments were, first, the formation in 1978 of a political grouping Seikatsusha, in Tokyo, which later developed as a local political party, the Seikatsusha Net (Net); second, the establishment in 1982 of the first Workers' Collective in Kanagawa; and third, the formation in 1990 of the Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union (SCCU) to create a formal national union between the various regional SC Co-operatives (SCCU, 2010).

2.1.1 The Structure of the Seikatsu Club Movement

The SC has a basic structure built around three pillars with the SC Co-operative at the centre along with its political and economic arms, the Network Movement (Net) and Workers' Collectives, see Figure 1.
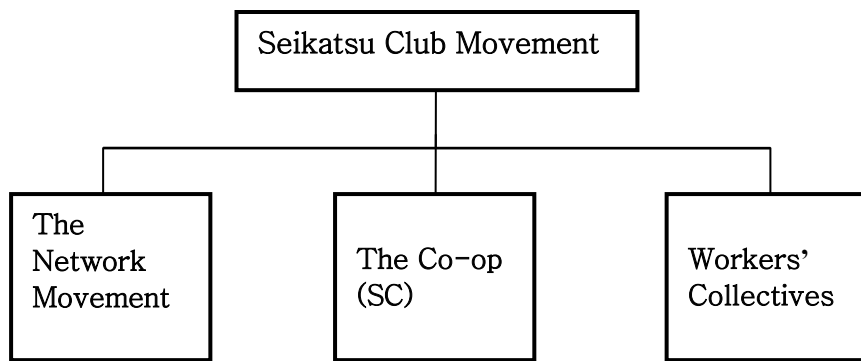
Figure 1: The structure of the Seikatsu Club Movement

2.1.2 The Seikatsu Club Co-operative Union (SCCU)

The SC Co-operative Union, which was created in 1990, is the headquarters of the SC movement. The SCCU co-ordinates the movement and has branches from the island of Hokkaido in the north to the Aichi Prefecture in the south. It is an association of 29 consumer co-operatives and is active in 19 of the 47 administrative divisions or prefectures in Japan. It has 307,000 members, most of whom are women (SCCU, 2010). In 2008 there were approximately 600 co-operatives affiliated to the Japanese Consumer Co-operatives Union (JCCU). In terms of turnover in 2007 the SCCU ranked as the twelfth largest retail co-operative federation in Japan (JCCU, 2007).

2.1.3 The Net

The SC's most conspicuous achievement is the promotion of women's participation in politics. Through its political arm, the Net, it has sought to elect representatives to local assemblies. This involvement has encouraged many previously apolitical women to venture into politics. Representatives in local government are particularly focused on advancing policies to protect the environment and improve the welfare system. The Net's legislative

agenda, 'Women's Viewpoint', includes more child-care centres, stricter standards in school food and the use of natural soap in schools. The Net promotes these policies on the basis of the role of its members as mothers protecting their families. However, since 2000 the number of local Net groups and representatives has stagnated.

2.1.4 Workers' Collectives

The SC has another important business arm called 'Workers' Collectives' some of which produce goods while others provide welfare services in their local communities. Modelled on the experience of workers' co-operatives in California, the Workers' Collectives aim to create an alternative type of business in which the members can invest, manage and work. Therefore, there is no employer and employee (Amano, 1988; Katumi, 2004, 110). They provide many women with an opportunity to work outside the home. Working hours in Workers' Collectives are flexible so that women can work at times which suit them. This is even easier if the workplace is close to home.

There are now about 400 SC Workers' Collectives employing 15,000 people in enterprises such as lunch box preparation, bread baking and other food processing, care for the aged and handicapped, kindergartens, recycling, editing, sorting and delivery of consumer materials. The SC, the Net and the Workers' Collectives see their activities as contributing to a new form of civil society based on citizen participation.

One of the important business sectors for the Workers' Collectives is local community-based welfare. In response to the ageing of Japanese society, in which over 30% of the population is expected to be 65 or older by the middle of this century (SCCU, 2010), the SC has set up social welfare Workers' Collectives to manage day service centres and special nursing homes.

2.1.5 The organisational characteristics of the SC Movement

Originally the purchase of goods in the SC was carried out by a collective pre-ordering system based on the Hans, which are small groups of between four and eight members which meet in members' homes. The SC has stuck to this system even though many other Japanese co-operatives have changed into supermarkets when facing the challenge of big commercial

distribution companies. However, the SC has had to adapt to the growing number of working women, who are reluctant to join Hans. Now consumer goods are delivered directly either to Hans or to individual members at home through the delivery system. In addition there are members who use SC shops known as Depots.

In 2007 the proportion of Han members was 39.7% of the total membership (SCCU, 2010). The Han is a strength of the SC, because it is not only a distribution unit but also plays an essential role in education and in social and political mobilisation.

Another organisational feature of the SC is the relationship between the sexes. The formal leadership and the membership are composed of women. However, not only was the Seikatsu Club founded by a man but also most of the regional Clubs were founded by men and male leaders continue to wield a disproportionate influence in the organisation. Lam (1999) commented that the male leaders and the women office holders played different roles in the SC and the Net. Until recently the men have tended to propound on the historical and structural causes of social movements in Japan, preach abstract principles of direct participation and plot the long-term strategic options for both the SC and the Net. The women office holders on committees tended to confine themselves to issues relating to their families and concrete local problems, especially rubbish collection, soap contamination and strategic issues in their immediate neighbourhoods (Lam, 1999, 132-136).

Male dominance has been perpetuated by the SC masculine staff structure in which positions above section staff level are usually occupied by men. For instance, according to Lam, in the 1990s men predominated in decision making positions at board level in the Kanagawa SC and Net while women tended to hold ceremonial positions (ibid, 134). However, this dominance has changed and been reduced over time as the women have become experts in their own fields. Women have come to exercise greater leadership in the SC Co-op and are particularly strong in the Net and Workers' Collectives.

2.1.6 Organisational changes

The SC has been undergoing a number of important changes. The number of full-time housewives, who form the backbone of the Hans, is declining and this demographic change

poses a great challenge to the SC (SCCU, 2002, 2006). As more women go out to work the number of Han members has steadily diminished (SCCU, 2002, 2004, 2006), although there has been a slight revival in Hans in the past year. It is unclear why this has happened or whether it will be sustained (SCCU, 2010). This shift in the membership means that although the membership of the SC has increased this has been among women who use home delivery services and has resulted in a reduction in the SC's active membership.

Other SC organisations like Workers' Collectives have increased over time, particularly in the welfare sector, although this growth seems to have levelled off and the Net has also lost ground recently. For instance by 2006 there were over 140 local representatives, but in 2010 this had fallen to 131 (SCCU, 2010).

2.2 Profile of the Kanagawa SC Movement

My research focuses on the Kanagawa SC Movement. I chose the Kanagawa branch of the SC Movement because it has a reputation for dynamism and has been a pioneering part of the movement, particularly in the development of Workers' Collectives. The Kanagawa Prefecture is located in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area. Its population is just under nine million (8,910,256 in 2007). It includes big cities like Yokohama and Kawasaki. It is an important part of the Keihin Industrial and Port Zone along the Tokyo Bay (Kanagawa Prefecture, 2010).

The Kanagawa SC Movement is known as a dynamic organisation in the SC Movement. It has produced the second largest number of representatives in local assemblies and created a wide range of welfare organisations run as Workers' Collectives. The Kanagawa Net together with the Workers' Collectives are no longer seen as subsidiaries of the Kanagawa SC Co-op (KSC) and have acquired a more independent status as sister organisations. They now have members who are not necessarily members of the KSC itself. This is an important feature because the growth and dynamism of the food co-ops seems to have slowed. Fearing stagnation as the number of full-time housewives, who are the base of the SC, is expected to diminish and the rate of urbanisation, which accompanied and facilitated the growth of the SC, slows the KSC has diversified its activities (Lam, 1999, 117). By offering support to working women through the provision of child-care or care for the elderly it has also begun to

address some gender issues. This strategy of embracing new groups of people like the elderly and working women seems to be succeeding in providing a new direction for the SC in general.

2.2.1 A brief history of the Kanagawa SC Movement

The Kanagawa SC Movement is typical of the SC Movement in that it was founded by a man, Yokota Katumi, a trade union activist. He first organised a Han in his rail company workplace. Many of the members lived in Midori ward and he concentrated his activities in that area. Before long housewives outnumbered trade union members changing the nature of the organisation. Katumi was fortunate in basing his organisation in a new suburb where there were few competing co-operatives, supermarkets or traditional shopping centres (Katumi, 2004). The brief history of the Kanagawa SC Movement, see Box 1, describes the key stages from the creation of the Co-op, campaigns to ban synthetic soap to the creation of the first Workers' Collectives and the development of the Net.

1971 Midori Co-op inaugurated.

1977 Kanagawa SC Co-op established

1982 'Ninjin' Workers' Collective established and first depots opened.

1983 Terada Esko elected as Assembly member in Kawasaki city as first SC representative.

1984 Kanagawa Net established, petition for the declaration of a nuclear free Yokohama submitted to the City Assembly.

1986 Mutual aid programme started, estate counselling office opened.

1989 Welfare Club established.

1995 UN awards the Kanagawa SC a prize as one of its fifty 'Humane Communities'.

1997 House delivery system started.

2003 Forum Associa formed to encourage local community networks

2004 Kanagawa SC Co-op divided into five independent local Co-ops

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Box 1: A brief history of the Kanagawa SC Movement

Source: Katumi, 2004, 42-44; Co-operative Learning Centre, 2010

In the late 1990s and early part of the new century the KSC suffered a setback in the number

of members and its turnover but has since recovered whilst its members have continued to underpin the Co-op with a steady level of investment throughout, even when their numbers were in decline, see Table 3.

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	2010
Members	25,469	41,523	50,337	48,175	44,553	65,087	68,848
Turnover	564,957	1,120,562	1,647,934	1,867,176	1,613,727	2,099,592	2,140,699 (£159.5mil)
Investment	67,557	177,894	274,811	369,720	408,844	618,017	795,051 (£59.6mil)

*Unit; 10 thousand Yen which equals approx £75 (19.09.2010)

Table 3: The achievements of the Kanagawa SC Co-op

Source, KSC, 2005; 2010a

2.2.2 The development of hegemony

The Kanagawa SC Movement has pioneered the development of 'hegemony' or an alternative society, lifestyle, values and organisations to oppose the existing system. Yokota Katumi and his colleague, Kotsuka Hisao, have applied this Gramscian concept to the work of the Kanagawa SC Movement in expanding its range of activities to include economic (Workers' Collectives) and political (Net) organisations, in addition to the Hans and co-operative shops. The education of its members is a critical function of the organisation. Many members joined simply to take advantage of the economic benefits but have later been affected by other programmes. The transformation of members through this involvement is a key goal of the KSC Movement (Lam, 1999, 110).

Kanagawa has also been at the forefront of the move to create new organisations to respond to the changes in Japanese society. As has already been noted, the SC has experienced a change in its membership and a decline in the number of Hans, which are based on members who are full-time housewives. Just as the number of working women in Japanese society has increased and this trend has altered the SC's membership, so more members have dropped out of the Han system preferring to get food through the delivery system. To combat this, in

2005, the KSC created five local co-ops to devolve power to the localities, see Map 2. Each co-op included smaller structures called 'Comonzu', which include both Han and delivery members in order to encourage more participation by delivery members (KSC, 2005).
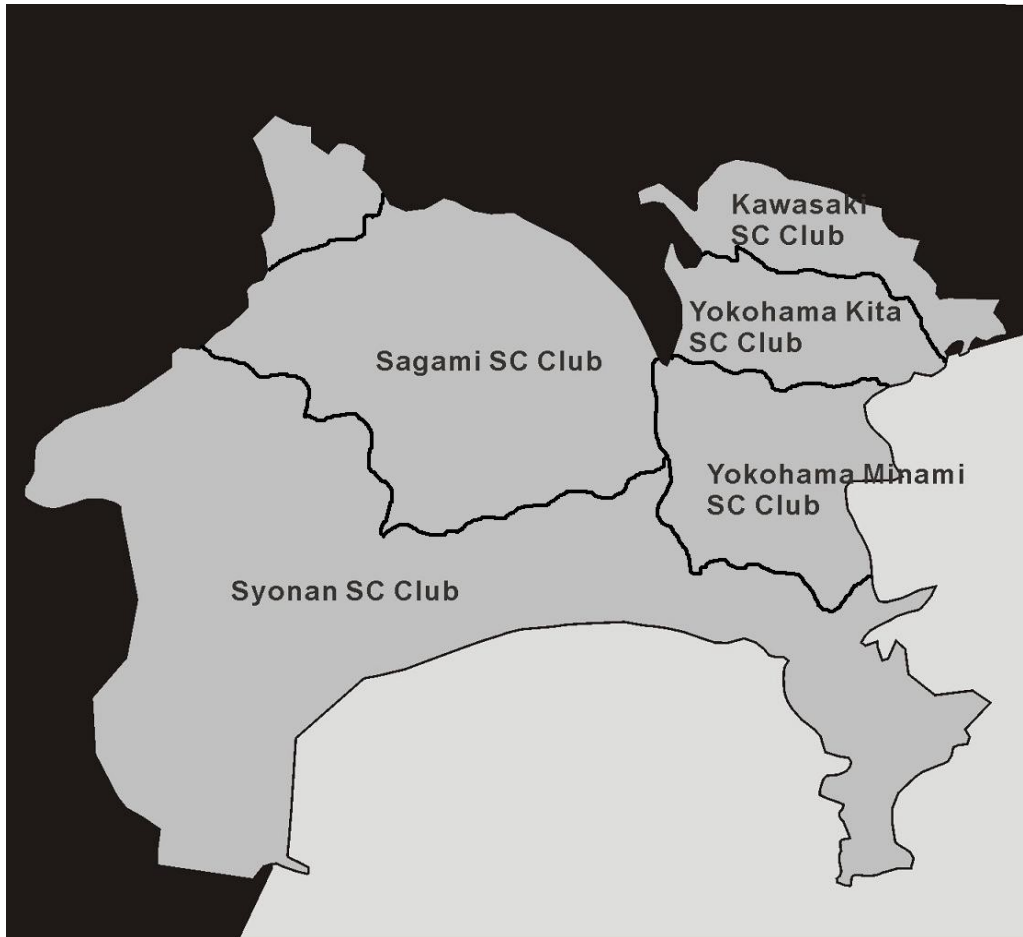
Map 1: Local Kanagawa Co-ops (not to scale)
Source: KSC, 2008a

In addition, local stores or Depots have been created to attract those who are unwilling to join Hans. The KSC has also been organising those members who shop in Depots (ibid).

2.2.3 The Net in Kanagawa

The KSC focused on campaigning on soap as an issue to mobilise its members. The impact of synthetic soap on the environment attracted media interest and then led on to a political campaign and the establishment of the Net in Kanagawa and the election of the first Net representatives. The failure of their initial petition in 1980 to ban synthetic soap, despite its

220,000 signatures, convinced members of the need for direct involvement in local politics. The role of Katumi in launching the Net was particularly important as he had to persuade a candidate to stand (Kanagawa Net, 2001).

The Kanagawa Net is the second largest Net after the Tokyo Net. In 2003, there were 44 Kanagawa Net representatives on 16 local government bodies from 28 election districts. There were 5,000 members in 36 Net branches. The Net is heavily dependent on the KSC membership, but in elections Net candidates also received support from other citizens. According to Katumi, in one election, whereas the total KSC membership was 75,000 the Net gained 200,000 votes, which therefore included many votes from people outside the KSC (Katumi, 2004, 192).

The Net in Kanagawa is organised on in a way which emphasises local autonomy. There is a multitude of committees at all levels reviewing policy and running the different campaigns and programmes. These include politics courses, local politics reform and home–care/welfare NGOs support campaigns, peace projects, study groups, the Sagami Hara environment project and a Waste Management project (ibid, 45).

2.2.4 The split in the Net in Kanagawa

The Net in Kanagawa had managed to increase and then sustain its representation in local assemblies. In 1991 it had 18 local assembly representatives. By 1999 these had increased to 39, a figure it sustained in 2003. However, in 2007, following the split into two groups, the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama suffered a decline to 21 members, 18 for the Kanagawa Net and 3 for Net Yokohama. In 2010, the Net representation had recovered to 33 assembly members, 29 for the Kanagawa Net and 4 for Net Yokohama. However, despite the split the number of members has increased as for example in the Kanagawa Net from 3,000 in 1997 to around 5,000 in 2007. The two Nets have been working for clean politics, food, welfare, environmental, education, and local transportation issues (Kanagawa Net, 2007, 2010; NetYokohama, 2007, 2010).

2.2.5 Workers' Collectives in Kanagawa

The KSC pioneered the creation of Workers' Collectives and has continued to show the way in their development. Up until recently these have continued to grow rapidly since their establishment. In 1992, there were 56 Kanagawa collectives employing 1,748 workers. By January 2004, there were 210 Kanagawa collectives employing 5,859 workers running a wide range of businesses. They can be classified in the following five categories:

(1) Home–welfare support: home help, care of the sick, child-care and health-care: 129 organisations.
(2) Food: Lunch box, bakeries: 10 organisations.
(3) Shops: Environmental shop, interior furnishings shop, recycling shop: 16 organisations.
(4) Information and Culture: Printing, Editing, Design, publishing, cookery courses, Culture courses: 10 organisations.
(5) Businesses commissioned to provide services for the KSC: 45 organisations
(Katumi, 2004, 123).

Although child-care services have been provided by Workers' Collectives for about fifteen years at first they were not an important part of the KSC's activities. However, more recently they have expanded in response to the growing number of women going out to work (Kanagawa Workers' Collectives Union, 2008, 2010; Katumi, 2004, 147-8).

Recently the overall number of Workers' Collectives in Kanagawa has fallen. In 2007 there were 198 Collectives, a 10% decline from 2006 although the number of members remained almost the same as before. In 2010 there were 187 Workers' Collectives and there was also a slight fall in the number of members from 5,692 to 5,607 since 2007 (Kanagawa Workers' Collective Union, 2008, 2010)

2.2.6 Other related organisations

As with other branches of the SCCU, the Co-operative, the Workers' Collectives and the Net are the main pillars of the Kanagawa SC Movement. In Kanagawa there is another pillar called the Welfare Co-op, which is a type of hybrid Co-op and Workers' Collective. The

Kanagawa SC Movement has also been developing a diverse range of organisations and activities to link up with other groups in the community, see Figure 2. The KSC Movement is developing these organisations not only to cope with the changes in Japanese society as mentioned earlier, but also in keeping with the principles of devolving power and encouraging participation in the movement (Katumi, 1991; 2004).

One interesting organisation is the WE21Japan, which stands for Women's Empowerment in the 21st Century. The WE21Japan has 55 shops, modelled on the Oxfam shop, and was established in 1998 to pursue a vision of a new Asian society and to support and forge solidarity with women in other Asian countries (WE21Japan, 2010). Along with the Earth Tree, which campaigns on Third World issues, the WE21Japan also aims to help developing countries. Other subsidiaries include the Women's and Citizens' Community Bank (WCCB, and the Forum Associa which was created in 2003 to support community organisations. Its purpose is to build community networks and it reaches out to a diverse range of local groups which may include both SC members and non-members (Co-operative Learning Centre, 2010).

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│   Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement         │
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| The Net Kanagawa Yokohama | Co-op (KSC) 5 Local co-ops | Workers' Collectives | Welfare Co-op | Forum Associa | WCCB | Earth Tree | WE21 Japan |
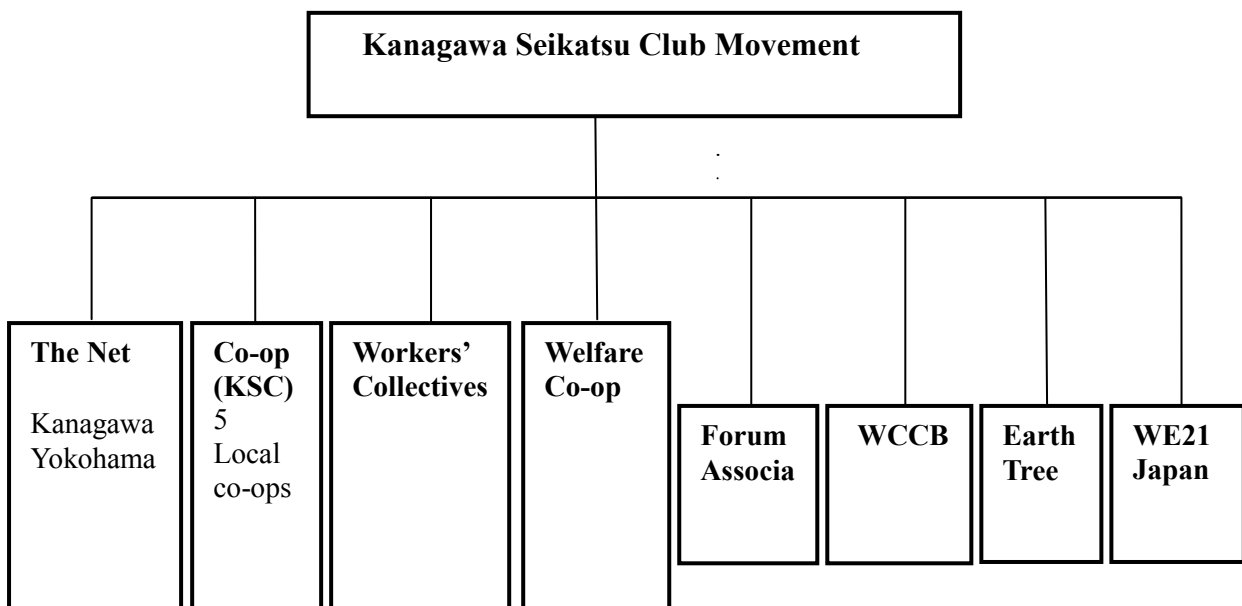
Figure 2: The structure of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement

The structure and organisations of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

3. The opportunity structure of the SC movement

3.1 New Social Movements in Japan and the Seikatsu Club Movement

It has been widely acknowledged that the SC Movement is one of the most prominent New Social Movements (NSM) in Japan (Amano 1995; Satō, 1996; Lam, 1999; Jung, 2004, Avenell, 2010; Park; 2010). It was established following the period of conflict around the Japan-US Security Treaty and it embraces different elements of NSMs, particularly as they developed in Japan.

The Security Treaty between the United States and Japan was signed in 1951. It meant that Japan provided the United States with the territorial means of maintaining a military presence in East Asia. In 1960, the renegotiation of the treaty provoked the fear of war and led to mass protests amongst a broad coalition of citizens who objected to Japan becoming part of a military front designed confront the USSR and Communist China. The right wing Kishi government forcibly ratified the treaty by excluding the opposition parties from the Diet, while at the same time it sought to reverse the democratic reforms of the Allied Occupation through greater control over the educational system and organised labour and by expanding the power of the police (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001, 16).

In general, the protests against the Security Treaty, the Anpo struggle as they were known, and their defeat marked a watershed in the shift from the old social movements built around class-based struggle to the new diverse local and citizens' movements. The influence of the Japanese Socialist and Communist Parties and the Labour Federations affiliated to them started to decline. The opposition's united front strategy, which the two parties tried to impose on the movement despite important differences among the participating groups, proved ineffective. Student organisations were among those who challenged the parties' claim to be the leaders of the movement (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001, 16-18). Since the Anpo struggle the labour movement has been weakened and fragmented by Japan's rapid economic growth and the policies of the long standing conservative government. From the 1970s onwards it has been incorporated into the national policy network and become part of the political system (Carlile, 1994). In its place new residents' movements emerged as important actors among Japanese Social movements. A key factor in the emergence of these movements was the

serious pollution scandals which resulted from the rush to development in the 1960s, such as the Kanemi Oil incident, the Tokyo Smog and the the Itai-Itai illness which was caused by the contamination of water with mercury discharged by the Mitsui mining company (Huddle & Reich, 1987). At the same time concern over the consumption of instant foods containing additives and pesticides became widespread resulting in the emergence of anti-development and anti-pollution movements (ibid). Residents began to campaign against developments like factories and airports and pollution victims sued responsible industries. Ironically, among those playing an important role in these movements were members of the new middle class which had emerged as a result of this economic growth.

The emergence of residents' movements also prompted the launch of the local government reform (jichitai kaikaku) movement by a political grouping of communists, socialists and intellectuals in the early 1960s. Unlike the government, the mainstream political parties and labour unions, which were basically obsessed with economic growth, this political grouping actively embraced the issues which residents raised under the banner of the devolution of power, autonomy and direct participation. They soon gained popularity and achieved political success. In 1971, they took a third of the seats on local government bodies. However, their very success marked the start of their decline. Central government began to respond to the demands of residents' movements undercutting the support of the reform movement, while it was unable to secure its budgets because of the economic downturn and internal divisions further weakened the movement, all of which allowed the conservative LDP to recover its control over local government (Jung, 2003; Park, 2010). Following their initial successes the residents' movements, which had led environmental campaigns against pollution and industrial development and in which victims of pollution incidents had played a leading role, fell away while environmental movements shifted their focus to prevention and self-help campaigns based on issues related to everyday life, such as recycling and organic food. Consumers' Co-operatives like the SC emerged to become the leading Social Movements in Japan (Jung, 2003, 30).

In parallel with these developments the labour movement was becoming integrated into the existing political system and was increasingly conservative. Following the oil shock and despite the sustained rationalisation of production the core unionised work force in Japanese industry managed to preserve its place in the permanent employment system, becoming

increasingly "white collar" and taking on supervisory and technical roles leaving behind part-time and temporary workers, workers in small firms, women and foreign workers (Carlile, 1994, 618).

Similarly, NSMs in Japan have increasingly promoted 'domesticated and largely apolitical' social activism against contentious politics and see 'self-help as the solution to all social problems' (Avenell, 2009, 247). They have also maintained a co-operative relationship with the state although the controlling nature of the Japanese state is partly responsible for this (Pekkanan, 2003; Esevez-Abe, 2003). One outcome of this relationship between social movements and non-profit organisations and the State is that NGOs or NPOs (Non-Profit Orgainsations) providing social services make up the largest sector among these organisations (Kawato & Pekkanan, 2008). In 1998 the Japanese Government passed the NPO Law which reduced bureaucratic supervision of NGO/NPOs and therefore appeared to favour these organisations. But in fact this law suited the Japanese government. The Neo-Liberal Government needed to find ways of coping with its ageing society without increasing expenditure and wanted to take advantage of the energy of its citizen movements to achieve this. It started to loosen regulations and support welfare services run by these civil organisations. There have been some positive results in that there has been a steady increase in the number of organisations with greater independence from bureaucratic control, but state control over NPOs remains fairly stringent and the law has not led to a fundamental change in Japanese civil society or the state-civil society relationship (Kawato & Pekkanan, 2008; Kurokawa, 2010).

Japanese business has also favoured the NPO sector. In 1984 the Toyota Foundation extended its existing grant programme to fund NPOs while in 1990 the leading business federation, Keidanren, the Federation of Economic Organisations, launched its 1% Club to donate to civic organisations (Avenell, 2010). Avenell says 'By the late 1980s there was a broad consensus among bureaucrats, interested political and corporate actors and influential movement intellectuals about the utility of the new civic groups and the necessity for regulatory reform' all of which resulted in the 1998 Act (ibid, 199). This environment has provided NPOs in the welfare sector, like the SC's Workers' Collectives, with opportunities to expand and as a result they have grown rapidly from the 1980s onwards. In addition, the Net has also benefited from the growth of these Workers' Collectives as its political activities

often focused on welfare issues and it depended on their support.

3.2 Women in Japanese NSMs

The distinctive feature of Japanese NSMs is the dominance of women in terms of participation. This has come about, first, because citizens' movements are principally identified with residents' issues, which mainly concern problems in the localities where women spend most of their time, unlike men who commute into the city centres and, second, because the development of the consumer society during the late 1950s again involved women who had the primary responsibility for caring for and purchasing things for their families (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001, 23, 29).

The emergence of the consumer society led to the creation of a consumers' movement and consumer co-operatives are one of the biggest actors in this movement in Japan (Maclachlan, 2002, 69). Once again, these movements reflect the wider changes in Japanese society and the emergence of women into the public sphere. While women are now in an absolute majority in consumer co-operatives, the membership of pre-war cooperatives, which had strong ties to the Communist Party, was principally made up of men. Many of the leaders of those co-operatives actively supported female suffrage (ibid, 67) and as a result many female activists were attracted by these co-ops. They saw the co-operatives as democratic bases from which they could play a part in building an equitable society. These co-operatives were motivated to forge alliances with consumers in the aftermath of the Second World War. The 1948 Consumers' Lifestyle Cooperative Law, or Co-op Law, sought to limit their growth and influence and also forced them into competition with mainstream business, which ironically stimulated co-operatives and consumer movements to work together (ibid, 68-71).

While Japan experienced rapid economic growth co-operatives benefited financially and were able to expand their capital base (Jung, 2003, 166). However, in the face of strong competition many co-ops opted to commercialise and, although at the Hukushima general meeting in 1970 the Japanese Union of Consumer Co-operatives (JCCU) re-stated co-operative principles based on the participation of members, these commercial pressures on Japanese co-ops have continued (Takagi, 1991, 22-27; Senghwalhubdonjohab Jung-ang-hwe, 2000, 30-32). Along with the Green Co-op (Moen, 2000, 59) the SC, as one of the most

radical organisations, stuck to its original participatory principles continuing to depend on the loyalty of its members and maintaining its participatory networks (Jung 2003, 285). An indication of the importance of this base of support is seen in the level of money invested in the SC by its members, which is higher than in any other Japanese co-operative (Katumi, 1991; Odagiri, 1992).

Women's movements of different political persuasions have also played an important role in consumers' movements. Organisations like The League of Women Voters (Fujin Yukensha Domei) and Shufuren (The Housewives Alliance) became involved in consumer-related campaigns from the time of the US Occupation and worked in conjunction with feminist and labour activists and leaders of the Socialist Party, who believed strongly in the advancement of consumers' and women's rights through both education and political activism (Maclachlan, 2002, 64). Shufuren, which was founded in 1948, focused mainly on consumer issues but simultaneously promoted the status and protection of women (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001, 117; Maclachlan, 2002, 61). Other important players in the contemporary consumers' movement are the National Federation of Regional Women's Organisations (Zen nihon Chiiki Fujinkai Rengo'kai), Chifuren, an association of regional women's organisations and their constituent local women's groups, Fujinkai. Fujinkai are largely conservative and, in the past, were often mobilised by local government for programmes in support of the war. Even now many Fujinkai receive funding from local authorities as subcontractors or to support local governmental projects (Maclachlan, 2002, 66- 67).

It should be noted that Japanese women's movements have tended to maintain a close relationship with the state from before the war. Garon points out that movements like the Daily Life Improvement Campaign urged the government to play 'an active role' in educating women and girls and followed the lead of bureaucrats in their commitment to modernisation (Garon 1997, 132) They found a new political opportunity when the post-war state sought to rebuild the nation and the economy. When the government needed the co-operation of the people to combat hyperinflation, black market activity and other social issues it found women's organisations were pivotal allies (ibid, 165). While men were increasingly removed from civic life to become economic warriors women 'gradually emerged as the state's agents in managing society' and they supported nearly all of the state programmes and national campaigns such as promoting savings, improvements in lifestyle and crime prevention (ibid,

179)

One of the most important post-war nationwide campaigns was the New Life Movement, which was a set of loosely connected initiatives involving government departments, women's groups like Shufuren and Chifuren and business corporations. Apart from Communist groups women's groups of all complexions, including progressive women's groups, supported this initiative (Garon, 1997, 184) which was based on a clear division of labour designed to promote rational household management in support of male 'economic warriors'. For example, the movement encouraged birth control and rational management of household expenditure with the explicit policy of encouraging women to limit their families and control their household expenditure in order to undermine trade union demands for higher wages. However, even when they follow the government line in this way these movements can develop in ways which deny their origins and in rural areas this was a foundation for the civil movements of the 1970s (Gordon, 1997).

Indeed, women's movements have not always had a cosy relationship with the state. With the emergence of the consumer society and the accompanying consumers' movement in which women are the absolute majority consumer issues brought women into politics. In the July 1989 elections to the House of Councillors, the Upper House of the Japanese Diet, women were propelled as never before into the limelight as elected representatives. The leading issue of the campaign was the newly introduced consumption tax, a problem of immediate concern for women as it meant an increase in the prices of a wide range of goods. As a result the ruling Liberal Democratic Party suffered severe losses in the Upper House (Iwao, 1993, 225).

The 1980s saw housewives becoming increasingly active in not only the consumers' movement but also in other areas like the ecological movement, giving rise to the phenomenon known as the 'housewives' movement'. The major women's movements like Shufuren and Fujin Yukensha Domei sought to recover their influence, which was weakened in the 1960s, by joining with the NSMs with their overwhelmingly female membership rather than with autonomous feminist movements and along with other housewife organisations have campaigned on issues like the environment, transport and welfare. As a result of this overlap in terms of membership and concerns there tends to be little distinction between the women's movement and NSMs (Jung, 2003, 314-5).

It is important to note these characteristics of the Japanese women's movement. First of all, women's organisations have co-operated with government campaigns and nationalistic causes. During the War prominent women leaders and feminists openly collaborated with the government. For instance, Ichigawa Fusea, a renowned leader of the suffrage movement, Akamatsu Tsuneko, a well-known socialist feminist, and Yamataka Shigeri, a leader of Chifuren, all collaborated with the fascist state during the Second World War. After the war the focus shifted to building the 'New Japan' in which women played an important role moulding the new Japanese lifestyle (Garon, 1997, 182-183). More recently, a strong nationalistic current can be seen in the campaigns of modern consumer movements such as in the anti-GMO campaign. The argument that American GMO food is unsafe while Japanese food is safe and clean (Maclachlan, 2006; Avenell, 2010) is embedded in the SC's anti-GMO food campaign and is used to justify the protection of Japanese agriculture (SCCU, 2009a, 2010a).

Second, in the women's movement progressive and conservative attitudes are often mixed up or the adoption of a particular approach in one instance may result in an opposed outcome later. As mentioned earlier, activists, included feminists, co-operated with fascism and with the New Life Movement led by the state and business, but this latter experience was to provide a foundation for the NSMs, because once women had become involved in social activism they could then be mobilised for other causes (Garon, 1997; Gordon, 2002, 160-161).

Third, while those in the women's movement who have described themselves as feminists have failed to mobilise many women and have received little public support, non-feminist participatory movements run by women, such as housewives' movements like the Mother's Convention or anti-nuclear movements and peace movements, which tend not to focus on gender issues such as sexual discrimination, have been more successful in recruiting women (Eto, 2005; Takeda, 2006). Their maternalist approach has profoundly influenced grassroots activists (Eto, 2005, 316) and this consciousness and attitude has remained a central feature of the women's movement in Japan (Takeda, 2005, 124). The SC is aligned with this wider Japanese housewives' movement.

3.3 Gendered Mobilisation Structure

The founding father of the SC, Kunio Iwane, had been involved in the Socialist Party but had become disappointed with its radicalism and lack of grassroots' support. Iwane recalled that, when he went out to the localities in the early 1960s to get signatures for a petition against the atom bomb he found nearly all the men had gone to their workplaces in central Tokyo, 'the only ones who were there to listen to me were housewives' (Iwane, 1993, 17). Iwane's experience was repeated by other SC activists in other cities showing why women have been the principal participants in Japanese NSMs.

It is useful to understand the broader situation of Japanese women, especially the emergence of full-time housewives. In fact, full-time housewives appeared at the same time as Japan's 'economic miracle' in the 1960s when, along with the massive expansion in industrial employment, the country underwent rapid urbanisation. Together with this, the modern segregation of the sexes, between husbands and wives, was established. Instead of working together as they had on the land once they moved to the cities a new pattern emerged, of men working away from the home while women stayed behind looking after the home. Whilst men were incorporated into the new company life housewives, who moved to the new urban areas, lost their traditional community networks and position and were isolated (Ueno, 1987, 137-8).

The rapid industrialisation of Japan resulted in an intensely competitive and achievement orientated society and this has intensified the division of labour between the sexes to an extreme extent, which ironically has enabled women, especially full-time housewives, to participate in local activities. Men were seen as economic warriors who often worked so hard as 'salary' or company men that they suffered 'Karoshi' which meant they died of overwork. They had little time to spend with their families (Ōsawa, 1995, 125-135). By contrast, there were few opportunities for Japanese female university graduates to get good jobs, especially after they married. Although opportunities have increased for middle-aged and older married women, they are generally in part-time, low-status and unstable jobs. Thus, university graduates are likely to be polarised into two groups, career seekers and full-time housewives. The latter probably prefer to stay out of the job market rather than to take low-status part-time jobs, especially as their husbands will already have a good salary. Instead they tend to get

involved in community and social activities (Tanaka, 1995, 301-3; Sasagawa, 2006). However, whether they are full-time housewives or part-time workers, a marked characteristic of Japanese women is that they take an active part in local community movements. A survey of over two thousand married women over the age of twenty in the greater Tokyo and Osaka area, conducted by the Ashahi Shimbun newspaper in 1987, showed that 52% of those with jobs and 53% of those without jobs were involved in some type of community-related activity. For these part-time working women this involvement represents an important means of bringing about improvements in child day-care and after school facilities (Satō, 1995, 368).

The participation of the SC women in the movement can be seen in this context. Many SC women joined the movement out of a feeling of isolation. They found themselves in strange suburban communities due to their husbands' work transfers and sought local community contacts (Gelb & Estévez-Abe, 1998, 266). In an article in the SC Magazine, Shakai Undo (Social Movement), Furuta asserts 'Intellectual women or women of ability were detained in their home. There were women in the Japanese cities who did not know what to do… the SC movement started with the idea that they could do something from their situation' (Iwane & Furuta, 2005, 25). Therefore, the segregation of women as a result of the acute division of labour between the sexes was not only a source of oppression and alienation, but ironically it has also allowed them the time, space and financial resources, especially in the case of middle class housewives who have inherited the traditional right of 'shufu' or control over the entire household budget, to pursue community activities. They can find their own personal network of women who are in the same situation (Ueno, 1987).

One of the strategies of Japanese women is to take advantage of traditional cultural traits to recover women's autonomy in industrial society. Many women came to realise that entering the world of men was not the only way to solve women's problems. They have found part-time work exploitative rather than liberating with a dual burden of household chores and work and have, therefore, chosen to remain as housewives (Ueno, 1987, 141). In established organisations, like companies and unions, women tend to be placed in supplementary roles, however, in the localities they find more room to participate in ways in which they can gain self-fulfilment (Yazawa, 1993, 53).

It is, therefore, a marked characteristic of Japanese women, whether they are full-time housewives or part-time workers, that they take an active part in local community movements. A survey of over two thousand married women over the age of twenty in the greater Tokyo and Osaka area, conducted by the Ashahi Shimbun newspaper in 1987, showed that 52% of those with jobs and 53% of those without jobs were involved in some type of community-related activity. For working women this involvement represents an important means of bringing about improvements in child day-care and after school facilities (Satō et al, 1995, 368).

Together with this, their roles and identities as mothers and housewives provide the impetus to become involved with the SC. This is, in large part, in line with Japanese feminism which is based on women's traditional gender roles and identities, which, as Khor says, 'distinguishes it from American and British feminisms and affiliates it with Asia and Latin American feminism in the Philippines, India and Peru, for example' (Khor, 1999, 650)

3.4 Ideology, framing and identity

3.4.1 The ideology of Japanese NSMs and the KSC Movement

Avenell points out that since the failure of the Anpo struggle civic activism based on rights, democracy and pacifism linked with street protest has faded away. But the residents' movements and local government reform movement left behind an ideological legacy for the NSMs in terms of autonomy, participation and self-help. However, the new movements have created a contradiction. The ideologues and activists of these NSMs have demonised confrontational activism, but this has undermined their project for political reform (Avenell, 2010, 151). Beginning in the 1970s these movements have developed 'proposal-style' (teian–gata) civic activism, 'which argued that true movement autonomy would come about only through nuts-and bolts activism and pragmatic engagement with the state, the market, and society in general' (ibid, 197).

Iwane and Katumi adopted Gramsci's idea of 'local hegemony' instead of following classical socialism. The founding fathers, Iwane and Katumi, applied this approach to the development of the SC to give it political direction (Katumi, 1991, 2004; Iwane, 1993). As Iwane put it, 'The day in which the labour union and the labour movement played a key anti-capitalist role has finished. Japanese social movements then asked who could be the actor? A new movement which is radical but rooted in daily life is needed. … I have the ambition that the SC should take the initiative in reforming Japanese society' (Iwane, 1993, 23).

Like Iwane, Katumi, the KSC's founding father, says that the SC is an instrument to achieve the citizen's freedom in the face of industrial society's problems, as well as being an agency for the creation of an alternative society (Katumi, 1991, 2004). They wanted to use 'citizen power' rooted in the daily life of a locally-based grassroots movement. Originally they did not plan to create a women's movement like the SC. They wanted to create a grassroots movement. However, as men left their homes to go out to work for companies the only people they could find for their movement were housewives (Iwane, 1993, 13-7).

The SC's founders and ideologues have seen it as the purpose of the SC and organisations like it to provide a check and balance to the state and the market in the triangular relationship between the three (Katumi, 2004). To achieve this hegemony the KSC Movement has not only developed as a co-operative but has also created a political party, the Net, and an alternative business sector, the Workers' Collectives, which operate particularly in the field of welfare, a sector it considers to be strategically important. Another strategy developed by the KSC is the building of wider 'associations' or loose networks with related hobby or self-help organisations in the localities (KSC, 2004, 2005).

However, Avenell has criticised organisations in Japan like the SC for diverting attention from crucial struggles at work and in the political arena and for failing to acknowledge how civil society can be co-opted by the neo-liberal state to complement or supplement its project (Avenell, 2011).

While the SC inherited many features of women's activism in Japan, it is helpful to understand the ideological aspect of Japanese feminism. According to Ehara, from its beginning the Japanese 'women's liberation movement' had an 'anti-modernist orientation, such as a community orientation, adoration of motherhood and a return to the physical body and nature' (Ehara, 1983, quoted in Ueno, 2010, 114).

In line with this, the most important characteristics of Japanese women's movements are that they seek to revalue the women's sphere rather than trying to imitate men and that they are critical of the capitalist system which is blindly pursuing economic growth. They seek to radically transform society on the basis of female perspectives, which largely echoes the ideas of Western 'difference feminists' (Khor, 1999, 649-654; Murase, 2006, 34)[6].

A similar ethos is found in the SC's Workers' Collectives. Amano (2003) argues that for women to seek paid employment does not solve the problem of the gender division of labour. She says that both men and women should work in non-profit co-operative organisations. She considers Workers' Collectives provide a suitable means of overcoming the problem. Similarly, a Japanese eco-feminist, Furuta, has given lectures following the same line of reasoning, which were published in SC booklets (Furuta 2001, 2003; Iwane & Furuta 2003).

3.4.2 Ideology, framing and 'Seikatsusha'

Although the women became involved in the KSC Movement because of their existing gender roles and identities as mothers and wives and their concern for their families' health, their activities extend beyond areas of self-interest or even voluntarism to a deeper social activism. The KSC women have been compared to the members of 'religious organisations' (Cp, interviewed, 2.8.2005; Katumi, 2004, 94). Cp said that they used to 'cling to the phone'

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[6] An example of a typical housewives' movement is 'Agora'. A Tokyo woman, Chiyo Sato, embarked on a three year campaign to establish a child care centre in her area. Agora grew out of the experience of the women who joined the campaign. By the 1980s the organisation had groups all over Japan, each having developed to meet the needs of local women. The establishment of Agora reflects one pattern of women's involvement in politics, a group of women meeting to try to solve an everyday issue. Their experiences may lead them to be identified with a specific brand of feminism known as 'housewife feminism' (shufu-kaza feminzumu) (Mackie, 20003, 150-1).

from morning to night for their KSC activities (Cp, interviewed, 2.8.2005). What kind of ideology has driven them to such a deep level of commitment?

As was seen in Chapter 2, women's involvement in social movements often stems from their gender roles and identities as mother and wife (Taylor, 1998; Kuumba, 2001; Naples 1992). Similarly women's needs and activism on environmental issues tend to grow out of their gender roles and responsibilities, which are conditioned by the social and economic status and culture of the women concerned (Rocheleau et al., 1996, 3). This appears to be the case with the KSC women when they first joined up.

