

**From Revolution to Devolution:
A Social Movements Analysis of the
Contemporary Women's Movement in Ireland**

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Abstract

This study analyses the evolution of the contemporary women's movement in the Republic of Ireland, from the foundation of the State to the present day. Drawing on a social movement's perspective, the emergence, consolidation and transformation of the Women's Movement in that period is explored. To date, there has been no systematic attempt at understanding the central processes and dynamics underlying the Irish Women's Movement. This study seeks to address that deficit by illuminating the processes through which the Women's Movement, and, in particular its constituent organisations, came to fruition as agencies of social change. The central argument advanced is that fundamentally the women's movement in Ireland is characterised by its interconnectedness: the central tensions, themes and organising strategies of the movement interpenetrate not only across different social movement organisations, but across time and space.

The movement's development is conceptualised in terms of four stages: A period of *Abeyance* which lasted from the Civil War until the end of the 1960s; a period of rapid *Advancement* which occurred during the 1970s; the *Re-appraisal* of the women's movement from within, which occurred during the 1980s; and the *New Directions* which manifested themselves particularly in the community sector in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The study demonstrates the continuities which link the movement and its constituent organisations across these four stages of development. A key theme is the continual process of formalisation, which has had the effect of incorporating radical organisations on the margins of the Women's Movement into the mainstream. Parallels can be drawn between the period of advancement in the 1970s, and the new kinds of consolidation and formalisation occurring in the 1990s. While the key analytical framework

drawn on is resource mobilisation, considerable modifications are made to the model in its application to the Irish Women's Movement. The movement's trajectory cannot adequately be documented without paying attention to the political opportunity structure, the potential for the development of external alliances, the existence of sympathetic elites and the role of ideology both as a source of conflict and as a valuable resource.

The study makes an important contribution to our understanding of Irish social movements. There has been no previous attempt to explain the evolution, form and processes of the women's movement from a sociological perspective. The method of analysis allows for tracing the continuities underlying the movement from the inception of the State to the present day, and challenges the received view that the women's movement 'happened' in Ireland as part of a generalised modernisation trend in the post-1960 era. This work provides a blueprint for the analysis of other historical and contemporary social movements in an Irish context.

Introduction

Commentators and scholars alike have described the 1980s and 1990s as a 'post feminist' era of political apathy. Former feminists are accused of trading their political ideals for career mobility. Younger women are seen to single mindedly pursue career goals and view feminism as an anachronism (Taylor and Whittier, 1993-: 533-548). While acknowledging a certain validity in such views, they fail to recognise the continuity and vibrancy of the Irish women's movement since at least the 1870s (Ward, 1989; Cullen-Owens, 1984). Although Irish feminism has changed form since the resurgence of the contemporary women's movement in 1970, neither the movement nor the injustices that produced it have vanished. Little attention is paid to conceptualising the women's movement in periods of decline and transformation. There are thus substantial inaccuracies surrounding our understanding of the contemporary women's movement in Irish society.

This study seeks to move beyond classical theories of collective behaviour and offers a much needed sociological examination of the contemporary Irish women's movement. A clear and informed analysis that is systematic in its application of theory, in the face of empirical data, is presented. The study sheds new light on one of the most interesting cases of a Western European 'new' social movement. The women's movement is an autonomous social movement in its own right and is complex, organic and multi-levelled. As a social movement, it interacts with several different spheres of Irish society in different forms. The starting point for analysing these nuances must begin with an accurate understanding of the themes and tensions within the movement itself. The study of the women's movement in Ireland as a social movement delineates the forces of change operating from both within and outside the movement. It also identifies the movement's dominant ideologies and motivations. The politics and ideas of

radical feminism in particular had a qualitative effect and produced an organic pattern of participatory, decentralised activism across the movement in the contemporary wave. Resource mobilisation theory, the key framework employed in the study, facilitates an in-depth process analysis of the women's movement by focusing on the mobilisation of movement organisations.

Shortcomings of Existing Interpretations of the Irish Women's Movement

There are several reasons for undertaking an analysis of the contemporary Irish women's movement:

1. There is no comprehensive body of *qualitative* data, from a feminist epistemological stance, encompassing the evolution of the contemporary women's movement in Ireland - women telling their *own* story;
2. A major integrated socio-historical text that annotates the development of the contemporary women's movement in Ireland has not been published to date. Archives exist but are not yet available to the public. Sporadic evidence or personal archival collections inform existing thematic publications, which tend to examine specific aspects of the social history of the women's movement in isolation (Tweedy, 1992; Coulter, 1993; Mahon, 1995). While acknowledging the immense importance of this work, an integrated social history of the movement would incorporate women's history into mainstream education and encourage further in-depth research and theoretical assessment of specific dimensions of the movement;
3. Analysis of the women's movement, or indeed of the position of women in Irish society in general, is not integral to recent major socio-historical

analysis of the modernisation of contemporary Irish society. This *exclusion* is inherent in the main body of Irish academic literature (Lee, 1989; Breen, 1990).¹ Furthermore, the continuity of the women's movement has not been acknowledged. The contemporary wave of the movement is inaccurately portrayed as some form of 'immaculate conception' with no previous legacy or sustained history of activism;

4. Mainstream sociology has not demonstrated the relationship between the women's movement and processes of *social change* in contemporary Irish society. Modernisation theory is the implicit theoretical framework underlying most existing discussions of contemporary Irish society (Breen, 1990). This genre relegates a peripheral role to the women's movement in the rapid modernisation of Irish society. It is the case empirically that an organised women's movement is at the kernel of the way in which Irish society has emerged since the 1970s. Irish sociology has not developed theories of social movements as a tool of analysis.²

Analysis of the role of the contemporary women's movement in Irish society is based, for the most part, on speculative observation from outside the movement or by elucidating what are perceived to be significant historical milestones. This approach provides a useful sociological context. However, over emphasising external themes as a major explanation for the persistent transformation of the women's movement in Irish society obscures the rich empirical social processes *within* the movement and engenders inaccurate interpretations. Intricate qualitative research into the movement itself across time and space from a feminist epistemological stance, and based on the *lived experience* of activists, underpins this study. This generates a more inclusive, factual appraisal of the evolving women's movement.

What is a Social Movement?: A Working Definition

The women's movement, for the purposes of this analysis, is defined as a social movement in the broadest, inclusive sense:

"A social movement is a conscious, collective activity to promote social change, representing a protest against the established power structure and against the dominant norms and values. The commitment and active participation of its members or activists constitute the main resource of any social movement." (Dahlerup, 1986: 2)

The concept 'social movement' refers generically to all those groups/individuals committed in some way towards changing and improving the lives of women politically, personally, socially or culturally. The definition of the women's movement is clarified by the boundaries of the movement, which are formed by SMOs that are in a constant state of evolution. Drude Dahlerup suggests:

"The distinction between 'social movement' and 'social movement organisation' (Zald, 1979) is appropriate (here). A social movement always has one or more organisations or centres. In fact, it often has several centres. And the movement is more than its organisations: it represents endeavours to reach beyond its own boundaries." (Dahlerup, 1986: 218)

The frontiers ultimately contract as the movement advances or declines in a cyclical manner, and divergent sectors consolidate. Dahlerup reiterates the core assumption of the resource mobilisation perspective, that particular cycles of advance and decline of SMOs are intrinsically connected to the resources and opportunities available to a social movement. The study analyses the women's movement by empirically tracing the development of key organisations.

By their very nature, social movements are difficult to conceptualise and define. Social movements are not static. Their key characteristic is that they initially form external to routine political activities and represent a

protest against established norms and values. Because it does not initially have institutional power, a social movement often uses non-conventional methods of protest, which was the case in the radical sector of the Irish women's movement in particular. Dahlerup's definition of a social movement implies that the understanding the conceptual nature of the women's movement as a social movement must focus on the loosely structured way in which the movement is organised. For example, the women's movement is frequently conceptualised in terms of ideological schisms. In the present study, the women's movement is approached as a 'maze' of ideologies, organisations, and participants that are in a constant state of organic evolution and are capable of transforming the movement, from within, over time and place.

Social movements are elusive phenomena with unclear boundaries in time and space. A central assumption of this study is that the unity of a movement is not given at the outset but is the contested result of mobilisation processes, in the course of which all those involved try to structure the field in accordance with their perceptions and preferences. Social movements are additionally hard to grasp, because their conceptualisation requires that we pay attention to at least three analytically distinct dimensions that intersect to constitute a social movement, including: (1) the actors (groups) involved; (2) the values, beliefs and claims (issues) articulated; and (3) the actions (events) carried out (Tilly, 1978: 9). As Tilly points out, change in one dimension may occur independent of change in another. Thus existing reconstructions of a social movement in the field differ considerably (see Chapter Three). Kriesi (1988) argues that to account for the complexity of the phenomenon, we need to define social movements in terms of all three dimensions. Tilly (1984) proposes a definition that implicitly takes into account all three, although it emphasises the action dimension: social movements are to be

viewed as a "sustained series of interaction" between authorities and challengers making claims on behalf of a constituency with specific preferences. In this case, the women's movement is clearly defined by the visibility of its actors - women. However, it is by no means a movement of *all* women, as a heterogeneous group defined specifically by sex. The unity of the "series of challenges to establish authorities" is sought on the level of a series of actions and reactions (Tilly, 1986: 392). It is the form and the pattern of interactions that provide the link that accounts for the unity, which is a core issue in the present study. Elucidating interacting layers of feminist meanings within the movement are clearly integral to this task. The notion of a social movement in this context provides us with an "intermediary" conceptual tool facilitating the link between the macro and micro levels. Social movements are both causes and consequences of large-scale processes of social change (Kriesi, 1988). However, the study of the practical *mobilisation* of social movements is in itself part of the study of social change. Some, Touraine (1978) for example, think these two terrains are identical.³ Attempts to bridge the gap between the two have only recently begun by focusing on the specific mechanisms that account for the transformation of structure into action.

In Tilly's work the study of single events remains episodic (Tilly, Tilly and Tilly 1975). In order to account for the dynamics generating a cycle of protest, the events produced by the interaction of challengers and authorities have to be connected in a meaningful way. The sequences of interactions must be identified to define the social movement in question. This is achieved by studying groups - SMOs - and the concerns they articulate. Gamson (1975), for example, attempted to choose groups at random from a list enumerating as completely as possible the 'population' of SMOs in a given period of time. The present study selects a set of organisations connected to each other in a meaningful way which

facilitates the task of analysing the women's movement as a social movement. In agreement with Kriesi:

"Such an endeavour...amounts to the (re-)constitution of a social movement, that is, the (re)-constitution of a series of interactions involving a cluster of groups (SMOs) articulating meaningfully related challenges over a given period of time." (Kriesi, 1988: 355)

This definition leaves open the question of how we can identify different instances of interactions as belonging to the same series. The study of social movements, in my view, is more generally associated with the empirical analysis of articulate, explicit attempts to challenge established positions of power, which do not rely entirely on established institutionalised procedures and also resort to methods typically used by outsiders to the system. The resource mobilisation framework, combined with an appropriate qualitative methodology, facilitates the complex task of defining the internal boundaries of the movement in question here in an *emergent* fashion.