According to the survey, nearly 95% of respondents were married. Thus the KSC Movement can be described as a married women's organisation. When asked their 'reason for joining' the largest number of respondents, 43.1%, said they joined because of their concern for their family, particularly their concern for the health of their children which relates mostly to their existing gender role as mothers. Respondents were asked to provide a short statement on the subject, see Figure 3.
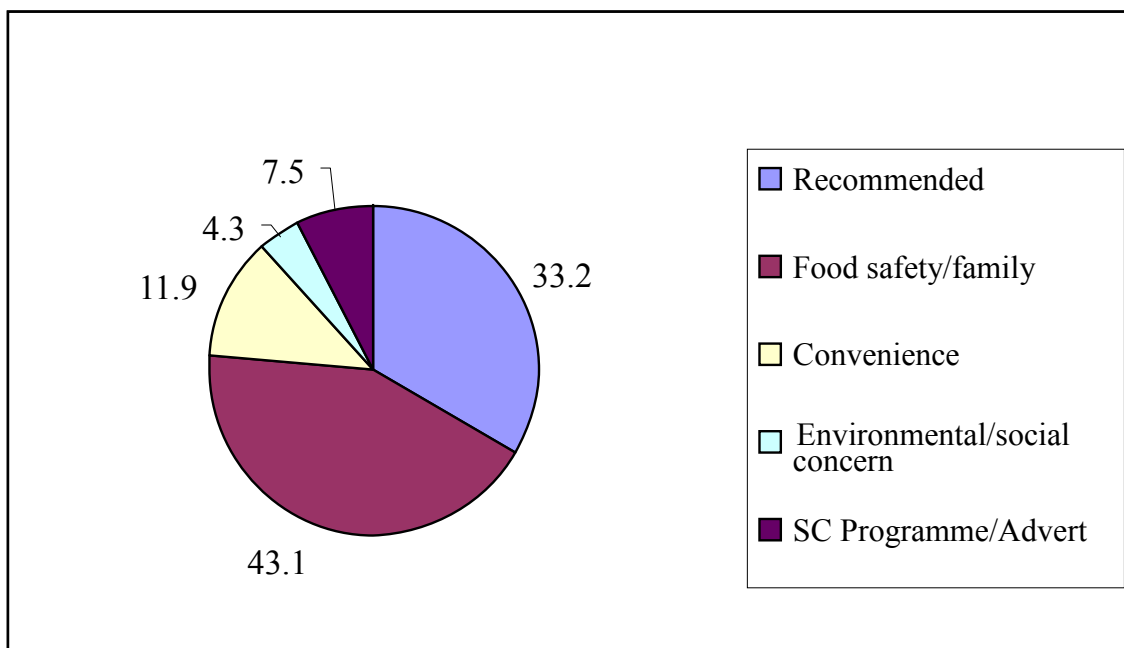
Figure 3: Reasons for joining the KSC (N=185)

Some mothers specifically mentioned that because of their children's allergies they had to use organic food, which is an SC speciality. A considerable number of members mentioned that

giving birth and pregnancy were a strong motive for thinking about the safety of food and this led them to join the KSC:

> "Because I've given birth to a baby I pay attention to food which has less additives and is more natural" (Survey response No 42);

> "As the date for giving birth approached I made up my mind to make food for the child with safe ingredients" (Survey response No 14).

Many others joined on the recommendation of a friend or family member. Over 33% of members said they joined because of recommendations from neighbours or friends. In fact, it is likely that 'recommended to join' might mean they were recommended to join the KSC on the grounds that 'SC food is good and safe', because some women specifically linked the two by mentioning that they were concerned about safe food along with the information that they were recommended to join.

In addition, the majority of Japanese, women more than men, consider the family revolves around the children not the adults. The VSR survey, mentioned above, showed there were extremely interesting differences between Americans and Japanese in what they consider to be the conditions for a good marriage. Whereas Japanese women considered their role as mother was more important than being a wife, 85% of American women thought 'being part of the spouse was the most important condition of a good marriage as against 45% of Japanese women (Iwao, 1993, 135, 169).

This emphasis on the place of children in the Japanese family is borne out by my survey, as can be seen above, in that so many women joined the KSC because of their concern for their children's health and the issue of food safety, which are intimately related. This concern for their children could also provide an impetus for them to become involved in campaigns on wider social and environmental issues as they too would be likely to impact on their children's health.

However, as they become more involved in SC activities the women are encouraged to move beyond this traditional understanding of motherhood. For this, the women needed to see their

roles and identities differently, in a way consistent with the SC's ideology.

This ideology was largely framed by post-war ideologues Ōuchi Hyōe and Minobe Ryōkichi, who argued that the way to create a democratic society against fascism was to develop individual freedom based on the family unit. To achieve this they argued that individual consumers or citizens have to organise into larger groups, for example in consumers' co-operatives, against capitalism or the state. Thus they provided a radical vision for political activism by consumers acting against the existing powers, which was put into practice by the SC (Hein, 2004, 174,180-181) So, in the vision of Iwane, women who are rooted in everyday life and their locality can oppose the mechanistic lifestyle imposed by capitalist society, for the most part, on men and can be aware of their daily life rather than blindly following this imposed lifestyle (Iwane, 1993, 40).

To achieve this the SC framed the identity of 'Seikatsusha' which is gender neutral and includes the concept of citizen, an idea which became established in the SC in the 1980s (Amano, 1995, 51). Seikatsusha means, literally, 'the people who live'. Although this concept existed in the pre-war period it was used by a wide range of social actors after the war. For example, the Beheiren, an Anti-Vietnam War peace Movement, which was an important social movement in the 1960s, called themselves 'Shimin' (citizen) and 'Seikatsusha'. Later, from the end of the 1980s, Seikatsusha was widely used by political parties and politicians as a synonym for citizen while industry used it as a term for consumers (Amano, 1996)

Consumers' co-operatives used the term Seikatsusha for their members as the people who embrace the identities of producer, citizen and consumer under one banner (Maclachlan, 2002, 38). In the Japanese context the consumer (Shōhisha) has had a negative image dating back to the pre-war period. In post-war Japan, driven by economic reconstruction, saving was emphasised rather than consumption. Consumption was only part of the broad national economic interest (Maclachlan, 2004, 119) with 'a tacit recognition of the mutually reinforcing order to survive as a citizen and produce in order to consume' (Maclachlan, 2002, 39). Therefore, the concept of Seikatsusha incorporates other aspects of the women's identity, such as being the wives of small businessmen or white-collar workers (Maclachlan, 2004, 120).

Later, this idea was further developed in the SC as Workers' Collectives were established. Rather than being passive consumers controlled by profit-driven industries, as Seikatsusha they were to develop a more holistic form of consumption by also producing goods and services, which they had come to see were necessary through their everyday experience, through these Workers' Collectives (Amano, 1988; Katumi, 2004). In that sense, Workers' Collectives are considered to be alternative economic organisations, which are radically different from the existing system of industrial production as well as being regarded as a more humane working environment enabling workers to run businesses (Katumi, 2004, 108-110)

The political participation of the Seikatsusha is conceptually framed as 'Seikatsu Seiji' (Livelihood politics), which emphasises a politics based on concrete life experiences in contrast to 'big politics', which implies their distrust of established political parties (Park, 2009b, 101). Park points out the limits of the Seikatsusha concept which is rooted in localism. For example, the Seikatsu Club in Zuchi city organised residents and campaigned against plans to build houses for the American army in the name of the protection of woods, the future of children and the protection of nature in which they were successful. As a result the candidate supported by the residents' movement was elected as the mayor of Zuchi. But the campaign eventually failed in the face of the Japan-American Security Treaty, because the issue of housing for the American Army was greater than local politics (Park, 2009b, 82). Likewise, many local issues are framed within 'big politics' at the national level and are entangled in issues like defence, economic policies and energy policies.

From a gender perspective, the Seikatusha concept in the SC was also criticised by some feminists because it is difficult for housewives, who are economically dependent on their husbands' income, to be independent citizens. In doing so the SC is turning a blind eye to gender inequality in their daily lives (Amano, 1995, 61).

3.5 Past, present and future: the changing position of women in Japan and the challenge for the KSC Movement

Women's prominent participation in Japanese NSMs can be explained by the opportunity structure in Japan from the 1960s. The old male centred social movements, socialist based,

militant, trade union supported had been fading away since the end of the Anpo struggle. The residents' movement which replaced these movements with anti-pollution and anti-development campaigns then declined as protests shifted toward self-help environmental practice. Throughout this process women, whether as residents and consumers or Seikatsusha who manage their livelihoods or daily life by themselves, have increasingly become the main force in Japan's NSMs. At the same time these social movements have co-operated more and more with government. The combination of nationalism, which historically is prone to serve conservative causes, with a women's movement which is largely based on maternalism may explain why Japanese social movements, unlike those in the West, have adopted this attitude.

The NSMs, including the SC Movement, have found political opportunity in the rising demand for welfare services. Although local government had long been willing to seek the assistance of civil organisations in providing welfare and other services, in the 1980s the Japanese government, pursuing neo-liberal policies, actively sought to use NPOs' services in response to the needs of Japan's rapidly aging society. The provision of welfare services by organisations like the SC's Workers' Collectives has been encouraged and supported by the government.

The vision of an alternative society, as epitomised by the Seikatsusha, characterises Japanese NSMs, particularly in the SC Movement in which women's voluntary work is the main ingredient. However, the SC's idea of building an alternative society is heavily reliant on women's voluntary work in support of local Net representatives and as members of Workers' Collectives. This idea fits well with Japanese feminism which upholds women's difference and has a tendency to be anti-modernist, so that the women do not seek to be the equals of men in the market economy.

However, more recently there has been a change in the position of Japanese women. The number of full-time housewives has been gradually decreasing while the proportion of married women in paid employment has risen from 26.4% in 1980 to 37.2% in 2002 and the proportion of women in general in paid employment has risen from 29.5% in 1980 to 41.9% in 2009 (Ōsawa, 2005, 97; Cabinet Office, 2010, 57). The rise in part-time employment was also dramatic for women over the age of forty, who are likely to be re-entering the workforce after raising children (Ōsawa, 1995, 165-170). Corporations began to employ non-regular

workers, who are mostly young and women, after Japan's economic downturn in the 1990s, because corporations have fewer obligations to provide job security and benefits to these workers and their wage scales are lower (Weathers, 2004, 431; Gottfried, 2008). Basically the male workers who were born soon after Second World, during the 'Dankai sedai' or baby boom period, 1945-55, continue to dominate as a core of workers on long term contracts and earn wages according to their seniority. The rest of the workforce, women and young men on short term contracts, are excluded from these privileges (Benson et al, 2007, 896; Osawa, 2009, 105). Japanese labour laws were designed to protect this core male worker and left peripheral female workers without protection. The Equal Employment Opportunities Law made no mention of the conditions of part-time employees, a category dominated by women (Gottfried & O'Reilly, 2002: Benson et al, 2007, 891).

Women make up 67.8% of dispatched or temporary agency workers in Japan. These workers have received minimal protection. In 2009, 53.2% of the women in work were in part-time work, while 18.3% of men were part-time workers (Cabinet office, 2010, 60-61). The conditions of these workers have been deteriorating. In 1994, the average hourly wage of dispatched workers was 1,704 yen, but by 2004 it had fallen to 1,430 yen. The average duration of these contracts is also falling. In 2004, more than 60% of dispatched workers were working on contracts of three months or less. Moreover, job offers for dispatched workers older than 35 years have declined significantly and there are almost no opportunities for women with young children (Benson et al., 2007, 894). As a result, women's wages are far lower than those of men. In 2008, 21.0 % of men get paid over 7million yen annually but only 3.3% of women. Conversely, 66.4% women as opposed to 22.3% men get paid under 3 million yen (Cabinet Office, 2010, 30).

However, there are some positive signs in terms of gender equality in the labour market. The wage gap between men and women has narrowed. Women earned 64.4% of what men earned in 1999, whereas in 2009 they earned nearly 69.8% of men's earnings (Cabinet Office, 2010, 65). However, it should be noted that both young men and women's job security has continued to decline because of the rise in non-regular employment. Because job security has worsened young people have been putting off getting married and tend to have fewer children. As a result, the Japanese fertility rate has dropped to 1.34 since 2008 and has been under 2 since around 1975 (World Bank, 2010).

While this situation has also prompted the Japanese government to promote gender equality polices to increase the fertility rate (Takeda, 2008), Estévez-Abe (2005) remains positive because Japanese companies are increasingly adopting 'performance based practice rather than seniority' as a way of deciding who to employ, which creates a more level playing field for women. There has been an improvement in the number of women holding senior positions. Between 1999 and 2009 the number of women in senior staff positions increased from 8.2% to13.8 %, in managerial positions from 4.0 to 7.2 and as directors from 2.1% to 4.9%. Even so these figures also show that the higher the position the fewer the women occupying them (Cabinet Office, 2010, 65)

The change in the social position of Japanese women appears slow in comparison with that in other countries. This picture of the position of Japanese women is supported by the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which provides information on women's place in their nation's economic and political life. This shows the share of seats in Parliament held by women, the percentage of female legislators, senior officials and managers and of female professional and technical workers and the gender disparity in earned income. The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) indicates the gap between the genders in the economy, education, politics and health. Japan ranks 57 out of 107 countries in the 2009 GEM index (UNDP, 2010). However, in the GGI for 2009 Japan only ranks 101 out of 134 countries in GGI. Moreover, this represents a considerable deterioration from 2006 when it was ranked 80 (World Economic Forum, 2009).

The position of part-time and temporary workers is increasingly regarded as a serious issue in Japan. Japanese women tend to leave their jobs when they have a baby in order to concentrate on raising children. This leads women to become part-time workers when they return to work. This pattern presents a sharper M curve than that seen in other industrialised countries apart from South Korea (OECD, 2010). It is fair to say that over time the M curve has been flattening out, not because more young women continue to work but because of later marriages and births (Cabinet Office, 2010, 57). As matter of fact more young women now quit their job when they have their first baby than before, up from 35.7% in 1988 to 41.3 % in 2004 (ibid, 70).

The difficulties that Japanese women face appear multi-faceted. Although the Japanese

government has significantly improved elderly care provision under the current Japanese care system, Long-Term Care Insurance, the family, especially women, still plays a predominant role in providing care for the elderly. Estévez-Abe sets out the vicious cycle facing these women. Because women's careers are interrupted by child care in their twenties and thirties they are unable to command high wages when they return to work as part time or temporary workers in their forties and fifties, with which they could pay for the care of elderly relatives. Once again they are forced to choose to stay at home to take care of elderly parents (Estévez-Abe, 2009).

Therefore, many of the problems they face in finding decent full-time work, caring for elderly parents and finding affordable child care still remain, while the pressures on them to contribute to the family's income have increased. Younger women are looking to stay in work and are postponing marriage and childbirth. The peculiar combination of women's low status and poor work opportunities, their social isolation along with their control of household budgets has provided opportunities for the SC Movement to find recruits. However, these changes pose a challenge to the SC Movement which has, up till now, thrived on the basis of the dedicated work of its members who are full-time housewives. Furthermore, the SC Movement has largely based itself on women's traditional gender roles. The question arises as to how it will respond to the issues facing working women and men, particularly those in irregular works and with low social status. The Kanagawa Net has joined in with anti-restructuring and anti-poverty movements which have developed in response to the low job security and low pay, which were outcomes of the restructuring based on the neo-liberal policies of the previous LDP government. In 2011, the reform of low pay for part-time workers became one of its principal policies. Yet it is too early to say how much energy it will put into applying this policy while currently the abolition of pensions for local representatives and the problems of radioactive pollution as a result of the Tsunami in early 2010 appear to be their top priorities (Kanagawa Net, 2011a, 2011b).

4. The resources of the members of the Kanagawa SC Movement

Japanese women command considerable resources both in material and non-material terms. These have proved vital to the development of the KSC Movement and enabled it to build a multi-faceted movement.

4.1 The networks of the KSC women

In this section I will explore the networks and the human resources the KSC Movement has mobilised. As stated earlier, I investigated these issues in a survey of KSC members, based on a questionnaire, which was conducted in July 2005.

We can see the network resources of the KSC women in their recruitment of new members. To develop their organisation and expand its work the women have to recruit new members. The survey asked a number of questions to determine how many members had been involved in the recruitment of new members and whom they had recruited.

According to the survey, see Figure 4, the great majority of respondents, 87.2%, had recruited other members. Of those recruited neighbours and friends made up a substantial percentage. A considerable percentage of the women, 12.3%, said they recruited mothers of their children's friends. This reflects that fact that for married Japanese women their children are their central concern. Thus, they became friendly with their children's friends' mothers and wanted to include them in their KSC activities.
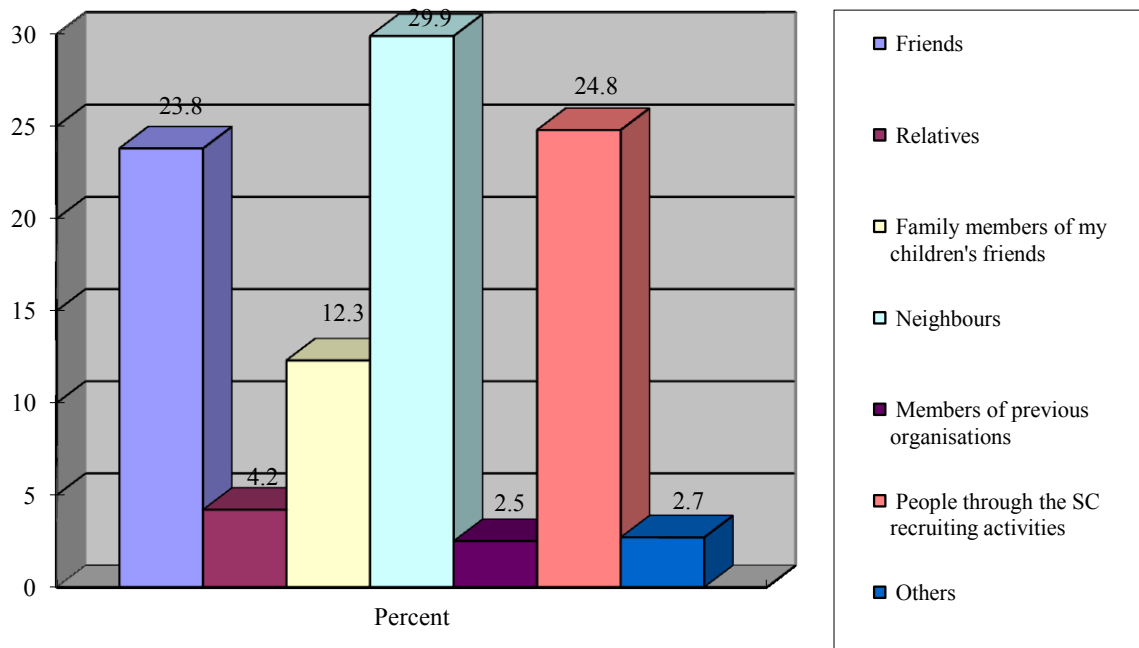
Figure 4: People recruited by members (N=159)

70.2% of members recruited those with whom they were in close personal contact, friends, neighbours, their children's friends' family members and their relatives rather than people they met in other social spheres like work related places. This is in line with the fact that, as was mentioned in the literature review on 'gender and social movements', women in social movements tend to mobilise other members through their informal networks rather than through formal recruitment activities.

In the case of the KSC, this concentration on informal networks is related to the urbanisation of Japan. When the SC was founded Japan was entering a period of rapid economic growth and rapid urbanisation without having a proper social infrastructure, so there were many social problems and needs which in turn provided an impetus for social movements. The SC started to locate in rapidly growing cities like Tokyo, Chiba and Kanagawa (Iwane, 1993, 28-9). Urban families, having almost completely lost their kin networks due to rural-urban migration, were forced to develop neighbourhood relationships, especially to create child-care networks (Ochiai, 1997, 140-1). In addition, the type of housing developed during this time appears to facilitate the creation of women's networks with their neighbours as Lam has suggested (Lam, 1999).

Whilst the great majority of survey respondents, 87.5%, live in houses they own, a growing number, 43.2%, live in a housing complex of one kind or another, as opposed to individual properties, see Table 4. Living in a housing complex may make it easier for neighbours to become friends by comparison with living in individual properties. Considering the density of houses the development of housing complexes may also assist in the development and preservation of the Han structure of the KSC. To make a Han viable members need to live in close proximity to enable them to meet and distribute food. Housing complexes are well suited for recruitment and members have a good chance of living near several fellow members who can join together to create a Han.

Rather than relying on formal recruitment methods, like meetings or handing out leaflets, the KSC women are able to use the informal networks they have built around their traditional roles and identities as mothers and housewives to recruit members and to mobilise their resources. This enables them to find a place in their new housing complexes and to turn what could be a lonely situation to their advantage. Through these contacts they also find friends and develop their personal relationships and social confidence creating structures, particularly Hans, which help in building the Co-operative.

Residential type	Percent
Home owner, individual property	49.2
Tenant, individual property	2.7
Home owner in a housing complex (less than 50 houses)	9.3
Tenant in a housing complex (less than 50 houses)	2.7
Home owner in a housing complex (more than 50 houses)	29.0
Tenant in a housing complex (more than 50 houses)	2.2
Total resident in a housing complex	43.2
Company house or an official residence	3.3
Other	1.6
Total	100.0

Table 4: Type of Residence (N=183)

4.2 Material resources

The KSC women also command considerable material resources, see Figure 5. This is particularly important when considering the level of investment made by the members, mentioned before, which is higher than any other co-op. Members are obliged to invest 80,000 yen, around £600, as a share in the Kanagawa SC to become members. However, many members choose to invest further in the Co-operative which gives it a strong capacity to develop its business (Katumi, 1991, 38). Katumi points out that the SC was the only Japanese co-op to collect a monthly investment fee from its members (Katumi, 1991, 6). This money has to come from either their personal resources or their household funds. Similarly involvement in the co-op results in many other expenses. Requiring members to invest may provide them with further motivation to become deeply involved in the organisation.

Household's annual income
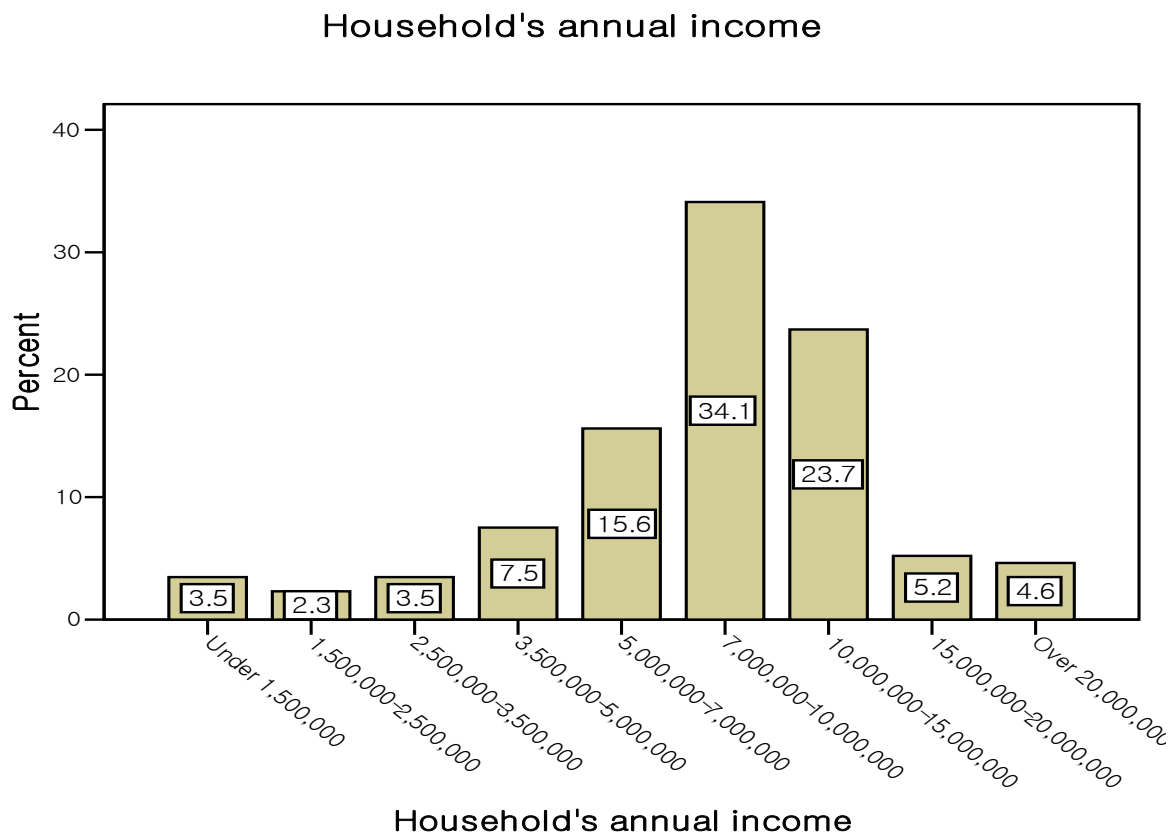
Figure 5: Household's annual income (N=186)

The survey shows the majority of respondents appear to be affluent. For example, the average annual household of Atsugi city, a city in the Kanagawa Prefecture, is around 7.3 million yen,

which is higher than the national average of around 6.2 million yen (approx £46,700). Thus, well over half of KSC members have a higher annual household income than that of the average Atsugi city resident (Kanagawa Prefecture, 2005). At least two thirds of SC households have an above average income for Japan. The high percentage of full-time housewives in the membership may also be explained by the high level of the members' household income. According to the 1995 Social Stratification and Social Mobility (SSM) survey the husbands of full-time housewives over 35 years old earned incomes far in excess of other groups (Sechiyama, 2001, 54). It is interesting to note that these household resources are under the control of the wives, see Figure 6.
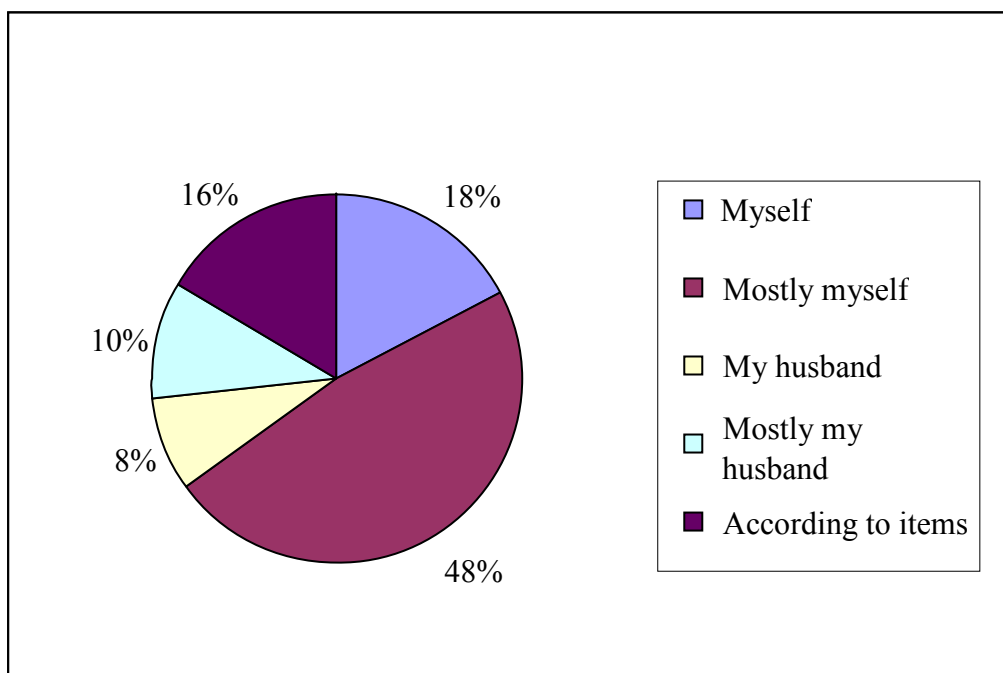
Figure 6: The management of household expenditure (N=180)

This shows that the great majority of the members manage the household expenditure by themselves or mostly by themselves. Members are often free to spend the household money as they please because their husbands are too busy, while in other cases the task is just delegated to them. Some respondents say that they make joint decisions with their husbands on spending on larger items. The women also have their own financial resources, either from jobs or their own savings, which they are able to spend themselves, see Figure 7.
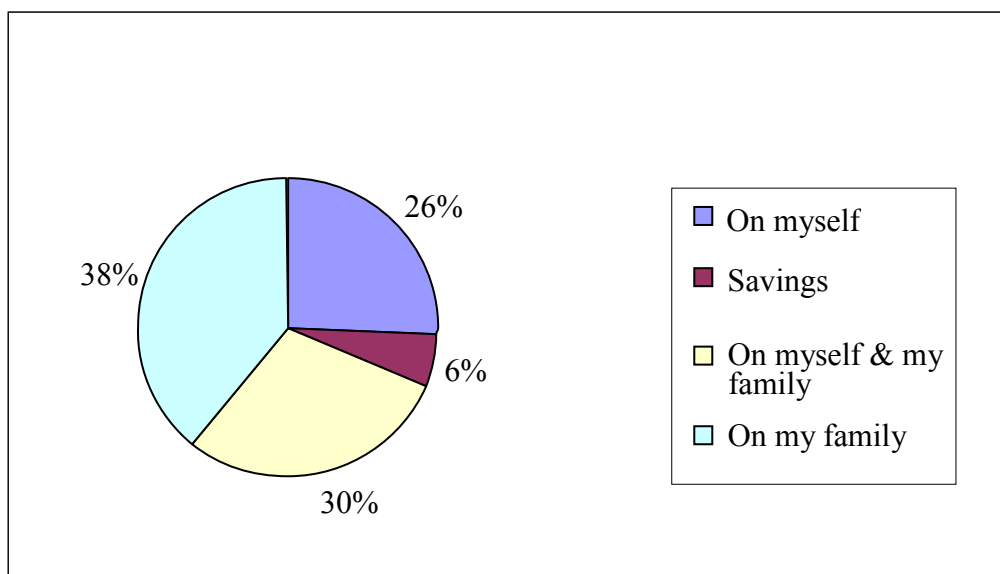
Figure 7: Spending my own income (N=116)

Around 56% of members surveyed answered this section. Considering that those who work in full-time and part-time jobs represent 47.6% of the total, it is likely that the great majority of the respondents to this question were part-time and full-time workers. But some full-time housewives would have answered this question as well. In response to the question, 26% of them said that they spend the money on themselves. For the most part in this category the women refer to hobbies and their own activities but a few specify that they spend money on their KSC or related activities. Although only a few specifically mention the KSC it is plain these women are free to spend their own money on these activities if they choose and, given the high level of involvement an investment in the KSC, access to such funds would provide an important resource for the Co-operative.

Having material resources allows members to spend time on Co-op business. Although members from all income groups play an active part in the KSC, the best guide to the depth of participation is provided by the holding of office. These members will have participated at every level before becoming officers in the KSC. It can be seen that, for the most part, the higher the income the more likely members are to hold positions of responsibility greater than leader of a Han, being a committee member, a chair or holding other positions, see Table 5.

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Million Yen	Holding office %	Membership %
Under 1.5	4.2	3.5
1.5 – 2.5	1.7	2.3
2.3- 3.5	2.5	3.5
3.5 - 5	5.8	7.5
5 – 7	16.7	15.6
7 – 10	32.5	34.1
10 – 15	24.2	23.7
15 – 20	6.7	5.2
Over 20	5.8	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 5: Household income by office (N=177)

On the basis of these members' resources the KSC Movement has established a range of collective material resources, which facilitate the development of the movement. For example, their buildings include local Co-op buildings and facilities, Workers' Collective workshops and units and Net centres.

In addition to their office headquarters the KSC owns a seven storey building called 'Oruta Kan' (Members' Building for an Alternative Society), see Plate 1. It is located near the headquarters of the Kanagawa SC. Here a range of member's activities like meetings, forums, films shows and cookery schools and other educational programmes take place.

Plate 1: The Oruta Kan building

The facilities in the Oruta Kan building include a 150 seat hall, a variety of businesses, restaurants, clinics and shops as well as offices, guest facilities and a school, see Box 2.

Basement
- 'Space Alter (Alternative)': 150 seat hall for concerts, parties, films, lectures.

First floor (Ground Floor in Japan)
Most of the businesses and shops in the Oruta kan are run by Workers' Collectives
- 'Alter Square' SC estate agency and architect's consultancy.
- 'We' organic restaurant
- 'Anju' pharmacy, herb medicines and supplements
- 'Deai' recycling shop, mainly clothes and accessories.

Second floor
- 'Hanbodo' acupuncture clinic
- 'Alter Station' health consultation centre

Third floor
- 'Suku Suku' child–care centre
- 'Bonapetit' cookery class

Fourth floor (offices)
- 'ACT' Workers' collective
    Provides seminars for qualifications
- 'Kanagawa exhibition union' Workers' Collective
    Provides clothes, food and other necessities of life
- 'VAC' Workers' Collective
    Video production and editing
- 'Earth Tree' Citizens' fund
    Supporting developing countries like Nepal and Cambodia
- 'Session D' Workers' Collective
    Produces SC magazine, pamphlets, flyers
- 'Jam' Workers Collective
    Supporting members' activities and organisation
- 'Jao'
    An organisation for male members, mostly SC members' husbands

Fifth floor
- 'Vision' Citizens' school;
    Provides courses, lectures, etc

Sixth floor
- meeting rooms, bathrooms, guest rooms for people to stay.

Box 2: The facilities in the Oruta Kan Building

The KSC has a number of other buildings in the prefecture such as the 'Seikatsu Kan' (Livelihood Building) Senta (Centre). The KSC has five local Co-ops and each Co-op has two or three of this kind of building. These buildings are used for meetings and members' activities and may also accommodate other KSC facilities like Depots (shops) or elderly care

centres, which are run by Workers' Collectives. Apart from meetings, the members' activities include cooking classes, child-rearing classes, discussion groups or lectures with SC producers or farmers, food tasting, exhibitions, education about the care of the elderly in the family, discussions about natural soap, film shows and meetings on peace or development topics (Yokosuka Commons, 2007).

Plate 2: The Chigasaki Senta includes the Chigasaki Depot and Syonan Seikatsu Club
Source: KSC, 2010a

The Chigasaki Senta, see Plate 2, which is a Seikatsu Kan building, is typical of these buildings. On the ground floor there is a Depot, the Chigasaki Depot, and on the second floor there is the Jonan Seikatsu Club with offices, rooms and a hall for members' activities (Field note, 18.11.2008). In all there are twenty-one Depots in the Kanagawa SC. Although the shops are managed by Workers' Collectives the spaces are provided through investment by the KSC (KSC, 2010b).

In addition, the Kanagawa SC Movement has created the Women and Citizens' Community Bank (WCCB) to support Workers' Collectives and other Non Profit Organisations. Although

it provides a comprehensive range of loans, like personal educational loans, most of its support goes to Workers' Collectives providing elderly and child care and recycling. By 2006 it had provided loans in 86 cases, totalling 34,785,000 Yen (WCCB, 2010)

4.3 Time resources

Having spare time outside paid work and domestic responsibilities is an important resource for those participating in a social movement. Full-time housewives are by far the largest group of members in the KSC, see Table 6.

Job	Percent
Full-time housewife	59.0
Employee	8.4
Civil servant	0.6
Managerial position in a company or organisation	4.2
Member of workers' collective	9.0
Accountant, doctor or lawyer	1.8
Writer, painter or musician	3.0
Student	0.2
Self-employed	3.0
Other	10.8
Total	100

Table 6: Jobs of members (N=166)

However, having spare time is not the only reason women become active members. The survey shows that in the case of the KSC women full-time housewives are slightly over represented proportionally amongst those who have held office, see Figure 8. However, the group which is most significantly over-represented is the members of Workers' Collectives who make up 11.4% of those who have held office but are only 9.0% of the members. It may be that their deeper commitment reflects the greater impact of working in this part of the KSC Movement.
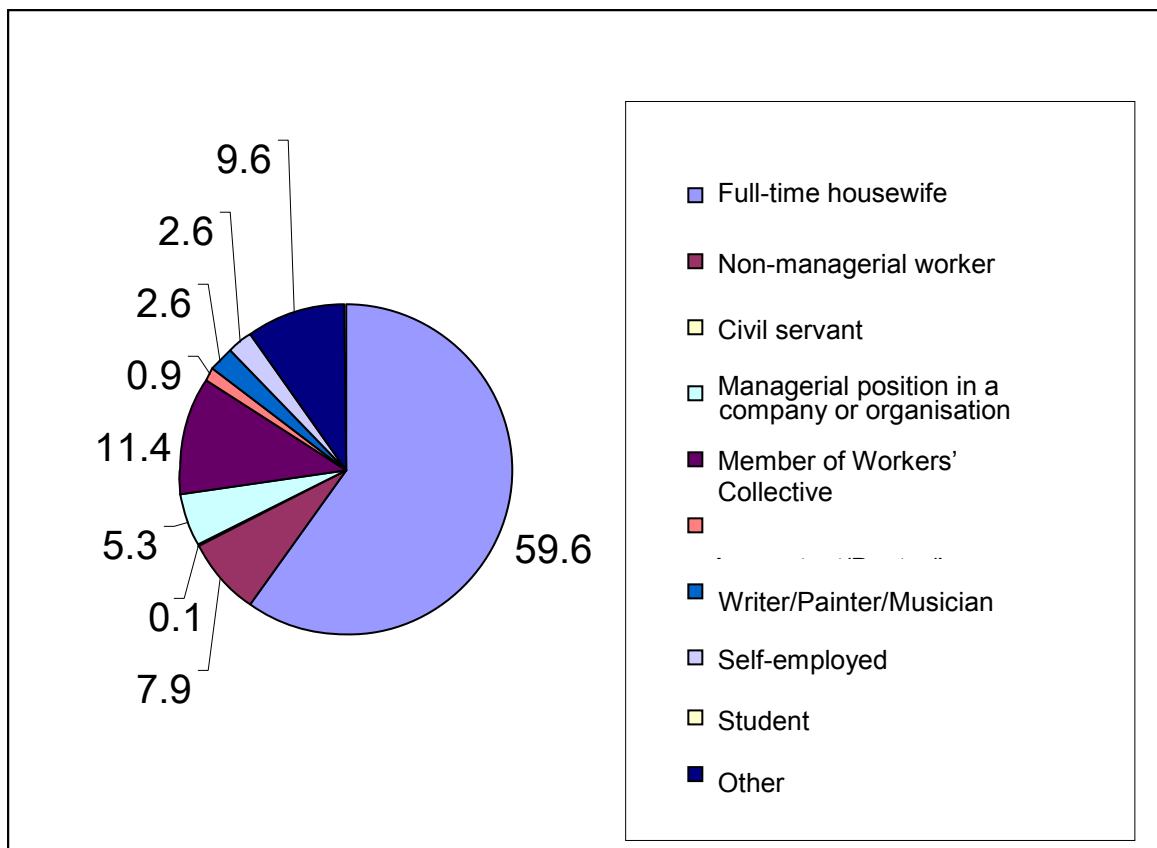
Figure 8: Relationship between experience of holding office and

members' occupations (N=159)

An instance of the importance of this time resource is provided from another part of the SC Movement, the Mizusawa Net. According to LeBlanc, in the 1995 local election the members of the representative's back-up team were all full-time housewives even though the Muzusawa City SC has a large number of working women in its membership. The explanation for this was that full-time housewives had to work for organisations such as the PTA or the SC because others do not have time (LeBlanc, 1999, 145).

The availability of free time may also depend on their husbands' type and hours of work. Most of the women's husbands occupy well paid jobs, which means they are absent much of the time, see Tables 7 and 8.

Job	Percent
Company employee	67.7
Civil servant or employee in the public sector	7.5
Professional (doctor, teacher, university professor, engineer)	7.0
Accountant, administrator	3.9
Working in service industry (hairdresser, chef, etc)	2.1
Blue collar (factory worker, etc)	1.0
Transport related job (railway, delivery or car companies	1.0
Owner of clinic, hotel, artist, etc	0.5
Farmer	0.0
Shopkeeper	3.9
Unemployed	0.5
Other	4.9
Total	100

Table 7: Husband's job (N=180)

Position	Percent
General staff	25.9
Managerial position	52.5
Company director/board member	18.4
Other	3.2
Total	100.0

Table 8: Husband's position (N=158)

The social position of Japanese women is closely related to that of their husbands, particularly in terms of their work. The great majority of members' husbands (68.3%) are company employees, so-called 'salary men' or white collar workers. In addition, more than half of them are in managerial positions. Including those who are directors or who are in

professional positions, most of the husbands of members who were surveyed occupy senior positions in their companies or organisations. These two figures may suggest that, as Japanese company employees tend to work long hours, many women in the KSC would have considerable time to spend as they please, especially once their children have grown up.

Family structure may also provide a further insight into the availability of resources for KSC members. The survey shows that the great majority of respondents, 85.8%, live in nuclear families of two generations or less. However, although Japanese women no longer live in households with aged parents they still take the primary responsibility for caring for elderly relatives. But this change in living arrangements means they have more spare time than previous generations.

When we consider the age of members we can see their average age is 48. At this age their children are likely to be finishing their education or leaving home meaning both in terms of money and time the women will have increasing resources. According to the survey respondents between 40 and 54 years of age make up the bulk of the KSC membership, the middle three columns in the graph, together representing just over 60%, see Figure 9. Overall, the respondents who are more than 40 years old make up 83.3% of those surveyed.
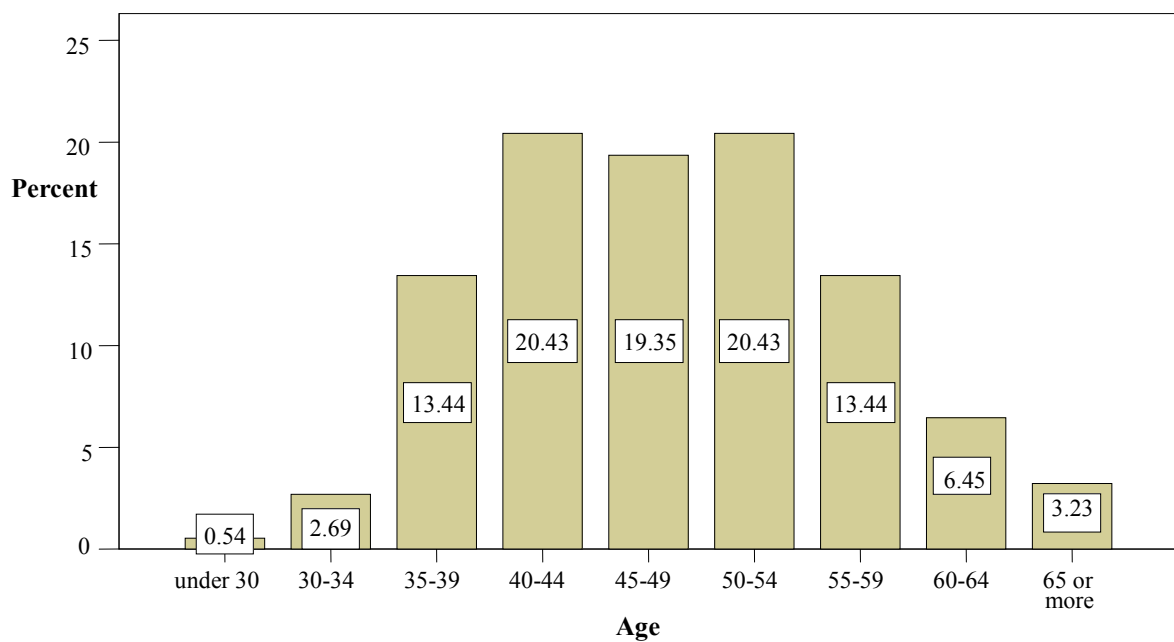
Figure 9: Age of Respondents (N=186)

A similar result can be seen when charting the age of those who have experienced positions of responsibility within the KSC, see Figure 10, which shows which groups of women have held office. The figure shows that it is the women in the same middle age group who may well have the time to spare who have most experience of holding office.
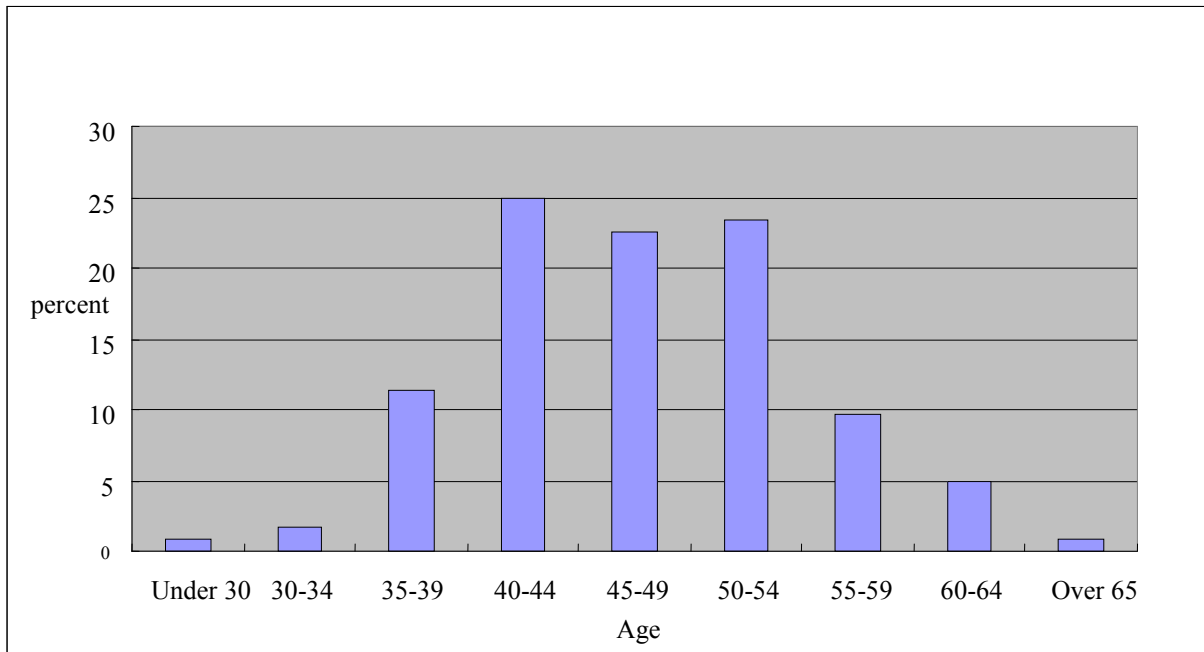
Figure 10: Age and the experience of executive office (N=177)

Respondents from the age groups 40-44, 45-49 and 50-54, the middle three pillars in the graph, make up the bulk of those who have experience of holding executive positions. Taking into consideration the fact that those who have this experience tend to have held different positions in the KSC, these women in their forties and early fifties have been leaders in all the different sectors of the KSC. In percentage terms they are over-represented in leadership positions.