The Theoretical Framework

Social movement literature distinguishes between a European and an American approach (Klandermans, 1989; Tarrow, 1990; Neidhardt and Rucht, 1991). The European tradition focuses on grand social-structural changes (such as individualisation or the growth of the welfare state) that underlie the rise and fall of different categories of social movements. The idea of 'new social movements' occupies a central place in the literature. Typically, these movements are viewed as the carriers of a new political paradigm and heralds of a new era labelled post-industrial, post-materialist, postmodern, or post-fordist (Kriesi, 1995: 238), depending on the theoretical perspective of the respective theorist (Offe, 1985; Touraine, 1981; Melucci, 1989). In the United States, less attention is paid to the

macro developments that are central to the European discussion. Scholars working within the resource mobilisation perspective (Zald and McCarthy, 1977; 1979; 1987; Oberschall, 1973; Ryan, 1992) have focused on how individual motivations are translated into participation through the mobilisation efforts of social movement organisations (SMOs) (Kriesi, 1995: 238).

Following Ryan:

"Historically, social movement research has centred on personality characteristics of participants and retrospective analyses of the factors leading to the origin or demise of a movement [Gusfield, 1962]. The ongoing process of change within a movement, while it is still occurring, has received little attention. Consistent with most research on social movements, studies of the contemporary women's movement have focused on the organising stage and the difference between various groups of feminist activists [Andersen, 1983; Banks, 1981; Carden, 1974; Evans, 1980; Fritz, 1979; Jaggar and Struhl, 1978; among others]. Far less attention has been given to movement transformation, including changing group relations related to constituent pressure, shifting social conditions, and societal resistance." (Ryan, 1992: 1)⁴

The complexity and organic nature of three stages of transformation in the present case study will be conceptualised by drawing on resource mobilisation theory, as a heuristic device.⁵ Resource mobilisation theory examines the way in which a movement creates interest and support for its goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Klandermans, Kriesi and Tarrow, 1988; Rucht, 1991; Lyman, 1995). Resource mobilisation theorists represented a shift in movement analysis from traditional social psychological grievance explanations and attributes rationality to movement participants. A fundamental continuity between institutionalised and movement politics is implicit (McAdam, 1988: 126). The constancy of discontent and variability of resources accounts for the emergence and development of insurgency. Accordingly, a principal focus of attention is how burgeoning movement organisations seek to mobilise and routinise (frequently by tapping elite

sources of support) the flow of resources to ensure movement survival (McAdam, 1988: 126).

Zald and McCarthy (1987: 12-13), for instance, assume that collective action is supported by and occurs in institutional settings, and focus on the infrastructural supports of social movements. The mobilisation of resources includes money, expertise (planning, public relations, publicity), labour, materials, premises and the media. The most crucial resource of any social movement is the participants themselves.⁶ The flow of resources influences the linkages among individuals in a movement, pre-existing structures, and microsituational determinants of participation.

In certain historical periods a number of social movements tend to emerge in a cyclical pattern, creating a social movement sector (SMS) (Zald and McCarthy, 1979). Recognition of the importance of SMOs (social movement organisations) has led to analysis of how the *internal* characteristics of organisations affect the strategies, tactics, outcomes and longevity of social movements. Movement organisations face problems of developing workable structures as well as ideological positions. The present study analyses the interactive effects of ideology and structure by examining in detail the ways in which specific SMOs actually deal with organisational problems. Data derived from in-depth interviews with activists in diverse organisations, combined with movement archives and documentary data, facilitates this task.

The analysis assumes the centrality of SMOs to the mobilisation of modern social movements. The organisational life of major movement organisations is elucidated over three key stages of activism (including the Irish Housewives Association, the Council for the Status of Women, the Irishwomen's Liberation Movement, Irishwomen United, the Rape Crisis Centre, pro-choice organisations, women's community groups and women's studies organisations). To date there has been no major application of

resource mobilisation or other contemporary theories of social movements to an Irish case study. A detailed understanding of how a specific social movement has evolved in Irish society challenges this.

The women's movement in Ireland in the 1990s is a modern, multifaceted new social movement with extensive networks and a number of component organisations. While the research object is a fluid, flexible and fleeting phenomenon, it can be mapped and preserved in the process of careful empirical analysis and original research. Following Kitschelt:

"Although contributors to RM theory disagree on the precise micro-logic and individual rationality that is involved in collective action, they share certain assumptions that set them apart from relative deprivation approaches. Not impulsive passions, but calculated interests guide collective mobilisation. Movement participants are not marginal and alienated members of society who have lost their belief in a shared system of norms and institutional mechanism of conflict resolution; rather, they are intellectually alive and socially competent individuals whose activities are based precisely on their deep enmeshment in social networks." (Kitschelt, 1991: 327)

In general, the evolving contemporary women's movement does not resemble established institutions. The women's movement tends to evolve and transform from within in a non-hierarchical, decentralised and organic pattern over time and place. Sociologists are primarily interested in theorising the factors which lead to cycles of growth or decline of new social movements. In view of the organic manner in which the movement re-emerged in the early 1970s, and the lack of existing research in the field of Irish social movements and comparative context, it is a complex case to conceptualise.

A number of questions arise in relation to the problem of explaining the growth, maintenance and decline of the contemporary Irish women's movement (Staggenborg, 1991: 8). Resource mobilisation draws our attention more to the process of mobilisation than the impact. The study elucidates what kind of political opportunities are important to the growth

of social movements. The model adopted deals with how the position of a social movement in a cycle of protest affect opportunities for mobilisation and collective action. In addition, the circumstances in which movement organisations cooperate and compete with one another, how victories and defeats affect subsequent mobilisation and the impact of countermovement activity are considered. A core question is, how do characteristics of movement organisations affect mobilisation and collective action? This study addresses these issues systematically through a sociological examination of the development of key organisations within the women's movement. Resource mobilisation theory focuses on the development of social movement organisations as a way of analysing the processes within a social movement. This approach *illuminates* how the women's movement evolved organically and is interconnected across time and space.

The Relationship Between Feminism and the Women's Movement

The women's movement is the focus of the study and it is assumed that there has to be some kind of organisational base before a diffuse set of concerns becomes a movement. However, it is important to clarify at the outset the relationship between *feminism* and the social movement where its proponents strive to activate its full expression. Literature in the field typically assumes a direct relationship between theory and praxis - that liberal and radical feminism, in particular, direct two distinct or separate movement sectors, women's rights and women's liberation branches. Contemporary feminism embraces diverse literature, theories and political methods. In practice, different currents of feminism inform movement participants and prescribe various styles of activism in a dynamic fashion. Advocates of post-feminism generally do not take into account this diversity:

"At both the theoretical and political levels, the debates, oppositions, separations and alliances are both the expression of an internal dynamic and of changing social conditions on the one hand, and on the other, they are the manifestation of differences and possible cleavages of economic, political and ideological interests even within the class of women... The highlighting of the multidisciplinary nature and the multidimensionality of the theoretical environment of women's discourse breaks systematically with all normative perceptions of feminism. It distances us from all dogmatic forms or inclinations and illustrates well all the complexity, the hesitations, the richness of the contributions of women to the elaboration not only of a new explicative theory of our social functioning, but more concretely of a new social order." (Descarris-Bélangier and Roy, 1991: 33-34)

In Britain the classic theoretical debate within *published* academic feminist analysis has been between radical and Marxist feminism and in the USA between radical and liberal feminism (Walby, 1990: 2). A central contention of the present study is that strategies often modify theories and vice versa within the actual structures and activities of the women's movement. In certain situations exchange and debate may be organised on an *ad hoc* basis (for example, when mobilising in favour of a particular cause). However, at other times there is no possibility of strategic alliances. Freeman (1975) highlights the complexity of 'types' of feminist activism:

"...radical aloofness from the system can end up in a kind of powerless introversion, while more system-oriented and gradualistic groups may have a platform 'that would so completely change our society it would be unrecognisable' (Freeman, 1975: 50)." (in Randall, 1991: 208)

Delmar (in Mitchell and Oakley, 1994) raises the central but complex question - what is feminism? A number of problems, particular to defining the women's movement and feminism, remain unresolved. Delmar contends that, in particular, the movement claims to represent all women, yet 'feminism' is perceived as being confined to a limited number of women. Frequently posed questions are - what comprises 'membership' of the women's movement? Are *all* women who strive for change 'feminists'? Is it

fair to label them as such? Did women who were radical in repressive/conservative eras privately identify themselves as feminists? Were they feminists? Who defines what or who a feminist should be?

Delmar (1994: 8) posits that it is now at least possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism, as someone who holds that women suffer discrimination on the basis of their sex, have specific needs and that the satisfaction of these needs requires radical change in the social and political order. However, as Randall aptly states, "...its boundaries, though not its core, are a subject of dispute" (1991: 208). General agreement about the situation in which women find themselves is not accompanied by any shared understanding of why this state of affairs should exist or what could be done about it. For instance, the history of the women's movement in the 1970s, a time of apparent unity, was often marked by internal disputes over what it was possible or permissible for a feminist to do, say, think or feel (Delmar, 1994). The proliferation of contemporary feminism points to the impossibility of constructing a shared definition of feminism, and it now makes more sense to speak of a *plurality of feminisms*. Many texts are written as if there were a 'true' and authentic feminism, unified and consistent over time and place. Since the late 1960s, an equation between women organising and feminism has been implicitly adopted. Delmar (1994: 8) urges that its usage as a 'blanket' term to cover all women's activities urgently needs to be questioned.

This contention raises an apposite problem. Are *all* actions and campaigns promoted or led by women feminist?⁷ Ryan (1992: 6), for instance, redesigned her methodology and loosened her interview selection criteria when she realised that women who did not proclaim themselves 'feminist,' or were members of established or traditional women's groups, were part of the women's movement and concluded that: "...the women's movement consists of more than organisations specifically stating their goal

as that of women's liberation." If feminism is a concern to advance women's interests, and therefore anyone who shares this concern is a feminist, whether they acknowledge it or not, then the range of feminism is general and its meaning is equally diffuse. Feminism becomes defined by its object of concern - women - in much the same way as socialism, for example, has sometimes been defined by an object - the poor or working class. Looking at feminism as diffuse activity, which is the approach in the present study, makes feminism understandably hard to pin down. This implies that contemporary feminists, being involved in so many activities, from so many different perspectives, would almost inevitably find it hard to unite in the future or form a social movement, except in specific campaigns.

On the other hand, feminism does have a complex set of ideas about women, specific to or emanating from *feminists*. This means it is possible to separate feminism and feminists from the multiplicity of those concerned with women's issues in Irish society. It is by no means absurd to suggest that you do not have to be a feminist to support women's rights and that not all those supportive of women's demands are feminists. In this light, feminism can claim its own history - its own practices and its own ideas - but *feminists can make no claim to an exclusive interest in problems affecting women*. Furthermore, the women's movement did not always take on the sole use of 'advocacy of the claims of women' - it has also dealt with nationalism, consumer rights, housing conditions, poverty, peace, spirituality, the environment.

Delmar concludes that a precondition of the construction of a history of feminism (separable from but connected to the history of women's position) is that feminism must be able to be specified. Feminism translates into the organised form of a social movement, which strives for change in the position of women. Its privileged form is taken to be the political movement, the self-organisation of women's politics. Strachey

(1928), in her classic work *The Cause*, suggests that feminists share the same aims and the same general ideas, the same broad commitment to the great cause of female emancipation, and a capacity to put this cause in the centre of their lives. The present study assumes an intimate connection between feminism and the women's movement. The leaders, organisers, publicists, and lobbyists *within* the women's movement are feminists. The social movement, particularly in its political dimension, provides the context for feminism - feminists are its animating spirit and sustain it over long periods of time.

Outline of the Study

The study is divided into three sections: (1) Background (Chapters One to Three), (2) Analysis (Chapters Four to Seven) and (3) Findings/Conclusions (Chapter Eight).

Theories of social movements in the European and American fields are reviewed in some detail in Chapter One, with particular emphasis on the utility of the resource mobilisation paradigm in the present case study. The antecedents of the first and second waves of the Anglo-American women's movement are outlined in Chapter Two and are linked to the social history of the women's movement in Ireland. Chapter Three delineates the methodology and originality of the research. Intensive interviews conducted from a feminist epistemological stance with movement activists, complemented with an analysis of the archival collection of the contemporary women's movement (which have not been accessed by a social researcher to date), and secondary documentary sources encompassing the social history of the women's movement and the changing position of women in Irish society since the inception of the State, underpin the analysis.

Section II analyses the evolution of the contemporary wave of the women's movement in Ireland from a resource mobilisation perspective. It is contended that 1970 marks the resurgence of the contemporary wave of activism - the year when the Report of the First Commission on the Status of Women was published and the IWLM (Irishwomen's Liberation Movement) mobilised. Four analytical stages of movement transformation are conceptualised in an emergent fashion: (1) The roots of resurgence in a period of *Abeyance* that lasted from the Civil War until the end of the 1960s (Chapter Four); (2) A period of rapid *Advancement*, at the level of local grass-roots activism and national organisations, which occurred during the 1970s (Chapter Five);⁸ (3) The *Re-appraisal* of the women's movement from within which occurred during the 1980s, a period marked by movement-counter movement dynamics and a generic process of formalisation (Chapter Six); and (4) The *New Directions* evident in the mobilisation of women in the community sector and the consolidation of women's studies, in the late 1980s and 1990s (Chapter Seven).

Section III highlights the originality of the study and its contribution to the field. A retrospective analysis of the development of the contemporary women's movement and findings are proposed. This section underlines the significance of the study and provides suggestions for further research in the field of social movements in Irish sociology.

Sheila Conroy, a trade unionist active in the women's movement since the 1950s, suggests:

"I think there is a great need to do some proper research on where women stand now and then we could see better where the women's movement should be directing its attention." (Heron, 1993: 142)

This study presents a theoretical assessment of the continuing impact and complexity of the women's movement as a major force for social change in Irish society.

Notes Introduction:

- 1 Recent major works such as Lee (1989), a much vaunted socio-historical account of Irish society, has no comprehensive reference to the first or second waves of the women's movement or, indeed, women's contribution to the public sphere in general. This amplifies the need for intricate research and the need for sociologists to research the archives of the contemporary women's movement and other new social movements.
- 2 Exceptions to this include, Cox, (1996) and Yearley (1995).
- 3 Touraine (1981) elaborates upon the notion of the new social movement replacing the old labour movement which emerged from industrialisation. NSMs are more focused on the anti-technocratic battle. Touraine is in search for the new agent of history and central conflict in society. He argues that this was the student movement in 1968. Touraine applied his distinct method of 'sociologique intervention' over ten years to look at different social movements (including the anti-nuclear movement) and undertook a rigorous research agenda. Touraine's (1981) approach is dominated by a conflict perspective in the study of social movements, how an opposing group can shape the objectives of a social movement (see Giddens, 1993: 645-648). How such processes stimulate a re-orientation in the course of a social movement is of concern.

Touraine has been less interested in the background of conditions that give rise to social movements than in understanding the objectives social movements pursue. Touraine also joined the growing chorus of theorists who rejected grievances models of collective behaviour. In contrast, he argues that social movements do not just come about as irrational responses to social divisions or injustices. In fact, they develop and evolve with views and strategies as to how these can be overcome. Social movements cannot be understood as isolated forms of association, they develop in deliberate antagonism and conflict with other groups (usually established organisations) (Giddens, 1993).

One of Touraine's key assumptions is that modern societies are characterised by "historicity." This emphasises that social movements reflect the stress placed on modern societies. It is argued that knowledge of social processes is used to re-shape social conditions. For example,

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- 7 For example, Greenham Common is a community of women, but, support for Greenham does not rely solely on autonomous "feminist" organisations.
 - 8 A social movements analysis of the women's movement in Northern Ireland, which followed its own distinct, parallel course, has not been undertaken to date (for a factual treatise see Evason (1991)).

Chapter 1

Theories of Social Movements: A Review of the Field

Introduction

Beyond analysing the course of the contemporary women's movement, this study develops the field of social movements in an Irish context. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on resource mobilisation theory and to contextualise it in the field of social movements. The resource mobilisation model is used to illuminate the form and process of the Irish women's movement in subsequent chapters.

From the 1960s onwards most advanced Western countries experienced waves of protest in the form of contemporary social movements. The most prominent of these were the women's, environmental, peace, civil rights and student movements. Although these movements mobilised around a diversity of issues, their participants shared common concerns. Chief among these was the quest for more political participation and autonomy; a critique of centralised and bureaucratised apparatuses; and scepticism about a singular conception of progress that stresses economic growth while ignoring its negative side effects (Diani, 1991: 9). Social movements, by their nature, are at the same time ubiquitous and hard to grasp. Rucht suggests that:

"This complexity is due in part to the specificities of the research object, which is characterised by its vague contours, its multifaceted nature, and its dependency on temporal and spatial contours." (1991: 10)

These developments prompted a major paradigmatic shift in the field of social movements in the US where conventional ideas about collective behaviour were challenged.¹ Classical Breakdown theories hold that social movements emerge as collective responses to specific grievances in society. Structural strain leads to a disruptive psychological state such as alienation, cognitive dissonance or relative deprivation (Turner and Killian, 1957;

Smelser, 1962). When this psychological disturbance reaches the aggregate threshold required to produce a social movement, the causal sequence is complete. Social movements are a collective response to a society in disarray. Movement organisations do not play a prominent role. Social movements are organised, but movement organisations become the new institutions that alienated individuals can identify with. Too much organisation, especially formal organisation, is considered a symptom of institutionalisation. Eventually bureaucratisation, centralisation and oligarchisation of movement organisations will mark the end of the movement.

In contrast to traditional breakdown perspectives, resource mobilisation stressed the rational and organised character of social movement activities, which were manifest in the *new* social movements that emerged in the 1960s in the US. The followers of social movements were no longer conceptualised as disparate and alienated masses (Rucht, 1991: 9). The once constitutive, conceptual boundary between conventional and unconventional behaviour became blurred and protest was conjectured as a normal phenomenon of social and political life. Ideas of rational choice and the sociology of organisations were adopted.

There was no corresponding paradigmatic shift in Western European sociological thought. The notion that there is an axial relationship between social movements and broader social change has existed since the nineteenth century. However, the central idea that the social movements that emerged in the 1960s are part of an overarching phenomenon of new social movements (NSMs) was developed. Despite a degree of homogeneity in the NSMs literature, in reality this perspective is a highly differentiated and complex field. The relationship between social movements and broader social change is a common point of reference. Some analysts promote the idea that NSMs herald a new societal type;

stress the differences between and within the various movements; emphasise the parallels to earlier movements; or speculate that these groupings will assume the central role of the labour movement and the liberal bourgeois movement in earlier societies. The three main orientations in the field are reviewed in this chapter in some detail:

1. Resource Mobilisation Theory;
2. New Social Movements Theories;
3. The Challenge of Constructionist Approaches.

Assumptions of Classical Approaches to Collective Behaviour

Classical approaches to collective behaviour in the US were underlined by the notion of system strain, framed by the Parsonian notion of societal integration (Parsons, 1964) which seemed threatened either by revolutionary agitation or totalitarian movements. According to Mayer:

"First in the classical-functionalist approaches, which were dominant in American social movement research until the early 70s, collective behaviour was triggered by societal strain, hence disorganisation, and mediated via social "uprootedness" and anomie (Smelser, 1962) or via frustration and fear (Gurr, 1970)." (Mayer, 1995: 171)

Different variations of this approach all share the core assumption that individual deprivations, breakdowns of the social order and homogenising ideologies are important preconditions for the emergence of social movements (Mayer, 1995: 171). Smelser (1962), for instance, contended that collective behaviour is an irrational and cognitively inadequate response to structural strains emerging from modernisation. Kornhauser (1959) suggested that collective behaviour results from participants' disconnectedness from normal or traditional social relations. According to Ryan (1992: 163), psychologically-based explanations for social movement

participation include characteristics related to an authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950), feelings of marginality (Lasswell and Blumenstock, 1939), isolation (Ernst and Loth, 1952), personality peculiarities (Hoffer, 1952), individual pathology (Heberle, 1951), and aggressive tendencies (Dollard et al., 1971). Analysis of the emergence of social movements was related to mass society and cultural milieu perspectives (Kornhauser, 1959; Gusfield, 1962; Riesman, 1961; Mills, 1956); social conflict forces (Dahrendorf, 1958); structural change (Smelser, 1962); and relative deprivation perceptions (Davies, 1962, 1971; Merton and Kitt, 1950; Gurr, 1970).