4.4 Intellectual resources

According to the survey of KSC members most are highly educated, see Figure 11. Almost all the respondents had completed high school. 40% of respondents graduated from junior college or technical college representing the largest grouping in the sample. 34.1% were university graduates. This is a far higher percentage than the Japanese average because, for

instance, from 1970 to 1990 the average women's enrolment rate for universities in Japan varied between 6.5% and 15.2% (The Cabinet Office, 2004, 32).
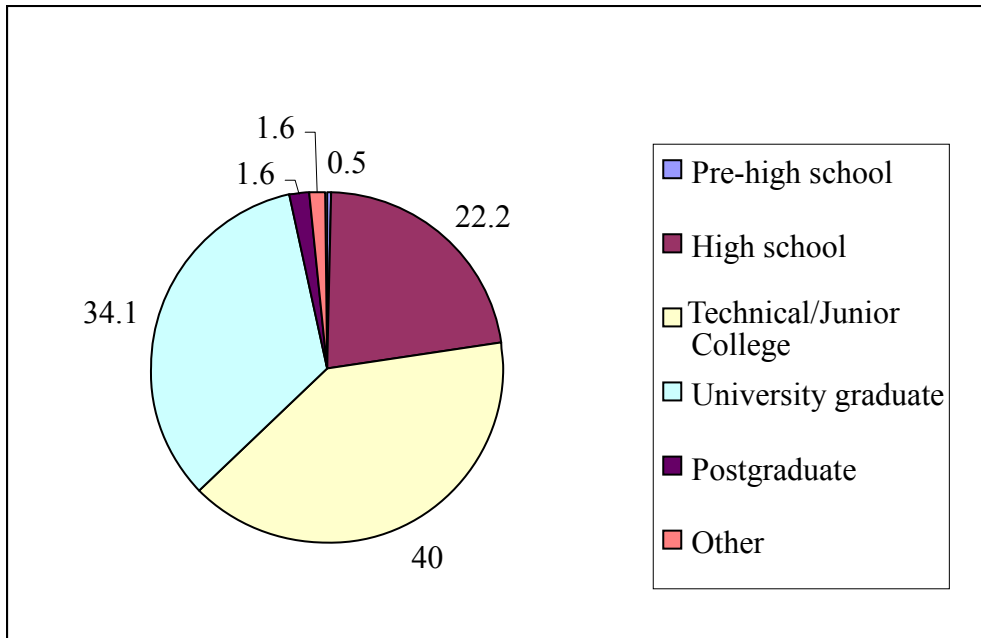
Figure 11: Education level of the members (N=185)

According to Iwai's survey in 1985, which covered women up to the age of thirty-five, born between 1946 and 1965, the more educated Japanese women are, once they withdraw from the labour market, the less likely they are to return to work. This situation has not changed. Tanaka notes that women in their early thirties who were high school and two-year college graduates have a high tendency to return to work while four-year graduates did not re-enter work (Tanaka, 1995, 301-303).

So it appears that, just as full-time housewives in Japan tend to be highly educated and have high household incomes, this corresponds to the situation of many KSC members. In addition to this, the KSC area includes the city of Yokohama, in which, as with other metropolitan cities, there is a higher concentration of full-time housewives with higher incomes (Sechiyama, 2001, 56), which may further explain the number of full-time housewives in the Kanagawa SC.

The Net, the SC's political arm, has been able to exploit its human resources in finding candidates to become local assembly members. The main political parties often have difficulty finding male university-educated candidates in local areas of Japanese cities, because men tend to work for big companies in Tokyo. Because the salary of local assembly representatives and the insecurity of a political career did not attract these career oriented male graduates, local farmers and self-employed men have monopolised local assemblies. This has provided the SC and its members with an opportunity to make their mark. The SC has been able to put well-educated mothers forward as their local candidates, ironically because of the gender discrimination in the labour market (Gelb & Estévez-Abe, 1998, 271-2).

4.5 Skills

Alongside their intellectual resources the women also have a variety of other skills, including professional qualifications, see Figure 12, which they have used to further their businesses and activities. The majority of the members surveyed have more than one formal job qualification. 27% have more than two qualifications.
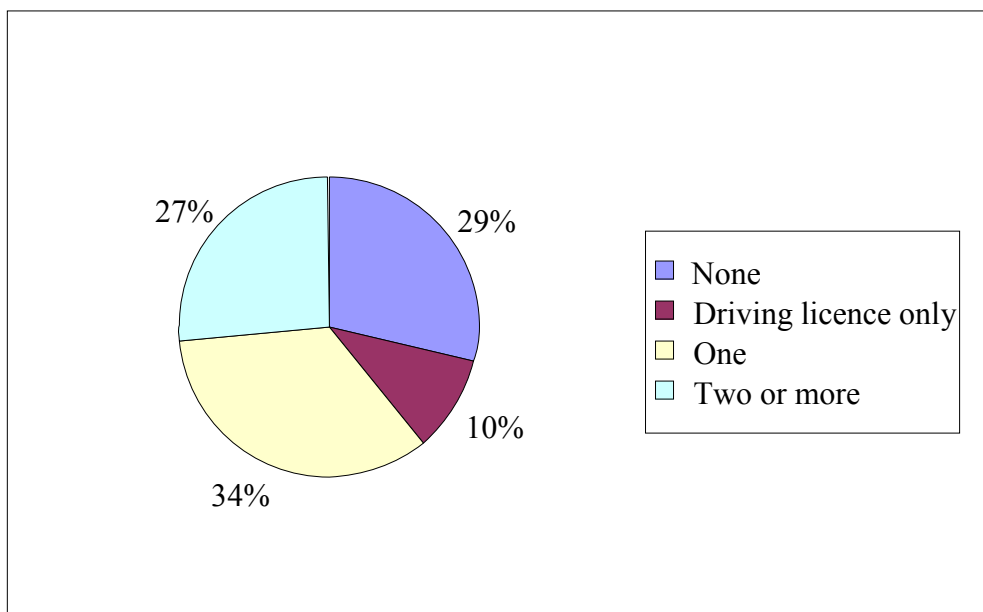
Figure 12: Job qualifications (N=187)

According to the survey responses, the most popular qualifications are fluency in English,

teaching, welfare work and accountancy. Others include qualifications in cookery, tea ceremonies, food safety or nutrition, Kimono making, typing, child care and flower arrangement. Most of these qualifications can be used for KSC activities, especially in the development of Workers' Collectives, which are often based on women's traditional or reproductive roles such as child care, welfare or lunch box businesses. The KSC also uses many of these skills like tea ceremonies, cooking and flower arranging in its programmes. In fact, according to what some members told me there was a comprehensive investigation into the skills held by members before the KSC attempted to establish Workers' Collectives (Field note, 29.9.2008).

5. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to understand the KSC Movement by applying social movement theories and feminist perspectives. The emergence and development of NSMs in the Japanese context explains the reason why women are the main force in an NSM like the KSC Movement. Since the defeat of the Anpo struggle Japanese social movements have become non-confrontational, hands-on and self-help type organisations based on localism. The combination of women's and residents' movements which is the distinctive feature of Japanese social movements like the KSC Movement, grassroots based and co-operative towards the state, although the KSC is renowned as one of the most radical NSMs in Japan.

The ideology of the KSC Movement has played a crucial role in building the movement around the concerns of the women, which relate to their traditional roles, and in constructing a citizen identity which enables them to act on these issues in the public sphere, particularly in their localities, and in broadening their awareness of how these issues link in with wider social and political problems. However, the inherent limitations of a movement based on localism remain unresolved.

The KSC Movement also shows compelling evidence that women have considerable resources. The acute division of labour between the sexes in Japan has provided many women, particularly full-time housewives, with more resources than most women. The KSC's members, for the most part, have considerable material and non-material resources, including their women's networks. In the development of these resources for their collective use the

women have provided themselves with a greater capacity to facilitate their activities and those of the movement. Not only are their material resources turned into collective assets, which facilitate their meetings and other activities, but they also have intellectual resources which enable them to be candidates to become local representatives and skills for establishing their businesses. Most of the businesses run as Workers' Collectives use women's gender-based skills as, for example, in lunch box businesses, bakeries, making processed foods like jam, office administration, child care and care of the elderly.

However, as we have seen above, the members, especially the core members are middle-aged full-time housewives whose main concern is food safety and their family's health. The active members are ageing. The position of Japanese women has changed with the great majority of women now going out to work. The low economic status of Japanese women as part-timers and temporary workers along with the pressures of child and elderly care are issues of growing importance. These wider social changes present a great challenge for the Kanagawa SC Movement.

Chapter 5: Understanding the empowerment of the women in the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will examine what kind of empowerment has taken place in the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement, how this has come about and what is particular about empowerment in a social movement, in this case the KSC Movement.

Social movements will vary in the extent to which they seek deliberately to empower their members. For the most part, except in explicitly feminist movements, it is not the primary aim of a social movement to empower its members, so any empowerment which occurs is likely to be a by-product of the women's involvement not a direct result of the movement's policies. However, things are seldom straightforward. A movement like the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club may not see itself as a feminist movement and its members may not see their empowerment in these terms, nevertheless the movement may, as the KSC Movement has, still develop and promote policies designed to improve the position of women. My first concern will be to establish how the collectiveness of a social movement is able to generate collective empowerment through its own dynamics and culture. My primary focus will be on collective empowerment and how this creates other empowerments, because it is my contention that in a social movement collective action is the key to understanding how the movement works and how the members are affected by their involvement, as social movements motivate and involve their members in their particular campaigns and activities.

As outlined in Chapter 2, collective empowerment would be expected to create further empowerments, such as individual empowerment, as a spin off. As Young has commented 'the collective empowerment of women, of course, would bring with it the individual empowerment of women' (Young, 1993, 159). Rowlands also considered that the three dimensions of empowerment overlap and interact (Rowlands, 1997). This chapter will explore how this occurs in the KSC Movement and how collective empowerment can be the engine for generating other forms of empowerment like individual or personal and relational empowerment.

Bearing in mind the fact that individual empowerment is not always consistent with collective empowerment it is to be expected collective empowerment will result in the gaining of skills and confidence by individuals participating in collective action. Collectiveness in a group can be oppressive and even disempowering for some individuals, implicitly or explicitly, so in that sense individual empowerment resulting from collective action, here called personal and relational empowerment, can provide verification as to whether an organisation is really empowering its members. I will attempt to describe the dynamics of collective empowerment, as well as to explain the overall characteristics of the empowerment of the women in the KSC Movement in a holistic manner, rather than simply classifying it by categories.

Special attention will be paid to the contradictions which arise out of activism based on traditional gender roles and identities and how this can lead to conflict, opposition, frustration and disempowerment. However, these very contradictions and conflicts can also be the potential for bringing about a transformation in consciousness.

Each section in the chapter provides a picture of the empowerment experienced by the women. I have also sought to demonstrate how these empowerments vary according to the length and degree of the involvement of the members. The information on personal and relational empowerment was collected mainly through the membership survey, which focused on members of the KSC, whilst the material on collective empowerment comes principally from interviews and participatory observation.

It should be noted that, as has already been seen, gaining control of resources for Japanese women is not an issue as they usually have exclusive responsibility for the household budget because of the sharp division of labour between the genders, whereby men tend not to be involved in household expenditure and finances. Therefore, issues such as 'decision making in the household', 'gaining resources' or 'the achievement of women's wellbeing', all of which would be important elements of women's empowerment in the context of development projects, are not being considered here. However, the fact that the KSC women already control resources and household budgets does not mean they are empowered. As has already been seen in Chapter 4 women in Japan are severely limited by the society in which they live. This thesis is mainly focused on the changes the women experience as a result of their

involvement in the activities of the movement. The focus in terms of relational empowerment will be on the women's freedom to act in the public arena and the approval or recognition they receive from their families for that action, which in turn will reveal the changes in their relationships and roles in the family.

2. Collective empowerment

In recent times some feminists have developed a more positive understanding of power to reflect the idea of empowerment. Instead of just seeing power as being held by groups or institutions, which restrict or control in the sense of having 'power over', they have adopted definitions in keeping with empowerment such as 'power to', 'power from within' and 'power with' (Townsend at al, 1999). 'Power from within' is related to an individual's sense of agency and 'power to' relates to the development of skills and abilities and the capacity to challenge the idea of the status quo being the 'natural' order. Both of these are important concepts when examining the empowerment of the women of the KSC Movement as they gain skills and confidence through their involvement in the movement.

Rowlands defines 'collective empowerment' as 'a sense of collective agency and purpose' (Rowlands, 1997, 85) which occurs 'where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have done alone. This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on cooperation rather competition' (Rowlands, 1995, 103).

I will focus on two points, first, how the activities and achievements of the KSC Movement create collective empowerment for its members and, second, how collective empowerment plays the leading role in creating personal and relational empowerment.

2.1 Generating collective empowerment

It is plain from my interviews that collective empowerment is perceived by participants as being what takes place in the everyday activities of the movement. One KSC Movement leader said "when involved in the SC activities, you feel it [everybody's power] everyday. It would be too much for you alone, whatever you do…because you have colleagues…." (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008). The Kanagawa Seikatsu Club started out as a campaign on food

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safety issues and developed as a co-operative to provide healthy food for its members. Anxiety over food safety and the need to feed their families are core concerns for the KSC's members and these everyday activities provide a focus for the movement. The KSC created the system of collective buying and distribution in response to these concerns and to mobilise and educate its members and this system has in turn been built on the concerted efforts of the members, because the collective buying system requires the co-operation of other members (Cy, focus group 15.10.2008). That this everyday involvement is central to the KSC's existence and is treated as a matter of course is also borne out in statements from leaders of the KSC Movement, including those in the Net and Workers' Collectives (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008; Mc, interviewed 11.10.2008; Br, focus group 9.11.2008). Indeed, it is plain from these and other statements that it is impossible for them to envisage a social movement like the KSC without this collective interdependence and empowerment.

A Workers' Collective member said she had often experienced how they were able to get by in difficult situations by co-operating with each other. However, ironically, the first time she really felt their collective power was when they faced a crisis. A member dropped out and their delivery system was in danger of collapsing, showing how they needed one another to make the business work. At that point another member's son helped them so they managed to continue the business (Kd, focus group 9.11.2008).

In a similar case, a leader of a Workers' Collective who works for a transportation service proudly explained why the Workers' Collective is a robust business by comparison with other Non-Profit Organisations:

> "Although other NPOs start up [in this service/business] they often collapse when they are not properly organised. I can see they are not viable. Here, we share knowhow and ensure the system works. It is truly important that it is made not by an individual but by everybody" (Ap, interviewed 13.11.2008).

However, from the start the KSC was a campaigning organisation. The original campaign focused on the safety of milk before the KSC branched out into taking action on other environmental concerns. So not only does the Co-op seek to involve its members in collective everyday activities surrounding the supply of food, but it also mobilises members for more specific activities like campaigns for which the KSC women have to organise themselves and study in order to understand their own materials so they can persuade other people.

Bk used to be a leader in the KSC in the early 1990s. She said when she joined the KSC she didn't have any particular interest in issues like healthy food and such like. A friend persuaded her to join. The thing which provided the impetus for her empowerment was her involvement with a committee running a campaign for natural soap called Shabondama (soap bubbles).

"In my case, it was soap… we planned and carried out a campaign. Also we had a study group. While we were doing this everybody said, Ah! I see! You feel your eyes are opening. I was very pleased… you have to go all over the place in the Kanagawa prefecture. You have to speak even if you don't understand. You have to remember the facts….when you campaign you have to take a plastic tub out on the street [to show how the soap works], normally you feel so shy you think you can't do this. You've never done that before. For example your heart is beating when you press the door bell of a stranger and you hate that ... But you have to …and something was changed by it. You feel alive. I was happy…, sometimes I'd liked to quit but I didn't. Perhaps I would have enjoyed meeting different people who did similar things and thinking there were the people like me. There were people who supported us, with their help we expanded the organisation. …..but now I have no fear of getting to know people. This helps me in my work for the 'Forum Associa'. Everyday I meet strangers. People with different philosophies of life flood into the SC. But I am not afraid of working with them" (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008).

Interestingly, as she mentioned, when members participate in campaigns they have to explain the campaign to others, which in turn requires the members to properly understand the campaign themselves. Satō's study reinforces this point. He points that there are various activities in the SC, like visiting farmers and lectures, which are designed to teach members about the movement, but the best way for members to learn about the SC's ideas and activities was for members to study themselves in order to persuade strangers to join the SC (Satō, 1988, 243). Learning about the movement and working together with other members to persuade new people to join or support a campaign gave the members confidence and a sense of togetherness.

Members of the Kanagawa Net experienced the same feeling of 'everybody's power', when they managed to establish or change policies as, for instance, when they changed the development plans for high rise buildings in the Segami area by petitions and campaigns (Za, focus group 12.11.2008), or when they established a policy in Kamakura city to build child-

care centres for young mothers (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008), or when they succeeded in installing new traffic lights for the safety of children by organising a petition with mothers and holding a 'Mini Forum', where police and local residents discussed the matter (Ro, interviewed 31.10.2008).

Net members also found elections were a great experience. Those Net members who helped local assembly members win a seat said it was great moment to feel 'we can do it'. According to Mc, a Net local assembly member and a member of the KSC, being involved in the KSC's activities provides an experience of 'everybody's power' everyday. She referred to her election campaign as a special moment when she felt 'everybody's power' and then when she worked as a local assembly member the Net members supported her by turning up in the public gallery (Mc, interviewed 11.10.2008).

This process can even be seen at work among people recruited for campaigns who were not members of the KSC Movement. An assembly member from the Kanagawa Net explained that even when neighbours, who were not members, were recruited to help with the election campaign they got to learn about the Net and became involved in its collective activities. Whether they distributed flyers or just stood beside a candidate when she made a speech they would read the leaflet or hear what the candidate said. If a passer-by asked about the candidate or the Net they had to say something so they took an interest in what the candidate was doing. When the voting day got closer they became more interested in the result for the candidate they had been helping (Ro, 31.10.2008).

For older members of Workers' Collectives, the period when they set up a Workers' Collective is remembered as a great experience. A member of a Workers' Collective, Kz, remembered how, when she was involved in setting up a mutual insurance company in the KSC, she felt their power (Fr, interviewed 20.10.2008).

From this it can be seen how collective empowerment was occurring while members were carrying out the daily management of their organisations. In addition, when they achieved goals or participated in special events like elections or projects they felt their power when working together with their colleagues. Recounting the experiences of these members of the KSC Movement bears out Rowland's assertion that women's collective empowerment should

also be explored 'through their organisational activities and achievements' (Rowlands, 1997, 15).

2.2 Collective empowerment as a driving force

It should be noted that the three dimensions of empowerment, personal, relational and collective, are not separate from each other but are dynamically inter-related (Rowlands, 1997). Young pointed out that 'the collective empowerment of women of course, would bring with it the individual empowerment of women, but only for individual advancement' (Young, 1993, 159). So it may be expected that collective empowerment would play a crucial role in generating personal empowerment in a social movement like the KSC.

When describing their experiences in the KSC members often referred to the feeling they had of collective empowerment before going on to describe how this altered their perception of what they and other women could achieve and how it changed them personally. For instance, in an interview one member said "I think what I achieved [since I joined] is that I came to understand 'the power of everybody'" (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008).

In response to my survey a woman wrote

> "I get to understand the fact that through co-operation people can do things which are not possible for one to do alone, so I have become more open towards other people" (Survey response No13).

Another respondent to the survey said

> "I know how great women's potential is and how they express their power" (Survey response No 94).

Whilst personal, relational and collective empowerment all arise from involvement in social movements, collective empowerment is critical in producing this dynamic.

Becoming proactive and confident

The experience of collective empowerment encourages members to put forward ideas. A Workers' Collective leader said she can suggest something without having to think too much about it because she has colleagues who will deliberate about it and share responsibility for the result (Tb, interviewed 5.11.2008). Another Workers' Collective member, Br, said:

> "I always feel [everybody's power] …especially when I suggested doing something and everybody responded "certainly" …. You know that when you suggest something you will always find people who will get together… experiences like these are repeated over and over again" (Br, focus group 9.11.2008).

Thus, collective empowerment creates confidence in individuals, by increasing their trust in their own abilities and their trust in their colleagues and makes them proactive and open in their dealings with other people. A Net leader, who served for eight years as a municipal assembly member, explained how her experience in the KSC Movement over time made her change:

> "I used to be a person who considered all the possible negative consequences first before I tried to do anything…. But since I joined the SC my negative expectations were always betrayed [proved wrong] so that I have begun to see thing more positively … When I was a child I often debated with myself which would be better, learning the piano or the violin? In the end I learnt piano. Maybe it would have been better if I had chosen to learn violin? I think it was good to learn piano. Now I tend to regard any choice I have made is eventually good…….Perhaps because of that I chose to go law school five years ago….but this time it might be too much for me!" (She laughs) (Sl, focus group 27.10.2008).

Collective empowerment gave her 'an optimistic expectancy'. Diener and Biswas-Diener consider this to be a part of the psychological empowerment which enables people to pursue their goals. 'Without feelings of competence, self-efficacy, autonomy, and optimism, people are unlikely to pursue goals' (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2006, 135).

Gaining social skills and mutual learning

Conducting meetings and activities together also enables members to better understand other people while also making them aware of their limitations as individuals and how they need other people to help them achieve or understand their own potential.

Case Study

A manager of a Day Care service for elderly people, a Workers' Collective, joined the Collective without having had any previous experience of the KSC, which is rare for a leader of a Workers' Collective. She had heard about the job from a friend. Most of the members of Workers' Collectives started out as members of the KSC where they had learned something of the co-operative and democratic principles of the movement. These are particularly important in the running of the Workers' Collectives where horizontal relationships and participation in decision making are regarded as important principles.

In a small office adjacent to the elderly people's common room, where the members of the Workers' Collective were guiding the elderly people's activity, she talked about her experience of working in a Workers' Collective. She said they appreciated each other's efforts, when they prepared events people worked hard and stayed on late, even after work, in order to complete their tasks. She went on to say how they were able to reach a level of mutual understanding and self-awareness, which are crucial elements in developing social skills.

"Because we don't get instructions from above everybody talks together in meetings, everybody's thoughts come out. Because everybody's feelings come out I realised 'Ah that person sees it that way'. This enables me to see myself objectively…. When we talk together … I get to understand my position in all this" (Aq, interviewed 7.11.2008).

It is particularly interesting to note that she described seeing herself 'objectively' and how she 'understood her position' as a result of their collective empowerment. After mentioning her experience of collective empowerment she continued:

"You learn to be considerate about other people's thoughts [through discussion]. People's experience shouldn't be hidden inside them. We learn everything about each other. That is the great advantage of Workers' Collectives. We share everything. Don't hold yourself back, please teach us what you know… we learn from each other" (Aq, interviewed 7.11.2008).

Working as part of a collective provided her with an opportunity for mutual learning and reinforcement as well as a greater awareness of herself and the personal changes she

experienced. She told me she had gone on to join the KSC and so had others who had become members of her Workers' Collective without first belonging to the KSC.

Encouraged/Energised

When they work together people look for other people who are devoted to accomplishing their goals and thus they inspire each other. A manager of a Depot, the KSC shop, said that they renewed their shop every year and to achieve this they aimed to increase the number of members. At first it didn't go well but later the membership increased more than they expected. She thought:

> "it became a great [outcome] as a result of everybody's small power to persuade [get together]. When I see people who work hard [for that] I get energy so I think I should work harder (Wp, interviewed 14.11.2008).

Similarly, Gj from WE21Japan, the chain of recycling shops, said that when she heard about her former colleagues and current colleagues working hard in different places she feels collective empowerment[7]:

> [I see] "the connection between people ….Ah! Everybody is working hard .here and there. When I hear it, I am very happy. I hear from other people that 'we did this event with that person'. ... 'I met a We21 person in the [other] meeting'… I am pleased" (Ep, focus group 28.10.2008).

Interestingly, in the group, each member's achievements were shared by everybody as their own achievement, which created great feelings of encouragement. A member of the KSC said when other members heard the news that a member had managed to recruit a considerable number of new members everybody was very pleased saying and clapping "Wa! She did it!" (Dj, focus group 14.12.2008).

A leader of the Workers' Collectives' Union made it plain she thought that the experience of collective empowerment also affected relational empowerment. She said:

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[7] In her case, when I interviewed her I used the term 'collective empowerment', which I avoided using in other cases because of its unfamiliarity in the Japanese context. The reason for this was when I attended a talk she gave in the Kanagawa Net she used the term 'Josei no Enpawāmento' when referring to 'women's empowerment'.

> "I feel that I am not alone even when I have a personal problem… the sense that I am not isolated. I am not alone …. even when I have household problems, I feel less isolated, because I have colleagues who are working together …. Although I don't consult with them [about problems in my household] in detail. I get hints [from them] although we don't discuss the matter together to sort it out.. the sense that …here I am not alone makes a difference ….. I think the meaning of my relationship with my colleagues is different from that in ordinary companies. They [company people] don't do things together and consult together (Ap, interviewed 13.11.2008).

Thus even the feeling of being close to her colleagues and getting hints of how to cope with difficulties and problems provided her with personal strength and was a support in her relationship with her family.

Here the dynamics between collective and personal empowerment can be appreciated in the way an individual's achievement can be multiplied by being shared by other members, who are excited and energised by another person's success in a common enterprise. Personal empowerment can also feed back into the group and create a new sense of collective achievement. This experience of a common cause and togetherness overcomes feelings of isolation and creates confidence and a new awareness in individuals in terms of their own potential and how they can rely on those around them. Starting from a point where a woman may think 'I can't', the experience of working together and seeing others succeed raises her spirits so she begins to feel 'we can' until eventually, filled with this sense of collective encouragement and energy, she is able to transform herself and say 'I can'. This 'I can' does not stop with her own activities but also impacts on her other relationships outside the KSC Movement, notably with her family.

As has already been seen, this collectiveness plays a role as a driving force in producing personal empowerment even though the movement was not created to achieve this result. The boundary between collective and personal empowerment often overlaps and is blurred in the KSC Movement.

Disempowerment and experiencing discrimination

However, KSC Movement activities do not always empower. For example, when they failed to achieve certain goals members felt disempowered. A former candidate for the municipal assembly in Yokohama said:

"In the election you can't say you experienced it [everybody's power] if the result is not good. If you lose in the election it tells us we don't have power. Result is result ….everybody is frustrated. I stood for election three times but lost. In the end I announced I wouldn't be involved in politics any more" (Ep, focus group 28.10.2008).

Another Net member, who has been a municipal assembly member, said "Election? When you win it is good, but if you lose it is the worst [for everybody]" (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008)

As was seen in Chapter 2, achievement is an outcome of collective action in which the women gain greater confidence in their ability to work together thus enhancing their collective empowerment (Rowlands 1997). By the same token lack of achievement may also be a measure of disempowerment. Diener and Biswas-Diener have discussed the negative impact of failure on people's feelings of empowerment. 'Repeated failures and the resulting negative emotions can stop the cycle of psychological empowerment and result in depression, resignation, or learned helplessness' (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2006, 135). However, they go on to point out that success is not the same thing as empowerment. 'Factors in addition to successful goal pursuit can influence the positive emotions a person feels – for example, temperament and mental outlook' (ibid, 136). People will respond differently to success and failure and even successful people may not feel empowered. These experiences of disempowerment can also inform us about the nature of empowerment. Facing challenges and obstacles always involves risk of failure but can also be turned to further achievement.

This mixture of negative experience and possible triumph can also be seen in some Net members' experience of discrimination and inner conflicts because of their gender. For instance, when Net assembly members spoke they used to face a considerable amount of bullying from male members. Kunihiro witnessed this when she was in the audience at the Yokohama assembly meeting and saw how a Net assembly member was bullied by a male assembly member when she asked a question and he replied saying "it is because housewives don't look after their homes!" (Kunihiro, 2001, 247). A former municipal assembly member said "there used to be considerable bullying when Net people speak" (Ih, interviewed 19.11.2008).

On top of that, according to a KSC leader women have experienced considerable discrimination when campaigning. She said when they campaigned against GM food:

"we have to explain about something like that, although it is not a [formal] speech, like in front of a station, then middle aged men [get angry] often tell us off a lot, saying 'you shouldn't behave like this... you women who have too much time behave like this.... Japan is sustained by industries so we have to help Japanese industries so they are able to earn money...[but] you are holding the industries back' ...you face a lot [of occasions like this being told] 'you women!'..." (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008).

Moving outside their traditional sphere puts these women in situations where they face pressures and discrimination they would not usually encounter. These experiences are reminiscent of those described in Chapter 2 in Nagar's study of women in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh. The very fact of their empowerment through their KSC activities took the members into these positions, like becoming assembly members, and required them to develop new skills and internal strength. If they had not taken this step they would never have experienced this kind of disempowerment.

The contradictions between their traditional and their public roles and identities can also be disempowering. Some Net members feel it is difficult to carry out the role of being an assembly member and a housewife at the same time. An assembly member said:

"when I finish washing the dishes and so on it was already past 11 o'clock in the evening. I feel anxious when I think that the male assembly members would be reading books" (Kunihiro, 2001, 247).

Similarly, another municipal assembly member said:

"I became an assembly member after my divorce. If I had a husband it would be very difficult. Especially in our city the assembly members work until late at night... when one wants to the job properly.... ... (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008).

According to a survey of a local branch of the Kanagawa Net, Midori Shimin Kaigi (Midori citizen meeting) in 1991, the great difficulty that the members and local representatives faced was balancing their family commitments like childcare, household chores and elderly care with their work for the Net. This was particularly serious for active local representatives because they felt that they were sacrificing their families (Yazawa, 1993, 238).

Family relationships and commitments can, in some cases, be insurmountable. The same Net assembly member said, "certainly those who can't get their husband's support can't be

candidates" (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008). Similarly, those with a small child find it is very hard to be a candidate or carry out the role of an assembly member, although there are a few exceptions (Lb interviewed 8.11.2008; Mc, interviewed 11.10.2008).

This illustrates the contradiction between their role as housewives and their public activities. Net assembly members in particular find their roles as a housewife and mother, which demands they take care of their family and their household chores, constrains their political activity. Although they wanted to carry out their job professionally they found themselves disadvantaged by comparison with male assembly members, who can exert themselves fully in their job, while they are reduced to working in their spare time.

It is a paradox that, for the most part, these assembly members are women who are already empowered. They have derived strength and acquired skills from their experience of collective empowerment in the KSC Movement. Many members will face difficulties in their relationships with their husbands and families. But now, moving into new territory, these women in particular find they are pushing the boundaries between their traditional and their political roles and having to cope with all the attendant stresses and resistance. Being empowered in one situation does not mean they are automatically empowered in another and each new situation requires a further adaptation to cope with its particular difficulties.

As was seen in Chapter 2, the literature on women's movements based on their traditional gender roles and identities, such as neighbourhood or tenant organisations and environmental movements, tends to emphasise how women experience great achievements and how some of them manage to enter local politics. However, as we can see from these cases in the KSC Movement taking on a job like becoming an assembly member does not happen without encountering difficulties. Although their traditional gender roles and identities may enable women to justify their entering the public arena they often face invisible social boundaries, which segregate women in the household. In addition, their responsibilities and workload in the home take up their energy and time which can leave limited room for these more substantial activities.

As has already been discussed in Chapter 2, Young suggests transformatory potential can arise from practical needs. This case shows that it occurs when women try to move beyond

the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable in terms of their traditional roles. A certain degree of social and political activities may be tolerated however, when women go beyond this limit their existing gender roles in their family will clash with these social activities and boundaries. This could be a great constraint on women's social movements, but at the same time could provide a great opportunity for these women to become aware of the restrictions on their freedom, which has transformative potential. Pharr, who studied women's political participation in Japan, remains positive. She considers that political participation has the potential to bring about great personal change and convert this into a new identity. Solidarity between women in a political group will enable them to share and consolidate their newly gained identity and overcome emotional stress (Pharr, 1981, 149). This point will be discussed further in the section on relational empowerment.

3. Personal empowerment

3.1 The changes in members' outlook and attitude[8] to life since joining the KSC

Rowlands defines personal empowerment as 'developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression' (Rowlands, 1997, 15). In their responses to the membership survey KSC members demonstrated this empowerment in their statements about their developing self-confidence and capacities. Members plainly felt they had found empowerment through gaining awareness and discovering new knowledge and information on a diverse range of matters from food to human relationships and social issues. This kind of realisation, achieved through gaining knowledge, seems to be a predominant characteristic of the empowerment of the KSC women. Those who have experienced change in their outlook on life gave detailed examples of the ways in which they had changed and how this had happened. These answers can be organised into the three categories such as 'Gaining confidence and finding a voice', 'Making friends and feeling solidarity' and 'Development of awareness from food safety to social issues'

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[10] The term I used for 'outlook and attitude' to life in the questionnaire was 'Shikō hōshiki', which is a broad concept combining the two ideas.

Gaining confidence and 'finding a voice'

KSC members illustrated the changes they experienced in answers relating to alterations in their personality and willingness to be pro-active. Many women mentioned 'finding a voice' as an achievement and said that they had changed from being passive to becoming an active person:

> "Because I used to worry 'if I say this, people might think me stupid', so I reserved my opinion. But now I can talk" (Survey response No155).

Similar things happened when women were inspired by their involvement in PAEM, Programa Educativo de la Mujer, an education programme in Santa Barbara in Honduras. Whereas these women had always been quiet in public meetings, after they had joined PAEM they gained sufficient confidence to participate and expressed their opinions and became active in community organisations (Rowlands, 1997, 88).

A KSC woman described how she regarded it as a 'great achievement' to be able to say what she thought:

> "Saying what I think and feel was a great achievement. I speak up as often as possible in order to deliver my idea. I used to think that in spite of my silence they might have understood me, but I changed my attitude" (Survey response No 23).

Another member said she had learned how to take responsibility to make sure that things got done rather than relying on other people to do things:

> "I would think that 'because somebody else will do it, so I don't have to', but now I think if somebody should do it, I will" (Survey response No 98).

These experiences and changes demonstrate the empowerment described by Rowlands as 'developing a sense of self and individual confidence' (Rowlands, 1997, 15) and the concept of internal strength in Moser's concept of empowerment (Moser, 1993).

Another distinctive achievement of the KSC members is their belief in the importance of making relationships. Their answers reveal their enjoyment at getting to know other members and building networks of friends:

> "I've experienced talking with many people together and I've thought a lot of things and made decisions and spread this understanding. I am enjoying relationships with other people" (Survey response No 165).

Brown referred to the 'blurred boundaries' between private and public spaces, when he described the friendships which are built in a public organisation and the use of public venues for the private interactions of friendship (Brown, 1997, quoted in Fincher, 2004, 52). The KSC women have found the movement offers them opportunities to expand their social lives and create new networks and friendships.

The KSC Movement also reveals how the development of friendships can be an indicator of collective empowerment. It has been assumed personal empowerment leads to collective empowerment. When Rowlands described collective empowerment in PAEM groups in north-west Honduras she found that 'friendships have developed which have nourished the group" which contributed to collective empowerment (Rowlands, 1997, 85). However, in social movements, this can be seen to take place the other way round that is friendship, group cohesion and trust can be developed as a consequence of collective action. Therefore, friendship can indicate collective empowerment.

When responding to the question in the survey 'With whom are you most friendly? please tick twice', the highest proportion of answers was 'SC members', indicated by 28.2%. For the same question the survey also showed that 17% of members were friends with 'SC members' only slightly lower than the top answer and taken together with the answer for best friend showing how important these relationships were, see Table 9. These relationships had developed as a result of their involvement in the KSC and show the importance of the relationships created through the collective activities of the KSC. These findings are also borne out by statements by survey respondents about the achievement of making friends through the KSC.

	Best Friend	Friends
SC member	28.2%	17.0%
Mother of my children's friends	20.4	17.9
Friend from my school days	17.6	16.9
Friend from recreational activities	7.7	11.3
Neighbour	7.0	13.6
Previous colleague	4.9	8.5
Colleague	6.3	5.3
Friend from social movement/activities	5.6	4.6
Friend through my husband	1.4	3.8
Others	0.7	1.0
Total	100	100

Table 9: My best friend and friends (N=182)

The experiences of the women also show how the creation of these friendships and the enjoyment of this companionship can develop into a sense of solidarity and a concern for wider society:

"I've learnt that we are not living alone, we are living with the help of other people and the importance of face-to-face relationships" (Survey response No 165).

Narayan described this as the increase in 'social capacity' in terms of 'relations of trust' and the 'capacity to organize' (Narayan, 2006, 10).

Development of awareness from food safety to social issues

When it came to describing which issues formed the basis for their involvement and led on to other changes food safety was of particular interest:

"After marriage, I used to buy food in the supermarket and I didn't read the ingredients. Now, when I have no choice but to buy food in convenience store, after looking at the ingredients I lose my appetite. Not only do I not want to have unhealthy food but also I don't want to feed it to my child" (Survey response No 184).

Other responses show how concern over food was the starting point for a wider concern for other social issues:

> "Before I joined I had never thought about additives, agriculture and goods…. I had to think about my child's health. Since joining the SC I have participated in training and 'Exchanging meeting', which supports the producers' life. The food we put in our mouths is the source of life as well as being related to the environment and is supporting producers" (Survey response No 145).

The women's practical concern for their children appears to provide a strong motive for paying close attention to the information on food labels as well as thinking further about production processes and the problems of producers. Their concern for the safety and quality of the food they eat and give to their children leads on to a wider concern about the environment as these respondents clearly stated:

> "Until my child was born I hadn't thought about so many other things. Now I think we have to think of our children's future so I have to keep the natural environment safe" (Survey response No 65)

This is a typical case, as literature on the environmental movement has shown, where women's role in relation to their children provides a compelling motivation for them to get involved in the environmental movement in order to protect their children from toxic waste and contaminated food (Miller, Hallstein & Quass, 1996; Bru-Bistuer, 1996; Bellows, 1996).

However, members' concern for their families' health not only broadens to include the environment but results in them making much wider connections including international relations. A member's statement shows how this process has occurred through her realisation that health or food issues are part of a larger context:

> "I've reached the understanding that food problems and so on are not individual problems but are compounded with other problems such as the environment, diplomacy and distribution, etc, and in order to resolve these problems we have to work in many different ways. I've realised that I am working to solve part of these problems" (Survey response No 159).

Therefore, it can be seen that the practical interest in food and the health of their family is not only socialised and politicised through their KSC activities but it leads on to other social issues because they come to see that one thing, food, is linked to all the other things in society. In other words, the women come to recognise that their private concerns are, as a matter of fact, a part of a continuum of broader social issues (Kofman & Peake, 1990, in Fincher, 2004, 52).

This concern can go beyond national boundaries to the international economy:

> "Before I wasn't aware of genetically modified food, now I am scared of America's food trade strategy toward Japan" (Survey response No 102).

Parpart et al (2002) make the point that the local is connected to the international and making this connection needs to be taken into consideration when discussing women's empowerment. It is therefore not surprising that the KSC women's interest should expand from their concern for their own family's health to concerns about the international economy and that this practical interest should contribute to their gaining a greater awareness of their social situation and to their empowerment. Batliwala considered this process of gaining social awareness to be an important component of empowerment in acquiring intellectual resources such as knowledge, information and ideas as well as gaining control over ideology (Batliwala, 1994).

The women also found their sense of responsibility has expanded from their family to the wider society. They had come to see themselves as agents of social change. This appears not only to have liberated them from their narrowly defined role as housewife but also to have enabled them to develop an independent spirit:

> "I thought I could live by myself, but I was wrong. I used to only consider myself amongst my family and friends, I began to turn my eyes to the wider society and I recognise myself in society. Now I have a direction in my life" (Survey response No. 90).

> "Because I have become interested in food and environmental security, peace and politics, I think, at least I should think for myself and act on my beliefs" (Survey response No 83).

3.2 The changes in members' outlook and attitude to life by length and depth of involvement.

The responses quoted above provide a flavour of the experiences of the women in the KSC. The change in the outlook and attitude of the members is an indication of the impact of the KSC Movement on the membership and how it has empowered them. However, not all the women experience the same degree of change. Quantification of these changes was attempted to see how their outlook and attitude had changed when measured against the length of their

membership and the depth of their involvement. If greater changes occurred in women who had a longer or deeper level of involvement then this could further indicate that participation in the movement was the key factor in bringing about these changes and empowering the women and that the greater the participation the greater the change.

The survey revealed that the longer the women have been members the greater the change in their outlook and attitude, see Figure 13. The Chi-test result shows the relationship between the two is significant (Sig-value of 0.003). Those who had been involved for longer showed greater change in their outlook although the group who had been involved between 6-10 years showed a higher percentage of those who had experienced a greater level of change rather than a moderate change, which was found in those who had been involved for over 11 years. This may be because more in the 6-10 years group have held office, which is the other category being investigated.
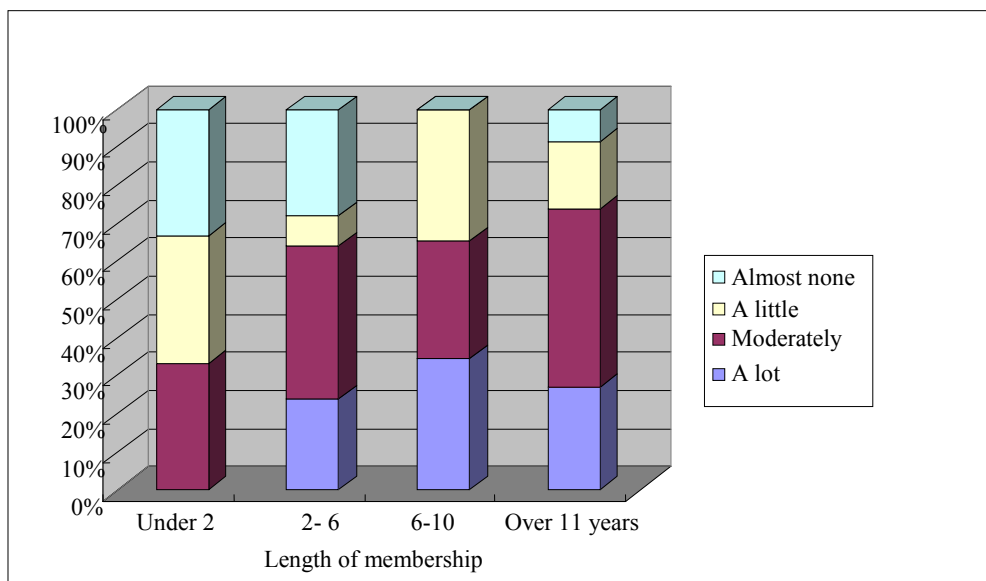
Figure 13: Change in members' outlook on life by length of membership (N=169)

When considering depth of involvement the survey was divided into three categories, no experience, leader of a Han and holding office, see Figure 14. Those who have only had the experience of being a Han leader represented 11.24% of the total. 18.54% had no experience of holding office.

The great majority of the KSC members surveyed, 70.22%, have occupied positions of responsibility, including positions on different committees, such as branch, consumption and other special committees as well as higher offices like chairs of committees, chairs of branches and the chair of the union. Does this commitment have a greater impact on them in terms of empowerment? There is a strong association between the experience of holding office and the change in outlook on life (Sig value of 0.00<0.05) showing that the more important the office the more the change in outlook on life. Although there is little difference between those who have no experience of office and those who have been a leader of a Han in terms of outlook on life, there is a significant difference between these two groups and those who had experience of holding office.
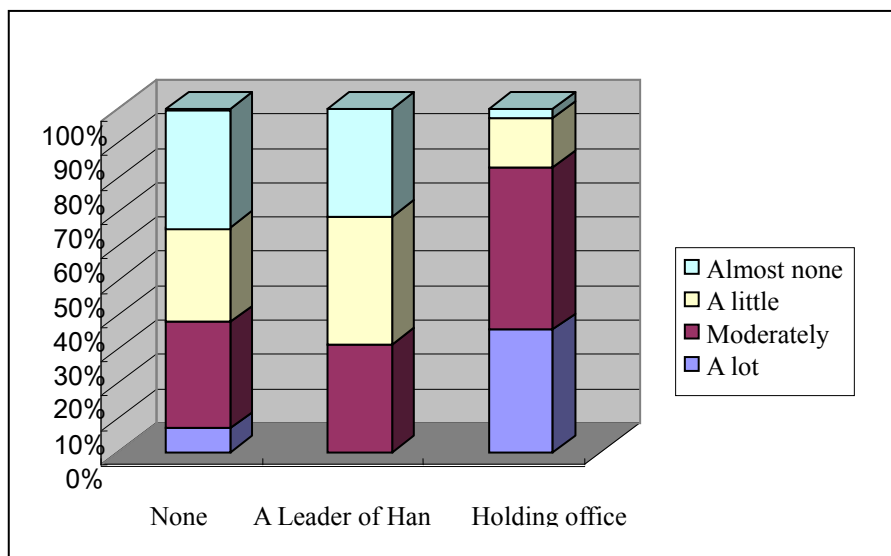
Figure 14: Change in members' outlook on life by experience of holding office (N=163)

It can be seen the change in outlook for those with experience of holding office is greater than in the case of length of membership (Sig-value is 0.000). This finding is supported by the studies of Satō and Yamasaki, which showed that the experience of being a member of a branch committee, Sibu-iyn, had a profound impact on the members in terms of the change in their outlook on life (Satō, 1988; Yamasaki, 1987). In both cases the change in outlook recorded in the survey was greater the longer and deeper the participation in the KSC Movement supporting the idea that involvement in the movement drove this change and that, as this change in outlook is an indicator of empowerment, the KSC Movement can be seen to

have empowered its members and the greater the participation the greater the empowerment.

3.3 Members' achievement from the experience of holding office.

As has been demonstrated above, membership of the KSC seems to have a greater impact on those who hold office in the organisation. It became apparent from the survey that their greater involvement results in greater change in every respect.

In response to the question 'what do you think you have achieved through the experience of holding an executive position?' the women gave very diverse answers in the space given to write a response.

In terms of the women's perception of their achievement in holding office, the most important achievement was considered to be the gaining of organisational and management skills, followed by making friends, gaining knowledge and social awareness and confidence, see Figure 15.
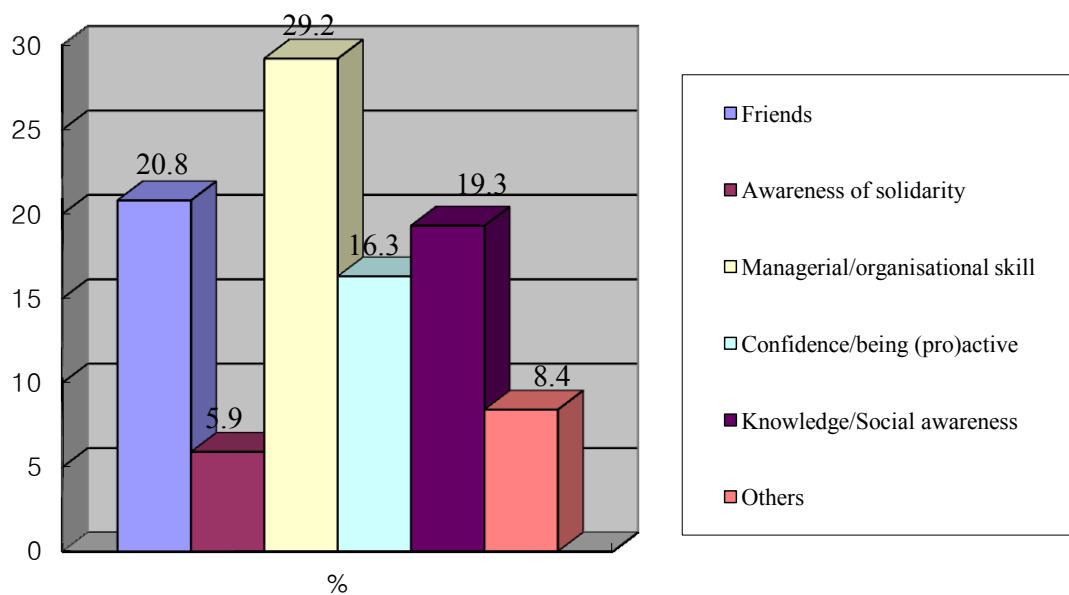
Figure 15: Members' achievement from the experience of holding office (N=122)

Managerial and organisational skills

The women showed a wide range of achievements including technical skills, knowledge and managerial skills and how to run the organisation in a democratic way:

> "Recently I've had to send materials, so I write the necessary papers and send them by using personal computer. If I hadn't been involved in the activities I could hardly do these things" (Survey response No 128).

> "I've gained experience through the process of persuading and mobilising people and mediating peoples' relationships. Also I've gained know-how for making publicity" (Survey response No 151).

Some members learned about marketing by being involved in the management of Depots, the KSC shops:

> "I am getting to understand about product provision and the Depot's structure by being a member of the management committee, which I didn't know about when I only used goods" (Survey response No 50).

Many women said that they had acquired knowledge and understood more about the philosophy of participatory or democratic management of the organisation:

> "I have learnt that because the extent to which we achieve success in work depends on thoughtful direction and planning, the plan should be agreed by everybody and on that basis the division of labour should be decided. Communication is important, so however small a thing is we should make sure we fully understand it, which enables us to build mutual trust (democratic management)" (Survey response No 161).

Other achievements

Office holders also plainly value more fundamental personal changes like gaining confidence and overcoming setbacks:

> "As for me the greatest achievement is the fact that I got confidence through my work" (Survey response No 27).

> "Striving without being discouraged, being honest in relationships with other people. Overcoming difficulties and the enjoyment of pursuing my way and beliefs

persistently" (Survey response No 53).

This shows clearly that they gained internal strength, which Moser saw as the essence of the empowerment (Moser, 1993). These members also mentioned how their experience of holding office, together with involvement in specific activities, increased their social consciousness and knowledge:

> "I used to be a committee member of a branch and was involved in affiliation activities. Also I used to prepare learning classes and make flyers to find more consumer committee members. To do this, I had to study by myself, so I learnt a lot of things through SC activities" (Survey response No 34).

Therefore, as we have already seen, the experience of holding office provides a critical momentum for personal empowerment. Holding office brought about the change in the women, rather than the other way around. Moreover, considering the fact that they appear to take on these positions for reasons such as peer pressure, including persuasion, and complying with the rotation system rather than ambition or personal choice (Ob, focus group 22.10, 2008, and Bk, interviewed 3.12, 2008), this provides compelling evidence once again of how collective action and empowerment in a social movement can generate personal empowerment.

The boundaries between personal and collective empowerment are blurred because the individual empowerment gained by holding office owes much to their collective empowerment, their experience of working together, the promptings of peer pressure, being inspired by one another and their pursuit of common goals. In turn their individual empowerment, achieved through the acquisition of social and organisational skills gained through leadership, contributes to and is a part of their collective empowerment.

3.4 Members' perception of the goals of the KSC by length and depth of involvement

It has already been discussed how one of the important elements of empowerment is the broadening of the women's concerns to include wider social issues beyond their initial concern for food safety. A further measure of this is the change in the members' perception of the goals of the movement which reflects the impact of the movement on their social consciousness and therefore, their empowerment. Those who had been involved longer and

who had held office showed the greatest change, once again reflecting the findings in the previous section that greater participation in the movement resulted in greater change. Becoming aware of other issues also led the women to become more deeply involved in the KSC and thereby to gain skills, confidence and knowledge in a wide range of areas.

The majority of KSC members had not joined because they were already aware of the issues on which the KSC was campaigning or because they were activists. On the contrary, as has been seen in the previous chapter, they joined for practical reasons to do with food safety or because their neighbours, friends or family had joined and had recruited them. But once they had become involved with the KSC the women were drawn into the activities and campaigns of the movement and changed their perception of the movement's goals. The following figures look at the way the women's outlook has changed in terms of their perception of the goals of the KSC and how this change relates to the length and depth of their involvement.

In terms of the survey as a whole, food safety was the matter of greatest concern, see Figure 16. The question 'What do you think are the goals and tasks of the KSC?' allowed for an open answer. The answers can be categorised under eight headings.
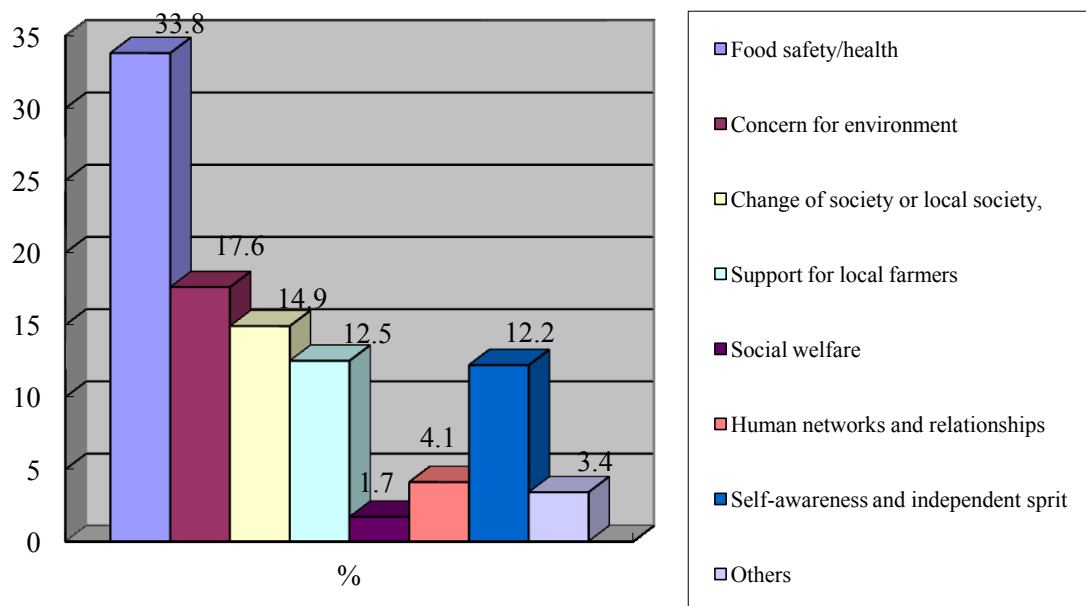
Figure 16: Members' perception of the goals of the KSC (N=154)

As a social movement the KSC involves its members in a range of different campaigns and seeks to raise their consciousness on issues outside their everyday lives. The survey provides an assessment of how members perceive these goals in terms of their length of membership, see Figure 17.
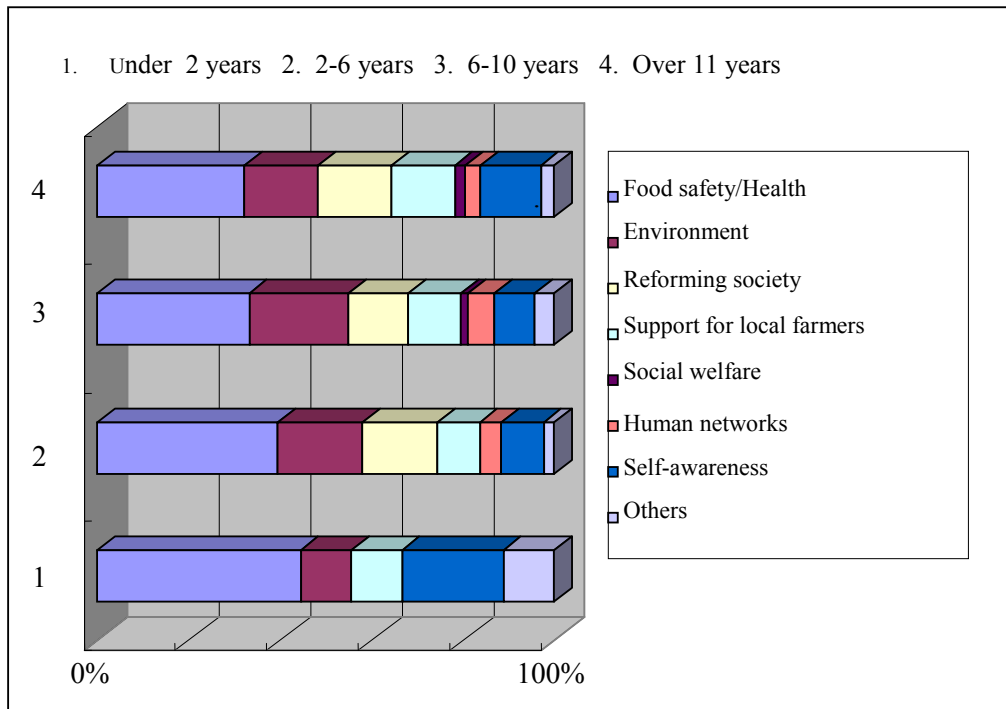
Figure 17: Members' perception of the goals of the KSC by length of membership (N=148)

Newer members show a greater concern for food safety and health issues than older members. Older members show a wider range of concerns and show the greatest interest in changing society or supporting local society and welfare. However, interestingly new members are the most interested in fostering self-awareness and an independent spirit.

Regarding the perception of the goals of the KSC according to whether or not the members have held office the survey shows very different results between members who had held office and other members, see Figure 18.
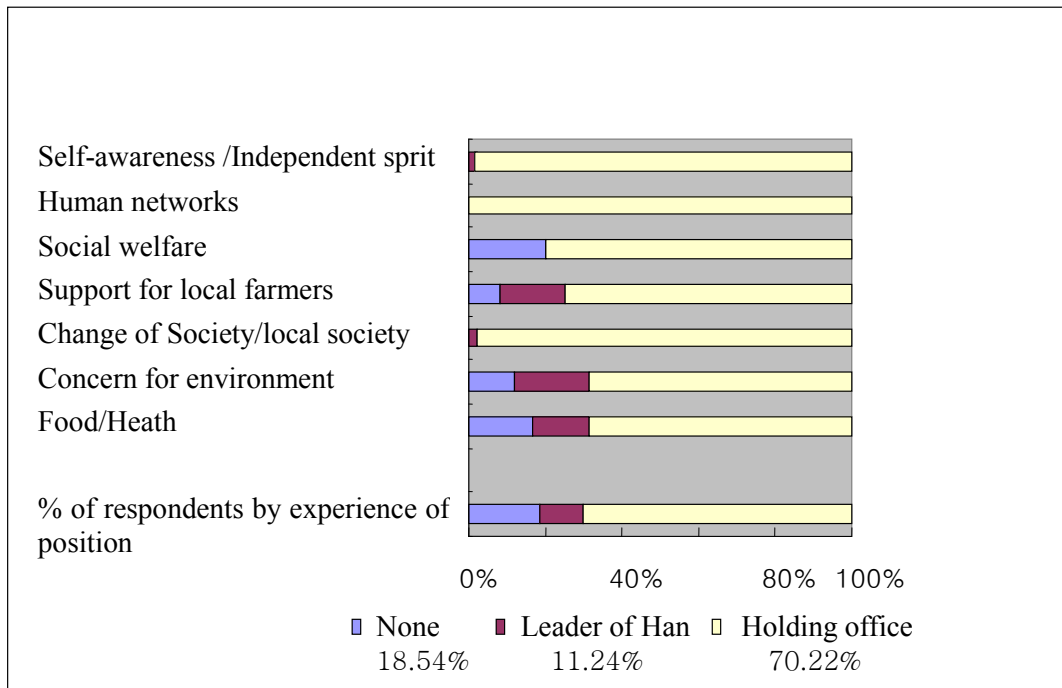
Figure 18: Members' perception of the goals of the KSC by experience of holding office

(N=119)

It has to be pointed out that office holders had more to say or felt more able to express their ideas about the tasks and goals of the KSC on each issue. This was a multiple answer question and many of those who had never held an office failed to provide a response to some of the options.

Given that the level of response was much lower, generally speaking those who have no experience of office or have the experience of being a leader of a Han once again focus on particular campaigns such as 'food safety and health', 'concern for the environment' and 'support for local farmers'. On the other hand, office holders have a broader view of the KSC's goals placing an emphasis on personal and social change by indicating 'reforming society/local society', developing 'human networks and relationships' and fostering 'self-awareness or an independent spirit' as KSC goals, all of which are either barely mentioned or not mentioned at all by other groups.

Plainly the understanding of the goals of the KSC differs according to the level of involvement of the members and that the deeper and longer the involvement the more interested they are in broader social issues. This association between a broader understanding

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of the goals of the KSC and deeper involvement matches the earlier findings on changes in outlook and attitude. It has to be remembered that the KSC, as a social movement, does not seek to empower its members. This empowerment arises out of the collective activities of the members. The motivation for this activity comes from the changing awareness of the members which, in the great majority of members, started with a practical concern for food safety.

3.5 The change in the activities of members outside the KSC

Typically, when women join the KSC they do so from a concern for their family's needs. This is reflected in the kind of groups they are involved with when they first become members. However, after they joined the KSC, as with their outlook on life, it can be seen that these interests underwent a change to broader concerns, see Table 10.

Activities	Before (%)	After (%)	Change (%)
Hobbies, courses	23.5	21.2	-2.3
Cultural, art groups	7.4	6.3	-1.1
Sports groups, clubs	11.0	14.9	+3.9
Adult educations, cultural schools;	4.3	2.8	-1.5
PTA activities	17.7	12.8	-4.9
Village activities, women's (housewives') groups	11.9	6.3	-3.6
Children supporting activities	8.7	8.3	-0.4
Welfare volunteer activities	3.8	7.3	+3.5
Environmental, conservation activities	0.7	3.1	+2.4
Consumer movements	0.7	2.4	+1.7
Civil movements, Peace movements	1.1	2.4	+1.3
Co-op activities	2.7	1.4	-1.3
Other	2.0	5.2	+3.2
No participation	4.7	5.6	+0.9
Total	100*	100**	_

Table 10: 'What other activities are you involved in?' (*N=182; **N=185)

Again it can be seen that the women's involvement has resulted in a change of activities. Those which increased are related to social movements like 'Welfare volunteer activities', 'Environmental conservation activities', 'Consumer movement' and 'Civil movement/Peace movement' which taken together increased by 8.9%, a movement which reflects the 'changes in outlook':

"I've been getting interested in other social movements" (Survey response No 185).

This shows that the involvement of the KSC brought about changes in the activities of members. Precisely speaking, the women became involved in other social movements along with their KSC activities.

I chose one member from the survey to make a case study to provide a fuller picture of the involvement of a long term member.

Case study

She is in her early fifties. She has been a member for more than 11 years. She graduated from a university. Her husband is self-employed. She is a full-time housewife with three children and they live in their own house. .

Before she joined the KSC she wasn't involved in any social activities, even cultural groups, religious activities or the PTA. She said the reason she joined the KSC was that she got pregnant later than other women and she found shopping difficult. At that time she lived in a housing complex where there were several Hans, so she could get food delivered to her home which was convenient for her. However, it had the added benefit of enabling her to get to know other people through the Han.

She started her career in the KSC as a leader of a Han. After that she became a member of the consumption committee, chair of the consumption committee, a vice chair of the branch committee, chair of the branch committee and an auditor. When she became a member of the consumption committee she met like-minded people and she got to know about consumer goods. The position also enabled her to

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understand more about the retail and commercial system outside the KSC and how the economy worked. She became interested in social movements and politics. She considers the KSC's goal is not only to provide safe food but also to protect the environment and increase the self-sufficiency of Japan. Currently her concerns include a wide range of issues like waste, chemical pollution of the air, handing over the KSC Movement to the next generation, prevention of war and terrorism and helping people around her.

Her family understands her activities, but they are upset because they think she goes out too often and works for the KSC from home. She takes the attitude that "my life is mine" but she tries to do her household chores properly.

Since joining the KSC her outlook has changed considerably:

"before I only considered myself amongst my family and neighbours, now I have turned my eyes to see the wider society and I am aware of myself in society. I have a direction in life." (Survey response No 90)

Therefore, in terms of personal empowerment the women have transformed not only their outlook on life but have also gained social/organisational skills. In addition to this subjective 'wellbeing' type of empowerment, the change in their everyday life in terms of both quality and quantity of activities has manifested itself in and outside the KSC Movement in a greater interest in broader social issues. This change can be described broadly as the empowerment which 'entails change from a previous state to a new state of greater freedom or choice' (Narayan, 2006, 23).

4. Facilitators of collective and personal empowerment in the KSC Movement

4.1 The collective buying system and Hans

The Han remains at the heart of the KSC, even though the KSC has altered its structure and the number of Hans and their membership has been in decline and most members are no longer members of a Han. One objective of the structural reform was to combine Hans with members who use the delivery system in Comonzus and Kurabus, so as to draw more

members into active participation. At the start Hans were created for the purpose of facilitating collective buying, but they soon became a training ground for democracy and co-operation as decision making bodies. The Han was the first place women would meet other members and get to know about the Co-op and it would have been the starting point for finding out about other programmes and campaigns. Members gathered and discussed what and how much would order and which products are of suitable quality as well as to collect money. When the food is delivered the leader of the Han and those on duty distribute the food. If they are not happy with a certain product they make a report which will be delivered to the producer (Satō, 1988, 37, 97).

Hans provide members with their first opportunities to learn and make themselves heard and to co-operate with other people in sharing tasks. Most Hans have a duty rota so that members take turns as to who will be in charge of deliveries, contacting buyers and collecting money. In the Han meeting members discuss not only matters about collective buying but also SC programmes and matters relating to their branch (ibid, 1988, 41-2, 66).

A leader of the KSC explained that the occurrence of collective empowerment should be taken for granted in everyday activities because Hans are based on the collective buying system (Cy, focus group 15.10.2008). The Han has played a crucial role as "the school of democracy" (Ep and Ka, focus group 28.10.2008) where lay members can establish their common goals and make decisions to achieve them. Two members said:

> "When I joined the SC, I didn't know about the SC. Among our Han members there were people who knew a lot and I learnt from them this and that" (Survey response No 127).

> "Other members have taught me a lot of things" (Survey response No 112).

Hans appear to have played an important part in consciousness raising and mutual learning. I had an interview with two older members:

> *Ka*; I certainly think the Han's role is vital. It is the core of democracy. [In each Han] people make their own rules… the rules which enable the Han to be a sustainable organisation.
> *Imsook:* How does the Han function in terms of consciousness raising? It has the reputation of being 'the school of education'. Are staff involved in the education of

Han members?

Ka: by chatting, isn't it? When everybody is waiting [for delivery of food].

Ep; when we heard other Hans got bread and meat, we though "why don't we?" Then we'd say let's increase our members [so that we can get those things]. We had clear targets. We were not educated by the SC staff. While we are waiting we chat. We chat about the Net and natural soaps or say things like "I think this [a product of the SC] is good' and so on. The other day, when we are waiting, a member said "Ep sang! I heard a nuclear warship is anchoring where you live, Yokosuka, it is scary. I can't forgive that." I said to myself, "Alright! I was waiting for this!" (Everybody laughs)… and I said "so, what will you do? Now nuclear power has even come behind you! What will everybody do about this?" (at that time it was a big issue for the peace movement in Japan) ….. and when somebody complained that "people can't take their babies to the child-care centre when they want to" I immediately complained "why is Yokohama's welfare so poor?" Because we eat the same kind of food together there is the opportunity for us to chat about these things (Ep and Ka, focus group 28.10.2008).

However, as was seen in chapter 1, Hans have been in continuous decline. In 2004 36.5 % of the KSC women were members of a Han, by 2010 this had declined to 29% (KSC, 2005, 139; 2010a). Nowadays the KSC depends less on the Han. Instead many members purchase food from their shops called Depots. However, setting up and maintaining Depots also needs members' collective effort. Cy points out that the time they particularly felt collective empowerment was when they were able to get rice which previously they could not order because they lacked the necessary number of members[9]. And when members were able to find enough other people to set up a Depot, so that members could have a shop in their area, they felt a great sense of achievement and empowerment (Cy, focus group 15.10.2008).

4.2 Sharing positions through the rotation system.

In the KSC the rotation of positions is the customary practice, formally and informally. It has already been shown that the experience of holding office makes a difference in terms of personal empowerment. One of the strengths of the KSC is that they conduct the rotation system from top to bottom, so that this has greatly increased the number of those who hold office.

Earlier in the chapter it was shown that experience of holding a position or office made a

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[9] To get certain items like organic rice they have to secure a certain number of members in their area in order to make direct contracts with farmers. This, in turn, depends on the members' efforts to recruit new members.

difference in gaining personal empowerment. In the case of chairing Hans there was a loose rotation system in operation. At this level it worked in a spontaneous way taking into account each member's situation, with only soft pressure on people to take up the position (Ob, focus group 22.10.2008). This system enables more people to experience positions of responsibility. In the case of choosing the committee chair of a branch senior members recommended a member for the position. Their choice was made on the basis of rotation and then they gently pressured members to take up positions. The position was held for two years (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008). That so many members are able to experience responsibility is a result, in part, of the policy of rotation which prevents members staying in office. This higher level of participation will have provided them with a wide range of experiences.

Those who have been members of different committees will acquire particular knowledge. Members of branch management committees would become experienced in planning and organising events as well as management, mobilising, accounting and administration. The members of the consumption committee may have more knowledge about food, the demand from KSC members for different products and other food systems (Satō, 1988). The same applies to higher positions. The top leaders of the KSC and Kanagawa Net assembly members can hold office for a maximum of two terms or eight years.

4.3 Women's culture: co-operative, horizontal and spontaneous

The empowerment of the KSC women is further facilitated by the culture of the women in the KSC which encourages participation, sharing and mutual support. Tb, a member who established a Workers' Collective, talked about her experience of working together with her colleagues:

> "When we started there were thirteen of us some in our thirties up to sixty years old. Nobody had any qualifications. We just got together with a will that we wanted to make this happen. While we didn't know about mountains, nor sea [we knew nothing] we discussed how this person can do this and that person can do that. Although one person may not able to do everything everybody can do something, so we can put all those things together and make a complete thing. In men's world this is impossible. Everybody got in tune with everybody else ...'I will write a flyer'… 'I will write a document'…. 'I will draw a picture'. And then, five or six people completed a flyer. Everybody took charge of different things. In men's world if somebody says 'Hey you do this', that's it. When we completed things and tuned in with other people, I had a powerful feeling …we gathered and talked…where should

we have our office..?...let's not have a fax because it is expensive and so on. It was exciting because we had achieved a lot…" (Tb, interviewed 5.11.2008).

She continued to discuss women's different style of work:

"I think we can do several things at the same time…. While you boil the rice you clean the house and do the laundry and you also watch TV and chat to visitors… this ability is used in Workers' Collectives. While you are involved in a Workers' Collective you can do household chores and you can take care of your child and husband. In this way women's power is demonstrated. [Women] don't work from nine to five like men. Because we work in the local area we return home to do the laundry and then go back to work. In the evening we go back home to make rice and have dinner together and then go out to work again. We work and live within the local area. Because this is possible it is enjoyable. This is real work-sharing, time sharing and substance [of work] sharing. Although a person may not able to do everything, everybody can do something, so we can put all that together and create something complete. One may not be an expert in everything, if we are experts in one thing when we put the all the expertise together it becomes a great expertise."

This applies to the women attending KSC events. When I attended an event called a 'Winter Party', I had a similar feeling. There was an explanation about a KSC product, organic seaweed. A seaweed producer explained the farming process using a map of the farm. Around eighty people listened, tasted different kinds of seaweed and asked questions. Middle-aged women tended to stay sitting but young mothers were moving around taking care of their children. There was an open Tatami or sitting room beside the hall for child-care, so while they were listening and attending the event they could keep an eye on their children (Field note, 25.10.2008). I observed the same thing on another event, a cooking class at a Seikatsu-kan (SC membership building) located in Yamato (Field note, 14.11.2008).

In addition to this I was amazed at the way the meetings were organised. I attended a formal meeting called Comonzu Renraku Kai which is a regular formal meeting of local KSC middle ranking leaders. They were reviewing an event, Kurisho Kai (the Christmas and New Year party), and each local event organiser reported on the activities in their area and they then planned the next programme. The meeting was held in a small room in the local Seikatsu-kan attended by around ten people aged in their thirties to their sixties. I got the impression the meeting was very well prepared by the participants with all the necessary materials. The leaders presented their opinions and the activities in their area in a very orderly fashion. Probably because I have experience of working in similar kinds of organisations in South Korea, albeit mixed gender organisations, I think I was in a good position to compare the way

the meeting was organised. The chair and vice chair ran the meeting very well with pertinent comments and encouragement for each opinion. People presented their opinions clearly and freely. They often laughed. But a bit later I noticed something odd. While the chair was directing the meeting some people chatted to those sitting next to them and people often left their seats. A woman who had brought her child moved around with the child and other women left to see how things were going in the kitchen attached to the hall. People were repeatedly leaving and coming back. I thought "why doesn't everybody sit down? This is rather like a market." Apart from the chair, everybody, even the vice-chair was moving around. I worried about the chair thinking "it is so distracting she must find it very hard to concentrate." But actually she didn't appear to care at all and kept the meeting going. I was puzzled by the scene in front of me. Slowly, I noticed there was an invisible rule. At the beginning, everyone had to sit down to hear the announcements from the chair and to decide what they had to discuss. But when each person reported on their activities other people did not need not to stay in their seats. Each person seemed to know when it would be her turn to report. People did seem to be paying attention to what was going on even when they were moving around because when they wanted to comment on something or make a suggestion they would come back. When the time came for closing discussions and to make final decisions I found everybody had returned to their seats. When I attended lengthy and formal meetings like this I tended to get bored and wanted the meetings to end, but in this meeting, to my amazement, I realised I didn't feel at all bored, probably because I asked questions and chatted with the women next to me. I found this meeting altered my previous perception of meetings. It was lively and fluid. Actually it was enjoyable. In a way it was like seeing friends or neighbours, but it was different because they were discussing matters of substance and suggestions, plans and tasks to work on together (Field note, 18.11.2008).

The female leaders in the KSC Movement were surprisingly humble. For instance, when I had to post the questionnaires to the members of the SC during my first fieldwork visit the Chair of the KSC volunteered to help so we arranged a time to do this in the KSC headquarters office. She worked with me folding the papers and sticking on stamps. I was very moved. But I also wondered, isn't she supposed to be busy? But when I saw her diary by chance I could see it was full of appointments. That wasn't the only occasion that she provided me with hands-on assistance (Field note, 12.7.2005).

I had the same experience when I met Net and Workers' Collective leaders. Former and current assembly members met me at the metro station to show me the way, did office chores, cooked food and volunteered to do errands. During the second period of fieldwork, two former local assembly members from the Kanagawa Net helped me to look around a KSC child care facility. While explaining about the facility one of the two told me with gestures of cradling a baby that when they worked for assembly members they used to come here to volunteer for one and half hours (Sl and Rk, focus group 27.10.2008).

Regardless of their position they called each other '-sang!', which is an informal form of address. I never heard anyone being called 'chair', 'president' or by any other title. It was impressive because I found people in Japan usually call superiors 'Sensei!' which is a formal mode of address, but they never used this term amongst themselves. Former and current assembly members are expected to be called 'Gy-in' (assembly member), but in the Net they were usually called '-sang. In fact, this practice reflects their policy of amateurism and resisting the professionalisation of politics (Bouissou, 2003, 344)

My overall impression of local KSC meetings and events was that the leadership was very soft and not authoritarian and leaders acted as facilitators. Members were chatty and lively participants. The meetings were democratically run and members co-operated with each other. The organisational principle of 'participatory democracy' is frequently emphasised in the KSC's materials and this did seem to be reflected in these meetings and in the way the members and leaders worked together.

This culture leads to an open-ended movement and allows for spontaneous participation. A leader of a Workers' Collective illustrated how the business worked:

> "When I think deeply I realise Ah! I changed during that process. I think it is because I was in a relationship in which our different thoughts resonated with each other and we discussed people's suggestions. At that time I was touched by moments when I felt that something was in the making through our discussions which allowed us to have different point of views. Ns and I never thought 'we have to do things this way'. We have reached here like a river flowing [making the gesture of a river flowing]. If I said let's do it this way we wouldn't have got here. You don't know the destination. 'No destination' is the destination (she smiles). So if other people are involved it becomes something else. If a different person is involved everything will be different" (Br, focus group 9.11.2008).

As I have already argued, empowerment in a social movement depends on this collective action and is influenced by the internal dynamics and ideology of the organisation. This spontaneous and co-operative way of working facilitated this collective action and helped them share their skills and support one another in their campaigns and activities. They gained confidence, skills and knowledge both individually and collectively.

4.4 Programmes, study group and campaigns

Some women said they gained knowledge through reading the SC magazine 'Seikatsu and Jichi' (Livelihood and Autonomy). Others said they learned through group study and lectures and through meeting producers:

> "Before, I used to think of things in an individual way. But after I became a committee member I had to think as a public person. Also through 'Exchange meetings with producers' and 'Communal nurturing classes' and 'Seikatsu and Jiji' and so on … my viewpoint moved from myself to other people" (Survey response No 62).

> "I got interested broadly in food, environmental and peace issues… by activities and attending lectures I learnt a lot" (Survey response No 132).

There were some cases which show the influence of KSC campaigns:

> "Until I joined the SC I only paid attention to the date of production and non-additive information, but now I think about the producers. Using environmental friendly soap and being against GMO I turn my eyes to my surroundings. I think that people are connected to each other and live together" (Survey response No 10).

When Satō interviewed SC members he found participation in affiliation programmes was very important in bringing about change in the participants (Satō, 1988).

A local chair also referred to the importance of these programmes and said that in the KSC there are abundant opportunities to learn about food and other issues through lectures, study groups and meetings with food producers (Vi, focus group 15.10.2008). In addition there were cultural programmes like film shows and other performances for members to learn more about the KSC and its activities and goals.

4.5 Being a member of the Net

There were only 13 women in the survey who had experience of working in the Net. Ten of them had been members for more than eleven years. All of them had experience of holding office in the KSC before they became members of the Net. Even though they represented a small sample it is still worth noting that nine of the thirteen said their outlook on life was 'very' much changed since they joined the KSC. This is well above average, even for those who have experience of holding office, suggesting membership of the Net may have a greater impact on KSC women than activity in the Co-op part of the movement.

This might be because both the Kanagawa and Yokohama Nets run study groups on a variety of local issues to do with welfare, the environment and reform of the local assembly as well as on national issues to do with the peace constitution and security. These groups work on devising and clarifying policy as well as specific local campaigns, as for example on day care facilities and the contamination of streams. They often form alliances with other social movements and members of the Net also join other related organisations (Kanagawa Net, 2006).

Net members get training and acquire skills not only by being involved in campaigns but also through 'Politics schools' run by the Kanagawa Net. These schools play an important role in preparing those interested in running for office by providing special lectures for local election candidates (ibid).

Members are also encouraged to write short reports of 300 words and to write their opinions about the content of the pamphlets which are distributed by the Kanagawa Net to its members for distribution to their neighbours, which provides interesting training for the members in understanding and thinking about the Net's policies (Lee, 2007, 26).

I attended an educational course about the city budget at a local Net, the Samukawa Net, which is one of 26 offices in the Kanagawa Net. The office was an ordinary flat. The lecture was held in a small Tatami style, traditional Japanese room with eight local Net members. Around half of them were full-time housewives and others were part-time workers in their early forties to early sixties. When I asked them later how they got to know about the Net

and became a member they smiled, looking at the next person, saying "I was dragged by this person", "She just told me to help her work so I came". The lecturer was a Net leader who had twice been a municipal assembly member. She brought several thick city budget records, which made me expect a painful and boring time. However, she started to explain about familiar things like cigarette tax and water bills. She managed to make us understand how the City uses citizens' money and to show how the system worked in favour of those in power. She also taught us how to read the enigmatic figures in the city budget books.

In the course of the meeting while everybody participated by asking her questions and talked freely and laughed a lot there was a woman bringing tea, copies of documents and cooking food. I thought she was a sort of secretary. Although she made comments from time to time, not as a director but as one of participants, I didn't notice that she was a local assembly member until later when she gave me her business card. Later, they shared the food which everybody had brought. It was rather like a party. They chatted endlessly so I had to leave because I didn't know when it would finish. I thought "Oh god! You learn a lot about politics in such an atmosphere!" One of the participants talked about what a good thing it was to be a member of the Net, "Now I can see politics from my village" she said (Field note, 2.10.2008). In the latter half of 2008 the Kanagawa Net was planning to hold this kind of meeting in all its local Nets (Kanagawa Net, 2008).

Election times are a great time for the Net to recruit members and raise their consciousness. An assembly member talked about the process. Often they ask their neighbours to help with jobs like distributing flyers or standing around a speaker, a candidate, and they find they tend to read the flyers and listen. They then get interested in the candidate whom they helped and develop some sense of responsibility, which makes them more involved in the Net and as a result they learn about social issues and local politics (Ro, interviewed 31.10. 2008) .

4.6 Being a member of a Workers' Collective

There were 31 women in the survey who had experience of being in a Workers' Collective. As with the Net the proportion of those saying their outlook had changed 'very much' was above the average even for those who have experience of holding office, suggesting again that being a member of a Workers' Collective also has a greater impact on those members.

This is supported by Satō and others' studies into members of Workers' Collectives (Satō et al, 1995; Satō, 1996). The interviews with Workers' Collective members and leaders, as we have already seen, also illustrate the process of empowerment in the Workers' Collectives.

5. Relational empowerment

Rowlands defined 'relational empowerment' as 'developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it' (Rowlands, 1997, 15). Batliwala looked for a 'redistribution of power' especially within the household as the indicator of empowerment (Batliwala, 1994, 129-130) saying that 'women's empowerment, if it is a real success, does mean the loss of men's traditional control over the women in their household' (Batliwala, 1993, in Rowlands, 1997, 23).

I will focus on the members' relationships not only with their husbands but also their children. These relationships are directly related to their gender roles. I wanted to see whether they had any influence on their families and whether there were changes in their relationship with their family members as a result of their involvement in the KSC.

5.1 The influence of members on their families' outlook and attitude to life

Finding out whether members have influenced their families' outlook enables us to understand directly and indirectly if the members have received recognition from their families for their KSC activities, which in turn would indicate whether their position in their families had been enhanced and they had achieved relational empowerment.

The survey provided clear evidence of the influence some women had on their families and the alteration in their relationships. The women identified this change as being connected with their involvement in the KSC. Some women receive acknowledgement from their families because of their KSC activities:

> "My family has come to realise that I am not just a housewife" (Survey response No 106).

> "They get to understand the fact that because we are working for this the society is changing" (Survey response No 24).

In some cases the women got respect from their husbands:

> "My husband is very co-operative. My husband respects me because I consider the linkage between people important and I am involved in social affairs so that he can concentrate on his own work" (Survey response No 61).

Even, in some cases their gender role as a full-time housewife in the household had changed. Both husbands and children accepted the need for change in the household arrangements because of the women's KSC activities:

> "When my husband took care of my children while I was involved in SC activities, he had the opportunity to experience what it meant to care for the children" (Survey response No 76).

> "My children have become more independent. They realised that 'mum' is not the person who should be always in the home. They understand my policy about food and the environment. Also they fully understand what I'd like to say" (Survey response No 90).

This indicated that the division of labour between husbands and wives in the household became blurred because the women got to socialise more while the men did more household chores. This change is especially important in that there was a transformation in the gender relationship.

Some members influenced their families to the point where they began to pay attention to their concerns and even to take an interest in the issues:

> "Because his wife is nagging about GMO and additives and so on, he pays more attention when shopping" (Survey response No 43).

> "My family has become interested in social and political issues" (Survey response No 44).

> "At the beginning my husband didn't understand my committee activities, but he began to read the information from the SC. As a result of this he is getting to understand more about the idea of the SC" (Survey response No 178).

This influence would not automatically be translated into a change in the power relationship or the existing gender roles in the household. However, the fact that families increased their

understanding of members' activities and even became interested in the issues they were campaigning on showed the impact they had made and the possibility of altering other aspects of their relationships.

5.2 The influence of members on their families by length and depth of the women's involvement

The same tests can be applied as earlier to see if the greater length of membership or deeper involvement leads to greater influence and change in family relationships, thus providing clearer evidence of relational empowerment, see Figure 19.
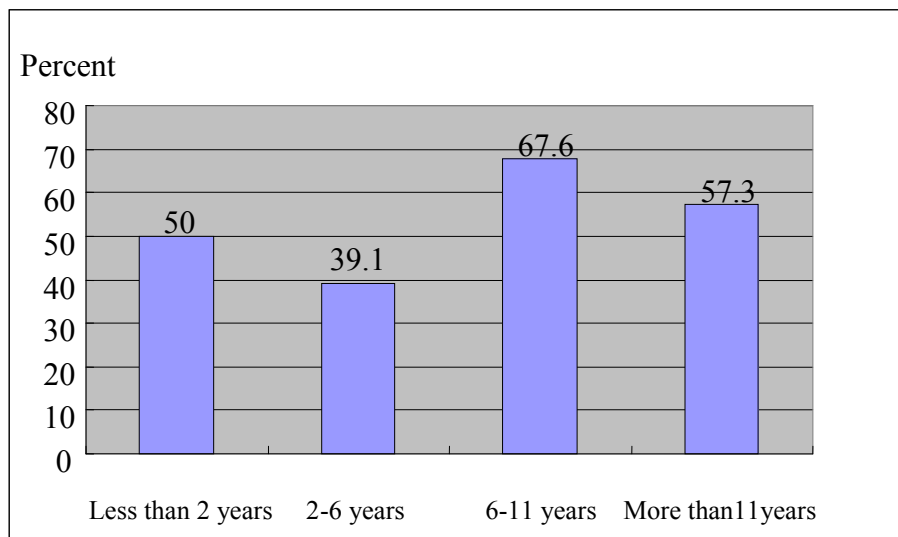
Figure 19: The change in families' outlook on life by length of membership (N=177)

The statistics on the basis of the members' responses show there is no significant association between the changes in the families' outlook in terms of the length of membership although those who have been members for longer do see a greater change (Sig Value 0.192). By contrast, it appears there is a strong relationship between the change in the family's outlook on life and a member's experience of holding executive office (Sig-value, 0.000<0.05). There is almost no difference between those who have 'No experience' of office and those who have been a 'Leader of a Han', but there is a great difference between those who have held office and the others in terms of the change in their family's outlook on life, see Figure 20.
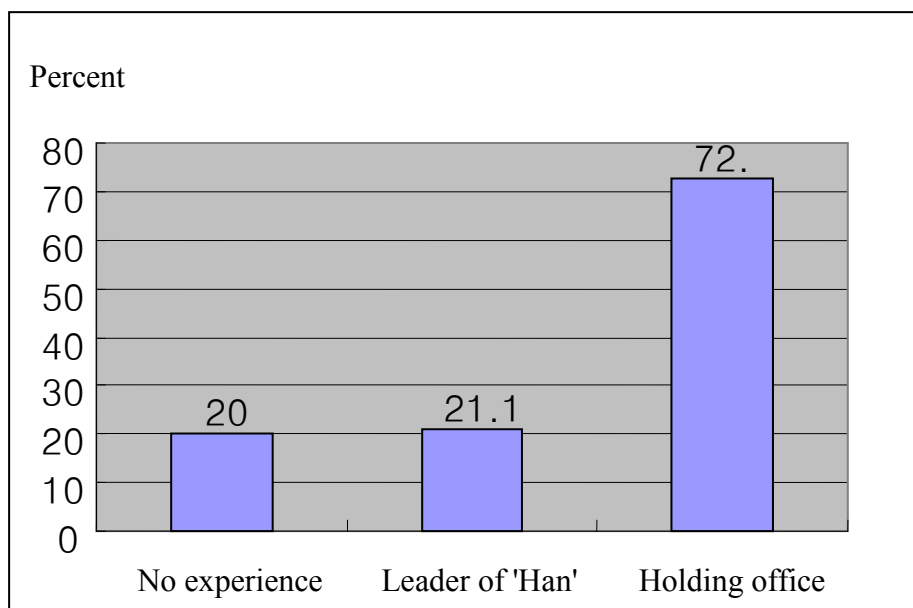
Figure 20: The change in families' outlook on life by experience of holding office (N=163)

Quite a few of the children of KSC members are now working in the KSC Movement, not only in the Co-op but also in the Net and Workers' Collectives, which shows their mothers' influence (Mz, interviewed 12.7.2005; Field note 28.9.2008; Field note 31.10,2008). According to a former top leader of the KSC this happens not only in the KSC but also in other branches like the Chiba and Tokyo SCs (Kv, interviewed 12.7.2005).

Case study

> Ul is working for a research centre in the KSC as well as for a local Net. She used to work for a Fair Trade organisation. She wants to be a local politician. Her mother began to be involved in the KSC when she was in elementary school. Her mother played an important role in creating a new branch in the Tsrumi area and later became a branch leader. After she became involved in the KSC she would often not be at home. Ul said

> "she was a housewife… she seemed to be an inexplicable woman who didn't have a job, but who was not at home… because my grandmother lived near my home we used to have dinner in my grandmother's place….perhaps because of my grandmother she was able to be involved in activities….although she spent money on them [activities], my father was ok [about her activities]."

Later she explained her mother's activities were partly why her father had become involved in the Anti-Security Treaty movement in which many socialist activists were involved in the 1960s in Japan. She often went to Iki-Iki festivals, where the KSC put its products on display, publicised its activities and events and families had a day out. She remembered she used to read flyers, photos and papers about campaigns of which her house were full, so that she got interested in environmental issues. Her mother was very strict about artificial colouring in food and forbade her children to eat any food which had strong colouring and they conducted an experiment in their house to see how such artificially coloured food could colour white threads. It was natural for them to use environmental friendly products like natural soap and toothpaste in their home. Her mother was a member of the Net so her sisters and she helped her mother with activities like folding flyers and distributing them by bicycle.