This perspective implies, for instance, that the resurgence of the women's movement in 1970 transpired predominantly in reaction to Irish women's specific grievances. However, as we will see, the grievances that formed the initial demands of the women's movement - including, contraception, equality in the law and employment, social welfare rights, property rights - were not suddenly imposed, and were more pronounced in Irish society before 1970. These issues already formed the basis of active feminist campaigns and networks of organisations in the post-independence period (particularly in the 1940s).

The category 'social movement' was used to encompass a broad number of movements - in particular, fascist, communist, regressive and emancipatory. The defining feature of 'aberrant' behaviour is that it occurs apart from the national consensus and established norms. A key posit is that it does not follow prevailing norms and the social actors are marginal and alienated agents of society. Structures associated with the complex processes of movement formation receive little attention. The growth and expansion of a movement is especially attributed to factors of communication, such as rumour, circular reaction and diffusion, for which homogenising ideologies play an important role (Mayer, 1995: 171).

Viewing resistance to modernisation as irrational, classical theorists focused primarily on the micro level of social psychological analysis. The origins of social movements are explained by reference to the same dynamics that account for individual participation in movement activities. In short, answers to micro questions of individual participation and answers to macro questions of movement emergence are sought in the characteristic profile of participants and the presumed psychological functions attendant to participation (Mayer, 1995: 172).

While not all theorists have an agreed view of collective behaviour as an irrational response of alienated individuals to change, they all share an emphasis on the psychological dimensions to breakdown combined with emphasis on the central role of crude modes of communication, volatile goals and the transitory nature of social movements:

"The underlying assumption begins that, if modernising elites are not overwhelmed by the resistance and institutions are successfully defended, the resistance is bound to fail. Modernisation will eventually provide the blessings of progress to all." (Mayer, 1995: 172)

The political model in which social movements are located is an approximation to the pluralist ideal of an open polity. Because the pluralist model allows for rational pursuit of interests through decentralised channels of political access, movements appear as superfluous and irrational. Non-institutional forms of collective action are a matter of marginal groups who lack the cognitive or temporal resources to use this access. The political system is observed as receptive with ease of access. Social movements are primarily viewed as spontaneous outbursts and are not accorded a long-term capacity to influence social change. The political processes, underlying organisational life of a movement and actual political change do not enter this model's analysis.

1. RESOURCE MOBILISATION THEORY

The emergence of the modern civil rights movement at the end of the Eisenhower era, followed by the War on Poverty, the anti-Vietnam War movement and the flowering of other social causes, represented the external catalyst for renewed concern in the field of social movements within the scholarly community. Debates in relation to the adequacy of grievance models and the growth of models that presented alternatives to existing versions of collective behaviour theory spurred the search for a new framework of social movement theory.

Resource mobilisation theory emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the explanatory weaknesses of grievances and deprivation models (Gurr, 1970; Smelser, 1962) of collective behaviour. Resource mobilisation theory was also a re-formulation of past theories, which did not successfully account for the new wave of social movement activity observable in American society in the 1960s. Early resource mobilisation theorists took the view that social movements emerge not so much because grievances increase, but because there is an increase in resources available to an aggrieved population. Movement organisations facilitate goal achievement and ensure movement survival. SMOs accumulate and allocate resources. Individual and organisational decisions to support a SMO are rational choices, based on an evaluation of the costs and benefits of participation. Organisation (especially indigenous organisation) is thus a key resource in itself (Zald and McCarthy, 1987). The resource mobilisation approach has been most fruitful in analysing mobilisation processes and in emphasising that existing organisations and networks not only increase the chance that persons will be confronted with a mobilisation attempt, but also make bloc recruitment possible. Pinard (1971), for instance, showed that an increase

in relative deprivation only leads to more protest if a collectivity has a certain degree of *organisation*.

Resource mobilisation concepts are drawn upon as a heuristic device to conceptualise the case of the Irish women's movement, for a number of reasons. A resource mobilisation framework is useful for studying the life history of specific movements, for examining the level of societal support and constraint on movement organising and to connect social movements to the central political processes of a given society (Ryan, 1992: 3). It focuses on the ways a movement creates interest and support for its goals. Resources refer to the assets garnered by a movement, and mobilisation refers to the control and use of assets. Mobilisation is defined in two ways: in terms of *activation* and *creation of* commitment. Mobilisation as activation involves the already committed members in a stage of resurgence and the forms of organisation and activism they undertake. Mobilisation for commitment refers to the actions implemented by the resurgent movement to increase the base of potential participants. It is a dynamic perspective which shifted the focus from why people join a social movement to how they attempt to change their condition.

The strength of the resource mobilisation approach has been in analysing *mobilisation processes* and in emphasising the role of *existing organisations and networks* in laying the groundwork for social movement formation and continuity. Today, resource mobilisation accounts for approximately three-quarters of the literature in the field of social movements in the US (McClurg Mueller, 1992: 3).

By the 1980s resource mobilisation encompassed a vast body of literature and expanded research programme (Zald, 1992). According to Zald (1992: 332) there are five core elements of resource mobilisation:

1. Behaviour entails costs - therefore grievances or deprivations do not automatically or easily translate into social movement

activity, especially high-risk social movement activity. The weighing of costs and benefits, no matter how primitive, implies choice and rationality at some level. Mobilisation out of the routines of social and family life, out of work and leisure, is problematic.

2. Mobilisation of resources may occur from both within the aggrieved group and also from many other sources.
3. Organising activity is critical since resources are mobilised and organised.
4. Costs of participating may be raised or lowered by state and societal supports and repression.
5. Just as mobilisation is a large problematic, so too are movement outcomes. There is no direct or one-to-one correspondence between amount of mobilisation and movement success.

The following sections review in depth the central tenets of resource mobilisation theory.

Olson: The Illogic of Collective Action

Consideration of Olson's (1968) rational choice model and Leites and Wolf's (1970) study of guerrilla movements influenced the initial formulation of resource mobilisation. In his classic work, *The Logic of Collective Action* (1968), Mancur Olson challenged the common assumption that groups of individuals will act on behalf of their common interests just as single individuals can be expected to act on behalf of their personal interests. He argued that the rational, self-interested individual will not ordinarily act to achieve collective benefits because such public goods cannot be withheld from members of the group according to whether or not they contribute. In other words, the rational actor can 'ride free' on the efforts of others in achieving collective goods. The weighing of costs and benefits of participation by the rational, self interested individual is a core element of the rational choice model.

The rational actor is therefore a "free rider". If everyone rides free, however, how does mobilisation for collective action occur? Olson's paradox suggests that social movement participation is irrational if the rational actor can "free ride" on the collective efforts of others. Olson distinguished between collective and selective incentives. Incentives differ in the way they are related to participation. Collective incentives are characterised by joint supply and obtaining them is not contingent upon participation, while obtaining selective incentives *is* contingent upon participation. Olson's core argument is that rational individuals will not participate in collective action unless *selective* incentives encourage them to do so.

Olson's theory offers an explanation for the fact that people often do not take part in collective action (despite their interest in the collective goals). This is consistent with the initial assumption that grievances are not a sufficient condition for the rise of a social movement. Resource mobilisation theorists introduced a different problem - Olson explains why individuals do not participate in collective action, but, why they sometimes *do* (even in the absence of selective incentives) remains an on-going problem. Various solutions have been suggested. Zald (1992) highlighted Oliver's (1984) assertion that individuals participate in more active forms of participation because they realise the collective good would never be achieved if everyone reasoned as Olson's rational individual did. Oberschall (1978) suggested that given the multiplicative relationship between the value of the collective goal and its possible realisation, for some people the goal is so valuable that even a slight chance of success is enough to motivate participation, especially if selective incentives are associated with participation. Carden (1978) pointed to the ideological incentives people receive by working for a cause they believe to be just. Fireman and Gamson (1979) argued that the two main reasons for

participation are loyalty to the larger collectivity engaged in collective action, and the felt obligation to participate in order to maintain one's self-respect. These claims are tested against the empirical data in the present study.

Olson's thesis that collective incentives make no difference is no longer taken seriously, except by a minority of social movement students (Zald, 1992). Instead, in recent work the two types of incentives are seen as reinforcing or compensating for one another. A distinction is made between willingness to participate in different forms of action, in moderate and militant action (Klandermans, 1984), and in low and high-risk activities (McAdam, 1986) because of divergent cost-benefit ratios. Furthermore, collective (or purposive) incentives are distinguished from selective incentives and selective incentives are in turn divided into social and non-social incentives (Oberschall, 1973; Klandermans, 1984).

The importance of Olson's rational choice model for the development of resource mobilisation and collective action theory cannot be underestimated (see Zald and McCarthy, 1977; Klandermans, Kriesi and Tarrow, 1988; Rucht, 1991; McClurg Mueller and Morris, 1992). By taking Olson seriously, theorists have had to re-examine long-held assumptions regarding the centrality of grievances, solidarity and ideology for mobilisation. Even though Olson's paradox was originally directed to the problems of large groups and interest group representation, it was extremely important for consolidating the resource mobilisation perspective. The free rider problematic poses the question that if the rational actor can 'ride free' on efforts of others in achieving collective goods, how is social movement participation explained in the case of the contemporary Irish women's movement? Olson offers an explanation as to why individuals do not participate in collective action, but why they sometimes do remains a vexing problem for resource mobilisation theorists.

The Contribution of Zald and McCarthy

Zald and McCarthy (1977; 1979; 1987) were largely responsible for the establishment of resource mobilisation in the field of social movements in the US. Other influential volumes published at this time includes the work of Oberschall (1973), Gamson (1975) and Tilly (1978). Gamson's *Power and Discontent*, published in 1968, emphasised the consequences of the differential distribution of political access and resources for strategies of influence, and Tilly and his colleagues were developing their collective action and strike analysis programme in the early 1970s.

Zald and McCarthy (1977) challenged the assumption of a close link between the frustrations or grievances of a collectivity of actors and the growth/decline of movement activity. Analysis of social movements was directed away from the heavy emphasis on the social psychology of movement participants towards analysis of the ongoing problems and strategic dilemmas of movement leaders. Resource mobilisation focuses on the variety of resources that must be mobilised; the linkages of social movements to other groups; dependence of movements upon external support for success; and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements. It is assumed that there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grassroots of a movement *if it is effectively organised* and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established élite group. In some instances, grievances and discontent may be defined, created and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organisations. Some movements develop through the moves of actors in the political system. A weak assumption regarding grievances emphasises mobilisation processes, which led to the search for analytic tools to account adequately for the sociological significance of social movements.

Zald and McCarthy adopted Olson's (1968) challenge as one of its underlying problems. Explaining collective behaviour requires detailed attention to the selection of incentives, cost-reducing mechanisms or structures and career benefits that led to collective behaviour (see also Oberschall, 1973). Resource aggregation requires some minimal form of organisation - hence a specific focus on SMOs in contrast to traditional theories.