"Before that my mother used to explain to us what was written in the flyers saying that they were important because of this and that 'so you have to help'. I also thought that when mothers in the neighbourhood ask me 'what is the Net?' I'd like to explain this properly… when I was a university student, at election time, my sister and I used to make speeches from the election car [to support the Net candidates] …. Perhaps because of this I got interested quite naturally in politics and society without any particular introduction" (Ul, interviewed 21.10.2008).

Husbands are also influenced by members to take an interest in the KSC. An example is the Jao group, which was started by husbands of KSC members.

Case study

Jao began as a group of the husbands of KSC members. At the moment there are 150 members, including some who are not husbands of KSC members. Jao is involved in diverse activities with small groups like forestry, recycling, health clubs and rediscovering Japanese traditional wine. A Jao leader said that for him the best part of being a member of Jao was being able to meet different people from different backgrounds, for example he met someone who was an officer in the Japanese Army. He only used to meet salary men from companies. The Jao leader used to be very quiet but he has completely changed and now he talks well in front of people (Sx, interviewed 5.11.2008).

Recently Jao has become part of the KSC's 'Forum Associa', which is a network reaching out to other community groups.

5.3 The change in families' understanding of the members' KSC activities**.**

In general, the members appear to influence their children more than their husbands, because they explain to their children what they do or take their children to their activities:

> "I always take my child with me when I am involved in SC activities and I talk to my family about food and my SC activities" (Survey Response 129).

Some families understand more as a result of their wife or mother's explanation of their activities and their conversations together:

> "We discuss the insecurity of modern society and think about what we can do to sort it out through the SC" (Survey response No 173).

From these statements, we can imagine how, when they have meals together, the mother talks about the "goodness of SC food" or about other aspects of her work in the KSC at the dinner table. The women discuss all kinds of environmental and social issues with their families. However, failure to live up to expectations results in opposition and resistance from families, which we will discuss in detail in the next section.

Changes in children's understanding

As has been seen, members tend to have more success in changing their children's understanding. However, I have applied the same tests in terms of length of membership, see Figure 21, and holding office, see Figure 22, to see whether longer or deeper involvement in the KSC alters these results and demonstrates greater relational empowerment.
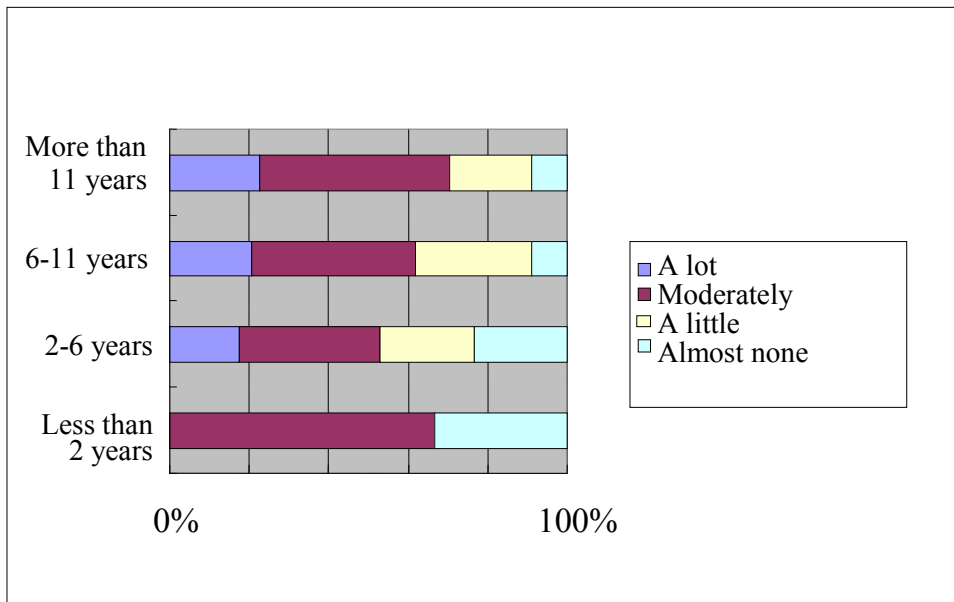
Figure 21: The change in children's understanding by length of membership (N=158)

The result shows that there is no correlation between the growth of children's understanding and length of membership (Sig–value indicating 0.317> 0.05). However, except in the case of those who have been members for less than 2 years, where a third report no alteration, there is a greater change the longer the period of membership.
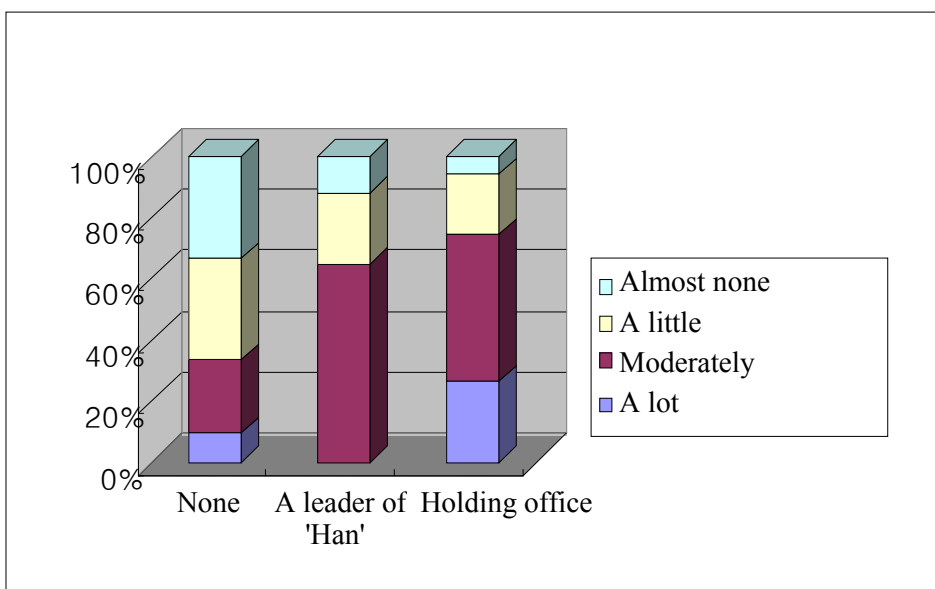
Figure 22: The change in children's understanding by experience of holding office (N=155)

Once again the experience of holding office indicated a greater change. The more significant

the position the members have held, the greater the change in terms of their children's understanding of their KSC activities, Sig-value, 0.00<0.05. This may be because women who have become so committed are keen to share their experience with their children and eager to explain things to them.

The change in husbands' understanding

More critical, from Batliwala's perspective, in terms of relational empowerment, is the alteration in the attitude of the women's husbands. Once again I have measured the change in understanding against the length of membership, see Figure 23, and experience of office, see Figure 24, to gauge which has the greatest impact. In applying the Chi-test, the Sig-value 0.737>0.05 shows there is no correlation between the expansion of the husbands' understanding and length of membership.
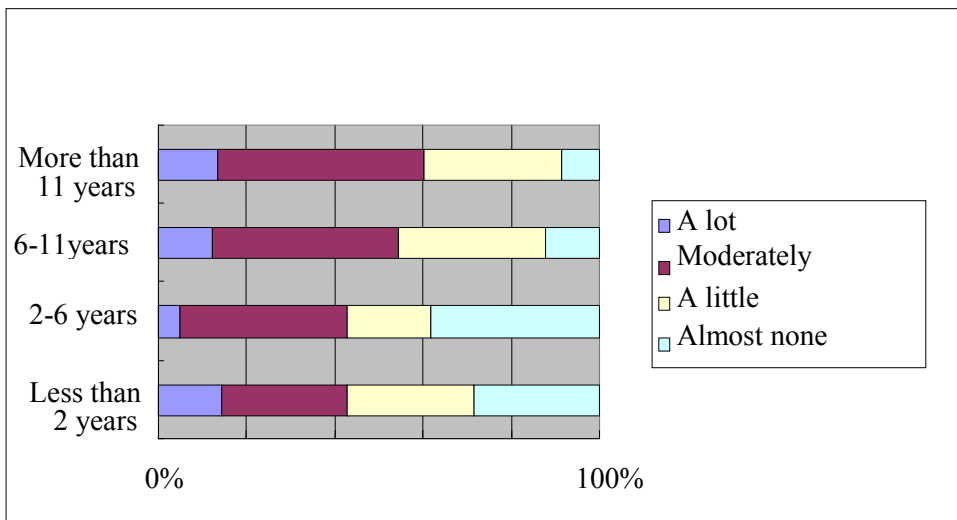
Figure 23: The change in husbands' understanding by length of membership (N=164)

However, the figure above does show that in all cases there is some expansion of understanding and that for those who have been members for more than six years there is a greater expansion of understanding on the part of their husbands, with over 60% of the husbands of the longest serving members showing greater understanding. Perhaps in the long run their husbands gradually come to understand more about their wives' activities.
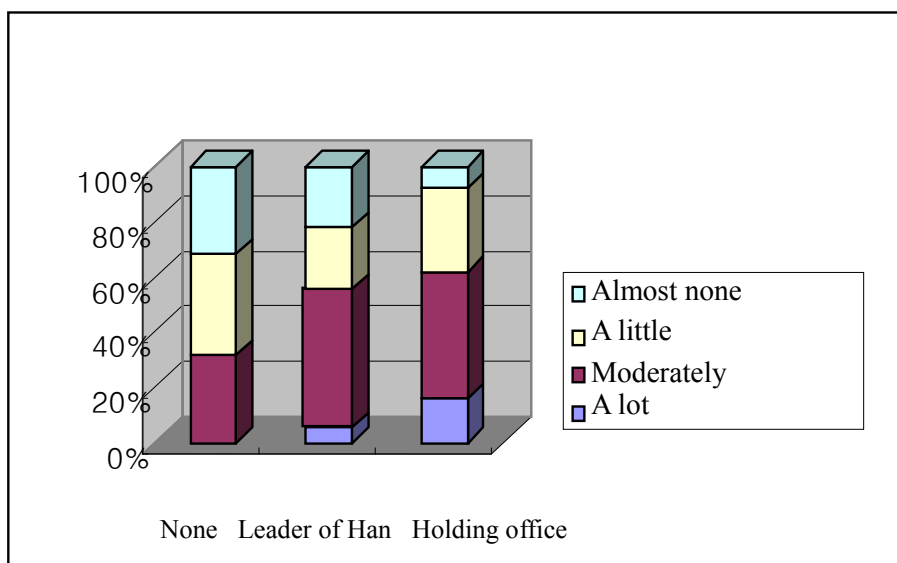
Figure 24: The change in husbands' understanding by the experience of holding office (N=158)

There is no clear relationship between the experience of holding office and the change in the husbands' understanding, see Sig-value 0.291>0.05, although once again the greater the level of responsibility the greater the change in the husband's outlook.

One member's response provides the reason why it is harder for husbands to understand or get involved in their wives' activities than their children, which is partly to do with the division of labour between husbands and wives in Japan:

"My husband is too busy for us to have enough time talk together. He is interested in food. He has a job in the centre of the city and he doesn't have any opportunity to make relationships with local people" (Survey response 131).

5.4 Disempowerment through opposition from members' families

Although, as can be seen above, families do show greater understanding over time members still face difficulties and conflict with their families because of the contradiction between their gender roles as housewife and mother and their social activities. According to a local KSC chair approximately a quarter of members have experienced opposition although in her opinion fewer members now face these problems (Vx, interviewed 15.10, 2008). Survey responses emphasised the difficulties the women faced:

"I work in the home a lot and go out often [due to SC activities] so I got rejection from my family because they think that their life is badly affected by it" (Survey response No 90).

"Because I am busy and I am often not at home my family is more critical rather than understanding" (Survey response No 69).

This is not surprising considering there are numerous instances of women going out for activities in a social movement facing strong opposition from their husbands, including threats, as was mentioned in Chapter 2. Batliwala saw women's physical mobility as a key element of women's empowerment, which is one of the forms of control by men whereby women have been unjustly confined (Batliwala, 1993, in Rowlands, 1997, 24).

Frequently, the opposition comes from the fact that they often neglect their roles as a housewife and mother in carrying out household chores and taking care of the children:

"[He was against my activities] because he had to take care of the children and do household chores at the weekend" (Survey response No 50).

"While I talk about safe food I often have to come home with ready made food because it takes time to cook. As a result it is difficult for my family to understand me" (Survey response No 127).

The conflict arises often because for women it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a clear line between their private and pubic activities. This happens with women in all kinds of social movements. For example, Spanish women campaigning against toxic waste facilities in their local area brought their domestic work like cleaning vegetables, taking care of their children and knitting with them to the street (Bru-Bistuer, 1996, 107-108). Similarly, the KSC women take their children to their meetings.

However, by contrast the KSC women also reverse the process and appear to consider their private sphere to be public. For example, they hold Han meetings in their homes. Other survey responses show how their public KSC activities take over their private space:

"When I am phoning and receiving faxes during the night my husband stares at me

as if to say 'why even at this time?'" (Survey response No 70).

"[I face opposition because] I often make documents [in the home]" (Survey Response No 142).

Because of this the women have feelings of guilt and regret, especially as mothers of children:

"Especially when I started to be involved in the activities and was the chair of a branch I used to be on the phone all day long. My children used to complain that they wanted to have dinner and not to phone so much, which is regretful when I remember that time" (Survey response No 5).

"When my child was little I couldn't play a proper role as housewife and mother (because I used to be late and I made too many phone calls)" (Survey response No 40).

"I had to apologise. I felt sorry that my child in elementary school had to have dinner at around 8-9pm" (Survey response No 119).

In some cases the conflicts reached very stressful levels:

"My husband regards my activities in the SC as harmful for him and our family saying often to me 'why don't you quit the SC?' This is really stressful for me" (Survey Response No 185).

Furthermore, the wife's independent social life can seem provocative:

"He explodes when my schedule doesn't fit with his, he seems to think his wife is his possession and I should do everything to suit him" (Survey response No 43).

More importantly, she shows how her activities have resulted in a new realisation of her relationship with her husband in which she sees herself as subordinate to her husband's needs. In light of the demands on their time and energy when pursuing their KSC activities it may not be surprising that those women who are the most deeply involved should face the strongest opposition, see Table 11.

Eperience of position	Opposition to KSC activities (%)		
	from children	from husbands	no/minor complaint
No experience	14.3	14.3	71.4
A leader of Han	0.0	33.3	66.7
Office holders	9.4	45.3	45.3
Total	10.0	38.6	51.4

Table 11: Opposition to members' KSC activities from children and husbands (N=70)

Indeed it can be seen the husbands of the women who had experience of holding office show the greatest opposition to their wives' activities. Yet, as was seen earlier, they also show the greatest expansion in their understanding of the women's activities. Probably as time passes the husbands who opposed the women's activities come to understand them even if they do not like their wives going out as the statement below shows:

> "My husband reads books, for example, on Japan's future and so on. He said that in the book it is written that the collective buying movement of food co-ops is supporting the future of Japanese agriculture and he may think 'probably because of this my wife is working hard'. But when I become busy his understanding suddenly drops off" (Survey response No 43).

On the other hand, as some less involved women pointed out:

> "I didn't get disapproval because I wasn't involved much" (Survey response 110).

> "There isn't disapproval particularly because I myself think I shouldn't be busier" (Survey response No. 63)

Sometimes, they face strong opposition from their children. According to a former local assembly member from the Net, her husband did not oppose her becoming a candidate to be a local assembly member but her daughter, who was a middle school girl, was strongly against

the idea crying "either you chose me or a being candidate". Although she managed to persuade her daughter she recalled that it made her feel very bad (Hd, interviewed 31.10.2008). The fear of conflict in the family often discourages the women from further involvement as well as possible further empowerment.

I wanted to consider the role of the KSC in backing members who faced difficulties with their husbands and to what extent they were able to draw on support from other members or from the organisation. Would they discuss this matter with other members or colleagues in the SC? Fifty-eight women provided responses. While twenty said 'yes', thirty-eight members responded 'no'. Although two thirds of them did not discuss these problems with other members, a third did. In some social movements women dealt with this problem collectively, as was seen in Chapter 2, but in the KSC Movement they tended to get support on an individual basis.

Half of the women who had experience of holding office said they faced opposition from their families, especially from their husbands, which caused considerable stress or guilt, especially when children were involved. Husbands seemed to put up with a certain level of activity, but the women often went beyond that acceptable level. Some women seemed to show great commitment to their conviction of the need for social change.

Case study

> Gw is a core member of staff. His mother used to be a local member in the KSC. He remembered that his mother began to be involved actively was when he was between middle school and high school. He said he was not influenced by his mother and he was not interested in the KSC. Unlike many of the respondents to my survey, he did not learn about food from his mother even at the dinner table, because

>> "she used to be not there because she was busy with her activities. When I came back from school there was no dinner prepared, so I had to cook …I said to myself 'let's cook' but in the refrigerator there was only stiff meat, I was embarrassed….but I liked cooking… I think there were arguments and fighting between my mother and father,… because my mother used to be absent from home and my house was messy and full of SC documents. My father was not happy about that.... On the contrary, for me I liked that [my mother's absence] because I felt free (he chuckles). I don't think I got to pay attention to food because of my mother's influence [she did not

influenced me at all]… nowadays the SC produces processed food but at that time mostly we got whole foods from the SC, so it was not easy to cook dinner … I used to cook dinner with my elder brother…. When I was preparing for my university entrance exam I used to come back from school very late at night, I heard noises from downstairs so I looked down to find that some people from the SC [SC Han members] were distributing milk. I thought to myself 'I would never do things like this'…even late at night!"

Interestingly, although he insisted he was not influenced by his mother, he recalled that his mother used to take him to 'festival', the KSC's Iki-Iki festival. More importantly, he said that what decided him to apply for the SC staff was when two producers from other parts of Japan stayed at his home and he chatted with one of them and got interested in the activities of the KSC (Gw, interviewed 22.10.2008).

It seems his mother was more of a social than a domestic person as can also be seen in the cases of other KSC women's children. She appears to have overcome her husband's opposition through her assertiveness. In these situations of conflict women may overcome their families' opposition or they may concede or give up certain activities in the face of fierce opposition. Sometimes they persuade, sometimes they resist tactfully and manipulate. Each woman gave a different answer. These included:

Deception

> "I have deceived them by keeping on saying I would work only one more year" (Survey response No 10).

Persuasion

> "I tried to persuade them by talking about my activity precisely" (Survey response No 41).

Begging

> "I begged them to let me be involved more" (Survey response No 166).

Waiting

> "[I thought] only time will solve the problems (he will give up eventually)" (Survey response No 147).

Compensating

> "Although I explained my work to them in order to help them understand I ignored their opposition. I tried to compensate with other things" (Survey response No 112).

While they tried to avoid direct confrontation, depending on the situation they appeared to use a mixture of strategies:

> "Although my situation was so uncomfortable as if I was sitting on needles, I never wanted to quit the SC. While I sometimes pushed and sometimes heaved [insisted and conceded] I tried to avoid too much reaction from my family. I pretended not to be so involved in the SC activities as if I was simply enjoying them rather than seeing them as important. If I looked serious my husband would tell me to quit the SC" (Survey response No 11).

The KSC members behave in ways favoured by women in many different situations who are trying to find ways to accommodate the contradictory forces in their lives, particularly where they remain attached to their traditional gender roles. Scheyvens called them 'subtle strategies' in the struggle for women's empowerment, which she defined as 'any strategies that attempt to achieve profound, positive changes in women's lives without stirring up wide-scale dissent' particularly in male dominated societies (Scheyvens, 1998, 237-240).

However, in many cases women had to concede and limit their activities:

> "I reduced the number of phone calls." (Survey response No 151)

> "I said I would quit the management committee" (Survey response No 175)

> "I say interesting things about my activities to my family little by little every day, [but also] I reduced my activities" (Survey response No 167).

> "I tried to be at home as much as possible" (Survey response No 184).

It was contradictory for the women, whose concern for their families' welfare had prompted them to join the KSC to campaign for or buy safe and healthy food and who then found that this was connected to a range of other social issues, to then face the dilemma of having to choose between their growing self-awareness and involvement in campaigns for change or the very gender roles in the home which had motivated this activism in the first place.

The members' survey shows a mixed picture in terms of their relational empowerment in the household, especially with their husbands. Some women managed to change the nature of relationships. However, many women also had to face stressful situations or hold back from their activities. It should be noted that many of the top leaders I met in the second fieldwork period did not face much opposition from their husbands and there were even some who were supported by their husbands (Field note, 21.11.2008). In some cases, as in Ul's case study above, some members were able to be active because of their mother's support or because their husband was sympathetic to social movements.

This reveals that, although the dimension of relational empowerment has not been highlighted in studies of social movements, in fact it plays a crucial role as a threshold for other empowerments. Without relational empowerment it may be difficult for women to be involved in social activities. Such involvement is vital to collective empowerment and personal empowerment.

6. Conclusion

The process of the empowerment of the KSC women shows that a movement based on 'practical interests', in this case food, can provide a robust base for women's collective empowerment. In addition, it is also facilitated by the women's culture of sharing, participation and co-operation and the KSC's horizontal structure and system of rotating the holding of office. They have achieved this based on their traditional gender roles and identities. This collective empowerment enables the women to gain confidence, social and organisational skills as well as social consciousness. It demonstrates that collective empowerment is a powerful engine for producing personal empowerment rather than the other way around.

However, the KSC Movement does not fit into the model of the empowerment process from practical to strategic interests. For the most part the women stated that their awareness developed from a practical interest, food, toward other social issues like the environment, agriculture, welfare and the reformation of society. Thus their empowerment trajectory is from practical interests to social reform, rather than from practical to strategic interests. For the most part, this transformation is related to wider social rather than gender issues.

Some women experienced relational empowerment by gaining acknowledgement from their family or by changing their gender relationships in their family. But for others this was not the case. In general, the deeper and the longer their involvement the more opposition they tended to face from their families. Some respondents to the survey revealed the dilemma experienced by full-time housewives who are active members. Some felt guilty that they were not properly fulfilling their role as a housewife when their husbands did not value, or opposed, their KSC activities. A considerable percentage of the women had to withdraw from their activities or make concessions in the face of their husband's opposition.

The irony is that when they acted to safeguard their families' health they realised this was connected to other wider social issues which led them to broaden their horizons and to focus on other issues. With this new consciousness they came to see themselves as agents of social reform and acted on this basis. However, their gendered space, the household, became more contradictory as their existing gender roles felt more confined. The picture is not straightforward. Some women asserted themselves or behaved in ways which did not conform to the expectations of their families so even though they had originally been motivated to join the KSC by their gender roles they stopped fulfilling those roles. However, in many cases, even when they saw their potential as women bringing about change in society they still found themselves limited by their relationships with their husbands and children.

In fact, the issue of women's mobility and its contradiction with their existing gender roles and identities in the household could arise in any situation where they are involved in a social movement, whether it concerns human rights or the environment, as we have seen in Chapter 2. However, when the women's involvement is based on their traditional gender interest in their family they may find they face greater confusion and conflict the more seriously they become involved.

This difficulty is often underestimated by the authors of the eco-feminist movement based on motherhood and difference feminism, when they emphasise the strength of this strand of the movement, the mass mobilisation of ordinary women into social movements. Other feminists cast suspicion on these movements thinking that they may not bring about real equality for women.

Yet, I would argue that these contradictions could create a threshold, I call it a 'transformatory threshold', for change. On the one hand, the women arrive at a point of contradiction which could limit their empowerment or, on the other, could open their horizons towards further empowerment. In the latter case, these contradictions and discrimination in the public sphere would become the impetus for the women to achieve greater empowerment and provide the potential to create a new gender consciousness through a new realisation of their gender relationships in the household as well as in the public sphere.

Unfortunately, the KSC does not take this issue seriously in spite of the fact that some members withdraw from society and return to the home because of these obstacles. In the KSC the trouble which members experience with their families' opposition, especially opposition from their husbands, appears to be regarded simply as an invisible or personal responsibility for each member to overcome on her own. While some women do talk to other members others do not reveal anything about their difficulties with their husbands. There were no programmes in the KSC to support women or to discuss these kinds of difficulties or to help understand women's situation in the wider Japanese society, although in 2005 there were around a hundred and ten different programmes and membership activities, including counselling, lectures and study groups in the KSC (KSC, 2003, 2005).

Therefore, although many women achieve a transformation of their existing gender roles and identities and the power balance in the family and some women even appear to become a social person rather than a domestic person, this takes place only on an individual level and does not contribute to a collective response in the KSC Movement. Changes in gender relationships in the household at the individual level do not necessarily lead to a new gender consciousness. On the other hand, gaining a new gender consciousness at the individual level should not be confused with an actual change in gender relationships in the household. As was seen earlier in Chapter 2, Nagar and Swarr (2005) argued that feminist consciousness

raising at the individual level can cause more frustration for those women who have to face daily oppression. The KSC Movement shows that change in gender relationships in the household is not automatically translated into collective action in terms of gender policies. In the literature on empowerment these distinctions are often not clear so that actual changes in gender relationships in the household and women's gaining a new gender consciousness are often mixed up in the same category, just as the difference between the individual level and collective level of change tends not to be distinguished.

In the next chapter I will seek to explain why this transformatory potential, around conflict in the household, is not acknowledged collectively and dealt with in the KSC. This could provide the momentum for women to raise gender issues in the KSC Movement as women in some other social movements have done (Cubitt & Greenslade; 1997; Stephen, 1997; Thorne, 1975). I will demonstrate how this depends on the internal dynamics of an organisation which can also affect its ideology and policies.

Chapter 6: The different empowerments of the women in the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the different empowerments of the women of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club Movement in terms of ideology, class and age and how they are created. However, rather than just classifying different empowerments in a monolithic way it is important to look at how these differences between the empowered and disempowered interplay with one another in producing power structures in the movement. The key concern is to see how this impacts on the empowerment of the women individually as well as collectively.

In this chapter, I will first look at the role of the men in the KSC Movement and the ideology they have created and how this both facilitates and constrains the empowerment of the women. The gender dimension needs to be taken into consideration because strictly speaking the KSC Movement is a mixed gender organisation in spite of the fact that an absolute majority of members are women. However, men are important actors as they occupy key positions as senior staff and these men have played a crucial role in the empowerments of the women. Therefore, it is important to look at the role of men in the empowerments of women as well as the differences between the women.

Second, I will look at the women in terms of the different areas of participation, the Co-op, Workers Collectives' and the Net, taking into consideration the different experiences of the women in each area. In each section the changes which have occurred over time will be considered as almost forty years have passed since the KSC was established.

I will argue that in case of the KSC Movement the women are neither a homogenous group nor are they free from power struggles between different groups and, accordingly, they experience different empowerments. In feminist studies into social movements and in the debate about women's empowerment the underlying assumption is that women are a homogenous group and have the same interests. In these studies the impression is also given that women are united in confronting men, whereas in the KSC Movement the women

usually work with the men in the social movement. Male leaders in the KSC Movement have played a crucial role in advancing women's empowerment. However, their role in the movement, in terms of women's empowerment, is complicated. At times they have also played on the differences between the women, which has created a complicated map of internal politics in the organisation regarding the inclusion and exclusion and empowerment and disempowerment of the women. Male leaders and a particular stratum of women in the movement have made an inadvertent alliance in the pursuit of their interests and ideas, which has affected other groups of women, although more recently the KSC Movement has been trying to address some of these contradictions.

2. The role and ideology of the male leaders of the KSC Movement

As Molyneux points out, empowerment can be directed from above (Molyneux, 1998, 74). The KSC Movement shows how the founding fathers had a profound influence on the KSC women. As has already been seen in Chapter 5, almost all the empowering features of the KSC such as creating an environmental consciousness, building campaigns around specific and relevant needs and concerns, democratic participation, the building of a robust local society and solidarity with other people are consistent with the ideas and policies of the founding fathers (Iwane, 1993; Katumi, 2004). They played a key role in training and educating the female members.

Unlike the Tokyo SC Movement which tried to organise local people, the starting point for the Kanagawa SC Movement was the labour movement and initially Hans were created at the Tokyu Train Company. The activists, who had a socialist ideology tried to organise local people with the intention of gaining sympathy for the labour movement. However, in both cases they found that only housewives were available in the localities and so the activists changed direction and concentrated on creating a movement built around their concerns (Iwane, 1993).

In line with this history, Satō sees the initial stage in the establishment of the KSC from 1971-74 as the period when male staff taught the housewives what co-operatives were about and showed them how to set up the Midori Co-op, the former name of the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club (Itō, 1995, 228). This relationship between the male teachers and their female students

appears to have established an organisational culture between male staff and female members not only in the Kanagawa Seikatsu Club but throughout the SC Movement (Inoue et al, 1987, 39).

A top male leader, in particular, was a key influence as an ideologue in the KSC Movement. Female leaders like Nd emphasised the political purpose behind the KSC and Xy's role in promoting the consciousness raising and education of female members. She recalled:

> "When Xy was chairman the KSC was very educational. How can I put it….For example, the papers presented at general meetings were very boring but highly educational. When reading them we were very attracted by those issues. The Co-op's magazine, lectures… the chairman used to read things and talked to us. This often happened. In the past 'Seikatsu and Jiji' (the SC's official magazine 'Livelihood and Autonomy') was political ….the driving force of the SC was… its ideology which was remarkably strong [in the KSC]. There was a will for social change in the SC. In reality ideology was firmly rooted in practice" (Nd, interviewed 15.10.2008).

Unlike Iwane in the Tokyo SC, who had to resign soon after a corruption scandal[10], Xy, the Kanagawa male leader, was able to maintain his position as a charismatic leader for a long time. He later became the leader of the Welfare Co-op, another part of the KSC Movement. He was also an advisor at different times to the Kanagawa and Yokohama Nets. He has long been involved in different KSC related organisations and has had a strong influence on their policies and activities.

It is generally agreed by the female leaders that they were greatly influenced by Xy and that his contribution was crucial in creating and developing the KSC and its sister organisations (Mc, interviewed 11.10.2008; Ep, focus group 28.10.2008; Nd, interviewed 15.10.2008; Br, focus group 9.11.2008; Sl, focus group 27.10.2008).

The male leaders also played a crucial role in directing the strategies and policies of the KSC Movement. The creation of the Net political movement occurred under the guidance of the male leaders. Male leaders in both Tokyo and Kanagawa wanted to develop a political movement. In Tokyo, Iwane persuaded a female member to stand for the Tokyo metropolitan assembly at a time when the female membership did not understand why it was necessary for

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[10] Iwane borrowed money from a food producer to build a house. This was revealed later and was considered to be corrupt, so he had to resign (Sl, focus group 27.10.2008).

them to get involved in politics (Eto, 2005, 323). In Kanagawa, according to KSC publications, the decision to create its Net was made on the grounds that members were frustrated by the normal forms of campaigning, such as presenting petitions, and the lack of response from the government. However, Park considers the reality is that this was the course of action chosen by all the male leaders to move into the political arena, following the example set by the creation of the Tokyo Net (Park, 2009).

Likewise, the strategy behind the creation of Workers' Collectives was formulated by the male leaders. Maruyama Sigeki, also from the KSC, inspired by the example of American producer co-operatives during a tour of North America, proposed the idea of Workers' Collectives as an alternative to the capitalist system of production. This led to the creation of the Nin-Jin Workers' Collective in Kanagawa, the first Workers' Collective in the SC and in Japan. Later, male leaders in Kanagawa initiated welfare services for the elderly through the KSC leading on to the formation of the Kanagawa Welfare Co-op as another arm of the movement.

This relationship between male and female members may have changed over time as the women have accumulated experience in the field, but the men in the KSC Movement are still the main pillar in the development of ideology and policy. The role of men in the KSC Movement is very different from that portrayed in feminist studies on social movements, in which men tend to be seen as a hindrance to women's empowerment. However, in the case of the KSC Movement, it is unthinkable that the women would have got involved and achieved the empowerment they have without the work of these men. On the other hand, the men in the KSC Movement have also constrained that empowerment, as I will discuss in detail below.

Ideology

As has already been discussed in Chapter 1, the original intention of the founders of the SC was not to create a women's organisation but a social movement rooted in the localities. However, because the residents they encountered there happened to be women they came to regard them as the base for their citizen movement. As a result the term 'Seikatsusha' ('people who live')[11] was adopted by the male leaders as the identity of the SC Movement's

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[11] The SCCU describes 'people who live' as 'inhabitants' rather than 'consumers' (SCCU, 2010)

members, who combine an independent spirit with critical thinking rather than blindly following authorities, including capitalists, and who are actively creating social change (Iwane, 1993; Katumi, 2004).

In Chapter 5 it was seen how important it was for the empowerment of the KSC members that they gained social consciousness. Conceptualising themselves as 'Seikatsusha' moves the women from their narrow family life to a broader society. It remains the case that the women became involved in the KSC because of their concern for their families' welfare and their involvement arises out of their traditional gender roles as mothers and wives. However, unlike many movements based on women's traditional gender roles and identities, the KSC does not focus on an ideology of 'motherhood', instead it sticks strictly to this concept of the citizen, 'Seikatsusha'. As was pointed out in chapter 2, while women's movements based on motherhood are often unable to develop further and are sometimes in danger of becoming regressive, because their ideology prevents them moving forward to a broader social consciousness, the 'Seikatsusha' does not appeal to a traditional gender image nor see gender as a social issue.

However, Japanese feminists criticise the seemingly gender neutral citizen concept of 'Seikatsusha', because they argue the male leaders have left out gender issues in their vision for social change. For instance, Kuba criticises the concept saying 'the Seikatsu Club and the Net are talking about citizens, but I feel they are talking about citizens while leaving out gender issues. What kind of citizenship is this that avoids gender issues?' (Kuba et al., 1996, 4-5). What they see as a contradiction has been embedded in the SC Movement from the beginning as the citizen's movement started from these ideas which rested on patriarchal assumptions of citizenship even though the movement is embodied in its female membership. Feminist political scholars like Pateman (1989) criticised this approach arguing that the concept of 'citizen' was not actually a neutral concept but related to a time when the norm for 'a citizen' was a man. Therefore, putting women on this pedestal of being 'real citizens' risked contributing to the failure of the women to see how oppressive the social structure is for women and of preventing them moving forward as women and independent citizens. However, while this criticism has some force it is still true to say that the concept of Seikatsusha does enable the women to see themselves as social and public rather than domestic persons and the KSC Movement has taken steps to develop gender issues, as will be

discussed later in this chapter.

In conjunction with this, another idea which reveals the nature of the male leaders' ideology is Katumi's rhetoric on 'unpaid work' in which he contrasts women's unpaid 'humane' work with the paid 'inhumane' work of men. The former is regarded as voluntary and caring and based on goodwill whilst the latter is money orientated and a slavish kind of work for industry. This strategy for building the future Japanese society appears to be based on valuing women's unpaid work rather than on women seeking to gain 'equal pay'. This logic might gain support in the Japanese context, where many women do not envy men their lives as 'company men' and, therefore, where 'equality' is not such an attractive term especially for middle-class women like the members of the KSC Movement, as was mentioned earlier regarding Japanese housewife activism. When the question arises as to how to value this unpaid work it is only understood in terms of moral recognition from society. This idea leads to the wages policy of the Workers' Collectives, the KSC's business sector, in which wages are described as a 'Community Price', which is between fifty and seventy percent of the average market wage. In Katumi's vision for the future of Japan, Workers' Collectives constitute an important part of the 'civil sector', which will provide a balance for the other two sectors, the government sector and the market sector. Thus, he argues that Workers' Collectives' wages should not be valued in market terms, but should be valued on another principle, the barter economy (Katumi, 2004).

Similarly, their political party, the Net, treats amateurism as an organising principle. Although in the beginning the male leaders conceived of the Net movement as being part of a broad network of different groups of citizens such as housewives, students and workers, they later came to see it as a 'housewives' amateur movement' in opposition to the old movements and politics (Park, 2009). In line with this, the Net established a rotation system for local assembly members, limiting them to two terms of eight years, emphasising their trustworthy amateurism against the corruption of the professional political parties. Katumi considers professionalism tends to create a privileged class of politicians who accrue power and the Net had to avoid this to retain its integrity (Katumi, 2004, 182). In addition, Net assembly members have to donate their salary to the Net except for the expenses needed to cover their activities[12].

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[12] In 2006 the Kanagawa Net representatives received 330 million yen from the different levels of

In the same vein, a further criticism of the 'Seikatsusha' concept, of the woman who acts as a critical citizen, is that it tends to meet the conditions of a social stratum of women who are able to depend on their husband's income in the nuclear family, which allows them to spend time on voluntary activities. Single women, single mothers and working women, especially full-time workers, are in practice likely to be excluded from this category.

The empowerments and disempowerments in the Kanagawa SC Movement appear to be framed largely in terms of the different elements of the ideology created by the male leaders.

3. Empowerment and disempowerment in the Kanagawa SC

3.1 The power structure between the male leaders and female members

In spite of the changes in the status of women in Japanese society as well as in the KSC, since it was established in 1971, the asymmetry in power between men and women in the KSC has not changed fundamentally, although women have increasingly taken over more top positions. This is not only an issue in the KSC but also in the wider Japanese Consumers' Co-operative movement. Japanese feminists criticise Japanese Consumers' Co-ops for having a top-down structure, in which men occupy the top positions as a centre of power, so that women are excluded in spite of their hard work (Inoue et al, 1987, 35-6).

Ueno points out that although more women have become chairs their terms are limited to two terms, but executive chairs, who are male, as heads of the staff side of the organisation, are not bound by such a rule. 'It is so apparent to anybody that the decision making power is held by the men' (Ueno, 2004, 5). This is in line with a statement by a senior female staff member in the SCCU, the Union of the SC based in Tokyo, who used to be a regional SC leader, who commented that the real power in the SC is normally held by the male executive chairs (K, interviewed, 12.8.2005).

It can be seen in information from the SCCU, which is composed of 29 regional branches including the KSC, that the important positions are occupied predominantly by men (SCCU, 2002). In addition, female staff find it difficult to gain promotion, because only two of the

Prefecture, City and local governments as salary, most of which (256 million yen per annum) they passed on to the Net organisation keeping only 180,000 yen per representative per month (Lee, 2008).

twenty members of the SCCU promotion board are female (K, interviewed 12.8.2005). As has already been pointed out, the female members are directed by male leaders through the division of labour within the SC, while the female members have, for the most part, followed their lead and confined themselves to implementing the policies and programmes devised by the male leadership. In this respect the Kanagawa SC Movement is no exception (Inoue et al, 1987; Lam 1999).

In 1992, the most important male leader, who had been Chair of the KSC for twenty-one years, resigned. However, the position of Chair of the KSC continued to be held by a man rather than a woman from the KSC membership. Some top female leaders were frustrated by this and resisted the male staff. However, when female leaders were appointed this did not necessarily result in change or satisfy the expectation of those members who hoped for more from such appointments. The first female Co-Chair was appointed in 1991. A former KSC leader said:

> "She was not the person we wanted. Although she was clever, she was popular with staff and was like a puppet who obeyed the staff [means male leaders].... We were very disappointed.... We had a candidate who would have become a strong leader… someone who was strong enough as a representative of the members to hire and fire the staff. From that point on, I decided I couldn't be involved in the SC Co-op any longer although I still get food from the SC Co-op" (Sl focus group 11.11.2008).

This shows how changing from a male to a female chair can simply be tokenism. In this case a former female leader explained that the male leaders in the JCCU were becoming embarrassed by the fact that all of the representatives were male while the great majority of the members were female so they started to appoint female leaders as a front (Yc, interviewed 19.10.2008). Plainly it was contradictory for Japanese Co-operatives, which were founded by male leaders who came from a socialist background and upheld egalitarian policies, to be run with a monopoly of top leadership positions being held by men.

The number of female leaders has been increasing which may mean women's power has also been increasing, however, in terms of decision making, it is doubtful if there has been a fundamental change. Indeed, the top decision making board is composed of committee chairs most of whom are men. The Chair of the KSC and the Chairs of the five local KSC Co-ops are women. They are all paid expenses. However, there are also four full-time standing chairs,

plus an executive chair, all of whom are paid staff and all of whom, except for one female standing chair, are male. Thus, there is a clear segregation between the female chairs, who are members and volunteers, and the mainly male chairs, who are full-time paid staff (KSC, 2004).

This gendered structure is more obvious when considering the KSC's strategy-making body. For example, the project team for 'the mid-term plan 2006-2010', which is responsible for a major restructuring of the KSC to cope with the change in membership from full-time housewives to working women, is composed of most of the female chairs along with a group of male staff, including male chairs (KSC, 2006). This means no female office staff are included. Likewise, in the 'review team' for the original plan important staff from the office, such as the four heads and two vice–heads of the four departments, are included, all of whom are male (KSC, 2007). Thus, through this hierarchy a small number of male full-time staff direct a large number of female members.

When he was the Chair of the KSC, Xy used to wield power over the women, which caused some women to question his commitment to 'participatory democracy'.

Case study

> Cp used to be a branch chair but left the KSC because she was shocked at the way the top male chair wielded power in the KSC. As one of the chairs in the KSC she was sent as a representative to build a joint organisation with other NGOs in order to help developing countries. She met people from other NGOs and was provided with travel expenses by the KSC. She reported back to the KSC on the progress of the meetings with other NGOs. In a meeting of chairs the top male leader suggested that the KSC should withdraw from creating the joint organisation without giving a clear reason and this was passed at the meeting. She realised later that the male leader had changed his mind and decided to set up a separate KSC organisation for supporting developing countries. She felt that the way this decision was made demonstrated the domination of the movement by the male leader and she decided this was no longer the place for her to work. Finally she chose to work for another NGO (Cp, interviewed 2.8.2005).

Other members also felt it was not right when they realised they were being instructed and directed by male staff in contravention of the KSC's principle of 'participatory democracy', which they had been told should guide their activities. The following case study show how they were alienated by this double standard.

Case study

Rp was a committee member in the KSC. She felt it was strange when she worked there because she was given instructions by the male staff. This was against the KSC's principles, which were that 'we think by ourselves and act by ourselves'. Later she was a leader in the Department for Social Movements and became interested in peace education and the peace movement. She forged a peace group, but she was told by the male staff that what she was doing was not important and the group was ignored. "I lost confidence and I got tired… I quit in order to find a way to do this outside the SC" (Rp, focus group 29.10.2008).

Sw, who was involved in the student movement in the 1960s and regards herself as a feminist, was involved in the KSC. Interestingly, her Han was composed of working women, but she was too busy to be involved in other activities. When she quit her job temporarily she was in charge of a branch committee. She found that

"it [the KSC system] has a pyramid system from the top through to the block down to the committee. A considerable number of women were dismissed [from their position]… I hate the male-centred structure… those who realised this tend to quit [the SC Co-op]" (Sw, focus group 29.10.2008).

Another member of the KSC said:

"while we were struggling to make a decision, suddenly people would make a particular decision because the top leader said OK [about that] … the female leaders could keep their positions because they didn't criticise the top male leader. It was like 'because he said that'" (Nw, interviewed 27.10.2008).

Indeed, my experience of a focus group is instructive. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, I had to establish a formal channel with the KSC. The most important help I received was in arranging a focus group with the Chairs of the five KSC local Co-ops. I explained my

research and the purpose of the focus group, which was to discuss issues of empowerment with female members, to the female KSC Chair and a male member of staff, but I did not mention that I also wanted to discuss gender issues as I hoped to raise them at the meeting and was concerned that this might upset the male staff. I said I wanted to meet female leaders. However, when I got there, to my astonishment, two senior male staff were also sitting there. Only two of the five female branch Chairs were present along with the top female Chair. I was ordered by the top female Chair to sit beside her, which made me feel like a lecturer and she started the meeting immediately. The top Chair started the focus group by introducing me. I was surprised by the situation and completely lost control of the focus group. I was embarrassed by the distance between me and the two branch Chairs because the two male members of staff were sitting between us as if they were supervising us. The staff may have thought it would be useful to me if they were present. However, their presence was very awkward as one of my major questions for the focus group was the gender relationship between men and women in the KSC. But how could I ask this question in front of the male staff and how could the women answer under these circumstances? This was not at all what I had expected. I was also surprised that the top female leader took the presence of the male staff for granted. However, this did support what I had heard from interviewees so what happened was instructive and provided a glimpse into the way the KSC worked (Field note, 15.10.2008).

3.2 The power structure between the male and female staff in the KSC

Satō's research into the KSC in 1995 showed the difficulties faced by female staff and how it took them more time than male staff to gain promotion to junior managerial positions. Sixty percent of male staff thought this system of promotion was reasonable in contrast to twenty percent of female staff (Satō, 1995, 307-09). As has already been stated, all the major positions are occupied by male staff. A female staff member in the KSC head office also said there were still few female managers (Q, interviewed 7.10.2008). Even in absolute terms there are far fewer female staff. The KSC's statistics show 29 female staff in comparison with 176 male staff in 2007 (KSC, 2008b).

The case of a staff member who worked for fifteen years in the KSC headquarters shows how male culture and practice was dominant in the KSC office.

Jh, chose to work at the KSC because she needed a job and wanted to work for a social movement. She found staff meetings were often held at the end of the day and lasted until around 8pm. Staff often used to work until late in the night. Because she had children she had to go to the child care centre to pick up her children at 5pm because if she was late she had to pay a fine. However, when she tried to challenge this practice by insisting on working from nine to five she was told that "child care is not a privilege… You can quit [this job]". On top of that because she couldn't attend the meetings held in overtime she found it was hard to catch up with other staff and keep on top of her job. On the day after these meetings she would find people were discussing things she didn't know about so she had to ask to find out what was going on. She would get a cold response from other staff who would ask "why don't you know that?" As she could only work half the hours put in by other staff she found she was increasingly isolated. In these circumstances she said most women would quit their job when they got married.

Studies show that organisations' practices and rules tend to be set to a male standard in which a worker is meant to be free from taking care of children and household management and can work for extra hours, which systematically excludes women staff from participating and results in discrimination and alienation (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; Acker, 1990; Acker, 2006).

Because she wanted to develop the KSC as a social movement she put forward a lot of proposals such as introducing GMO issues, using female carriers in the delivery service and other changes. All of these were ignored by her boss with all kinds of excuses although, ironically, the KSC later adopted these policies. In another instance, she suggested that the KSC introduce fair trade coffee in the KSC but again her boss ignored her. She managed to involve a fair trade activist in a KSC subsidiary organisation called the Earth Tree. But her boss got angry with her and he gave her a final warning and had her write a report which went back on her previous suggestions.

This shows how a male leader monopolised the development of ideology and policy in ways

which prevented her putting forward new ideas. Although her demands for equality in the office were rejected the impact of this system is not necessarily limited to female staff. Indeed, Ito points out that ordinary male staff in the KSC faced similar difficulties and were also excluded from the decision making process as the relationship between them and Chairs was becoming increasingly like the relationship between employee and employer in a company (Ito, 1995, 250). To illustrate the problem facing ordinary members of staff one of them said: "If we are in a board meeting we do not feel able to suggest something to the Chairs" (ibid, 270).

On top of that for fifteen years she wasn't promoted as she should have been and also faced gender discrimination over wages. Instead a man who had arrived after her and who had only graduated from high school became her boss, contrary to the usual practice in a Japanese office. On top of that she felt he was irresponsible and incompetent. Although it was very difficult for a woman who had children to find a new job she felt that "she would rot under this irresponsible boss" because she was losing motivation for the movement.

She said "I felt discrimination every day". When I asked her if she got any support from the woman who was elected as the first female chairperson she replied, "Oh! she was a person who followed men's opinions."

She added, "After that I didn't know what to do. Was it a mistake to choose to work for the SC Co-op? I was sceptical about what I did. .. maybe it was meaningless .. I might be wrong….. I was so deeply broken down I couldn't do anything after that" (Jh, interviewed 1.10.2008).

Another female member of staff I interviewed, who is still working for the KSC, said that the KSC has improved and has become a more relaxed environment for working mothers. But she also said that more women just go home even if meetings are supposed to be held after working hours as they refuse to comply with these rules. She also said women managers are still rare and ordinary staff's opinions tend to be ignored. She thought that those who had alternative ideas or opposed the male leaders eventually left (Q, interviewed 7.10.2008). It is worth pointing out that in many mixed gender organisations there is a division of labour between the genders whereby men tend to monopolise ideology while women tend to assist in supporting men's ideas (Thorne, 1975; Ferree & Roth 1998; Kummba, 2001; Acker, 2006).

The KSC developed a different system for employing members through the Workers' Collectives. Ueno (2004) criticised Japanese Co-ops for employing female workers in part-time positions with lower wages while their core workers are male. Although recently the KSC has used some dispatched, or agency workers, it has not taken on part-time workers directly as staff. Instead, from the 1990s a considerable amount of office work started to be outsourced to Workers' Collectives like the 'Jam' in which members are employed. These Workers' Collectives operate the 'community price' which sets wages at a lower rate following the principle that Workers' Collectives are supposed to provide an alternative to wage labour. So these KSC members did office work for the KSC at far lower wages than those paid to the mostly male office staff.

In the rare cases in which members are taken on as staff in the KSC they tend to be promoted quickly. Most of them were either divorcees or in economically difficult situations (Jh, pers.comm, Oct 2010). Becoming a full-time member of staff means working long hours, which is very difficult for married women. For the most part if they want to work they have to choose to work in organisations like the 'Jam' where part-time workers are common. Members are thereby inadvertently excluded from being KSC staff, which is very different from the Net and Workers' Collectives where most of the staff are active members.

3.3 Changes in the structure of the KSC and their impact on the empowerment of the women

As was pointed out in Chapter 2, the social and political circumstances need to be taken into consideration when discussing women's empowerment in social movements. Japan has been undergoing considerable social and political changes and the KSC has sought to adapt to those changes. This has resulted in considerable structural reorganisation within the movement, which in turn has affected the nature and depth of participation of the members.

Under the Seventh Interim Plan introduced between 2000 and 2005 the KSC sought to reform its organisational structure to meet the challenges posed by the demographic changes in Japanese society and, in particular, the decline in the number of Hans (KSC, 2001) As the number of working women in Japanese society has increased fewer members have joined the Han system, which is based on full-time housewives, preferring instead to get food through the delivery system or from KSC shops, Depot. The KSC has been more severely affected by

this decline than the SC Movement as a whole. As was already seen the number of members who belonged to Hans had fallen to 29% in 2010. In the past the structure of the KSC was based on the Han, see Figure 25.

Han: 7-8 members
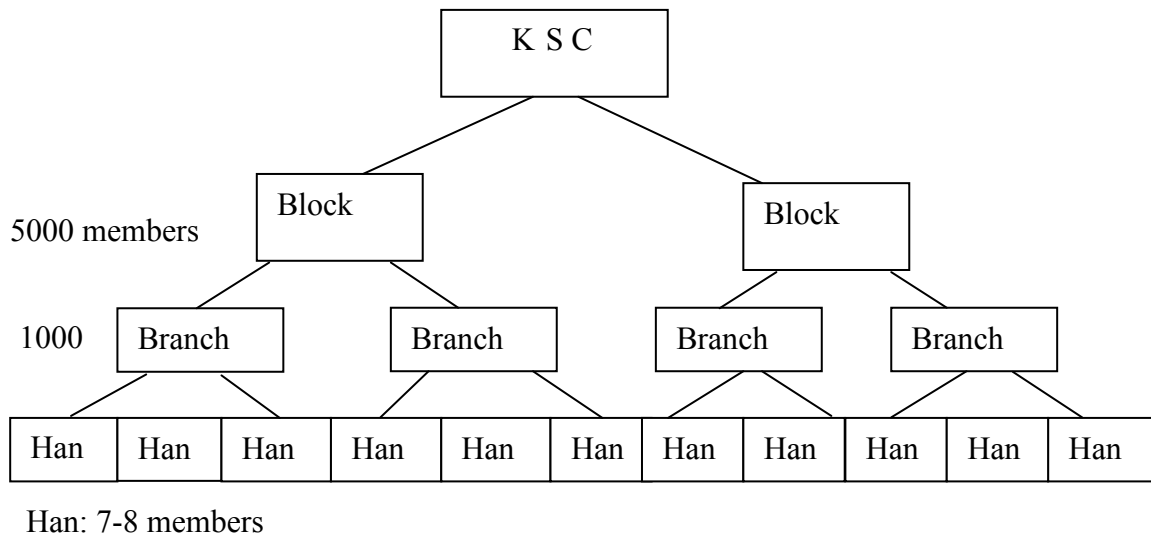
Figure 25: The previous structure of the KSC

The reform of the organisation sought to integrate delivery and shop members, who were largely inactive and nominal but who were now a majority of the membership, into the organisation. The KSC also sought to reach out to those were not KSC members. The reform plan can be summarised in three points. First, the KSC was to be divided into five local Co-ops which were to be united under the banner of the KSC Union. Individual members, whether Han or delivery members, were to be organised into Kurabus or Clubs and several Kurabus would combine to create one Comonzu, see Figure 26.

Second, shop users were to be organised through the shops or Depots. Members can participate in management committees and small members' groups called 'Wakus' to support the Depots, such as 'vegetable sorting, food tasting, information distribution Wakus'. In 2008, the Syonan SC, one of the five Co-ops in the KSC, consisted of 14 Comonzus and 2 Depots (Syonan SC Co-op, 2008). Third, each local Co-op was to foster and support small groups in the local area, called associations, under the umbrella of the Forum Associa, in which non KSC members can also participate. The KSC encourages its members and non-members to forge small interest groups for their hobbies or self-help. When a group enrols with a local SC the KSC provides help such as providing meeting places, offices, advertisements and, sometimes, funds (Forum Associa, 2010).
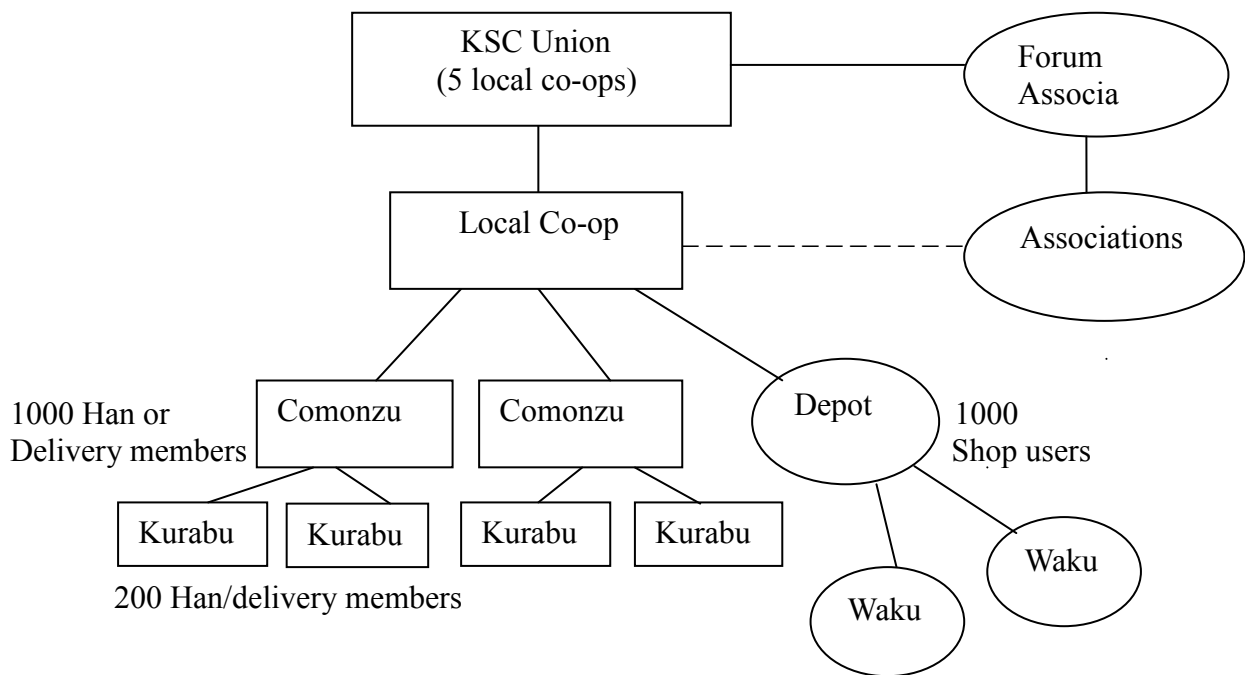
Figure 26: The new structure of the KSC

Although Hans remain important their function has changed. Before, each Han was a decision making body, which had a vote. But now each individual member, whether she is a Han member, delivery member or shop user, has a vote. Thus, the Han now functions as a delivery system rather than a decision making body within the KSC, although it is still an important human network for exchanging information and raising social awareness.

For a long time the KSC was built around the Hans and Branches to which, in principle, members had to belong in order to get KSC products. However, the new Kurabus and Comonzus are much looser than the earlier system of Hans and Branches. Members take part in the Kurabus on a voluntary base, where they make plans and hold small events like food tasting or lectures on health, craft making and other subjects. These meetings are held on average once every two to three months and attendance averages twenty to thirty people, around ten percent of the membership, considering around two hundred belong to each Kurabu. Each Comonzu has around a thousand members (KSC, 2004).

This reform programme has made it more possible for part-time working women to participate in KSC activities. Part-time working women, who are more likely to be delivery members or shop users, and full-time housewives appear to hold positions of responsibility in

the Kurabus and Comonzus in roughly equal proportions. I was told that in the Syonan and Yokohama SCs, two of the new local Co-ops, similar numbers of full-time housewives and part-time workers were chairs of committees (To, interviewed 18.11.2008; Aa, Ma, Dj, focus group 14.12.2008). However, as was mentioned above, not only is the level of participation lower but also, while in the previous system there were a lot of members who held positions like Han leader, committee member and committee chair, in the current system there are fewer positions. However, they have retained the system of rotating offices even though there is a greater emphasis on voluntary participation and less reliance on peer pressure.

As was shown in Chapter 5, the experience of holding office has a great impact on the members' empowerment. The reduction in the number of offices and the looser structure is likely to mean many members will not experience the same depth of involvement as in the past. However, when I visited a Comonzu meeting I was told by a young Kurabu leader that she had experienced 'minna no chikara' or everybody's power through her involvement. I had just asked her what impact the KSC had had on her and had not expected her to refer to this kind of collective empowerment (Pz, interviewed 18.11.2008). Another young member said she had discovered through her KSC activities how local society worked and she had become socially aware as a result (Bq, interviewed 18.11.2008). Plainly the new structure still enables members to experience considerable changes in their outlook and consciousness. The KSC has had to make difficult choices when facing the demographic changes in Japanese society. In order to reach out to other groups of members it has had to adapt its organisation to meet their needs but this has resulted in changes to the way the organisation works.

As the KSC sees it Japan has become a high risk society and people have become increasingly individualistic. People used to be employed for their whole life and felt safe in their company community. Japanese companies used to provide considerable welfare benefits for their employees. Now companies do not employ their workers on a lifetime basis and because of companies restructuring employees are in a very vulnerable position. People have lost the communities on which they had relied. Even the nuclear family is disintegrating. However, the government is not capable of dealing with the emerging issues such as increasing unemployment, personal financial insecurity, an ageing society and the high suicide rate because it has stuck to a 'small government' policy. Therefore, citizens have to cope with these problems by themselves (KSC, 2001; 2006)

The KSC considers this individualism has its good points in increasing freedom and autonomy, but believes people should forge a new 'civil sphere' through the creation of associations, in which the third sector, Workers' Collectives and other volunteer organisations, interest groups or hobby groups can create a wide network of social associations. In this instance, the KSC's 'social sphere' appears to have a broad meaning of 'third sector' or 'civil society' as opposed to the market and government sectors. The KSC is aiming to be a pioneer in creating these networks with a base in the local community by mobilising its existing networks built around the Hans, which are now integrated into the Kurabus (KSC, 2001; 2006).

The Forum Associa, together with the WE21Japan, is also part of the effort to enhance the participation of members who up till now have not been active in the KSC. The Forum Associa aims to enhance the cohesion between members through group activities based on their interests as well as opening up opportunities for non-members to become involved in the KSC. This organisation aims to forge a wider social network by creating groups, including men, in local communities based around a wide range of individual interests such as health, education and hobbies and self-help. There were around three hundred of these groups in 2008 (Bk, interviewed 3.12.2008).

WE21Japan shops, which were first opened in 1998, also reach out to non-members. By 2010 there were 55 shops run by paid managers and volunteers. I met a manager and two volunteers, one of whom was not a KSC member and even disliked the KSC, in a local shop where around fifteen people are actively involved. Managers and volunteers are encouraged to go on tours of the developing countries to which WE21Japan sends aid, as well as to attend study groups and training. They also bring people from developing countries to Japan for exchange visits. Some members said that as a result of their involvement they have become much more aware of environmental and third world issues (Av, Ks and Ea, separately interviewed 11.12.2008).

However, while the KSC has made efforts to involve a wider range of members, during my second fieldwork trip there were some disturbing signs of the difficulties the movement was facing. For example, I attended a KSC symposium on global warming held by the Institute of Participation Systems in the Yokohama City Naka Ward building. This was the only meeting convened by the KSC on social issues, other than food, during the three months I was in

Japan. There were around one hundred people at the meeting, mostly women in their fifties and sixties, but the hall was less than half full. This was a big reduction by comparison with three years ago when I attended a similar meeting in the same place organised by the same Institute. At that time the place was almost full and those attending were much more enthusiastic. But none of the middle rank leaders whom I had met a few days earlier at a local Co-op meeting turned up and the only person I recognised was the local Co-op chair whom I had met at the focus group. I was also surprised to see that KSC male staff did not attend the meeting. I thought the Net people might be right when they said that the KSC people are now only interested in food (Field note, 8.12.2008).

The participation of full-time working women

For all of these changes the participation of full-time working women in the KSC remains difficult. Nowadays the great majority of women in Japan go out to work, unlike the time when the KSC was established. The level of participation of full-time working women in the KSC still appears to be very low and although part-time workers are now more active in the KSC the majority of active members are still full-time housewives. In the past this was taken for granted.

According to a former member, it is difficult for full-time working women to get involved. She held a position as a chair of the consumption committee, one tier above the Han, but was only able to do this when she quit her job temporarily (Sw, focus group 29.10.2008). Another former member said that she had a friend in the KSC who was keen on being a member of 'The Research Group on Unpaid Work', but she couldn't be involved because she had a part–time job and was not able to attend meetings because of the times they were held (Cp, interviewed 2.8.2005). Although there are exceptions it seems that most events are planned with full-time or nearly full-time housewives in mind and are held in the daytime or during the week (KSC, 2008a). For instance, I attended a big annual event organised by a local Co-op, called 'The Winter Party', where local members get together to have a party. There was a lecture from a KSC food producer, a seaweed farmer, and everybody tasted different kinds of seaweed. It was an informal party where people could chat and eat nice food and have some fun with quiz competitions. However, it was held at midday on a weekday when it was impossible for working members to attend (Field note, 7.11.2008). Only two of the eight

events I attended during the second fieldwork trip were not held on week days. If the member is a serious part-time or full-time worker it would be difficult for her to attend these events.

It is fair to say there seems to be some variation depending on the local Co-op. For instance, when I looked at the recent programme of Yokohama Minami Co-op there were members' events held at the weekend, which husbands and children could attend, although other events were held in the daytime on weekdays. On the other hand, in the case of a local Welfare Co-op facility in Kamakura City, which is a city in the Kanagawa Prefecture, the events were held exclusively in the daytime on weekdays and therefore not possible for working women to attend (Field note, 11.11.2008).

A manager of a snack shop, a long-standing KSC member, complained that

> "on reading through the flyers [sent by the KSC Co-op], I threw them straight in the bin (she made a gesture of throwing them away) because there is nothing I can attend." She added that "if the times suited I would like to attend" (Mx, interviewed 7.11.2008).

A teacher, a KSC member, said that it is impossible for her to attend any KSC meetings because she could not find the time. She could only participate if there were meetings at the weekend, then she could participate occasionally (Du, focus group 2.11.2008). Her husband, also a teacher, said he was willing to participate if a Han was set up in his school (Dn, focus group 2.11.2008). I wondered why the KSC was not aware of this and why it did not make an effort to organise Hans in the workplace. I found there were a few Hans in nurseries and hospitals where many women work. I also heard from a woman that a Han was created by chance a few years ago between female school staff in the KSC. The KSC leaders didn't know about this and they thought it was almost impossible to organise such a Han (Sl, focus group 11.11.2008; Xy, interviewed 10.10.2008). As a matter of fact the KSC was the only SC Co-op which started with the support of Hans in workplaces (Katumi, 2004). I also found there are other Hans operating in workplaces although this was hardly known amongst the KSC members (Aa, Ma and Dj, focus group 14.12.2008). It would be entirely possible to organise Hans in workplaces where women are in a majority such as in child-care centres, hospitals and school. For example, I happened to meet a woman who belonged to a Han in a school in another part of the SC Movement in Shizuoka City.

If the KSC thought organising working women was important, considering the likely future demographic changes facing women in Japan, it might be thought it could use this example from its past to find a way to develop the social movement to involve working women and include issues which affect them. Yet it seems even Katumi has forgotten his own early experiences.

Therefore, although the KSC has made great efforts to cope with the demographic changes amongst Japanese women by reorganising the distribution system from Han to Delivery and Depot as well as by creating sub-organisations, it still has to be anticipated that full-time working women will find it harder to participate than full-time housewives or part-time working women. The KSC still has a long way to go in making the necessary adjustments like reconsidering times for meetings and organising Hans in working places to make things easier for working women.

The changes being carried through by the KSC in response to the demographic changes in Japanese society and in the KSC membership are important in terms of their impact on the empowerment of the KSC women. As these changes have been taking place during the period this thesis has been prepared it is too early to know exactly what their impact will be. However, it is the contention of this thesis that empowerment in a social movement is related to the collective actions of the movement and the resulting collective empowerment and that its ideology plays a key role in motivating the women, in inspiring participation and in broadening their consciousness, while the internal structure and dynamics of the movement facilitate or constrain this empowerment. It is to be anticipated, therefore, that changes in any of these features will affect the empowerment of the members. Lower rates of participation through the decline of the Hans or fewer committee positions, a loss of political consciousness through the divorce from the Net, a retreat from a broader consciousness as a result of members becoming consumers rather than organisers all pose a risk of a decline in collective action and a loss of dynamism. There are some indications that this is happening in the KSC. In a negative sense this tends to confirm the findings that empowerment in a social movement does occur as suggested in this thesis. In interviews, as has already been pointed out, newer members appear to show less awareness of the political dimension of the movement and show less awareness of or interest in issues other than food safety. This alteration, although it was not able to be properly tested, appeared to accompany a decline in

participation both in terms of time and depth and a retreat into greater commercialism. However, there is a more positive aspect to this change in that the KSC Movement in seeking to adapt to changing circumstances has shown a willingness to address issues of importance to working women and thus to promote a broader gender awareness and advance women's empowerment in this respect, although this remains rather piecemeal in its approach.

4. Empowerment and disempowerment in Workers' Collectives

The KSC and Net leaders established Workers' Collectives as a means of pioneering an alternative type of work and business (Na, 2008). In addition, the long recession since the beginning of the 1990s meant many members, particularly middle aged women, were having difficulty finding work. One opportunity which presented itself lay in the needs of the increasing numbers of old people in Japan. This meant there was a growing demand for welfare services and this provided an opportunity for the newly created Workers' Collectives (Ueno, 2007a, 126).

4.1 'Gueru Wakazu' people

Workers' Collectives fall into three categories: first, businesses operating under contract to the KSC, second, independent businesses and third, businesses operating in the welfare sector. The independent businesses are not of concern here as they decide their own future and survive or fail according to their own performance.

When the idea of Workers' Collectives was introduced in the KSC many leaders were involved in trying to make this experimental and seemingly ideal type of organisation work. Every year new Workers' Collectives were created. During this early period, after the first Workers' Collectives were created in the early 1980s, the KSC adopted the slogan 'Gueru Wakazu' or 'Feed-able Workers' Collectives', meaning 'through this work we should be able to feed ourselves', which included the aspiration of promoting women's economic independence from their husbands. However, later Katumi initiated another concept called the 'Kommuniti Kakaku', or 'Community Price', which worked against this, by which the wages of members of Workers' Collectives should be calculated. In explaining this concept Katumi declared that jobs in Workers' Collectives are defined as 'community work' which is

understood as work which produces necessary value in the local society. The 'Community Price' is the value ascribed to this work, which in turn is based on the idea of direct exchange in a barter economy (Xy, interviewed, 10.10.2008) or in Lets or Time banks, based on non-profit, co-operative businesses (Katumi, 2004, 128). On this basis, he originally suggested to Co-op members that wages in Workers' Collectives should be pitched at 50-70% of the market rate (ibid, 127).

The Workers' Collective members who argued for 'Gueru Wakazu' were ignored and alienated. For instance, a strong proponent of the 'Gueru Wakazu', Ba, a female leader, was replaced by a proponent of the 'Community Price' after she was in conflict with Xy (Rz, interviewed 7.12.2008). A supporter of 'Gueru Wakazu', Rz, said:

> "I kept arguing for it. Originally the slogan 'Gueru Wakazu' came from 'Ninjin' [the first Workers' Collective]. We weren't very strong [at that time] but it was our goal, because we shouldn't be fed by our husbands [any more]. I was against the idea of 'Community Price'. It isn't fair [to say such a thing] to single women and women with children. .... What I hated most was the fact that women in Workers' Collectives are expected to remain as amateurs even after ten years' work. …They should be professional…. I hate Xy. He hates me because I talked openly about these things. He despises women. After all, what it comes down to is he fools women" (Rz interviewed 7.12.2008).

According to her the philosophy of 'Gueru Wakazu' has been on the retreat in the Kanagawa Workers' Collectives Union, after an influx of new members from the welfare sector, where the volunteer spirit was prevalent.

Faced with this pressure those in the welfare sector who wanted to receive proper wages left the Workers' Collectives and set up their own NPOs and corporations (Rz interviewed 7.12.2008; Jh interviewed 1.10.2008). Rz recalled the exodus:

> "There was a big commotion in the Workers' Collectives [because of that], [but] basically it was a matter which could have been resolved by discussion [in the Union]. I felt Xy's theory was responsible for that exodus" (Rz, interviewed 7.12.2008).

Unlike the KSC's male ideologues these members believed that women's economic independence was compatible with creating an alternative way of working to capitalism. She was convinced of this when she toured Europe with a group visiting Workers' Co-operatives

which were successful businesses. At that time she thought:

> "while in Italy the Workers' Co-operatives were powerful enough to enable Italy's economy to recover, what are we doing in Japan only using housewives? My argument wasn't supported within the Kanagawa Workers' Collectives Union. I was simply regarded as a troublesome person… I thought I am going to do what I like [outside the Workers' Collectives Union] so I set up a restaurant"[13] (Rz, interviewed 7.12.2008).

She went on to explain the reason why they were in a minority among the members of Workers' Collectives and why their ideas didn't catch on with the women:

> "Their husbands earn money so they don't feel like earning money themselves. However, I was born in a poor family running a restaurant. I took it [the Workers' Collective] very seriously… [but] there were plenty of women who blindly follow those in power. They might feel insecure otherwise….." (Rz, interviewed 7.12.2008).

Two other women, who had worked in private restaurants before joining a Workers' Collective which runs a restaurant, found that the other members of the Workers' Collective were unable to keep up as restaurant work is very hard. All of the other members gave up leaving them to run the restaurant on their own because they could not endure the hard work. They said that many members of Workers' Collectives did not have the strength to keep going. In the opinion of Lw and Ia they were too affluent and feeble. For these two women, who had experience of running or working in restaurants, unlike the other members, this was their livelihood and a way of life, not a hobby (Lw and Ia, focus group 28.9.2008).

In the case of these women their class background may have affected their outlook. Rz, who grew up in a poor family, although she later married a better off husband who had a factory, and the other two who were running a restaurant, a Workers' Collective, showed how they despised the women from affluent backgrounds. But more broadly class plainly plays a part in determining how different women view their work. Businesses can be tough to run and require a lot of commitment, which those women who became members on the basis of their ideology may not be able to sustain. Women like Rz consider the Workers' Collective to be a

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[13] She ran a restaurant to promote local activism. The staff were involved in management and were paid well so that many young women joined the staff. It demonstrated an alternative model, a kind of 'Gueru Wakazu', which combined business with a successful community movement. Later Rz left because she had to take on her late husband's business.

workplace. However, in most cases, KSC members like Fr, who come from a middle class background, choose to work part–time, so that they can work and earn some pocket money (Fr, interviewed 29.10.2008).

4.2 Members in Workers' Collectives commissioned by the KSC

There is a spectrum in terms of independence and revenue in this category of Workers' Collectives. Although the Workers' Collectives which run Depots, the KSC's shops, are bound by their contract with the KSC the Workers' Collective members can earn more by increasing the turnover of their shops. Likewise members of Workers' Collectives providing carrier or delivery services earn more than those in other Workers' Collectives, because the work is physically very hard and tends to be done by men or young people. But members of other Collectives, which depend on outsourced orders from the KSC and are heavily dependent on the KSC, suffer low incomes and a lack of power to negotiate a better deal. Despite the principle that in Workers' Collectives 'there is neither employer not employee' and that they represent an 'alternative style of business in which workers invest and run themselves', actually this type of Workers' Collective lacks real power to shape its future.

Case study

> Jf worked at the 'Jam' Workers' Collective which provides administrative services for the KSC under an outsourced contract. She took the job because she needed the money. Currently the majority of people in the Jam are working there because they need to make a living. Every year they negotiate their levels of pay with the KSC. But their pay hasn't been changed for fifteen years. Some members asked "why do we only get paid like this while we are working so much." Basically it is very difficult to find a reason for demanding better pay. As she put it, the problem is:

>> "We are housewives, so we didn't study management and we are not accustomed to negotiating along the lines of 'we worked like this so would you please give us that'. When we tried to explain our feelings to 'the old, cunning man' (the KSC's male leader) we thought this and that, we were told 'you should bring me statistical material rather than tell me your feelings'. But this is difficult to do because we have work to do rather than analysing our work into statistics. It is very difficult to present our work value as a figure. I need to study hard not to be defeated [by the KSC staff]… I have such a feeling [because of low pay] it is difficult to bring up leaders"

(Jf, focus group 10.11.2008).

Ho, a woman who worked for a recycling Workers' Collective, was in a similar situation:

"Our pay hasn't been raised … we are the same…. But what about the SC staff themselves? I think their pay has been increased. Why is our pay not increasing? I am very unhappy with that….Although I was told that you are under contract [with the KSC]… (everybody laughs) … they are paid two thousand, three thousand and five thousand yen per hour …. But we get less than a thousand… hundreds of yen… I don't understand…. I am not happy but I can't find the words to justify higher wages…. They [the KSC staff] just think they are working for something very lofty. I am now fifty…I have worked for twenty-one years… I find myself thinking I may have made the wrong choice. There won't be any retirement grant [or] pension. ….If I had chosen to work quietly in an ordinary company, at my age there would be a big difference, there would be a retirement grant, there would be pension. But I think 'but it is OK because I have just been working as I like'."

She believes young people cannot continue to work in this way. They would work only while their children are studying at elementary school (Ho, focus group 10.11.2008).

Another woman who worked for a publishing Collective also described their difficulties because they don't have young people to succeed them, while they are getting older (Wl, focus group 10.11.2008).

However, the same focus group included women who were content with the KSC contract. They appeared to accept the wages policy of the Workers' Collectives and agreed with the idea that Workers' Collectives are pioneers of the civil sector in Japan. Some of them appeared to be confused between the ideology of Workers' Collectives and the belief in women's economic independence (focus group 10.11.2008).

Some Net people were critical of this policy and were also not happy with the male staff and the female leaders of the KSC. A Net municipal assembly member said "I don't know what on earth the SC Co-op's Chairwoman and the Board of Directors [who decide the level of pay] are doing" (Rk, focus group 27.10.2008)

4.3 Members in Workers' Collectives in the welfare sector

Because of the low wages paid by Workers' Collectives under the so-called 'Community Price' system young people, who have to support themselves, do not join Workers' Collectives. In addition, since the collapse of the economic bubble even middle-class women tend to look for jobs which provide sufficient income to provide for their families. The principal source of members of Workers' Collectives has been full-time housewives. However, as the number of full-time housewives has been steadily diminishing this has resulted in a growing problem of a lack of new members and an ever ageing workforce.

A member of staff from a Workers' Collective for elderly care, who gave a recruitment talk after a KSC meeting, joked cynically:

> "because, nowadays, we members of Workers' Collectives are ageing it is difficult for outsiders to discern the difference between those who are caring and those who are being cared for" (Field note, 18.11.2008).

Another staff member from the Welfare Co-op, when referring to the growing problem of ageing staff finding the work too physically hard, said "nowadays old members of Workers' Co-operatives tend to quit because they get injured" (Cw, interviewed 2.12.2008).

I found almost all the Workers' Collectives I visited, especially the Workers' Collectives in the elderly care sector, were suffering from a lack of new and young members. Many Workers' Collectives members were warning about the lack of replacements to continue the business after their retirement (Field note, 29.11.2008). The Kanagawa Workers' Collectives Union is well aware of this fact. A Workers' Collective leader, Ap, said:

> "The membership of Workers' Collectives needs to change otherwise it will be too aged. It is becoming difficult with this age group. It is difficult to continue with this group."

While she admitted this problem is largely caused by low wages she still thinks the objectives of the Workers' Collectives do not just encompass women's economic self support and higher wages are not the solution:

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"In the local society, there are two kinds of people, those who have to prioritise making a living and those who prioritise other activities. I think that the people who have to prioritise making a living should go to places where they can make a living. The task of Workers' Collectives is to target the needs of local society at the moment. To say that because a certain wage is guaranteed people can work for the Workers' Collective is different from the values of the Workers' Collectives which we have put into practice" (Ap, interviewed 13.11.2008).

This is in line with Xy's ideas. Nd, a KSC leader, also makes it clear that those who have to earn a living should choose other jobs:

"[Essentially] they labour for themselves. There are jobs where people can earn money, in the world of employment. Workers' Collectives cannot do everything" (Nd, interviewed 15.10.2008).

A Workers' Collective leader, Ap, thinks that raising consciousness is critical in overcoming the difficulties in recruitment:

"It is getting harder to explain this [the values of the Workers' Collectives] to those who have a different sense of values. I think the reason that there are people who have worked for twenty years for a Workers' Collective is they have felt ownership, they find it easy to work there and have achieved self-fulfilment through making a contribution to society…. It is a very important task for us to find a way to make them [new people from outside the KSC] understand" (Ap, interviewed 13.11.2008).

In fact, Katumi said the Kanagawa Workers' Collectives Union was established for the purpose of controlling wages in Workers' Collectives. Whilst new Workers' Collectives were being created the demand for wages based on the market system grew and proved uncontrollable. The Union was set up in order to prevent this and to re-establish the earlier control (Katumi, 2004, 125).

Ueno pointed out that in fact an issue of class lay behind the women leaders' acceptance of low wages. The Japanese government introduced the 'Long-Term Care Insurance' policy in 2000, so that when an elderly person uses a welfare service provided by a Workers' Collective in the elderly care sector the Workers' Collective receives some money from the local government. This directly affected the wages of those working in these Workers' Collectives and meant their wages went up. When this happened there was considerable resistance from the members of Workers' Collectives who did not wish to get paid more because of the new law. They wanted to keep their status as people who did good things for

the local society rather than as workers doing a low status job (Ueno, 2007b, 127).

According to Fushimi's survey on the Workers' Collectives' in home-care service in Kanagawa, over 87% of the members received an annual payment of under 1,030,000 yen, roughly £8,080. This meant that their earnings were within the category of 'spousal relief' in the Japanese tax system and these earnings were not taxed. Their worked an average of 4.7 hours a day and their average age was forty-seven years old. She says the main pillar of the Workers' Collectives was full-time housewives who were dependent on their husband's earnings and who were less concerned about earning money. 62.5% of the respondents did not aspire to earn a living from their Workers' Collective activities (Fushimi, 2006).

Feminist scholars on social policy and economics have pointed out that women's lower status in the labour market and unpaid or under paid care work are closed related. They are not only concerned about the impact of low wages in care services on women's status but also on the quality of care (Elson, 2002; Hassim & Razavi, 2006; Razavi, 2007). In this sense, the Workers' Collectives have contributed to women's status because they put a value on women's previously unpaid care work in the household by socialising this work. However, the policy of keeping wages below the market level may also be contributing to the undermining of their status. The 'Long-Term Care Insurance' policy is designed by the neo-liberal government to reduce the government budget by relying on NPOs (Non-Profit Organisations) like the Workers' Collectives, in which women are underpaid. This policy is praised for benefiting women who mostly shoulder care responsibilities in the household. But it is criticised because the middle class are its beneficiaries. This means that poor women, whether they care for the elderly in the home or work for NPOs or in the market sector, suffer a negative impact in either unpaid or low paid work. Uzuhashi pointed out in her report on Japanese care-workers that unpaid volunteer work and part-time work by homemakers in NPOs 'bring down the supply-price of work' (Uzuhashi, 2010, 20).

4.4 Different empowerments in Workers' Collectives

Workers' Collectives are run on the principles of participation and democratic management. Because of these principles they have obvious strengths for a certain group of women. Firstly, there are those who do not have to work for a living, especially middle-aged, middle-class women. This group of women tends to originally come from the KSC with the intention of

establishing humanitarian welfare in the local area in accordance with the KSC's ideology. They get a small amount of money from this work (Fr, interviewed 29.10.2008). Other middle-aged women, who do not have skills or have found it hard to find places to work, have also become involved since the bubble economy collapsed and they have had to work to contribute to the household economy (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

Secondly, Workers' Collectives also offer opportunities for young women who have small children as they allow flexible hours of work and, especially if their place of work is near their house, they can go home whenever their child has a problem like illness or injury and they can talk to their colleagues and ask for a replacement. In particular, it is a good place for single mothers to work (Gs, focus group 9.12.2008; Jj, interviewed 4.10.2008).

The system of Workers' Collectives, which emphasises participatory management by all members, appears to have a mixed impact on the participants. According to Yamashita (2007), who investigated NPOs (Non-Profit Organisations) in the elderly care sector in Japan, the SC's Workers' Collectives are run in the most participatory and democratic way. Workers' Collectives consider regular and frequent meetings, through which they share their organisational philosophy and policies, to be very important (ibid). In relation to this, the participatory system appears to be empowering because members can be involved in decision making, can learn about management and broaden their views.

A woman who works in a Workers' Collective child-care centre said:

> "I worked in an ordinary child–care centre before I married. [In there] the relationship with your boss was very harsh… Instructions on how to care were already decided and we just got told what to do. I had to follow the instructions even when I didn't feel like it… But here you can think what to do, so working here is very attractive… certainly different" (Ek, focus group 12.12.2008).

Her young colleague said:

> "I don't know the difference because I never worked in an ordinary company. But it is very easy to work in the Workers' Collective and it is easy to get along, it is good in that you can say what you think" (Yd, focus group 12.12.2008).

Another colleague said "I think it is interesting [working in the Worker's Collective]" (Nt,

focus group 12.12.2008).

A young woman working for the SC Co-op's Carrier food delivery service, where many young people work, said:

> "I am able to plan and implement my ideas. And I have learnt to reflect… I've learnt how to make reports and how to say what I think to other people. It will be useful even after I leave for somewhere like PTA… whatever I may do… like in a local self-governing body" (Ml, focus group 9.12.2008).

It should be noted that these statements are from Workers' Collectives in the child-care and transport sectors in which staff are particularly well-paid because they needed young and male personnel. However, the participatory system means there are frequent meetings to discuss management issues as well as arrangements with other outside bodies (Fushimi, 2006, 50). A member of Dial–A Workers' Collective whom Fushimi interviewed said:

> "I attend not only A's (a Workers' Collective) meeting but also meetings in the city assembly which are unpaid, almost every day. I was told that citizens should participate in such things. I only get 40-50,000 yen, even if I work from the morning to the night" (Fushimi, 2006, 50).

Fushimi's interviewee worked for a full day and was paid. For those like her who work for a living and tend to work long hours, unlike most SC Co-op members, meetings can be burdensome and uninteresting, a feeling which may also reflect a difference with the original members from the KSC who have a strong ideology. Jj, a man working in the Carrier delivery service, one of the Workers' Collectives where a considerable number of men and young women work, complained about the meetings saying:

> "Aunties [management level women] chat among themselves all day long. In the meetings they use difficult ideological jargon with too many papers …. I don't want to attend them".

He said that because the meetings are not paid people are not interested and want them to finish as soon as possible so that they can go home (Jj interviewed 4.10.2008). In the case of the 'Carrier' Workers' Collective men tend to leave within one to three years and women tend to stay for five years because they regard the job as temporary (Jj, interviewed 15.11.2008; Fr,

interviewed 29.10.2008) [14].

Attendance at meetings may well be discouraged by the fact that attendance is not paid (Ueno, 2007b, 131). When the hours for meetings are taken into consideration their wages are far lower than in any other sector. Yamashita also points out the limits of participation in the Workers' Collectives because it is difficult to keep all members motivated to attend meetings. In turn the low attendance rate in these meetings would make it difficult for new members to understand the business as a part of a social movement (Yamashita, 2007).

It appears there is a division between veterans who mostly have a background in the KSC and others. The veterans seem to be generally happy in Workers' Collectives because they do not have to work long hours to make a living while they get pocket money from it (Fr, interviewed 29.10.2008). On top of that they may well be proud of themselves for being involved in socially-meaningful work. However, for those who work for a living, although they may find the environment in the Workers' Collectives more human and flexible, the system is time consuming and burdensome because of the frequent meetings. They may well feel distant from the ideologically driven managers. This means there are different empowerments among the Workers' Collectives members according to class and generation.

As long as the wages do not improve and as long as the meetings are not paid the impact of the empowering management system will be limited, in spite of all the efforts to raise consciousness through chats, meetings, lectures and training for the newcomers, including young people (Gh, focus group 26.10.2008; Tb, interviewed 5.11.2008; Yc, interviewed 17.11.2008).

Workers' Collectives and their members face a number of other difficulties. As small and medium-sized businesses they find it hard to get financial support within the existing system. They do not fit into the NPO category because members invest their money in the business and are therefore unable to get tax relief (Amano, 2006, 347-8). Furthermore, people who work for the Workers' Collectives are not employees, because they invest money in the business, and so do not receive benefits like pensions.

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[14] Men only make up 3.6% of the workforce in Workers' Collectives (Fushimi, 2006). Most of them are in their twenties, and between jobs, or are retired as Jj said.

In order to combat this situation the Workers' Collective Network Japan (WNJ) was organised to promote a law to support Workers' Collectives. However, the effectiveness of the strategy and work of the WNJ has yet to be established, partly because the Workers' Collectives in Kanagawa, which make up around half of all Workers' Collectives, do not support it (Park, 2008).

5. Empowerment and disempowerment in the Net

5.1 The changes in power between men and women in the Net

When the male leaders first suggested the creation of the Kanagawa Net movement in 1982 members of the KSC resisted strongly asking 'why should a consumer's co-operative be involved in politics? I don't want to even think about such a thing like politics, because most women had apathy toward politics' (Park, 2009). As was noted earlier Park pointed out that the male leaders made the decision to create a political party. Katumi said that the members became frustrated while they were campaigning and petitioning local assembly members and experiencing failure in getting support for an ordinance forbidding the use of synthetic soap and eventually stopped having any expectations of the existing politicians. As a result they decided to become involved in politics (Katumi, 2004). However, it seems that this simply coincided with the decision which the male leaders had already made and enabled them to push ahead with this policy.

Since being involved in politics the women have had to experience discrimination from male assembly members. When they questioned policies on school food, children and synthetic soaps, they were ridiculed by male members saying 'you should ask about such things in the PTA' (Park, 2009). This has continued to happen. A former assembly member said "when the Net people speak there is considerable heckling" (Ih, interviewed 19.11.2008).

In spite of the initial resistance among the women themselves and the prejudice of other politicians, the KSC established the Net and was successful in local politics. Funabashi (2005) considers the Net created the third wave of women's participation in local politics after the second wave, which followed the impact of the Women's Liberation Movement in Japan in the 1970s. In the Kanagawa Prefecture, in particular, they had a profound impact with success

in the 1990s, which made the formal parties like the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party follow their example (Ooki, 2007).

The Kanagawa Net has also experienced change in terms of the balance of power between men and women. When it was conceived it was not just as a housewives' movement. The male leaders envisaged a network between the labour and consumers' movements which would reform local politics. Members were to include students and young people, so that more than half of the seventeen management committees included men and one in three had a male chair (Park, 2008). Even after the Kanagawa Net was established as a women's party, the involvement of men and their control continued, but this has gradually changed.

After 1991 the Kanagawa Net elected a woman chair and since then has only had female chairs. In addition, in 1994 a woman became the general secretary instead of a man sent from the KSC. A Net leader said "we expelled the men' (Yc, interviewed 19.10.2008). However, the conflict over the men's control appears to have continued. According to the record of a round table talk on the subject 'Is the consumers' co-operative a top-down organisation?' in 1996, members of the panel referred to the members' frustration with this control in the Kanagawa Net during the election campaign.

> Ueno "at the last election… the mass media have praised it as a 'women's election'… but those who are involved in the election campaign are very unhappy. I think that because it was time for the women to show their power, ironically their frustration was able to come to the surface. I heard that the time the conflict came to a head was during the election campaign when men controlled it completely and the candidates were like puppets. The way of campaigning was also not democratic, which is based on network system, it was absolutely top-down so that there was strong frustration among the members."
>
> Satō: "At least you can say it is progress because they were able to express it." (Inoue, et al, 1987, 36)

Currently all of the staff in the Kanagawa Net are women and most of them are Net activists. This has meant that the women have become more independent of the influence of the men. However, the top male leader still exercised power as the 'political advisor' to the Kanagawa Net and continued to teach women leaders until 2003. Recently, all the staff including the chair, management committee and office staff have been women.

5.2 The top-down culture of the Net

The Kanagawa Net used to be under the direct control of the male KSC staff. Currently, although the direct influence of the male staff has disappeared, the top-down culture still remains as a legacy. A former KSC member of staff, who attended a meeting of Kanagawa Net leaders, recalled:

> "I felt it was very strange when I attended a Net meeting (shaking her head), it was not democratic at all. Only the two top leaders were speaking" (Jh, interviewed 1.10.2008).