Explicit recognition of the crucial importance of the involvement of individuals and organisations from outside the collectivity which a social movement represents was adopted. A rather crude supply and demand model is sometimes applied to the flow of resources towards and away from specific social movements, which shifts the focus of analysis to three issues: (1) support base; (2) strategy and tactics; (3) relation to larger society. Although traditional case studies of social movements may mention external supports, they are not central analytic components of breakdown perspectives. Conscience constituents (individual and organisational), who do not stand to gain directly from a movement's goals, provide a potentially major source of support and resources. In some cases supporters (who provide money, facilities and even labour) may have no commitment to the values that underlie specific movements.

Breakdown theories argue that social movement leaders use bargaining, persuasion or violence to influence authorities to change. Choice of tactics depends on prior history or relations with authorities, relative success of previous encounters and ideology. Tactics are also influenced by the oligarchisation and institutionalisation of organisational life. Zald and McCarthy (1977) *were* concerned with interaction between movements and authorities, but is also noted that SMOs have a number of strategic tasks. These include mobilising supporters, neutralising and/or transforming mass and élite publics into sympathisers and achieving change

in targets. Dilemmas occur in choice of tactics, since what may achieve one aim may conflict with behaviour aimed at achieving another. Tactics are further influenced by inter-organisational competition and co-operation.

Case studies of traditional movements emphasised the effects of the environment upon movements, especially with respect to goal change. For the most part, ways in which movement organisations can utilise this environment for their own purposes are ignored. Society and culture are treated as descriptive and in a historical context. Zald and McCarthy suggested that society provides the infrastructures which social movement industries utilise. Aspects utilised include communication media, levels of affluence, degree of access to institutional centres and pre-existing networks.

The idea that *organisations* act as carriers of social movements is now commonplace in political sociology. Until the 1970s, this idea did not fit in well with the dominant social psychological way of framing social movements. The organisations that shape the ebb and flow of social movements were seen as more excrescent than as the essence of the movement. Zald and McCarthy (1987) and their subsequent collaborators gradually challenged the traditional view. Rather than seeing organisation and movement as contrasting phenomena, they are embedded. Since resource mobilisation was first coined, Zald and McCarthy now represent one major strand of a stream of revisionist thinking on social movements, generally referred to as resource mobilisation theory.

The common theme that synthesises resource mobilisation theory is the treatment of social movement activity as purposeful behaviour. Each major strand of movement activity as purposeful behaviour calls our attention to different aspects of social movement theory. Zald and McCarthy (1977) consolidated the term resource mobilisation but, surprisingly, their specific contribution does not focus significantly on

resources. Zald and McCarthy call our attention not to resources themselves and how they are used, but to how they are acquired and organised in two senses:

1. Organisational interaction -
the interaction between SMOs and a variety of other organisations (including other SMOs in the same movement, counter movement organisations and authorities);
2. Organisational infrastructure -
the 'nuts and bolts' of social movement activity.

The introduction of a costs/benefits model of participation made possible a more sophisticated approach to the study of recruitment in social movements. Zald and McCarthy contended that organisation decreases the costs of participation, is important in the recruitment of activists and increases the chances of success (Gamson, 1975). Resource mobilisation stressed the complex problems of mobilisation in relation to the manufacture of discontent, tactical choices and the infrastructure of society and movements. Previous emphasis on structural strain, generalised belief and deprivation have largely ignored these ongoing problems and strategic dilemmas within social movements. Resource mobilisation addressed many of the practical questions that have concerned social movement leaders (Zald and McCarthy, 1977) by analysing the dynamics and tactics of social movement growth, decline and change. The variety of resources (both tangible and intangible) that must be mobilised are related to linkages of social movements to other groups, dependence of movements on external support for success, tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements and the relationship of social movements to the State.

In the last two decades, the study of social movements has thus undergone profound change. It is now closer to political sociology than before, and its concerns are more distant from the analysis of traditional collective behaviour analysis of fads, fashions and panics. The transformation of social movement theory rests upon explicit recognition that the mobilisation of resources for collective action is problematic. Distinctive variants of resource mobilisation were subsequently formulated, which differ in focus. Some analysts focus more directly on the relation of collective action to the underlying broad changes in political structures (Tilly); put more emphasis upon the analysis of the linkages among individuals, the mobilisation of individuals through pre-existing structures, and the micro-situational determinants of participation (Oberschall); and/or focus upon the political process aspects of mobilisation, noting how opportunities for social movement action are created by regime weakness and instability, as well as regime support (McAdam).

The Political Process Model

Although the central theoretical statements of resource mobilisation clearly overlapped by the 1980s, they varied in emphasis. Zald and McCarthy concentrated on the social movement organisation (SMO) and the movement entrepreneur "...looking outward for resources and reflexively looking at constituents and the authorities for tactics and opportunities" (Zald, 1992: 333). Other variants included research into micro-mobilisation (McAdam, 1988), political opportunities (Perrow, 1979), and relationship to the state (Tilly, 1984). Theorists' attention to these factors began to move resource mobilisation theory closer to the analysis of politics and political interaction (Piven and Cloward, 1977; McAdam, 1982). It was observed, for example, that the discovery of a new tactic sometimes activates a protest cycle or shifts it to a new level of interaction

with authorities. As long as the opponent does not know how to respond to the tactic, the protesters' chances of success remain high (Klandermans, Kriesi and Tarrow, 1988). Eventually this advantage dissipates because the opponent learns how to react to the new tactic. These authors shifted attention from movements as emergent and unstructured forms of collective action to movements as a form of mass politics. Tilly (1978) traced the development of a concept of 'repertoires' of collective action and the relation between such repertoires and political crises and regime changes. Piven and Cloward (1977) emphasised the importance of electoral realignments in triggering social movements. Tarrow (1983) argued that a reform cycle runs parallel to the protest cycle and is thus an indicator of how the government responds to the new protest tactic.

Perrow (1979) distinguishes between two major branches of resource mobilisation which evolved. Oberschall, Gamson and Tilly's approach tends to regard movements as the "continuation of orderly politics by other (disorderly) means" (Ferree and Miller, 1985: 39). Tilly (1978), for instance, argues that collective behaviour flows out of a population's central political processes instead of expressing momentarily heightened diffuse strains and discontents within a population. McCarthy and Zald's approach stresses the selective incentives of participation.

The differences between the two main strands of resource mobilisation are of emphasis rather than kind. Both attribute rationality to movement participants and posit a fundamental continuity between institutionalised and movement politics. Resource mobilisation emphasises the constancy of discontent and the variability of resources in accounting for the emergence and development of insurgency. Accordingly, a principal focus is how burgeoning movement organisations seek to mobilise and routinise the flow of resources to ensure movement survival, frequently by tapping lucrative elite sources of support. The political process version

represents a slightly different perspective (McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1978) by emphasising two sets of macro structural factors to facilitate the generation of social insurgency - the level of organisation within the aggrieved population and the political realities confronting members and challengers at any given time. The first is the degree of structural "readiness" within the minority community and the latter, following Eisinger (1973), the structures of political opportunities available to insurgent groups (McAdam, 1988: 126).

The re-assertion of the political is one of the major contributions to the paradigmatic shift in the field of social movements and is emphasised in the present study. Resource mobilisation locates social movements squarely within the realm of rational political action. Social movements were viewed as an extension of institutional politics and should be responsive to the broad political trends and characteristics of the regions and countries in which they occur, as are institutionalised political processes. Among the macro-political factors that have been linked to the development of collective action are expanding political opportunities, regime crisis and contested political arenas, the absence of political repression, and the unchecked expansion of the welfare state (McAdam, 1988: 128).

Considerable evidence is provided in this study to suggest that changes in the structure of political opportunities is central to the ebb and flow of movement activity. The political opportunity structure refers to the distribution of member support and opposition to the political aims of a given challenging group. Challengers are characteristically excluded from any real participation in institutionalised politics because of strong opposition on the part of most polity members. Lipsky (1970) originally described how communist political systems experienced a 'thaw' or 'a process of retrenchment' and posed two questions. Should it not at least

be an open question as to whether the political system experiences such stages as fluctuations? Is it not sensible to assume that the system will be more or less open to specific groups at different times and different places? (Lipsky, 1970: 14)

Challenging groups experience different levels of support and opposition over time. Variations in support and opposition that constitute the evolving structure of political opportunities have been studied empirically by theorists in the field. Jenkins and Perrow (1977: 263) attributed the success of the farm workers movement of the 1960s to the altered political environment which originated in economic trends and political realignments that took place quite independently from any 'push' from insurgents. McAdam (1982) attributed the emergence of black protest activity in the 1950s to key political trends - including the expansion of the black vote, its shift to the Democratic party and post-war competition for influence among emerging Third World nations - which served to enhance the bargaining position of civil rights SMOs. Agencies already sympathetic to the movement were crucial resources in the mobilisation process. Broadly speaking, the political opportunity structure of the 1960s facilitated the emergence of a wide variety of social movements. It is similarly argued that the transformed political opportunity structure of the 1980s encouraged the mobilisation of successful pro-life and new right movements, such as the Moral Majority in the US. Tarrow (1983) proposes a pattern of 'thaw' and contraction as a standard feature of most liberal democratic regimes.

In contrast to classical theories, the social categories typically excluded from the political process are disposed towards a rational form of interest politics. They form a collective means of interest realisation because of inaccessible political avenues. Both the regular channels of interest realisation and the resources for political mobilisation are unevenly

distributed. In view of this, it is evident that the central unit of analysis for resource mobilisation theorists by the 1980s was the movement organisation rather than the individual participant. Mobilisation in this study is studied as the deliberate political process by which SMOs established control over resources and were facilitated or constrained by the political opportunity structure, over time and place - rather than psychological processes by which individuals come together to form crowds, groups and other collectivities.

Movement Maintenance

A central question of any empirical case study is where does a movement come from? A core assumption of this study is that movements do not emerge irrationally. The organisational base of previous waves of activism and pre-existing networks are in fact a crucial element of a movement's emergence. One of the main criticisms of social movements theory in its original formulation is its 'immaculate conception' view of those social movements which emerged during the 1960s (Turner and Killian, 1957). Recent empirical work suggests that the break between the movements of the 1960s and those of the earlier part of the century is not as sharp as previously thought. The work of Verta Taylor has been particularly useful in this area. She suggests that "what scholars have taken for 'births' were in fact breakthroughs or turning points in movement mobilisation" (Taylor, 1989: 761). Taylor (1989: 762) uses the NWP (National Women's Party) case in the US to highlight the processes by which social movements maintain continuity between different cycles of peak activity. Mizruchi's abeyance process is applied to the case. Abeyance is essentially a holding pattern of a group which continues to mount some type of challenge even in a non-receptive environment. Factors that contribute to abeyance are both external and internal to the movement. Externally, a discrepancy between a surplus of activists and a lack of status opportunities to integrate them into the mainstream, creates conditions for abeyance. Internally, structures arise that permit organisations to absorb and hold a committed cadre of activists. These abeyance structures, in turn, promote movement continuity and, crucially, are employed in later rounds of mass mobilisation. In congruence with the resource mobilisation perspective, political opportunities and an indigenous organisational base are viewed as major factors in the rise and decline of social movements.