However, it seems this was not only the case with meetings of leaders, but also occurred more widely in the Kanagawa Net, in the coalition of the local Nets and in local Nets. A former Net staff member illustrated the power structure of the Net:

> "Participation, devolution, autonomy and openness is what we used to say, but each of them failed… Devolution to the local Net wasn't working. Instead there was centralisation.… Everyone stayed silent, they just said yes! (laughing)… otherwise you would be attacked". She said left the Net partly because she was disgusted by it (D, interviewed 28.10.2008).

The top-down culture between the Kanagawa Net and its local Nets was highlighted when the Kanagawa Net attempted to enter national politics. Regardless of the correctness of the strategy followed the method of pursuing it remained problematic.

In 1989 the Kanagawa Net decided to make a political alliance with the Japanese Socialist Party by supporting a Socialist candidate, Kobayashi, as MP. The local Kanagawa Nets, especially the Tama Net, were strongly opposed to the decision. A municipal assembly member belonging to the Tama Net criticised the decision saying:

> "The Kanagawa Net decided to support the socialist party candidate Kobayashi and ask for the support of the local Nets. We can't accept the decision suddenly thrown from the top… Furthermore while citizen's consciousness against nuclear power plants was rising because of the Chernobyl incident the socialist party's policy in favour of nuclear power plants was compromising us. The Kanagawa Net was against nuclear power plants but suddenly it changed its line saying 'we could accept them depending on the situation" (Park, 2009).

While the local Nets and their members did not fully understand or agree with the decision of the Kanagawa Net to enter national politics the Kanagawa Net leaders made further attempts to play a part in national politics. One of their campaigns from January 1997 was for members and Net politicians to affiliate with the Democratic Party in order to influence that party to adopt Net policies. However, for several reasons this caused fierce resistance among some members and local Nets. First, there were differences of policy between the Kanagawa Net and the Democratic Party, whose policies were not much different from the conservative Liberal Democrat Party. In addition, it was doubtful if the Net could influence the Democratic Party because of the condition that the Net leaders were supposed to be observers without voting rights in the Democratic Party. However, throughout this process, the Kanagawa Net leaders forced the members and the local Nets to follow their ready-made decisions rather than allow a full discussion of the options. As a result the Takatsu Net, a local Net left the Kanagawa Net in 1997 (ibid).

Similarly, in the case of an election in Atsugi City, which is in the Kanagawa Prefecture, the former Net leader campaigned to become Mayor of Atsugi City. A former municipal assembly member, Ih, said that, because of this, local Nets had to sacrifice their local election campaigns to concentrate on the Atsugi Mayoral election. As a result the Kanagawa Net failed in the election of 2003, securing a smaller number of assembly seats (Ih, interviewed 19.11. 2008).

Case study

> Nw was the chair of a local SC Co-op and knew the staff of a support group for T, a Yokohama municipal assembly member. Nw was elected with the help of a local Net support group called Simin-Net (Citizen Net). However, the Net Yokohama, which was superior to the local Net, didn't agree with the Simin-Net's policy in the Yokohama municipality. T chose to follow the Net Yokohama's policy rather than that of her own local Net without even discussing this with her own local Net. The people in the local Net thought that T was influenced by the top male leader's decisions and felt betrayed by E. Nw opposed the lack of respect shown towards the local Net by the Net Yokohama. "I resisted them again and again asking is it OK for you to behave in this way?" Z, who was a very influential member of staff in the Net

Yokohama, immediately became angry with her. Nobody, including the chairwoman, said anything. The local Net was very disappointed by the whole affair. Finally the local Net group was dismissed. Nw said:

"I was attracted by the SC's slogans about women's independence and autonomy so that we got deeply involved... [but] I was depressed and disappointed... I left the Net when I realised how the power structure worked." Her colleague Su added "it hasn't changed much…" (Nw and Ob, focus group 22.10.2008).

A current local assembly member says the level of self-importance among local Net assembly members depends on the size of their constituencies. Thus, she said:

"if someone [from a large constituency] becomes a leader it turns into a top-down system." She added "the former top leader still has too much influence…whether it is good or not… but because of that we don't have a successor for her" (Ro, interviewed 31.10.2008).

5.3 Conflict and splits in the Kanagawa Net

Women's challenge to the male leadership

Conflict over the role of men in the Kanagawa Net led to a split in the Kanagawa Net and the creation of two organisations in 2005, the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama. The women were increasingly aware of the male leaders' control and arbitrary practices, which culminated in disagreements over money:

"They set the rules, but they have kept their influence, despite the rule requiring a system of rotating positions, with a maximum of two terms or eight years…. Some male top staff stay and get paid as advisors. It is strange that they treat themselves as exceptions to the rules. When they retire they got pensions, but they continue to get paid as advisors. …Although the Welfare Club Co-op has a chairwoman the former chairman, Hm, still plays a role as a top leader by being an advisor" (Sl, focus group 11.11.2008).

The women's rebellion may well have come about because, as the women in the Net gained concrete experience of politics by holding diverse positions as local assembly members from village to prefectural level, they increasingly questioned why they should be controlled by men who had no experience of elected office:

> "Xy [the top male leader] is a theorist and he has never been a candidate in elections or worked in the field of welfare service….or in Seikatsu Club activities…In that sense there is a question, is it OK for someone who has never experienced local activities to be a leader? Because we need advisors, researchers and theorists I think we should pay them, for instance, a certain payment on an hourly base. But it is strange for us to have such a theorist and provide for these people with all their living costs. I think it is strange to have someone, for example like Xy, in a position as if he was an elected representative or advisor" (Sl, focus group 11.11.2008).

A local municipal Net representative put it simply:

> "we acknowledge his contribution in the creation of the SC movement, but the question is should he hold power and control the money forever?" (Lb, focus group 11.11.2008).

This complaint amongst the women of the Kanagawa Net appears to have become entangled with a personal power struggle between the top male and female leaders. Municipal assembly members explained what happened and its consequences:

> "Simply speaking, the Empress and the Emperor worked together in the Net. The Emperor managed to use women skilfully…. [At some point] the relationship between them deteriorated…" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008)

Another municipal assembly member recalled:

> "there were rumours that they were involved in a big war. I think that he tried to replace her with another person. As had happened in the SC, he used to interfere in other organisations." (Lb, focus group 11.11.2008)

Eventually, women in the Kanagawa Net led by U blocked the flow of money to Xy. Former municipal assembly member Zp said:

> "A new system of financial controls in the Net meant he couldn't use its money any longer. He managed to get money from the Net using different means and guises such as being a political advisor and a special advisor… This made Xy very angry and he took revenge" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

In the end, Xy joined a group of women who were not happy with the policies of the Kanagawa Net and with the leadership of U and they left and created a new organisation called Net Yokohama. Yokohama is a city in the Kanagawa Prefecture. Xy became an advisor to Net Yokohama.

As will be seen, the split in the Kanagawa Net into the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama was a big setback not only for the Net but also for the whole Kanagawa SC movement. This occurred as a result of the challenge by some women in the Net to the behaviour of the top male leader. But the situation was further distorted by becoming entangled in the conflict between two groups of women in the Net.

The establishment of Net Yokohama

Although the Net women, spearheaded by U, had challenged the top male's behaviour, this did not necessarily mean all of them were happy with her charismatic leadership. In addition, there was a group of people from the Yokohama area who were unhappy with the donation system in the Kanagawa Net (Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008; Sl, focus group 27.10.2008; Ro, interviewed 31.10.2008; Yc, interviewed 17.11.2008). These discontents provided room for Xy to manoeuvre and create a separate Net.

The Kanagawa Net has rotation and donation rules for its local assembly members. Each member can only be a local assembly member for two terms, a maximum of eight years. This is to give other members opportunities to become local assembly members and to prevent them becoming professional politicians. The donation rule requires local assembly members to donate their whole salary to the central Net so that the Kanagawa Net as a whole could use the money to develop its activities and maintain its local offices. The assembly members are then given a certain amount of money back to pay for their activities and expenses. Both these rules are designed to preserve the voluntary spirit among the assembly members and prevent the creation of a professional political elite.

However, the problem is the amount of money the assembly members receive from the Net is the same, currently a hundred and eighty thousand yen, regardless of the size of their constituencies. There are different levels of assemblies from small villages to the prefecture. In addition, as the population is concentrated in the Yokohama City area the constituencies of municipal assembly members are much bigger than those in the suburban areas. Therefore, those who worked for the Yokohama City assembly argued that it was unreasonable for them to be given the same amount of money as those from small villages. Certainly their salaries

were bigger, but they were only paid a small amount by the Net which was not enough to pay for their constituency expenses. However, in the Kanagawa Net talking about money is regarded as dirty and the Yokohama group faced the danger of being criticised as simply money seeking politicians (Za, focus group 12.11.2008; Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008; Zp. interviewed 13.12.2008).

This grievance among the members in the Yokohama area was exacerbated by the top female's top-down leadership style, which contributed to the division of the Kanagawa Net (D, interviewed 28.10.2008). People from both sides, the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama agreed that she was partly responsible for the division of the Kanagawa Net (Ep, focus group 28.10.2008; Jh, interviewed 1.10.2008; Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008).

The top female leader, U, was as charismatic as Xy, "U was exactly like Xy" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008). However, she was assertive enough to prevent other people from expressing their opinions freely. People were afraid of being attacked by her (Jh, interviewed 1.10.2008; Lb, interviewed 8.11.2008). One of the leaders of the Yokohama group, Ih, said, "her opinion is everything … she only listens to what she believes…she can't embrace other ideas" (Ih, interviewed 19.11.2008). "We talked about it [the problem of the donation system] to U, but she didn't listen" (Ep, focus group 28.10.2008).

The Yokohama Group were criticised for the fact that they avoided raising the issues formally and discussing them in the management committee, where all major issues were discussed (Sl, focus group 11.11.2008). In the end the Yokohama assembly members didn't pay what was demanded from their wages to the Kanagawa Net and they were expelled. In 2004 they set up the Net Yokohama in parallel to the Kanagawa Net (Ishikami, 2005).

There is no doubt Xy was deeply involved in this process. Even the separation process did not involve all the members in the Yokohama area. According to a Kanagawa Net leader:

> "the office of Net Yokohama was rented from a state agency as a result of Xy's mediation, so that when they held a press conference even the local members of Net Yokohama itself didn't know about this" (Sl, focus group 11.11 2008).

In fact, the Yokohama group initiated some reforms of the Net system. They wanted to reconsider the donation system and the two terms and eight years system. If municipal

assembly members received more pay from the Net they could be economically self-supporting, although this would create inequality amongst Net assembly women. Abolishing the two terms and eight years system would open the door for the women to continue their careers and become professional politicians. If these arguments were taken seriously in the Net there would be an opportunity for the women to overcome the amateurism of Katumi's full-time housewives' party. Moreover, it would have provided greater opportunities for younger professional women to join. Developing professionalism and achieving economic independence could be seen as advancing the cause of women's equality. However, this would overthrow the rotation system which enabled more women to hold office and spread financial resources through the Net, both of which facilitated the empowerment of the women.

Thus, it was an irony that, in his conflict with U, Xy, the top male leader, forged an alliance with the Yokohama group to take revenge on U and her sympathisers:

> "In the Net there were people who weren't happy for various reasons. He took advantage of them. He got hold of them and left the Kanagawa Net with them. I said that [basically] we are divided not by a difference of ideas but because one leader [Xy] wants to destroy the other [U]… In the next election both sides (the Kanagawa Net and the Net Yokohama) declined" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

Therefore, it can be said the women in the Kanagawa Net who questioned the top male leader's control challenged the internal gender inequality, because they were not happy with the practices of the male leaders as a privileged group. However, this challenge in the Kanagawa Net against internal gender inequality differed from the ideas of gender equality held in Net Yokohama. Furthermore, the fact that the male leader, who had been opposed for his behaviour by the Kanagawa Net, then joined up with Net Yokohama created further confusion as he was now allied with women who were more inclined to support a gender equality agenda despite his support for amateurism in politics. A feminist who did not choose to go with the Yokohama group stated her dilemma at that time:

> "although basically I agreed with the feminist agenda of the Yokohama group, I didn't choose to go with them because he wasn't right either" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

The fact that these two groups of women were unable to resolve their differences had serious consequences for both the Net and the wider KSC Movement.

5.4 Consequences of the conflict in the Net

The conflict has been very damaging not only for the two Nets, the Kanagawa Net and the Net Yokohama, but also for the KSC Movement as a whole. First, both Nets were weakened and declined following the split. Many supporters, lay members of the Net who had come from the KSC, left the Net (Za, focus group 12.11.2008). A leader of the Kanagawa Net said: "The biggest loss is that we lost people, they thought it [the conflict] was disgusting. Certainly, we lost trust" (Lb, interviewed 8.10.2008). Ob, a former active member of the Net said: "After the conflict I graduated from the Net" (Ob, focus group 22.10.2008).

The Yokohama group also admit that:

> "The split brought about a great loss… The Net representatives were elected because of their pure image. But this was damaged. In that respect it was very damaging [for us]. We explained [about the reason for the split to the KSC], but it didn't make any difference. I was told very clearly [by the KSC] 'you separated as you pleased, so we are not responsible for [the Net's] future election [to the local assembly]'. It was painful" (Ih, interviewed 19.11.2008).

On top of that, in many local Nets the members split into two factions. A member of the Asahi ward which experienced a split said:

> "People were split in two. For instance, the Kohoku area chose to join the Net Yokohama, but one or two people refused and remain in the Kanagawa Net but they are not active at all now. In Asahi ward … it is difficult to keep activities going. The local Nets in the Yokohama area are in a mess" (Zp, interviewed 13.12.2008).

I tried to contact the member and phoned the local Asahi office in the Kanagawa Net, over a period of more than a month, but every time I had to leave my contact number on an answering machine as there was no-one there to take calls. I was told another Asahi Net office in Net Yokohama nearly closed down.

The negative impact of the split may have partly contributed to the decline of number of elected politicians on both sides. Before they separated the Kanagawa Net had 39 assembly members in 2004, however, in 2010 the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama together had 35 members (Kanagawa Net, 2010; Net Yokohama, 2010).

The KSC is more sympathetic to Net Yokohama at least in part because Xy's male colleagues in the KSC continue to support him (Zp, interviewed 13.12.2008). After the separation, the KSC chose Net Yokohama as a partner. The Chair of Net Yokohama was invited to be a member of the KSC Chairs' meeting (Ishikami, 2005, 55). However, it would be true to say that this incident is largely responsible for making the KSC distance itself from the Net, be it the Kanagawa Net or Net Yokohama (Zp, interviewed 13.12.2008).

The whole incident seriously damaged the KSC Movement's social capital and the social network between the KSC and the Net resulting in the loss of the positive interaction between the KSC and the Net. The KSC used to be a supportive base for the Net in mobilising people and providing human resources for the Net's activities. On the other hand, the Net used to provide KSC members with the opportunity to expand their social and political understanding and made it possible for them to gain a new range of experiences by becoming local assembly members. For both sides the severing of this link was to their detriment.

5.5 Gender issues in the Net

For the most part the Kanagawa Net had been either antagonistic or apathetic towards issues of women's equality. However, over time there have been changes with both the Kanagawa Net and Net Yokohama developing policies on child care, domestic violence and greater equality between the sexes.

Case study

> Zp was influenced by the student movement in Japan in the 1960s and said she was a feminist before she joined the KSC and the Net. She joined the KSC because of her worries about food safety and later in 1993 she joined the Kanagawa Net. She was elected as a municipal assembly member in Yokohama in 1995. She tried to persuade the Net to include policies supporting single mothers, full-time working women and divorced women. However, she was asked "do you want to get divorced?" and told "Single mothers can create their own networks between themselves" and "we dislike feminism very much." In order to recruit the next generation to take over from the baby boom generation, which was the main pillar of

the Net, she insisted they needed new policies, but instead she was bullied for expressing her opinions. She was also against the Workers' Collectives' low wage policy. All of this wasn't accepted in the Net.

When she was involved in 'the research group on unpaid work', which was a long-standing Net group to prove the value of women un-paid work, she was told "You shouldn't come here. Women's economic independence is not everything" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

She recalls her pain that she couldn't deliver her belief of women's equality in politics when being an assembly member:

"It was painful because my opinion was not accepted. When I talked to my colleagues they didn't understand. Why can't they imagine that even their situation may change? When I became an assembly member, nobody understood me, nobody listened to me. Instead I was told I am egotistic and selfish. It was so painful I was suicidal. But I thought somebody may replace me in my position [as an assembly member] but nobody can be my children's mother, so then I stopped thinking [of killing myself].… There was a lot of harassment" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

Another woman who joined the Net talked about the attitude towards feminism in the Net:

"Before I was approved as a candidate to be a local Net assembly member I had to have a final interview with a Net block representative. She asked me "I-sang you appear to be greatly interested in feminism or gender …. What do you think about 'women's self–support'?" "I replied 'I think self-support is necessary for women economically and psychologically.'" "If you think that you can't be a Net assembly member. We are not aiming for women's self-support." However, she managed to pass by agreeing "'I understand that'…because I thought there was no choice but to" (Ih, interviewed 19.11.2008).

This shows that although there were feminists in the Net it was difficult for them to express their ideas, which in turn meant that they tended to be marginalised and frustrated. The transformation potential inside the Net in terms of bringing about a change in the KSC women's consciousness and creating gender equality policies was limited and sometimes suppressed. Later when Ih established herself in the Net Yokohama she managed to influence some its policies.

It should be pointed out that the difference between the policies of the Kanagawa Net and the Net Yokohama shows that collective empowerment can be in conflict with personal empowerment. The two terms rotation system and the donation system in the Kanagawa Net encourages collective empowerment by providing more members with the chance to stand as politicians and by sharing money with local Nets, which are less able sustain themselves. However, this system prevents individual politicians from pursuing a professional career. Being amateur politicians also means that the women remain economically dependent on their husbands. As Zp, a former municipal assembly member who served for two terms, said:

> "by the time when my second term was ending I thought myself, 'I've just got to know what politics is .. but' [I have to end my career in this point]" (Zp, interviewed 8.10.2008).

The Net Yokohama policy creates opportunities for women's independence and professionalism by altering the two terms and donation systems, which can be seen as being more equality feminist in its attitude. However, as a result local Nets attached to the Net Yokohama, which lost representatives, had great difficulty in remaining active, some of them had to close their offices as they stopped getting the funding they used to receive from the centre (Field note, 14.11.2008).

5.6 Women's empowerment in the Net

The Net in Kanagawa has begun to introduce policies addressing women's issues. In 2001, before the split, the Yokohama group of the Kanagawa Net attempted to change the Yokohama City Ordinance for 'The Planning for the Equal Participation of Men and Women in Society'. This had proved to be entirely tokenistic. They suggested a revision of the law, although this failed (Kanagawa Net - Yokohama, 2003). The Yokohama group set up child-care centres, shelters for victims of domestic violence and ran a counselling centre for women who had suffered domestic violence. More recently the leaders of the Kanagawa Net have criticised the wages policy of Workers' Collectives which adopted the 'Community Price' and they have attempted to secure higher wages for workers in welfare facilities for the elderly in Atsugi City (Yc, interviewed 17.11.2008). Yc also said KSC members had taken the lead in creating child-care facilities as the male leaders had no idea of what to do about this (Yc, interviewed 17.11.2008). As a result currently twenty child-care centres are being run by Kanagawa Workers' Collectives (Kanagawa Workers' Collective Union, 2010).

The Kanagawa Net now includes policies which mention women's rights and they speak out against discrimination. For example, the Net charter, drawn up in March 2005, includes among the Net's goals the reform of the Kanagawa Prefecture Assembly and refers to 'abolishing gender discrimination'. They suggested creating a new law for 'the prohibition of discrimination against part-time workers', which mainly applies to women. This would include abolishing dependants' tax relief, which is granted if wives stay at home, and would reform the pension system based on the household unit, which supports the division of labour between the sexes (Kanagawa Net, 2009b). Although there are no concrete proposals for the implementation of such a policy, it can be seen as a symbolic change in direction.

However, for the most part the positions taken by both the Kanagawa and Yokohama Nets remain strongly attached to a housewives' agenda, even if they include some working women's issues. In particular, the improvement of welfare for the elderly along with child care can be counted as policies for working women, because in Japan women are nearly always responsible for the care of the elderly.

A comparison can be made between policies put forward by different female Chigasaki municipal members. Chigasaki is a city in the Kanagawa Prefecture. The Net assembly member belongs to the Kanagawa Net. It can be seen that there are considerable differences between the different representatives on gender policies, see Table 12.

	The Net *Yoshino*	**Feminist (Independent)** *Koiso*	**Communist party** *Uchida*
Policies	▪ Reform of elderly care insurance ▪ Global warming policy ▪ Anti-nuclear and peace ▪ Abolition of assembly members' pension	▪ Improvement of Elderly care insurance ▪ Peace education	▪ Reform of medical system ▪ Financial support for small and middle sized enterprises ▪ Ensure companies take responsibility for industrial waste. ▪ Support for the residents in a regeneration area ▪ Improvement of a school building ▪ Suggestion of community bus route
Policies for women	▪ Improvement of child care	▪ Improvement of child care ▪ Support for part-time and temporary workers ▪ Support for working women's network ▪ Support for women seeking work after rearing children	

Table 12: Comparison of the policies of three female municipal members in Chigasaki City
Source: Yoshino, 2009; Koiso, 2009; Uchida, 2009.

The feminist assembly member, Koiso, has a far wider agenda in support of working women than the Net member, notwithstanding her policies for child and elderly care (Koiso, 2009). Interestingly, whilst the female member from the communist party includes a range of diverse and concrete policies and activities she has no policies specifically for women. Her agenda is exactly the same as that of the male communist assembly member in Chigasaki City (Koizumi, 2009).

Although the Net deals with issues related to women, such as the care of the elderly and child care, the fundamental problem of the Net's policy is the separation of these issues from the wider problems facing Japanese women. Nowadays most Japanese women are part-time workers or irregular workers who do not receive the protection of the law. In relation to this, The Net fails to deal with the issues facing women comprehensively and adopts a piecemeal

approach.

The Net is finding its pool of candidates is shrinking. According to Ooki's studies on assembly members and candidates in the Kanagawa Prefecture, the Net candidates are finding it harder to win elections, unlike in the mid 1990s when the Communist Party and the Net were in the mainstream. Instead the Democratic and Liberal Democratic Parties started to produce female candidates in local elections and have been successful. In 2007, five out of six female Democratic Party candidates won seats by comparison with the Net's haul of one seat out of eleven contested. The Democratic Party has coped shrewdly with issues of working women struggling with work and child–rearing as the number of women in this situation has greatly increased. The Democratic and Liberal Democratic Parties choose female candidates from the professions and presidents of companies. On the other hand, the majority of the Nets' candidates are housewives, a diminishing group in Japanese society (Ooki, 2007). Ooki thinks it is inevitable that the Net, as a women's party, will have to find professional women to stand as candidates in the future (Ooki, 2007, 82). However, the Kanagawa Net policy in favour of amateurism does not allow candidates to become professional politicians. Zp pointed out that women who take their career seriously do not want to be a Net assembly member:

> "Who will take a job which they are supposed to quit after eight years especially when there is no pension after they have stepped down? As a matter of fact, we had a candidate in mind who was a professional but she declined to stand for the Net" (Zp, interviewed 13.12.2008).

In order to broaden its support the Kanagawa Net even keeps the door open for men, but in reality male members are rare. A top leader explained this might be because it is embarrassing for men to be seen sitting among women (Yc, 17.11.2008).

However, the top Net leaders said they have become more aware of gender inequality. L said she got to know about gender equality issues because her daughters were now grown up and had difficulty finding proper work (U, interviewed 8.10.2008). Ep said the eye-opening moment for her was when she heard the testimony of Korean comfort women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army in the Second World War. The KSC has made a point in its peace campaigns of looking into the misdeeds of the Japanese during the War. She said "while I was listening to their story I was shaking ..." Later she was involved in

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helping women who suffered from domestic violence, which led her to be aware of these women's situation (Ep, focus group 28.10.2008). Sl also said that they found out about gender inequality when they were dealing with domestic violence (Sl, focus group 27.10.2008). As was seen earlier, when a Gureru Wakazu person, Rz, visited Italian Workers' Co-operatives as a part of a KSC programme she was inspired by them and saw the possibilities of Workers' Collectives as businesses which could advance women's economic independence.

As was pointed out in Chapter 2, this shows that when the women expand their activities they have increased opportunities to meet other women and understand their problems which can make them more aware of gender issues. Even though the two Nets in the Kanagawa Prefecture are part of a movement which starts by campaigning on issues arising from women's traditional gender roles these women had developed a new consciousness through their Net activities, which supports the idea that women in movements based on traditional gender roles can develop a new consciousness.

6. Changes in the networks in the Kanagawa SC Movement between the Co-op, Workers' Collectives and the Nets

The relationship between the three pillars of the Kanagawa SC Movement, the Co-op, Workers' Collectives and the Net used to be tight and interdependent. However, nowadays it is becoming looser and more distant, which in turn has an impact on the women's achievements and empowerment.

The founders of Workers' Collectives were KSC leaders or Net members. In particular many experienced local assembly members were involved in community movements and in establishing Workers' Collectives (Lee, 2008; Na, 2008). Without their devotion the experiment in an alternative form of work in which 'there is no employer as well as employee' would have been impossible. The loyal members of the Net and the KSC willingly took risks by investing their money and were involved in the management of the businesses. The trust and organisational skills developed through their KSC and Net activities were crucial for the establishment of the Workers' Collectives (Katumi, in Na, 2008, 99). In the beginning the KSC did not just provide the Workers' Collectives with human resources, it also gave

material support in the form of buildings at low rents and other office facilities. The KSC was also the main customer for the Workers' Collectives and provided it with contracts (Ap, interviewed 13.11.2008). Yokota acknowledged that people from the Net have played a vital role in creating Workers' Collectives. 'One important reason why Workers' Collectives are flourishing in Kanagawa is the close relationship between the Net and Workers' Collectives' (Katumi, 2004, 144).

Because the Net was launched as the political expression of the KSC it was included in the KSC's activities and the KSC devoted time and money to developing it. Local Nets were also actively involved in the KSC to recruit supporters. Not only were active members of the Net leaders of the KSC, but the KSC's magazine and the Net's papers both identify their members using same term 'Seikatsusha' (Kunihiro, 2001, 231). The KSC sent staff to help the local Net (Lq, focus group 3.12.2008). In the 1990s forty of forty-eight candidates had a background in the KSC showing that the KSC, at that time, was still an important source of Net candidates (Ooki, 2007, 80). However, in recent years this has changed considerably. In the 1999 and 2003 elections the Net selected more diverse candidates (Ooki, 2007, 280).

Part of the reason for this distance, Gw, a male staff in the KSC headquarters explained, is that the law on consumer co-operatives has now placed tighter limits on the political activities of co-operatives making it more difficult for the KSC to be involved in the Net (Gw, interviewed 22.10.2008). However, the split in the Net certainly had a great impact on the KSC, which resulted in the KSC distancing itself from the Kanagawa Net as was explained earlier. Although at the beginning the KSC was friendly with the Net Yokohama it appears it has proved difficult to support the smaller faction, the Net Yokohama. As a result the KSC seems to have become distant from both Nets. In the KSC's 2003 annual report there was a section about the Net's activities, but this disappeared from the 2005 report (KSC, 2003, 2005), although in the annual report of the SCCU there is a section on the Net (SCCU, 2005). The Net leaders also looked back to the impact of the split, which severely harmed the ties between the two arms of the movement. According to a top female leader of the Kanagawa Net, the relationship between the Kanagawa Net and the KSC has almost died (Lee, 2008).

Nevertheless it is still true to say, at the local level, that there are close relationships between KSC and Net members, who often have double membership of both organisations. At this

level the relationship between the KSC, Net and Workers' Collectives is still strong because the core of the membership comes from the KSC. For instance, all of the management committee of the local Zuchi Net, which is part of the Kanagawa Net, are members of Workers' Collectives while the management committee of the Isogo Net, which is part of the Net Yokohama are either Workers' Collective or KSC members. Almost all the active members of the Isogo Net are KSC members (Lq, focus group 3.12.2008).

Although the Net finds it harder to appeal openly to the KSC to support their candidates in election campaigns because of the consumer's co-operative law, whether they are allowed to come to KSC meetings to explain their policies or other campaigns appears to depend on the area and the nature of the meeting. The areas which still retain close human ties find ways to provide the Net with a place to speak informally but not in big and formal meetings (W, interviewed 7.11.2008).

However, it is undeniable that the relationship between the KSC and the Net has been growing more distant. As has already been pointed out, I was surprised to find that some young middle-ranking leaders, management committee members from two Comonzus did not know anything about the Net (Field note, 7.11.2008). When I mentioned this to older members of the SC Co-op, who are chairs of SC Co-op branches, they deplored this but they admitted the young leaders may be ignorant about the Net (Field note, 14.12.2008). Moreover, young Workers' Collective members either did not know or barely knew about the Net even though they had been involved in the Workers' Collective for more than five years (Ml, focus group 9.12.2008; Gs, focus group 9.12.2008; Ek, focus group 12.12.2008).

The connections between members of Workers' Collectives and the KSC appear stronger. It is the case that as Workers' Collectives expand a lower proportion of their members are also members of the KSC. However, new members of the Depots, which are KSC food shops run by Workers' Collectives, tend to be affiliated to the KSC because they get to know the KSC food by selling it. This direct experience leads them to take an interest in the KSC (Tk, interviewed 3.11.2008; Wp, interviewed 14.11.2008). New members working in Workers' Collectives for the welfare of the elderly sector also tend to join the KSC because KSC food is used in these facilities. They get to see the quality of the KSC food and are strongly recommended to join by older members, who have a background in the KSC (Lo, focus

group, 10.12.2008). However, members of Workers' Collectives who work long hours appear to have no time to be involved in KSC activities even though they are members (Gs, focus group 9.12.2008; Nt, focus group 12.12.2008). But for the most part KSC members know about Workers' Collectives because the KSC regards Workers' Collectives as part of its movement and Workers' Collectives advertise their activities through talks, plays and videos at KSC events (Field notes, 3.11.2008; 7.11.2008; 14.11.2008; 18.11.2008; 8.12.2008).

In order to cope with this loss of a support base in the KSC the Kanagawa Net has tried to develop contacts in Workers' Collectives and other local NPOs to provide it with a source of support outside of the Co-op (Lee, 2008; Yc, interviewed 19.10.2008). The Kamakura Net, part of the Kanagawa Net, is trying to create links with a broad network of the local NGO/NPOs to represent them in the political arena and to find supporters among their members (Sl and Rk, focus group 27.10.2008). Almost all the local Nets appear to be following a similar strategy. However, the Net may still face difficulties because the growth in Workers' Collectives is stagnating and it may also be difficult to find new blood from NGOs to become active members of the Net. Local NGOs and NPOs like Workers' Collectives in the elderly care sector do not necessarily have to depend on the Net while other political parties like the Democratic Party or independent politicians support a similar agenda.

Local Nets try to develop their links with the different parts of the KSC Movement. In the case of Atsugi City the network between the Net, Workers' Collectives and We 21 shops appears to be working well. The Atsugi Net runs a tour hosted by the Human Netowaku Sappoto, Human Support Network, for established Net members to travel around this network, see Map 3. On the day I went there were five members of Workers' Collectives and a young Net member of staff. We went in a van with a guide, a Net leader, to look around welfare facilities, learning about the background of the establishments and what they were trying to achieve. Four out of five members of the Workers' Collectives who attended were not members of the KS which meant they joined the Workers' Collective simply to get a job (Field note 17.11.2008).
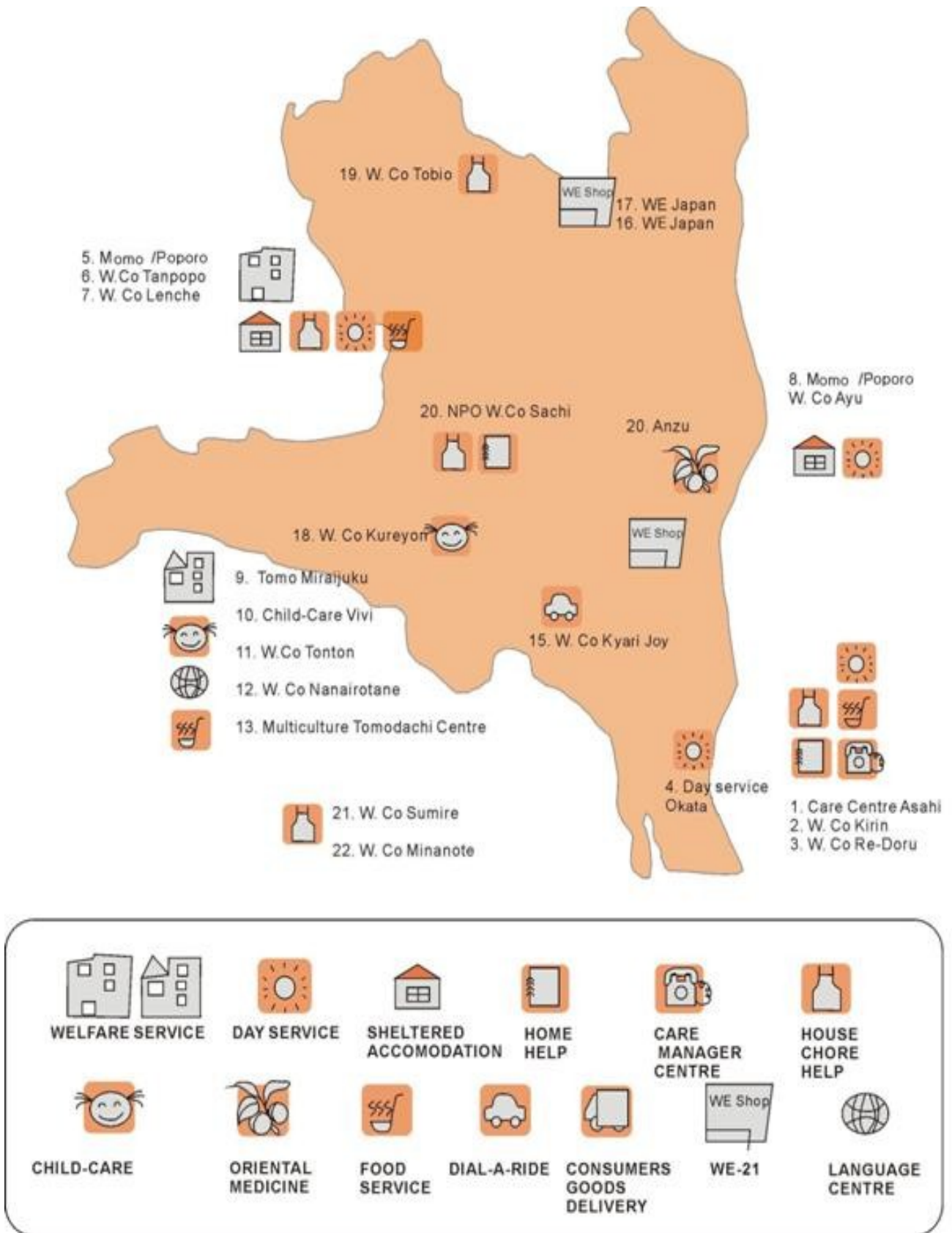
Map 3: Human Support Network in Atsugi City (not to scale)

Source: Human nettowāku sapōto - Human Support Network, 2008

The KSC, Workers' Collectives and other related organisations in Atsugi City operate a range of services. Among them the Asahi Care Centre and Okota Day Service Centre opened more than fifteen years ago and were very helpful in getting the local Net candidates elected (Lee, 2007). As can be seen there are a wide range of different facilities in this area, day services, group shelters for elderly people, a centre for care managers and helpers, child care centres, Chinese medicine clinics, food service centres, transformation service centres for elderly people, We21Japan shops and multi-cultural friendship centres (Language centres for foreigners). In Atsugi city there are three hundred members working in fifteen Workers' Collectives.

By contrast, in the Samukawa area there are not many Workers' Collectives, especially in the elderly care sector. The local Net, the Samukawa Net, pays more attention to issues of importance to local residents. The Kanagawa Net provided the local Nets with a three week training programme to learn about local politics. In the Samukawa Net this was held at times, on Saturdays, which were suitable for working women. I found, when I attended a course at the Samukawa Net, that both part-time workers and full-time housewives were active members in equal numbers. Given that the Samukawa Net was established more recently in comparison to other local Nets working women there do appear to participate in that Net as active members (Ro, interviewed 31.10.2008).

However, in general, the links between the KSC, the Net and Workers' Collectives have become looser. This decline in contact between the Net and the KSC has had negative consequences for both parts of the movement. Senior leaders in the KSC and the Net have worried that the KSC is losing its character as a social movement (Fg, focus group 14.11.2008; To, interviewed 18.11.2008). The organisational distance between the KSC and the Net, in particular has had a profound impact. The creation of a political party was a highlight in the development of the KSC as a social movement. Net members were actively involved in the KSC's activities. Leaders on both sides shared a double membership, which enabled the Net to find supporters in the KSC. This involvement of Net members in the KSC Co-op in turn raised the KSC members' political consciousness. Losing this connection with the Net has further exacerbated the commercialisation of the KSC. The Net, the political arm of the KSC, was the cream of the KSC as a social movement, which its members supported and in which they participated and without which the KSC's status as a social movement

would be tarnished. Considering that gaining social and political consciousness was a key feature of the KSC women's empowerment, as we saw in the previous chapter, this loss of contact with such a vital part of the movement has important implications for the empowerment of the women and suggests the opportunities for members to learn about and participate in political activities and thus develop this broader consciousness has been damaged. The decline in these networks and the social capital that has been developed, all of which enables collective social action and contributes to empowerment, is likely to have a negative effect on the empowerment of the KSC women (Narayan, 2006, 11).

7. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the different empowerments, including disempowerments, of the women in the KSC and the power dynamics between the women as well as their consequences. Chapter 5 showed how the members of the KSC were empowered through the collective activities of the movement and how this impacted on their personal and relational empowerment. However, not all women are empowered in the same way. This chapter has described how different groups of women are affected and how their empowerment varies. These differences are caused by the internal dynamics and the power structure of the movement and in turn they feed back into the way the movement works. The KSC Movement illustrates how women's empowerments in a social movement can be diverse and complicated because they are entangled with different issues to do with gender, ideology, class and generation. Rather than creating a universal formula of the process of women's empowerment I have shown how the process of empowerment can be advanced or hindered by these interactions and dynamics.

A group of important actors, who have an affect on women's different empowerments in the KSC Movement, are its male leaders, whose role has been double-edged. Unlike most feminist studies on social movements, which only see the role of men in negative terms, the KSC Movement shows their involvement is neither simple nor straightforward. Men can have both a beneficial and detrimental effect on women's empowerment. On the one hand, in the KSC they have played a crucial role in drawing women out from their narrow role as housewives into the public sphere to become citizens. On the other hand, they also have constrained the further empowerment of women because of their gender-blind ideology. In

fact, the seemingly gender neutral framing of the KSC around the concept of 'Seikatsusha' is based on the condition of full-time housewives as was discussed earlier. They have also dominated the women through their privileged position, which has caused divisions between the women. As a result of this the women's network between the KSC, the Net and Workers' Collectives has been damaged.

Feminist studies on social movements show that when women are faced with arbitrary practices by men, which offend democratic principles, and then challenge the men there can be an opportunity for women to develop gender awareness (Thorne 1975; Kuumba, 2001). The example of the KSC Movement also shows that women do not necessarily share the same interests. They are not a homogeneous group and do not always unite against the control exercised by men, rather they can be divided and ally with men against other groups of women. In addition, women's power is not necessarily more democratic nor does it necessarily result in a higher gender consciousness.

Certainly in the case of the Net, women no longer wanted to be directed by male leaders and they wanted to achieve greater autonomy. However, the ensuing conflict did not take a simple course. The top female leader of the Net managed to mobilise women who were frustrated by the male leader. But the top male leader was also able to use other women's frustration with her domineering attitude and with the Net system to fight against her. Because of this, although both factions had important points to make, these were not developed in a constructive way, but ended in division. This reveals that the top-down culture had become embedded in the organisation so that the top female leader in the Kanagawa Net was as domineering as the top male leader and the undoubted achievements of both the male leader and the female members were undermined. Although, in the Net the women have developed a greater independence and autonomy, which has been born out of their struggles with the male leadership, this has still been constrained by the internal struggles for power.

Similarly, the KSC shows not only that there are different empowerments amongst women but also that the differences are inter-related in that the empowerment of one group, the majority, may be achieved on the basis of other groups' disempowerment. The inadvertent alliance between charismatic male leaders and the mainstream of full-time housewives in the organisation, who accept male leadership without question, underlies the nature of the

empowerment of most of the women in the KSC. In this process, those who questioned the male leader's dominance and those who sympathised with ideas of gender equality were excluded from the centres of power. Thus, the mainstream's empowerment has been achieved at the expense of other groups' disempowerment.

The structure and practice of the KSC has favoured the interests and needs of the housewife majority who were also able to accommodate the ideology established by the male leadership. Therefore, we can see from this that the ideologies of different groups as well as their organisational culture are important elements influencing women's empowerment. Class background and generation also need to be taken into account as significant variables in creating different empowerments. The case of Workers' Collectives shows this more clearly. Underlying the culture and ideology of the Workers' Collectives is the social background of the membership, as the great majority of the Workers' Collectives' members are affluent women who have time on their hands and who neither need nor wish to support themselves. They are empowered by the participatory style of working proposed by the male leadership, as well as the limits on wages. The veterans of Workers' Collectives are prepared to remain as volunteers or to work for low pay rather than to be seen as working for money. However, unlike these veterans, women from poor backgrounds and the younger generation are more interested in earning a living and may find the level of involvement difficult to sustain. Because of this, some members of Workers' Collectives under contract with the KSC and in other sectors may feel disempowered in their employment. As a result of this the Workers' Collectives, especially in the elderly care sector, face difficulties in recruiting young people. In relation to this, the low-pay policy based on the 'community price' has contributed to lowering the wages of those working in care work, which affects the position of those women who depend on wages from their work in this sector. This has fitted in with the policy of the Japanese government. The government, which wants to cut the welfare budget, has taken advantage of these NPOs. At the same time the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare strictly controls wages in the care sector making it hard for service providers to recruit and retain staff. Uzuhashi (2010, 20) predicts this will affect the future of elderly care services in Japan saying 'It is no exaggeration to say that if the present situation continues, the lack of human resources will become serious and a deterioration of service quality many be unavoidable.'

Understanding different empowerments in a social movement helps to reveal more about how empowerment occurs and how the internal dynamics and power structure of a movement, in the case of the KSC Movement the inadvertent alliance between full-time housewives and senior male staff, both facilitate and constrain empowerment for different groups. In this way the dominant group's ideas, based on the male leaders' gender-blind ideology, have been preserved, which prevents other ideas like gender equality from being embraced in the KSC Movement.

It should be noted that, whatever the differences between groups, at an individual level the more the women in the KSC Movement expand their activities in the public arena the more they are likely to meet other women in different situations or be inspired by other ideas. Through this process they have opportunities to gain a broader gender consciousness. Even though this happens mainly at an individual level with leaders in the long run these experiences are being translated into new gender policies. However, it is happening at a very slow pace and may well fail to meet the needs of the mass of Japanese women.

The KSC Movement has changed its structure in response to the demographic changes in Japanese society. It is too early to discuss the impact of the change on the members. However, the movement has begun to adopt new policies and attitudes to working women, such as in the provision of child care facilities, which can be expected to impact on the outlook and consciousness of the members in the future.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

1. Introduction

This thesis started with five questions regarding my research into the empowerment of women in the Kanagawa SC Movement: 1) What is the background to the Kanagawa SC Movement and how does this impact on the empowerment of the women in the movement? 2) How does empowerment occur in a social movement like the Kanagawa SC Movement? 3) What kind of empowerment has been experienced by the women in the Kanagawa SC Movement? 4) How do the women in the KSC Movement experience the public sphere and how does the transformative process of gaining gender consciousness occur in the Kanagawa SC Movement? 5) How and why do different groups of women in the KSC Movement experience different empowerments?

In the first section of this concluding chapter I highlight the key findings of this study and compare them with the existing literature. In the next sections I clarify the contributions that this thesis makes to academic studies and to practice and make recommendations. Lastly I suggest areas of future study.

2. Key findings

In Chapter 4 I provided a comprehensive understanding of the movement, including the social background in Japan, the resources of the KSC women and the movement's ideology and framing process. The development of the KSC Movement is in line with broader Japanese New Social Movements and housewife activism. I explained that the ideology and framing, which originated from the founding fathers, have largely determined how the women have been empowered. In addition, I examined how the resources the women already possessed have played an important part in facilitating that empowerment.