A central problem for resource mobilisation is thus how to account for the growth, maintenance and decline of social movements. Tarrow developed the concept of "cycles of protest" to analyse the rise and decline of individual movements (Tarrow, 1983; 1988; 1989). Cycles of protest are related to the structure of political opportunity - widespread protest is likely to occur when political conditions reduce the costs of collective action and increase the likelihood of success. For instance, political opportunities exist when élites are divided among themselves or are open to the demands of protesters, allies are available, and resources are plentiful. However, beyond explaining how these factors influence a period of widespread protest, this notion is useful in pointing to changes that occur over the course of a period of limited movement activity. During a peak cycle the social movement sector expands in size, with important consequences for the movements and organisations that compose it - including the potential for both co-operation and competition among movement organisations and other actors drawn into movement activity.² As Tarrow contends, the political opportunity structure changes once a cycle of protest is under way, because 'early riser' movements provide models of action and evidence of elite vulnerability for movements that emerge later in the cycle (Tarrow, 1989: 23). The civil rights movement in the US, for example, directly or indirectly generated resources which spawned the growth of numerous other movements in the social movement sector of the 1960s. Social movement theorists need to take into account how the outcomes of one round of collective action affect the resources, organisation and tactics of the next (Snyder and Kelly, 1979).³ The present study focuses on the dynamics within the women's movement in different rounds of collective action.

When a cycle of protest wanes (in the case of post-independent Irish society, for example) movements find it more difficult to survive. Piven and

Cloward (1977) predict an inevitable decline in 'poor people's movements' when conditions of political opportunity dissipate. However, studies of other kinds of movements reveal that certain types of movement organisations do survive. Rupp and Taylor's (1987) study of the women's movement in the years between the passage of suffrage and the 1960s shows that the movement was kept alive 'in the doldrums' by its 'elite-sustained' structure consisting of a small, exclusive, and affluent core of feminist activists. This finding points to the more general proposition that movements with different organisational structures have different capacities to survive "dry" periods for mobilisation. The formalisation of movement organisations can also facilitate ongoing mobilisation.

A number of questions arise in this study regarding the problem of explaining the growth, maintenance and decline of social movements. What kinds of political opportunities are important to the growth of social movements? How does the position of a social movement in a cycle of protest affect opportunities for mobilisation and collective action? Under what circumstances do movement organisations co-operate and/or compete with one another? How do victories and defeats affect subsequent mobilisation? And how do the characteristics of movement organisations affect mobilisation and collective action? This study applies an abeyance model to the dynamics within the Irish women's movement in the post-independence period (1922-1969) and demonstrates in detail how the movement did not disappear, but scaled down to adapt to changes in the political and social environment and ensure movement maintenance.

Taylor's analysis (1989: 772) raises three crucial issues integral to the aims of the present study:

1. Scholars are generally more interested in movements undergoing cycles of mass mobilisation and have done little research on movements in phases of decline and equilibrium;
2. The limited conceptualisation of the movement organisation in the literature has perpetuated classical concepts of social movements as numerically large and mass-based. Recent research is challenging the classical view by suggesting that these types of movements are capable of sustained activism in non-receptive political climates;
3. Existing approaches overlook *continuity* by neglecting to think about outcomes. Focusing on short-term gains ignores the possibility that social reform proceeds in a "ratchetlike fashion," where the gains of one struggle become the resources for later challenges by the same aggrieved group (Tarrow, 1983).

The subsequent analysis aims to address these issues systematically.

Movement-Counter Movement Dynamics

Mottl defines a counter movement as "a conscious, collective, organised attempt to resist or to reverse social change" (1980: 621). The presence of a counter movement is clearly critical to the ability of a movement to perpetuate a cycle of protest (Staggenborg, 1991: 150). The interaction between a social movement and counter movement influences mobilisation as well as the strategic and tactical options of both sides. The nature of this interaction transforms with the outcomes of collective action by both collectivities. Success or defeat for one side takes the form of protracted conflict. Zald and Useem (1987: 253) argue that analysis of the relationship between a movement and counter movement over time allows us to see how "events from one period limit the choices and responses of the next" (Staggenborg, 1991: 150).

Mottl (1980: 620) contends that the study of social movements and counter movements may usefully be conceptualised as a continuous dialectic of social change. A series of 'anti' feminist organisations extensively mobilised in Irish society from the mid-1970s. These CMOs (counter movement organisations) are elements of a particular kind of protest movement which is a response to the social change advocated by an initial movement. The analysis of reaction as an inevitable component of social conflict in the study of the women's movement in Ireland has not received sufficient analytical treatment.

After achieving a significant victory, movement actors may be in a position to make further demands or adopt new goals. Success brings a certain legitimacy to a movement, which may increase support from established organisations and sympathetic elites. However, when a movement spawns a counter movement which is successful, the movement is forced into a reactive stance. Tactical options become constrained, despite the advantages of increased resources than can be mobilised in response to counter movement threats. In reaction to counter movement mobilisation, SMOs' strategies are generally diverted to engage in arenas chosen by their opponents and, in some cases, it is necessary to alter their organisational structures. These processes are particularly relevant to the transformation of the Irish women's movement in the 1980s.

Critique of Resource Mobilisation

For over two decades resource mobilisation has emphasised the importance of institutional continuities between conventional social life and collective protest. Piven and Cloward (1995) provide a timely reappraisal of this central posit. While acknowledging that traditional breakdown perspectives incorrectly portrayed movements as "mindless eruptions lacking either coherence or continuity with organised social life"

(1995: 137), Piven and Cloward argue that resource mobilisation analysts commit a reverse error. Resource mobilisation's emphasis on similarities between conventional and protest behaviour has led them to understate the differences and thus to normalise collective protest. Blurring the distinction between normative and non-normative forms of collective action is the most fundamental expression of this tendency. Resource mobilisation analysts are clearly aware that some forms of protest violate established norms and a good deal of research accounts for examples of defiance of normative structures. Piven and Cloward argue that in the course of examining the institutional continuities between permissible and prohibited modes of collective action, they often allow this distinction to disappear. Crucially, it is the theoretical problem that is central to breakdown approaches that resource mobilisation disparage - it is non-normative collective action, such as disorder and rebellion, that traditional approaches sought to explain. This is challenged in the present study by theorising the process of interaction between autonomous and mainstream movement dynamics.

Other problems in the resource mobilisation literature stem from this normalising tendency. Protest is often treated as more organised than it is, as if conventional modes of formal organisation also typify the organisational forms taken by protest. Some analysts normalise the political impact of collective protest to the extent that the processes of influence mobilised by SMOs are no different than those set in motion by conventional political activities. Piven and Cloward stress that these criticisms do not detract from the generalisation that institutional arrangements pattern both conventional and unconventional collective action. However, there is a difference between the two which returns to the 'old' problem which formed the grounds on which breakdown perspectives were rejected.

Typically, resource mobilisation has emphasised the structure and working of social movement organisations. This analysis has led to further criticism, based on its lack of incorporation of issues of meaning and symbolism. Ryan remarks that:

"Because resource mobilisation was developed with the intention of replacing analyses of movement participants with an analysis of movement organisations (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), it is not surprising that this framework is now being criticised for too much emphasis on structure." (Ryan, 1992: 4)

According to Ryan, ideology and symbolisation are used by social movements as effective strategies and resources for mobilisation. Ryan's analysis of the women's movement in the US incorporates the impact of ideology and symbolic meaning on social movements and reformulates resource mobilisation's 'overemphasis' on structure.

The women's movement is premised on egalitarian values, the elimination of hierarchical power relations and the ideal of sisterhood. Yet, internally antagonistic relations created serious rifts and mitigated against concerted collective action in the women's movements in the US and Britain. Gamson (1975), for example, found that factionalism is generally *the* major block to the success of social movements. Disputes over ideological purity which evolved in the early years of the contemporary Irish women's movement are analysed in detail in the present study. Recent work in the field of resource mobilisation (Ferree and Miller, 1985; Zurcher and Snow, 1981) provides a context for incorporating the mobilisation effects of emotions, symbols and ideology, which are frequently ignored in mobilisation studies. Diverse contemporary feminist ideologies are of particular importance. While ideology was used by leaders and activists as a mobilising resource and source of group cohesion during the organising stage, at the same time, feminist SMOs comprising the movement

experienced intense antagonism over conflicting ideologies (Ryan, 1992: 54). Although there were disagreements in mainstream feminist groups, radical autonomous groups experienced the greatest divisions and therefore warrant close attention in revealing the advancement of the Irish women's movement in the 1970s.

Ryan contends that ideology provides the rationale for how people lead their lives; it is a belief system for how things should be (Ryan, 1992: 60). The formation of alternative ideologies is a crucial component for social movement development (Ferree and Miller, 1985; Gusfield, 1970b; Zurcher and Snow, 1981). Ideology, in addition, functions in the establishment of a framework for individuals to connect with others through common experiences. The development of a challenging ideology thus provides an alternative world view uniting diverse individuals into a group with a common interest in changing the existing social order (Ryan, 1992: 60). Part of the ambience of social movements is to argue about strongly held feelings and convictions. This is expected of social activists. The ways in which differences are resolved are problematic and tend to stimulate fragmentation of SMOs. Although feminist SMOs reflected activists' diverse experiences, the Anglo-American strand of the international women's movement moved very quickly from introducing new ways of shared exploration to a narrowed view of feminist 'legitimacy.' The movement found itself with competitive models of "right-thinking." Self-labelled radical groups argued about what being radical really meant, and labelled the liberal sector conservative since its goals included reform within the current legal, social and cultural structures. None of the feminist organisations in the women's movement espoused dictatorial control, yet emphasis on ideological purity often lent itself to rigid mind-sets. Ryan concludes that ideology in the American women's movement was an important resource for garnering social movement support, but became a

negative factor in sustaining commitment, particularly in self-defined radical feminist groups (Ryan, 1992: 64). The importance of ideology in social movements is analysed in this study by addressing the issue that, given the pragmatic considerations of the need for co-operative feminist organising, why were divisions in radical SMOs so intense?

This re-iterates the question of how resource mobilisation managed to "neatly side-step" meaning, symbolism and ideology in explaining social movement activity (McClurg Mueller and Morris, 1992).⁴ McClurg Mueller and Morris (1992) argue that grievances, ideologies, manipulation of symbols through oratory and the written word, media portrayals, consciousness raising and identities should be taken into account in studying a social movement - in short, a social psychology is advocated (see preface of McClurg Mueller and Morris, 1992). From the beginning, critics of resource mobilisation were quick to point out that social movements could not be deduced to business organisations, industries or conventional political behaviour. Attention was mainly focused on how social movements generate and are affected by the construction of meaning, consciousness raising, the manipulation of symbols and collective identities and how a viable conceptual framework of social movements must simultaneously explain *both* the structural and symbolic side of movements. McClurg Mueller and Morris (1992) suggest that:

"The attempt to stay within the natural science framework of a utilitarian, instrumental model has become increasingly strained by the social constructionist perspective of many contributors. However, proponents of this perspective have developed a variety of ingenious strategies for posing semiotic questions of meaning within the resource mobilisation paradigm." (1992: 6)

Attention is focused on the definition of the actor, the social context within which meanings are developed and transformed, and the cultural content of social movements. A related, but theoretically separable, set of issues

concerns the implications of structured inequalities in the distribution of resources that are mobilised by social movements, particularly the implications of differential reliance on constituent resources.

In conclusion, since the early 1980s critics have pointed to the absence of an account of values, grievances, ideology and collective identity in the resource mobilisation paradigm (Zurcher and Snow, 1981; Fireman and Gamson, 1979; Jenkins, 1983; Klandermans, 1984; Cohen, 1985; Ferree and Miller, 1985). This debate broadly suggests that a resurgent social psychology of social movements begins with three elements:

1. a re-conceptualisation of the actor;
2. the extension of the central role of micro-mobilisation in face-to-face interaction within a variety of groups contexts;
3. the specification of meaning generating oppositional elements within socio-political cultures at varying levels of temporal extensity, formality and instrumental appropriation.

McAdam (1988) re-iterates that what resource mobilisation has recently come to say about broader macro political perspectives has come to dominate theorising in the field of social movements. While this perspective elucidates the broad political factors that give rise to widespread collective action, the dynamics of individual recruitment to activism are negated:

"...these findings serve to remind us that whatever macro factors underlie collective action, it is the micro dynamics of mobilisation and recruitment that produce and sustain a movement....The macro political roots of movements may vary, but the micro structural dynamics of collective action are likely to look very similar from movement to movement." (McAdam, 1988: 151)

Theorists increasingly concur on the centrality of these elements for the building of a viable social psychology of resource mobilisation theory.

Ferree and Hess (1985) criticise Zald and McCarthy's core assumption in relation to selective incentives:

"While an incentive formulation appears to cut the Gordian knot of social psychology and free resource mobilisation to concentrate on macro concerns, the bold stroke is illusory. The knot remains in the black box that incentive terminology constructs around it." (Ferree and Hess, 1985: 40).

This paper presents an alternative model of the mobilisation of people into movements and suggest that this *is* compatible with a resource mobilisation focus on the SMO as the core unit of analysis. A cognitive social psychology based on attribution theory and the sociology of knowledge substitutes the incentive model typically used by resource mobilisation theorists. Ferree and Miller (1985) suggest that resource mobilisation theorists have neglected the problem of explaining the translation of objective social relationships into subjective, collectively defined grievances. Causal weight is given to ideology in their analysis without excluding the role that resources also play in defining movement goals. On a social psychological level, three distinct organisational strategies are identified for mobilising participants - conversion, coalition and direction. The cognitive and organisational consequences of each strategy direct mobilisation.

The incentive model (which both variants of resource mobilisation employ) inadequately addresses the problem of *individual participation* in movements. It is argued that Zald and McCarthy's model rests on simplified assumptions of rationality which are favoured by economists:

"Incentives as a source of action are problematic. If broadly conceived, the term rapidly becomes tautological: the sources of action are incentives. If restricted to a narrowly economic

and individual application, the construct is readily demonstrated to be inadequate." (Ferree and Miller, 1985: 40)

Ferree and Miller suggests that the lack of analysis of the effects of social individual thought disregards too much of what we know about cognitive structure and social psychological processes in general. However, much work remains to be done on developing a social psychological model complementary to the resource mobilisation framework (see McClurg Mueller and Morris, 1992 for a number of papers attempting this). The absence of a plausible account of values, grievances and ideology has been recognised as a problem, even by researchers themselves working within the resource mobilisation framework (Fireman and Gamson, 1979; Ferree and Miller, 1985; Klandermans, 1988). The question of incorporating a social psychology in place of incentive terminology has revived fears that this may lead to a re-emergence of traditional pathological models of collective behaviour that were dominant before the 1960s. Social psychology proponents suggest that analysis of participation in terms of cognitive structure and organisational strategies of recruitment, rather than in terms of the specific motives or incentives individuals have for joining movements, re-introduces the old problem of participation in a new and potentially productive manner. The development of resource mobilisation as a conscious effort to provide an alternative to traditional collective behaviour research explains its limitations in this area.

Ferree (1992) provides a further challenge to the field, based on a critique of rational choice theory, and offers suggestions for a broader more realistic view of rationality in resource mobilisation theory. It is suggested that the dehumanising assumptions of rational choice are especially problematic in the study of social movements and have led to a neglect of value differences and conflicts. A misplaced emphasis on the 'free rider

problem' and a pre-supposition of a pseudo-universal human actor without either a personal history or a gender, race or class position within a societal history blurs the rich creativity and symbolic discourse which are integral to social movements (Ferree, 1992: 30).

The next section reviews the field of NSMs which points social movement analysis to ask 'grand questions' about society as a whole and the course of transformation within it - rather than the careful empirical work within resource mobilisation which reveals what social movements are actually like and what they actually lead to.

2. NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (NSMs) APPROACH

The NSMs perspective conceptualises SMOs not as means to realising external goals, but as goals in themselves - democratic niches in a society in which autonomous social action creates new identities (Klandermans, 1989). Analysis of the impact of industrialisation and modernisation on the growth of new social movements suggests that contemporary movements are no longer rooted in the classical labour-capital contradiction. New mobilisation potentials, such as professionals and governmental officials, are identified as core constituencies. New problems connected to the shifting boundaries between public, private and social life and the struggles against old and new forms of domination in these areas are believed to fuel NSMs. New organisational structures such as decentralised, non-hierarchical organisational designs are thought to be typical of new social movements.

Resource mobilisation has been criticised for taking for granted the very phenomenon that social movement theory must explain - the existence of SMOs (Melucci, 1984).⁵ As long as the existence of movement organisations can be assumed, the rational-instrumental viewpoint can

satisfactorily account for the development of social movements. However, it is contended that the emergence of SMOs must be theorised. Cohen (1985) described the NSM approach as the "identity-oriented paradigm," which enables it to accomplish what resource mobilisation has failed to do. In other words, it examines the processes through which collective actors create the identity and solidarity they are defending. SMOs are viewed not simply as instruments to change society, but as networks of groups and individuals sharing and adhering to a conflictual culture and a group identity within a general social identity whose interpretation they contest (Melucci, 1985). Creating and defending new identities (a SMO) is to its members an end in itself (Klandermans, 1989: 9).

Pivotal contemporary movements - peace, women's, environmental, student - are elements of an overarching phenomenon known as new social movements.⁶ According to Klandermans, the dynamics of the four major social movements and the interrelations between them are equally striking (Klandermans, 1991: 19). The NSMs approach seeks an explanation for the rise of the social movements of the past two decades in the appearance of new grievances and aspirations. It stresses that new movements differ from old movements (generally characterised as the labour movement) in values, action forms and constituency (Klandermans, 1991: 26):

1. Values:

New social movements do not accept the premises of a society based on economic growth. They have broken with the traditional values of capitalistic society and seek a different relationship to nature, one's body, sexuality, to work and consumption.

2. Action Forms:

New social movements make extensive use of unconventional forms of action. They take a dissociative attitude toward society, as indicated by their antagonism towards politics. They prefer small-scale, decentralised organisations, are anti-hierarchical and favour direct democracy.

3. Constituency:

Two particular groups are particularly predisposed to participate in NSMs. The first group involves people who are paying the costs of problems resulting from modernisation, primarily those people who have been marginalised by societal developments. This group cannot be defined by social class or rank, because the problems it confronts are not limited to particular social strata. The second group consists of those who because of more general shifts in values and needs have become particularly sensitive to problems resulting from modernisation. Members of this group are found primarily among the new middle class and among the well-educated young people working in the civil service - what Berger terms the 'knowledge class.' Brand et al. (1986) state that new social movements recruit primarily from the latter category. To a greater extent the values and needs of these people determine the dynamics of the new social movements.

NSM theorists seek to answer where these new values, action forms and constituencies come from. The answer has been sought in various sources, but all explanations link new developments to industrialisation and economic growth. Brand (1982) classified them in theories focusing either on rising demands or on need defence. The former seek an explanation in new values, needs and wishes rooted in the modernisation process that

clash with the traditional system; the latter seek it in the negative consequences of modernisation for the individual.

One group of authors, drawing on Inglehart's theory of post-material values, ascribes the rise of new social movements to changed values. Inglehart (1977) described a silent revolution in Europe - a dramatic change from materialist to post-materialist values. Post-war youth, assured of the satisfaction of material needs, developed non-material needs such as self-actualisation and participation. Change in other values were also discerned - conventional middle-class values appeared to be eroding; the traditional work ethic was declining; and attitudes towards work and career were changing. Adherents of these new values were coming into conflict with a political and social system that is essentially materialist.

Another strand of this approach describes NSMs as a reaction to the welfare state. The welfare state has created new entitlement needs with respect to government services. Increased prosperity has caused the demand for scarce goods to grow. Many of these are positional goods (pleasant living surroundings, a car, good education). When used extensively, they become an obstruction to the satisfaction of other needs (traffic jams, suburbs, the devaluation of degrees). The general result is increased competition which in turn produces more grievances.

The expansion of NSMs theories attributes the phenomenon not to an 'explosion of aspirations' but to increased strain related to industrialisation and bureaucratisation. These two processes, it is argued, have resulted in the loss of identity, leading to a decline of traditional ties and loyalties. As a consequence, people become receptive to new utopias and new commitments. Young people are particularly vulnerable to this. Industrialisation has many negative consequences for the satisfaction of important needs. Self-destructive aspects of western society (exhaustion of resources, conflicts between industrialised countries, rising economic, social,

psychological and ecological costs of production) together with a decreased problem-solving capacity have generated tremendous social problems. Having become accustomed to new services, people then become dissatisfied with the level at which services are performed. These dissatisfactions provide the breeding ground for new social movements.