Women's resources

My first key finding is that, when considering the empowerment of women in a social movement, it is important to take into account the resources of the women involved. All

women have resources. The Kanagawa SC Movement shows women have resources, particularly skills and social networks, which may be different from those of men. Ironically, in Japan, because of the acute division of labour between men and women, housewives have considerable resources in terms of time and money. However, it should be noted that possession of these financial resources does not, in itself, mean the women were empowered when they joined. This thesis shows that the women of the KSC Movement experienced empowerment after they joined the movement. Among other things, they increased their confidence, skills and knowledge and experienced the joy of 'everybody's power'. As they belong to the middle class they have resources in terms of time, money and education. The material resources of the members have contributed to building robust financial foundations for the movement and facilitated their activities. Their social networks have aided recruitment and participation at all levels of the movement. Their high level of education has supported their political participation in the Net and their skills have been used in forming Workers' Collectives.

The complex relationship between personal, relational and collective empowerment in the KSC Movement

The achievement of personal empowerment can be seen as an alternate proof that the women were empowered by their involvement in the movement. The KSC Movement's members stated that they had not only gained self-confidence and wider social consciousness but had also achieved social and technical skills. It was shown that the longer and the deeper they were involved the more they were empowered. When trying to understand in what ways the women had been empowered I relied on the statements made by the women in the survey where they described the changes they had experienced, as for example the growth in their confidence or skills.

In addition, in terms of relational empowerment the survey provided evidence of how some women had achieved changes at home. Women often found they had to make concessions or strike bargains to be able to continue their work for the movement but in some cases just continued by ignoring their family's objections or being assertive. Some women also altered their relationships with their husbands who had come to accept they should spend more time looking after their children and sharing household chores.

As these dimensions of empowerment are inter-related this can also mean a constraint in one dimension of empowerment can limit other dimensions of empowerment. For instance, a constraint on relational empowerment, women's relationships with their husbands and children, could limit personal activities and empowerment and thus also have an indirect effect on collective empowerment. The three dimensions of empowerment do not always reinforce one another. For example, if there was conflict in the home women would not necessarily benefit from the support of other women. So although the women might be personally and collectively empowered this would not necessarily assist them in terms of relational empowerment as the organisation did not respond collectively when members faced these difficulties. This reflected the fact that the culture and ideology of the KSC Movement was, for the most part, insensitive to gender issues. Women who were disempowered by increasing conflict at home sometimes found they had to withdraw from their activities.

Furthermore, I have also demonstrated that one dimension of empowerment can conflict with another. For example, collective empowerment can conflict with personal empowerment. The policies of rotating office by limiting members to two terms and the sharing of salaries in the Kanagawa Net encourages collective empowerment by providing opportunities for more women to stand as politicians and providing funds to sustain the local Nets. However, this system hampers the personal empowerment of women, who want to be professional politicians, and the development of their skills and prevents them gaining economic independence from their husbands. The Net Yokohama, which tends to favour the professionalisation of politics, has allowed its assembly members to hold office for more terms and to retain more of their salaries. But this reduces the opportunities for other members to become assembly members and less money is shared among local Nets. A similar division between amateurs and professionals can be found in the Workers' Collectives. For those who have to work because they need the money or who have other commitments, which limit the time they can spend in meetings for which they are not paid, the long democratic and ideological discussions in these meetings can be seen as a waste of time, even though they may enhance collective empowerment.

Projects which aim at empowering individual women may not experience this conflict between collective and personal empowerment. However, in a social movement the

relationship between the different dimensions of empowerments is not straightforward. Therefore it is my contention that, when considering the evolution from a project to a social movement, this complexity should be taken into consideration.

The 'transformation' of the women in the KSC Movement

Through their involvement in a social movement women enter the public arena. It can be seen from the survey that the more deeply the women became involved in the movement the more their outlook and social consciousness changed. It was also clear that the more deeply the women became involved in the KSC Movement the more likely it was they would face opposition from their family members, their husbands and children, because the women were crossing the boundaries of their gender roles and space. I define this crossing point as a 'transformatory threshold'.

The KSC Movement provides examples of how women's experience of activism based on their existing gender roles as mothers and wives pushes them to redefine their roles and identities, that is it takes them beyond this 'transformatory threshold'. The survey and interviews with members showed how some of the women and their families no longer viewed themselves as just mothers or wives but as social persons. As a result they changed their roles and relationships in the household because their husbands shared more household chores and child rearing. The most active members in the KSC Movement not only experienced more conflicts in their households but also in the public sphere when campaigning or working in local assemblies. This experience of conflict can lead to a new realisation of the nature of existing gender relationships in the household as well as in the public sphere.

A key to transformation; power and the internal conditions of the KSC movement

While the forces pulling the women back to their previous gender roles or spaces should not be underestimated, in the case of the KSC Movement, as we have seen, the women can arrive at the point of the transformatory threshold at which point the women experience the conflicts and contradictions with their existing gender roles and identities both in their families and in public. However, these experiences were limited to being personal matters without giving

birth to a collective response or a new gender consciousness in the movement. I argue that the internal organisational dynamics of the KSC Movement which govern ideology and policy are responsible for this.

In Chapter 6, as part of the investigation into the internal conditions of the organisation I addressed the movement's power structure and politics, its different groups and the tensions which exist between them. I looked at who is empowered and who is not. The empowered control the ideology and policies of the movement. As the women are not a homogeneous group some women associated with the male leaders, who have played a crucial role in the movement, are empowered but others, who are excluded, may not be empowered within the organisation.

In the case of the KSC Movement women who questioned the male leaders' authority had to leave the organisation, which reduced the chances of the movement embracing ideas that were different from the male leaders' gender-blind ideology. Those who are empowered are mostly full-time housewives, who find this ideology fits with their lifestyle and outlook. However, even in this group there were those who thought that the KSC Movement should stick to its democratic principles. But when they opposed the male leaders' control they had to leave. For others, like working women or younger women, involvement in the movement may provide fewer benefits. The structure of the KSC favours those full-time housewives with the time and resources to spend working in the organisation. Meetings are often organised at times which suit them rather than those in paid work.

In the Workers' Collectives there was a struggle between the Gueru Wakazu group, which supported women's economic independence, and those women who followed the male leaders' ideology founded on women's unpaid work. Eventually the Gueru Wakazu group was excluded, so the low pay policy in the Workers' Collectives prevailed. For the majority of middle-class women this policy demonstrated their altruism, so when government money flowed into the Elderly Care sector of Workers' Collectives, following the introduction of the government's Health Care Insurance System, some middle-class women resisted the payment of higher wages (Ueno, 2004). However, for working women and the younger generation this wages policy is a disadvantage even though Workers' Collectives still provided advantages for them in terms of the flexibility of management and a more human working environment.

Workers' Collectives reveal the overt and covert tensions between not only generations but also classes of women. Workers' Collectives have become increasingly dependent on an ageing workforce, because their low wages do not attract younger workers, a problem which represents a threat to the sustainability of the Collectives.

Unlike the Co-op, the leaders and staff of the Workers' Collectives are predominantly women, but their policies still conform to the male leaders' ideology based on women's unpaid work known as the 'Community Price'. For these women a combination of their social class, their independent resources and their attachment to their traditional gender roles leads them to find fulfilment in this kind of work. Their male leaders, who come from a socialist background, have created an ideology which fits in with this outlook, even if it contradicts a socialist perspective of seeking equality in wages. I would argue that the example of the Workers' Collectives shows that even though these women have an autonomous space, which feminists like Young (1993) and Cubitt and Greenslade (1997) claim would lead to the development of gender consciousness, they choose to work in a way that contradicts the expectation that this will lead to a new consciousness. The women leaders' class background better explains why Workers' Collectives stick to the idea of women's unpaid work rather than pursuing women's economic independence. However, while the majority of women have continued to work in this way others from within the KSC Movement, like the Gueru Wakazu group, have developed a different consciousness, even if they have later left the movement.

Events in the Net show that the power asymmetry between the men and women in the Net changed in favour of the women as the women in the Kanagawa Net freed themselves from the control of the male staff and removed the male leaders. However, in this case the conflict has revealed new distortions. The male leader was able to take advantage of a split among the women in the Kanagawa Net and made an alliance with one group which then broke away to form a new political grouping. Within the Kanagawa Net these changes neither entailed more democracy nor did they generate internal policies in support of women's professionalism. Even though the women of the Kanagawa Net no longer accepted the male leaders' control they still chose to stick with their ideology of amateurism which favoured the situation of full-time housewives.

Therefore, it is a feature of the KSC Movement that inadvertent alliances between the male

leaders and the established female members, who accepted male leadership, created a power structure which came to dominate the organisation as well as to create an organisational culture in which it is difficult to embrace new ideas. For the most part these alliances relied on this combination of the traditional roles of Japanese women and the ideology developed by the male leaders. Overall, there has been an increase in the power and influence of women in the movement and, as in the Kanagawa Net, women have taken over the leadership, but as in other organisations this power is not evenly distributed and particular groups of women are disadvantaged or marginalised. Consequently, although there was great potential arising from individual members' needs to address gender issues inside the movement, as was shown in Chapter 5, as well as in groups like Gueru Wakazu, which demanded women's economic independence, the organisation has not been able to translate this into collective action or develop policies on gender issues, because the organisational power structure made it difficult to embrace ideas different from the male leaders' gender blind ideology.

Accordingly, the transformation that has taken place has occurred in an individual and incremental fashion. As has already been mentioned some active members have managed to redefine their roles and gender relationships in the household, which should not be underestimated. Some leaders show that the more they expand their public activities in a movement like the KSC, which operates in the wider society, the more likely they are to be inspired by other ideas and come across women in different backgrounds which bring about gender awareness. This individual transformation in turn is likely over time to be reflected in the organisation in the creation of policies on gender issues. Members of the Net described how meeting women from other walks of life had made them aware of gender issues as they became involved in working with women who had suffered from domestic violence. The WE21Japan is supporting the empowerment of women in developing countries. The women in the KSC Movement initiated child-care facilitates. This has not occurred because of any systematic feminist input. This is a continuing process. But as yet the KSC Movement remains ambivalent on gender issues both in terms of its internal organisation as well as in terms of issues for the movement to campaign on.

The role of men and the empowerment of women in the KSC Movement

In feminist studies into social movements men have tended to be portrayed as negative players where women's empowerment is concerned. However, more recently, in the gender and development context, a more nuanced understanding of masculinity and the role of men has emerged. My thesis also shows how, in the case of the Kanagawa SC Movement, the role of men is double-edged and their contribution complex. On the one hand they have played a crucial role in enabling the empowerment of the women, but on the other hand they have also constrained it. It is clear that the ideology and strategy created by the male leaders have had a profound impact on the women because the more and the deeper they became involved the more the women came to appreciate the KSC as a social movement with a vision for social reform, rather than just as a provider of safe organic food. Their idea of the KSC Movement came to resemble that of the male leaders. It was the male leaders' influence which led the housewives into local politics through the creation of the Net just as it was they who initiated the formation of the women's business enterprises or Workers' Collectives. They enabled these women, as housewives, to move from their domestic sphere into the public arena as citizens.

In this instance, by creating the movement, by providing an inspiring ideology and a vision of an alternative social system and by finding a way of involving the women in a way they are comfortable with in terms of their traditional roles and identities, they have greatly contributed to the empowerment of the women of the KSC Movement. However, by retaining a dominant position in the structure of the movement and continuing to control the making of policy, the male leaders have created rigidity in the system and limited the development of the women's consciousness and the addressing of gender policies. They have both enabled and constrained their empowerment. However, it has to be noted that female leaders, such as the charismatic leader of the Kanagawa Net, can also exercise dominance in an organisation and cause damage to the movement and the empowerment of the women in it.
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Whose empowerment? What is the impact on society of their empowerment?

Earlier, in Chapter 2, I highlighted the point that women's empowerment in a social movement is not automatically emancipatory in terms of the wider society, especially for

other women in society. The question has to be asked, whose empowerment and for whom?

In the KSC Movement, the Net has had a great impact in promoting women's participation and position in local politics. Its agenda reflects the outlook of the KSC at large and the party has been strong on environmental and peace issues, although it can be considered to have a limited impact in terms of problems facing working women focusing as it does on issues related to women's traditional gender roles.

When it comes to Workers' Collectives the position is similarly ambiguous. In that Workers' Collectives have helped to socialise women's unpaid domestic work, like child and elderly care, and give it value, they have contributed to the enhancement of women's position. In addition, they play an important role in raising social consciousness and in training participants in democratic management and they provide an alternative form of business. However, in promoting the community price form of wages some members complain they are simply engaging in a subtle form of exploitation of women's labour. They are criticised for undercutting rates of pay in the welfare sector and for providing support for the government's neo-liberal policies, which are accused of taking advantage of women's voluntary work to limit spending. According to Uzuhashi's study into Japanese care work, the voluntary work and part-time work by housewives in this NPO sector 'bring down' the wages of women care workers in the wider welfare sector (Uzuhashi, 2010, 20).

On this point, it should be noted that the existing approaches on women's empowerment have not differentiated clearly between empowerment in social movements and projects. Scholars have emphasised that empowerment should be collective and political (Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1997). However, the focus in these studies is on personal empowerment which is at the heart of most projects. Generally speaking the primary concern of the empowerment discourse is focused on the well-being of the poorest women.

However, in social movements the concern is strongly related to social change, that is, the impact of the movement on the wider society. When considering how change occurs it is the case the poor are not always the leading social actors. Middle class and upper class women have been involved in important social movements like women's suffrage or the environmental movement.

Likewise, the KSC Movement shows that people who have power can get more power by organising and taking action and by mobilising their resources. Feminist scholars are aware of the fact that it can be difficult for women from the working class and minorities to be involved in a social movement (Parpart, Rai & Staudt, 2002, 7).

This study has dealt with middle and upper class women as the KSC Movement is, for the most part, a social movement whose membership is made up of affluent full-time housewives who are the core of active members. They have financial, intellectual and time resources. Men in the KSC Movement have also had power through their ideological and strategic skills in controlling the movement and have maintained their power by making alliances with a group of women in the organisation thereby forging a longstanding power structure.

I suggest, therefore, that in social movements we need to ask who gains power, who loses it and who is marginalised and investigate what the consequences are for the movement and the wider society. Understanding the link between who is empowered in or by a social movement and what this means for society is an important issue for feminist studies of women in social movements to explore.

3. Academic and practical contributions

The findings outlined in the previous section can be seen as contributions to academic debates which partly overlap each other.

Feminist studies on social movements

In this area I made the following contributions. First of all, I argue that resources are an important element for the understanding of the empowerment of women. All women have resources, which contribute not only to building collective assets for their activities but also to securing necessary skills for the movement. My contention is that these need to be taken into account when considering how empowerment can occur.

Second, feminist studies from Latin America and elsewhere show that women's activism based on their traditional roles and identities as wives and mothers has empowered women to

the point where they gained gender equality. However, apart from external intervention by feminist activists or scholars there has not been a clear explanation of the internal forces or processes by which this happened. I have showed through the case of the KSC Movement that there is an inherent empowerment process arising out of women's activism based on their existing gender roles and identities to overcome the gender inequality of their existing gender roles and relations.

Women become involved in activism which takes them into the public sphere to safeguard their family because these family issues are not just a private matter. For instance, rising food prices, housing and welfare issues are closely related to public policy. The more serious the women are about their families' wellbeing the more important it is for them to enter the public arena to fight for this. So while their domestic activities are supposed to be private and to be conducted out of the public eye these domestic concerns take them into the public arena. However, the more women are involved in activism the clearer the contradiction becomes between their supposedly private work inside and their public activism outside the household. They experience opposition from their family as well as discrimination in the public arena.

The experience of this contradiction will result in two different responses. It has the potential to result in the women gaining gender consciousness and changing their understanding of their previous gender roles and identities and developing their activism in the public arena. Conversely, the women may choose to withdraw to their private sphere and their previous gender roles, which was the basis of their activism. This tendency to conservatism may explain why it can be difficult for activism based on women's gender role to lead on to a new gender consciousness. Because they have justified their activism in the public arena by their gender roles and identities as mother or wife they find it difficult to transcend the ideology which is attached to these roles and identities and move beyond it. For this reason many feminists like Jackson (1995) and Molyneux (1985) regard women's activism arising out of their gender roles with scepticism and why some feminists have argued feminist consciousness raising is crucial in bridging the gap from practical interests to strategic interests. However, the history of women's activism has proved the great potential of women's gender based activism, as in popular movements in Latin America, to empower women as well as to create gender consciousness (Blondet, 1995; Stephen, 1997; Huiskamp, 2000). I provide a theoretical analysis based on the feminist debate on the public/private

dichotomy as to why and how this can happen and explain it by developing a deeper understanding of the process of empowerment with reference to the case of the KSC Movement.

While it is true that where transformation has occurred there was often a feminist influence, it is worth noting that even in these cases an internal empowerment process had already developed along with the women's activism, without which it would be difficult for feminist consciousness raising alone to bring about transformation.

Third, I have shown that transformation depends largely on the dynamics of the social movement. Taking the case of the KSC Movement I have explained, through an analysis of the power structure of the organisation and the interplay between different groups and their class backgrounds, why a movement may or may not be responsive to the members' experience of the transformative threshold. This shows that the change in gender relationships is not automatically translated into collective action, or policy, in terms of gender issues.

Fourth, I have highlighted class differences between women in a social movement and illustrated how these are linked to empowerment and disempowerment. In addition to this, women are not always united in confronting men in the way feminist literature in social movements tends to suggest. Indeed they may choose to unite with men to exclude other women, as the KSC has shown.

Fifth, as stated above, feminist research into social movements provides an insight into the role of men in the empowerment of women. However, it tends to see the role of men in social movements in negative terms. I argue that this is not always the case, nor is it straightforward. In the Kanagawa SC Movement the male leaders and male staff have played a crucial role in advancing women's empowerment and yet they have also been a constraint on their empowerment. Furthermore they played on the differences between women, forging alliances and marginalising others, which has meant they may have had beneficial impact for the empowerment of some women but not for others.

Lastly, this thesis is one of the few studies written in English on the empowerment of women

in social movements in Japan and, in particular, on the KSC Movement.

The discourse on women's empowerment

First, in this area of study I have highlighted the complex relationship between the three dimensions of empowerment. Throughout the thesis I have made it plain that studies on women's empowerment have not properly articulated the difference between social movements and projects and that understanding empowerment in social movements needs to be seen in a different way from how it occurs in projects. Not only does the whole context of the movement need to be understood, but also the way in which empowerment occurs is substantially different from projects. It goes without saying that social movements are more dynamic and interactive with society, while projects are organised within given parameters. In relation to this, I provide detailed illustrations as to how collective empowerment works and generates other dimensions of empowerment, especially personal empowerment. In addition, I made it clear that although the positive inter-play of personal and collective empowerment was discussed in the literature (Young, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1997), the relationship between them, including relational empowerment, is much more complex. Personal empowerment and relational empowerment do not necessarily translate into collective empowerment. Different dimensions of empowerment can conflict with each other. In particular, there can be contradictions between personal empowerment and collective empowerment.

Second, this study develops the concept of empowerment by considering how empowerment will vary or even lead to disempowerment. Empowerment can occur along with disempowerment for as the KSC women become more active they experience more opposition from their families and face dilemmas and frustrations. Thus disempowerment could be a consequence of the empowerment resulting from their social activities. In addition, the empowerment of a group of women may go together with the disempowerment of other groups in a movement.

Third, one of the purposes of understanding this experience is to find the best strategies for empowering women by learning from other cases of women's activism. In spite of diverse social contexts a broad strategy has been debated based on women's common reality 'from

practical needs/interests to strategic needs/interests'. There is great strength in this strategy. However, we have to understand its underlying assumption. In order to achieve the transformation from practical to strategic, feminist consciousness raising tends to be regarded as a panacea for achieving women's empowerment. This is related to another assumption that all women are attracted by and ready to accept feminist ideas. However, women are not a homogeneous group and have different priorities, interests and beliefs. Some organisations are ready to develop gender consciousness raising and gender issues as goals for the movement, some are not.

Having considered this I argue that the transformative threshold could be an important strategic point from which women can expand their consciousness of the wider structural oppression of women. On this point, I do not deny the importance of feminist consciousness raising, but I place an emphasis on women's own motivation to understand their subordination through problems or conflicts which they are already experiencing individually and collectively. The women may encounter an overt organisational problem they have to overcome. They could discuss not only why this is happening but also how they can deal with this problem collectively so that they can move forward. The internal imperative that they should deal with this issue themselves would be strong enough grounds for a real bottom up approach to gaining wider gender consciousness. On the other hand, deliberate thinking about this threshold enables us to be aware of the dangers in women's activism based on their traditional gender roles and identities, whereby individuals and movements retreat into their traditional roles and fail to adapt or respond to the challenges facing them.

Fourth, I have established how the empowered, those who determine the ideology and policies of the movement, have an impact on the wider society. The KSC Movement shows that the ideology and policies of the movement are in the hands of affluent women and male leaders and that this ideology and these policies are insensitive to the situation of working women. This has resulted in the Workers' Collectives' Community Price wage policy which impacts on the wages of care workers in the wider care system. So it can be seen that the impact of a movement on society reflects the views of already empowered groups based on their class, gender, ideology or ethnicity.

Dispute between Equality and Difference feminists

The debate around women's empowerment overlaps with the dispute between difference feminists and equality feminists. Yet it is worth reiterating the points I made above from the perspective of this dispute.

The KSC Movement shows that developing a movement on the basis of women's difference from men can result in the empowerment of women, which supports the argument put forward by difference feminists. The KSC women managed to revalue the women's realm in areas like food, health, child care and elderly care by bringing these issues into the social, political and economic realms through campaigns by the Co-op, the Net and Workers' Collectives. However, this means women have to leave their special realm, the domestic space, and move to the public arena. At this point, the issue of equality with men in both private and public spaces becomes salient.

Thus, women's difference cannot be revalued beyond a certain point without the achievement of equality. Having found that there is a discontinuity between difference and equality, because the women feel the contradictions between their traditional gender roles and identities and their social activism, which may lead them to retreat to their previous roles, we can also see there is continuity between difference and equality because there is a bridge by which the difference feminism strategy can encompass equality feminism, in which both difference and equality can be incorporated in the long run. Technically speaking, this shows that a social movement based on women's traditional gender roles and identities, difference, can embrace the concept of equality.

It should be noted that the point I made concerning the KSC Movement is different, to some extent, to the case of the suffrage movement, in which, as Pateman (1992) pointed out, the dichotomy between difference and equality was overcome, as it was argued that in order to carry out their gender roles properly women had to achieve equality in their political rights.

While the suffragists' goal from the outset was to gain political equality, I have highlighted the empowerment process in which the consciousness of the KSC women has expanded to include gender equality issues. The KSC women have re-valued their realm, socially,

politically and economically, and as a consequence of their empowerment from doing this have come to include equality issues. So I have presented difference and equality as a continuum in the empowerment process. I highlight the fact that the empowerment of the KSC women is evolving and expanding on the basis of practical needs along with the revaluation of women's role in society and that this is a dynamic process based on the collective action of the KSC Movement.

4. Recommendations

The Kanagawa SC has tried to organise its members through shops or depots in order to cope with the increasing number of working women. An alternative would be to organise Hans in the workplace, like schools, hospitals, nurseries, offices and factories. In this way, the KSC would also be able to reach out to men.

This type of Han does exist in some exceptional cases according to information from local KSC leaders (Aa, Ma, Dj, Focus group, 14.12.2008), although the movement's leaders were not aware of this. There may be some practical problems with this, for instance keeping food in a school fridge, but there would be ways to deal with these problems. In my opinion, Hans have proved they play such an important role in the movement that it is worth making an effort to revive them.

The current policy on wages in Workers' Collectives should be reconsidered. The most problematic sector concerns those Workers' Collectives where work is outsourced by the KSC. One such case is the Jam whose workers do virtually the same jobs as the KSC staff in administration but get paid far less in the name of the community price. While the KSC staff's work is considered to be professional the Jam's work is regarded as semi-voluntary work. As most of the Jam's staff are women, whereas the majority of the KSC administrative staff are men, this policy discriminates against women. This will become unsustainable in the future as younger people look for properly paid jobs. A similar situation applies in the for care workers. The Workers' Collectives could demand better subsidies from the government to pay better wages, so that the Workers' Collectives in this sector could provide better conditions for care workers. In addition, the Net should include policies for irregular workers, a group which includes a large number of women and young people. By doing this it can

reach a wider audience, including young men.

5. Further areas of study

A key issue for the future for the KSC Movement will be the position of part-time and full-time working women in the different parts of the movement. Part-time working women prefer their workplace to be in the vicinity of their home because it enables them to fulfil their roles as mothers and wives while full-time workers will have less freedom in where and how they work. As more Japanese women go out to work they will have to adjust to new expectations and gender norms. It will be interesting to study how the experience of participating in a movement like the KSC will transform these part-time and full-time workers and how this increase in the number of working women will affect the movement.

6. Rethinking empowerment

My thesis has developed the understanding of empowerment, what it is and, in particular, how it occurs in a social movement. I have used the KSC Movement to show that women can be mobilised and empowered on the basis of their traditional gender roles and identities and how, in the process of being empowered, they are brought to a threshold where they can achieve a change in their gender consciousness. I have shown how empowerment can be generated in a movement in which men have played and continue to play a leading role. I have also demonstrated how involvement in such a social movement and its collective activities empowers its members and that this empowerment is greater the longer and deeper the members are involved. I have challenged the binary notion of three sets of concepts in feminist studies, practical and strategic interests, the positive and negative views on women's activism based on their traditional roles and identities and difference and equality. In fact while there are quite a few empirical studies bridging these binary concepts in women and social movement studies, especially in Latin America, I provide a systematic explanation of the continuity and discontinuity between these supposedly opposed concepts. In practice, I show that the continuity between them can be used in strategies for the empowerment of women.

I have shown that empowerment should be understood as a complex process. Women are not

a homogeneous group, and this will affect their involvement and empowerment. Studies into women in social movements have to take into account the class affiliations of their members. I have also shown that the structure of the organisation will reflect the existing empowerments and internal alliances and power structures, including the relationships between men and women in the organisation. I have further demonstrated how the internal structure and dynamics of the social movement affect the empowerment of the women and how some are more empowered and some disempowered as a consequence.

Finally, I would defend the usefulness of the concept of empowerment. As long as the limitations of the concept are borne in mind, that empowerment is a complex process and may well entail disempowerment and that we do not assume it is an automatic good, then it is still useful because, as Connell said, it is not only 'politically effective' but also a 'mobilizing tool' for women (Connell, 2010, 173). The study of the empowerment of women in social movements can provide abundant insights and lessons as to how women can empower themselves and have an impact on society.

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Appendix 1: The survey of Kanagawa Seikatsu Club members (English)

-Please tick the answer given
-Please write in the space provided

Section I: About yourself and your family

1) How long have you been a member of the SC?

   a. Less than a year
   b. 1-2 years
   c. 2-4 years
   d. 4-6 years
   e. 6-10 years
   f. more than 11 years

2) How old are you?

   a. Less than 30 years old
   b. 30-34
   c. 35-39
   d. 40-44
   e. 45-49
   f. 50-54
   g. 55-59
   h. 60-64
   i. more than 65years old

3) What is your level of education?

   a. pre-High School
   b. High School
   c. Junior/Technical College
   d. University
   e. Graduate school
   f. Technical College
   g. Other ……………………………………

What qualifications do you have?

Please write them down here (multiple answers are ok):

4) What is your occupation?

    a. Full-time housewife
    b. Employee
    c. Civil servant
    d. Managerial position in company or organisation
    e. Member of Worker's Collective
    f. Accountant/Doctor/Lawyer
    g. Painter/writer/Musician
    h. Student
    i. Self-employed
    j. Other ……………………………………..

5) How much is your annual household income?

    a. Less than 1,500,000 yen
    b. 1,500-2,500,000 yen
    c. 2,500-3,500,000 yen
    d. 3,500-5,000,000 yen
    e. 5,000-7,000,000 yen
    f. 7,000-10,000,000 yen
    g. 10,000-15,000,000 yen
    h. 15,000-20,000,000 yen
    i. More than 20,000,000 yen

6) If you have your own income, how do you use it?

Please write here:

7) Who manages your household income?

    a. Mostly me
    b. I decide more than my husband
    c. Mostly my husband
    d. My husband decides more than me
    e. It depends on the items
    f. Other……………………………………………………

Please specify the reason:

8) Where do you live?

    a. Home owner, individual property
    b. Tenant, individual property
    c. Home owner in a housing complex (less than 50 houses)
    d. Tenant in a housing complex (less than 50 houses)
    e. Home owner in a housing complex (more than 50 houses)
    f. Tenant in a housing complex (more than 50 houses)
    g. Company house or an official residence
    h. Other…………………………………………

9) What is your husband's job?

    a. Company employee
    b. Civil servant or employee in the public sector
    c. Professional (doctor, schoolteacher, university professor, engineer)
    d. Accountant, administrator
    e. Working in service industry (hairdresser, chef)
    f. Blue collar (factory worker, etc)
    g. Transport related job (railway, delivery or car companies)
    h. Owner of clinic, hotel, artist, etc
    i. Farmer
    j. Shopkeeper
    k. Unemployed
    l. Other…………………………………………

10) Please specify your husband's position

    a. General staff
    b. Managerial position
    c. Company director/board member
    d. Other……………………….

Section II: About your SC activities

11) Before joining the SC, what kinds of activities had you experienced?

    a. Hobbies, courses
    b. Cultural, art groups
    c. Sports groups, clubs
    d. Adult education, cultural schools
    e. PTA activities
    f. Village activities, women's (housewives') groups
    g. Children's activities
    h. Welfare volunteer activities

    i.   Environmental, conservation activities
    j.   Consumer movements
    k. Residents movements, Peace movements
    l.   Co-op activities
   m. Others……………………………………….
    n. No participation

12) Why did you join the SC?

Please write here:

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13) What is your experience of holding a position in the SC?

    a. None
    b. A leader of a Han
    c. Holding office

Please specify:

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14) Question for those who have experienced 'Holding office': what did you gain from the experience?

Please specify:

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15) What are your other activities? (Multiple answers are OK)

    a. Hobbies, courses
    b. Cultural, art groups
    c. Sports groups, clubs

d. Adult educations, cultural schools
e. PTA activities
f. Village activities, women's (housewives') groups
g. Children supporting activities
h. Welfare volunteer activities
i. Environmental, conservation activities
j. Consumer movements
k. Civil movements, Peace movements
l. Co-op activities
m. Other……………………………………………………………
n. No participation

16) Please say which SC activity you are involved in, for example the Net, Workers' Collective or some other organisation, and describe what you do.

17) Have you been involved in recruitment activities?

    a. Yes   b. No

18) Question for those who said 'yes': whom did you recruit?

a. Friends
b. Relatives
c. Family members of my children's friends
d. Neighbours
e. Members of previous organisation
f. People through the SC recruiting activities
g. Others…………………………………………

19) What do you think is the goal of the SC?

Please specify (Multiple answers are OK):

Section III: The impact of your activities on you

21) Which area are you most interested in? (Multiple answers are ok)

    a. food safety
    b. Environment
    c. Health
    d. Welfare
    e. Child rearing and education
    f. Others

22) Since joining the SC, has there been any change in your outlook on life?

    a. a lot
    b. moderately
    c. a little
    d. almost none

Please specify:

23) Currently with whom are you most friendly? Please tick as many as you wish (multiple answers are ok). For your best friend please tick twice

    a. an SC member
    b. my neighbour (excluding SC members)
    c. a mother of my children's friends
    d. a friend of my husband
    e. a friend from my schooldays
    f. a work colleague
    g. a colleague from a previous job
    h. a friend from my recreational activities
    i. a friend from another social movement/activity
    j. other

24) Has your family participated in SC events and programmes?

    a. Yes   b. No

If yes, please specify the name of the programmes and the times

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25) About your SC activities, have you expanded your family's understanding?

    1) your children

        a. very expanded
        b. expanded
        c. not so expanded
        d. almost no expansion

    2) your husband

        a. very expanded
        b. expanded
        c. not so expanded
        d. almost no expansion

Please specify:

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26) Was there any disapproval from your family members about your SC activities?

        a. from my children
        b. from my husband
        c. none

If there was any disapproval please specify which kind of activities and why?

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27) Have you discussed your family's disapproval with your colleagues in the SC?

    a. Yes   b. No

28) If you faced disapproval from your family, how did you cope with it?

Please specify:

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29) Since you joined the SC, what kind of changes have occurred in your family?

Please specify:

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Appendix: 2 The survey of Kanagawa Seikatsu Club members (Japanese)

生活クラブの組合員調査

※当てはまる項目の記号を〇印で囲んで下さい。

※記述式の設問は、□の中にお応えを記入して下さい。

A．あなたご自身とご家族のことについてお聞きします。

1）生活クラブに加入してからのおおよその年数をお聞かせ下さい。

あ）１年未満　　い）１年～２年　　う）２年～４年　　え）４年～６年　　お）６年～１０年

か）11 年以上

2）あなた自身の年代は

あ）30 歳未満　　い）30～34 歳　　う）35～39 歳　　え）40～44 歳　　お）45～49 **歳**

か）50～54 歳　　き）55～59 歳　　く）60～64 歳　　け）65 歳以上

3）最終学歴を教えてください。

あ）中学校　　　い）高等学校　　　う）短期大学　　　え）４年生大学　　　お）大学院

か）専門学校　　お)その他

4）現在お持ちの資格がありましたら、どのようなものでも記入してください。
　（いくつでも）

5） あなた自身の職業は

あ）専業主婦　　　　　い）常勤社員・職員　　　　う）公務員　　　　え）団体役員

お）ワーカーズ・コレクティブ　　　か）弁護士・会計士・医師等　　　き）画家・作家・音楽家等　く）学生　　　　　け）自営業あるいはその手伝い　　　こ）その他
（　　　　　　　　　　）

6） 一緒にお住まいの家族全員の年収合計はどれくらいですか。

あ）150万円未満　　　　　　　　　い）150万～250万円　　　　　　　う）250万～350万円

え）350万～500万円　　　　　　　お）500万～700万円　　　　　　　か）700万～1,000万

円　く）1,000万円～1,500万円　　　け）1,500万～2,000万円　　　　　こ）2,000万円以

上

7） あなた自身に収入がある場合、その収入は主にどのようにお使いになりますか。
具体的に述べて頂けますか。

8） ご家庭の家計費管理について決定するのは誰ですか。

あ）全てご自分が決定する　　　　い）どちらかというとご自分が決めることが多い

う）主に夫が決定する　　　　　　え）どちらかというと夫が決める方が多い

お）家計費はそれぞれで区分し、管理している

か）その他

※出来れば、その理由を具体的に書いて下さい。

9）あなたの住居形態についてお伺いします。

あ）一戸建て（持ち家）　　　い）一戸建て（賃貸）

う）50世帯未満の集合住宅（持ち家）　　　え）50世帯未満の集合住宅（賃貸）

お）50世帯以上の集合住宅（持ち家）　　　か）50世帯以上の集合住宅（賃貸）

き）社宅、官舎　　く）その他

10）あなたの配偶者のご職業を教えてください。＜複数回答可能＞

　　※定年退職された方は、以前の職業を教えて下さい。

あ）会社員　　い）公務員、公的機関勤務　　う）専門職（医者、教授、看護師、技師など）　　え）事務職（経理、一般事務など）　　お）サービス業（理容・美容師、調理士など）　か）製造業（工場内　作業など）　　き）運輸関係の仕事（鉄道、自動車、配送など）く）開業医、弁護士、芸術家、塾経営など　　け）農業　　こ）自営の商店、工務店など　さ）仕事には就いていない

し）その他

11）職位について差し支えなければ教えてくたさい。
あ）一般職　い）管理職　う）役員　え）その他

B. 生活クラブでの活動に関してお聞きします。

12）生活クラブに加入する前に、どのような活動を経験されましたか。

　＜複数回答可能＞

あ）趣味、習い事　　い）文化、芸術活動・サークル　う）スポーツクラブ、サークル

え）市民大学、カルチャースクール　お）ＰＴＡ役員、活動　　か）町内会、自治会、

婦人会役員、活動　き）子供関係ボランティア活動　く）社会福祉ボランティア活動

け）環境、自然保護活動　　こ）消費者運動　　さ）住民運動、平和運動　　し）生協

活動　す）その他の活動（例；宗教活動、政治活動、学生運動・・・）

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せ）どれにも参加したことがない

13）生活クラブ生協に加入した主な理由、あるいはきっかけは何ですか。

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14）生活クラブの班長や委員など役についたことがありますか。

あ）特に経験がない。　　　　　い）班長を経験したことがある。

う）委員、役員などの経験がある

　具体的な役職名（いくつでも）

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15）役についた方にお聞きします。その経験から得たことを具体的に書いてください。

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16）現在、生活ぐラブ　以外、興味や関心を持って参加している活動があれば教えて下さい。

　＜複数回答可能＞

あ）趣味、習い事　　い）文化、芸術活動・サークル　　う）スポーツクラブ、サークル

え）市民大学、カルチャースクール　お）ＰＴＡ活動　　　か）町内会、自治会、婦人会

き）子供関係ボランティア活動　　　く）社会福祉ボランティア活動　け）環境、自然保護活動　　　こ）消費者運動　　　さ）住民運動、平和運動　　　し）他の生協活動

す）その他の活動（例；宗教活動、政治活動、学生運動・・・）

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せ）どれにも参加したことがない

17）生活クラブ生協とかかわりのある活動に参加している方にお尋ねします。

　（例：神奈川ネットワーク運動、ワーカーズコレクティブ、その他関連組織、活動）

参加している活動名称、活動内容を教えてください。

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18) あなたは組合員の拡大活動に参加したことはありますか。

　　あ）はい　　　　　　　　　　　　　い）いいえ

19)「はい」と答えた方、拡大活動ではどんな人に声かけ（紹介）をしましたか。

＜複数回答可能＞

あ）あなたの友人　　い）親　戚　　う）子供の友達の家族　　え）ご近所の人

お）以前、参加していた団体や組織の知り合い

か）特に知り合いではないが、地域で生活クラブの拡大活動に参加した

き）その他、あれば具体的に教えてください

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20) 生活クラブ生協が果たすべき、大事な役割と使命は何だと思いますか、あなたの考えをお聞かせください

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21)生活クラブ 生協 に加入して、最も関心のあるテーマは何ですか。

＜複数回答可能＞

あ）食の安全 い）環境保全 う）健康 え）福祉 お）子育て,子供の教育 か）その他

22)生活クラブ生協に加入して、あなたの考え方に何か変化はありましたか。

あ）非常に変化した　　い）変化があった　　　う）少しだけ変化があった

お）ほとんど変化はなかった

※その理由について、詳しく教えてください。

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23）あなたは現在、どのような人々とつきあっていますか。次の中から特に親しく
つきあっている人の番号 すべてにチェクして下さい。

あ)生活クラブを通じての友人　　い)（生活クラブの知人を除く）近所の人

う)子供を通じての友人　　　え)夫を通じての友人　　　お)学生時代の友人

か)現在の職場の友人　　　き)かつての職場の友人　　　く)趣味などの活動を通じた
友人　け)社会的活動（ボランティア、環境保全な　ど）を通じた友人

こ)その他（いくつでも、具体的に）

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24）生活クラブに生協の活動やイベントなどのプログラムにあなたの家族は参加し
たことがありますか。

　　あ)はい　　　　　　　　い)いいえ

※参加した企画内容と参加の程度や回数などについて教えてください。

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25）生活クラブでのあなたの活動に対する、あなたの家族の理解や共感は広がりましたか。

①あなたのお子さんについて

　あ）多く広がった　　　　い）広がった　　　　う）あまり広がらなかった

　え）ほとんど広がらなかった

②あなたの配偶者について

　あ）多く広がった　　　　い）広がった　　　　う）あまり広がらなかった

　え）ほとんど広がらなかった

※それについて、詳しく教えてください。

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26）あなたの生活クラブでの活動に対し、ご家族からの反対がありましたか

あ）子供から反対があった　　　　い）配偶者から反対があった　　　　う）その他

※どのような活動について、どんな理由で反対されましたか。あれば具体的に教えてください

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27）あなたのご家族の反対について、生活クラブの仲間に相談したことはあります
か。

　　あ）はい　　　　　　　　い）いいえ

28）ご家族からの反対があった時、あなたはどのように対処しましたか。

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29)生活クラブの活動に参加して以降、あなたのご家族にどんな変化がありましたか。

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Appendix 3: List of Interviews[15] (listed alphabetically)

First fieldwork trip - 2005

Cp, a former KSC branch chair, 2.8.2005

K, a female SCCU member of staff, 12.8.2005

Kv, a leader of the KSC, 12.7.2005

Mz, a member of a Workers' Collectives, 12.7.2005

Second fieldwork trip – 2008

Ap, a Workers' Collective leader, 13.11.2008

Aq, a manager of a Workers' Collective, 7.11.2008

Av, a local KSC leader, 11.12.2008

Bk, a former KSC leader, 3.12.2008

Bq, a local Kurabu leader, 18.11.2008

Cw, a member of staff in the Welfare Co-op, 2.12.2008

D, former Kanagawa Net member of staff, 28.10.2008

Ea, a local KSC leader, 11.12.2008

Fr, a member of staff at a Workers' Collective, 20.10.2008

Gw, a KSC member of staff, 22.10.2008

Hd, a staff member of the Kanagawa Net Movement, 31.10.2008

Ih, a former municipal assembly member, 19.11.2008

Jh, a former KSC member of staff, 1.10.2008

Jj, a male member of staff at a Workers' Collective, 4.10.2008 and 15.11.2008

Ks, a local KSC leader, 11.12.2008

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[15] The list of interviewees differs from the tables in Chapter 3 in that I have only included details of interviewees whose quotations I have used so the numbers of interviewees differ.

Lb, a municipal assembly member, 8.11.2008

Mc, a former municipal assembly member, 11.10.2008

Mx, a KSC member, 7.11.2008

Nd, a KSC leader, 15.10.2008

Nw, a former member of the Kanagawa Network Movement, 27.10.2008

Pz, a local Kurabu leader, 18.11.2008

Q, a KSC member of staff, 7.10.2008

Ro, a village assembly member, 31.10.2008

Rz, a former Workers' Collective leader, 7.12.2008

Sx, a leader of Jao, 5.11.2008

Tb, a manager at a Workers' Collective in the welfare sector, 5.11.2008

Tk, a Depot manager, 3.11.2008

To, a leader of a local KSC Co-op, 18.11.2008

Ul, a KSC researcher, 21.10.2008

W, a local municipal assembly member, 7.11.2008

Wp, a Depot manager, 14.11.2008

Xy, a former KSC leader, 10.10.2008

Yc, a Net leader, 19.10.2008 and 17.11.2008

Zp, a former municipal assembly member, 8.10.2008 and 13.12.2008

Appendix 4: Focus Groups[16] (by date)

Lw and Ia, managers of Workers' Collective, 28.9.2008

Cy, a KSC leader; Vi, leader of local KSC Co-op; Np Vx, leader of local KSC Co-op, 15.10.2008

Ob and Nw, former members of the Kanagawa Net Movement, 22.10.2008

Gh and Ud, manager and member of an elderly–care Workers' Collective, 26.10.2006

Sl, a former local municipal assembly member and Rk, current local municipal assembly member, 27.10.2008

Ka, a former member of KSC Co-op staff and Ep, a worker in a WE21Japan Shop and member of the Net, 28.10.2008

Sw and Rp, former members of the KSC, 29.10.2008

Du and Dn, member of the KSC, 2.11.2008

Kd and Br, managers of elderly care centre, 9.11.2008,

Jf, Ho, Wl and others, Members of Workers' Collectives, 10.11.2008

Sl, former municipal assembly member and Lb, a current Municipal Assembly member, 11.11.2008

Za and Ya, staff members of the Net Yokohama, 12.11.2008

Fg, a leader of a local KSC Co-op and Tt, a member of a Comonzu, 14.11.2008

Lq and Bt, leaders of a local Net, 3.12.2008

Fp and Gs, members of Workers' Collective, 9.12.2008

It and Ml, members of a Workers' Collective, 9.12.2008

La and Lo, members of a Workers' Collective, 10.12.2008

Nt, Yd and Ek, staff of Workers' Collective 12.12.2008

Aa, Ma and Dj, leaders of local KSC Co-op, 14.12.2008

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[16] I have excluded details of focus groups if no quotations were used from that group. Details of all participants in a focus group are included provided a quotation is used from a member of the group.

Appendix 5: Participant Observations and Symposiums

Participant Observations

Food tasting meeting in Hayama, 3.11.2008

School of politics, Kanagawa Network Movement, 24.10.2008

School of politics, Samukawa Kanagawa Net, 25.10.2008

Gamoi Autumn Festival, 26.10.2008

Winter Party, 7.11.2008

Shoku no sarong (food salon), 14.11.2008

Association festival, 16.11.2008

Human Sapoto Netowaku Atsugi 28th training course, 17.11.2008

Chigasaki Commons renrakuki [Chigasaki commons network], 18.11.2008

Forum: Kurasikata, hatarajikata o toinaosi, onnanka housi o susumete jisokiganouna shakai o tukuru [let's make society sustainable by questioning the way to live and work and prevent global warming], Naka ward building, 8.12.2008

Symposiums

Ueno symposium; Non-Profit Organisations, Domiciliary Services and Gender: A Case Study of The Japanese Long Term Care Insurance Act, Department of Sociology, Tokyo University 22.10.2008

Ueno symposium; 'Wakazu Korekutibu Bon no jitten', [the achievements of the Bon Workers' Collective], Department of Sociology, Tokyo University, 25.11.2008