Yet other theorists consider the intervention of the state and capitalistic economy into new reaches of life as the chief explanation for the rise of new social movements (Habermas, 1973; Melucci, 1980; 1981). The state took upon itself the responsibility for the satisfaction of needs which the market economy could no longer meet. The restructuring of the capitalist economy in the wake of recession led to the exclusion of a growing number of unemployed or otherwise disqualified persons. Increasingly the state was given the task of alleviating the consequence of this process of restructuring. This led to the development of a network of regulatory, ministering, supervisory, and controlling institutions and increased the danger of loss of legitimacy. The significance of new social movements, as Melucci argues, must be determined against the background of these changes. The NSMs fight for the re-appropriation of time, of space, and of relationships in the individual's daily experience (Melucci, 1980: 219).

There is clearly diversity in the developing field of NSMs which reflects the complexity and cultural specificities of the research subject. According to Niedhart and Rucht (1991: 421) there are three central models:

1. Cultural Model:

Emphasises the role of NSMs in terms of fundamental conflict over cultural patterns. Touraine (1981), Nelles (1984), Raschke (1985), Eder (1982) and Melucci (1988; 1989), for example, assume that NSMs

indicate a historically relevant struggle which is typically not centred on the control over economic and/or political power, but focuses on the sphere of cultural reproduction. Problems of self reflection, collective identity and collective learning processes play an important role in the mobilisation of NSMs.

2. Political Model:

Places NSMs closer to the realm of politics (Nedelmann, 1984) viewing them as the expression of a new political paradigm (Offe, 1985). Here the emphasis lies on the distribution of power, state intervention and the side effects of capitalist welfare states (see Kriesi, 1995).

3. Integrative Model:

Pursue a more integrated perspective and interpret NSMs in a broader structural framework which allows for both a historical and a systematic perspective. One variation of this approach, not yet fully elaborated, is based on a theory of modernisation which combines economic, political and cultural dimensions (Brand, 1989; Raschke, 1985; Rucht, 1988). Another strand, closer to the Marxist heritage, interprets NSMs both as an outcome and a catalyst of the crisis of the fordist mode of societal regulation (Hirsch and Roth, 1986; Roth, 1989).

Toward a Synthesis of Resource Mobilisation and NSM Theories?

Melucci (1989) argues that macro approaches such as Habermas' theory of the colonisation of the life-world, explain *why* and not *how* movements are formed and maintained. The strength of resource

mobilisation is that it deals with this level of analysis by explaining the growth and development of social movements through emphasising the fundamental importance of pre-existing organisations and the availability of resources (such as money, professional expertise and recruitment networks). However, Melucci contends that while it tends to explain how social movements emerge and develop, resource mobilisation does not adequately explain *why* and tends to view collective action as data which is merely given.

Klandermans (1991) assesses the question of synthesis between European and American approaches to social movements. He aptly notes that the weaknesses of one appears to be the others strength (Klandermans, 1991: 29). Klandermans argues that the NSMs field focuses on the structural origins of strain and neglects the 'how' of mobilisation, while resource mobilisation does not elaborate on 'why' demand (grievances) will appear if there is some supply of social movement organisations. NSMs seems to argue that social movements materialise automatically if some demand (grievances) exist. The main deficit of both approaches is that neither school demonstrates that social problems are not solely objectively given. A social problem does not inevitably generate a social movement. Resource mobilisation recognised this insofar as it postulated that resources play a significant role in the generation of social movements, but it left several important questions unanswered - it assumed a direct relationship between objective circumstances and individual behaviour and it did not take into account mediating or framing processes through which people attribute meaning to events and interpret situations.

Klandermans suggests that scholars of social movements have increasingly become aware of two principles: (1) what determines the individual's behaviour is not so much reality *per se* as reality as the individual perceives and interprets it; (2) SMOs themselves play an

important role in generating and diffusing meanings and interpretations. These principles hold true not only in the case of grievances but also in relation to resources, political opportunities, and outcomes of collective action. Scholars in the past five years have proposed a number of concepts for analysing both the ways in which people attribute meaning and define situations and the way in which social movement organisations help create such meanings.

3. THE CHALLENGE OF CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVES

In recent years, several authors have criticised both the resource mobilisation and NSM approaches for neglecting the role of grievance interpretation (Ferree and Miller, 1985; McClurg Mueller et al., 1992). Resource mobilisation has a tendency to see a direct link between objective circumstances and individual behaviour without taking into account the intervening processes of defining and interpreting the individual's situation (Klandermans, 1989: 9):

"One's interpretations, rather than reality itself, guide political actions. The definition of the situation can make an obnoxious situation justifiable in the eyes of the victim. If authorities are perceived to be legitimate, coercion is not defined as oppression, but as legal enforcement of the law. According to scholars who emphasise the role of grievance interpretation, the crucial variables in movement mobilisation are not anger or frustration but the belief that one's interests are common interests, as well as the perception of injustice - that is, the belief that these interests are legitimate yet are not being met." (Klandermans, 1989: 9)

The NSM approach also neglects grievance interpretation despite its consideration for identity formation. It assumes that the emergence of contemporary social movements is related to the negative impact of modernisation and industrialisation on the political, social and ecological environment, but how structural changes are transformed into grievances is

not explained. The recent development of constructionist approaches has challenged the field of social movements in four areas:

1. Sponsorship of ideological packages (Gamson, 1988; 1992);
2. Consensus Mobilisation (Klandermans, 1984; 1988; 1991);
3. Frame alignment (Snow and Bedford, 1988; 1992);
4. Collective identity (Melucci, 1988; 1989).

Sponsorship of ideological packages

Gamson's notion of 'sponsorship of ideological packages' concerns public discourse. At any particular moment in a given society, one political theme will be represented by several ideological packages. In addition each political theme generates a set of packages and counter packages. An ideological package is constructed around a few core ideas and symbols. Because the mass media play such a central role in modern societies, social movements are increasingly involved in a symbolic struggle over meaning and interpretations. Gamson asserts that unless we examine media discourse and investigate how this discourse changes over time we will not be able to understand the formation and activation of the mobilisation potential of social movements. Social movements must compete with representatives of the 'official' position, opponents and competitive organisations who also want a voice in the public debate.

Consensus Mobilisation

This refers to attempts to disseminate the views of a social actor throughout various sectors of the population. Klandermans (1988) distinguishes consensus mobilisation from consensus formation - the former is a deliberate attempt by a social actor to create consensus among a subset of the population; the latter concerns the unplanned convergence of

meaning in social networks and subcultures. Consensus mobilisation is necessary at each stage of a campaign but the nature of it differs according to which stage the mobilisation process has reached. Klandermans suggests there are four steps in the process of mobilisation: (1) formation of mobilisation potential; (2) formation and activation of recruitment networks; (3) arousal of the motivation to participate; (4) the removal of barriers to participation. In forming mobilisation potential, movement organisations must win attitudinal and ideological support. In the forming and activating of recruitment networks, they must increase the probability that people who 'belong' to their mobilisation potential will be reached. In the forming/activation of recruitment networks, they must favourably influence the decision of people who are reached by a mobilisation attempt. In removing barriers they must increase the probability that people who are motivated will eventually participate.

One further distinction between the two is the context of the formation of mobilisation potential in a society and consensus mobilisation in the context of action mobilisation. The first refers to the generation of a set of individuals with a predisposition to participate in a social movement - the second to the legitimation of concrete goals and means of action. Thus the two forms of consensus mobilisation have different time frames - formation of mobilisation potential is a long-term problem - action mobilisation is a short-term matter. The target audiences differ as well. The formation of mobilisation potential means the creation of commitment, in this case the audience is very broad - usually a social category of people who share some characteristic related to the movement's cause. Action mobilisation means the activation of commitment, thus it restricts itself to people who already 'belong' to the mobilisation potential of a movement organisation. The two different processes involve different requirements for communication channels - the formation of mobilisation potential

requires channels with a relatively high impact, but usually employs long-term strategies. Action mobilisation on the other hand is bound to short-term strategies but can confine itself primarily to limited forms of persuasion. They also involve different arguments - legitimating the existence of the movement versus legitimating its strategy. Klandermans (1989), and Gamson (1988), stressed that SMOs are not the only sources of information in a society and often not even the most credible source of information. In almost every mobilisation campaign social movement organisations must compete with other (sometimes opposing) sources of information.

Frame Alignment

This notion attempts to explain mobilisation at the level of the individual participant. Snow and Bedford (1988; 1992) describe how the cognitive frame of individuals and the ideological frame of a movement organisation are brought together. Social movements frame (i.e. assign meaning to and interpret) relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilise potential adherents and constituents, garner bystander support and demobilise antagonists. In mobilisation campaigns movement organisations try to connect the interpretations of individuals with those of movement organisations so that they are congruent or complementary. Snow and Bedford break down the process of frame alignment into four distinct activities that a movement will find more or less relevant, depending on the degree of similarity between the two frames of reference: (1) frame bridging - which involves the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but, structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problems; (2) frame amplification - which refers to the clarification and invigoration of an interpretative frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events; (3) frame extension - which involves the expansion of the boundaries of a movement's primary

framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents; (4) frame transformation - which refers to the re-definition of activities, events and biographies that are already meaningful from the standpoint of some primary framework, such that they are now seen by the participants to be quite something else. Clearly going from frame bridging to frame transformation the four activities are progressively complex. Consequently, the more of those activities a movement organisation must engage in, the less complicated the task will be. In elaborating the notion of frame alignment, Snow and his colleagues have tried to formulate answers to the question of what are the key determinants of the differential success of movement framing efforts, and which characteristics of an organisation and its frame of reference contribute to its ability to persuade.

Collective Identity

Melucci's concept of collective identity localises the process of the construction of meaning completely within the groups of participants that constitute a social movement. In his view the formation of a collective identity is the central task of a social movement. A movement that has developed a collective identity has defined itself as a group and it has also defined its view of the social environment, the participants shared goals and their shared opinions about the possibilities and constraints of collective action. According to Melucci (1984; 1989), the formation of a collective identity is not only instrumental for successful collective action - it is a goal in itself. If a movement succeeds in creating a new collective identity the participants will integrate this new identity in their everyday lives. Groups experimenting with new lifestyles are themselves a challenge to the dominant culture. Melucci objects to the other three concepts elucidated above because he contends they take for granted what they must explain -

the existence of collective actors. The sponsorship of ideological packages, the mobilisation of consensus and frame alignment presuppose the existence of a collective identity.

Multi Organisational Fields

NSM and resource mobilisation approaches neglect the processes and mechanisms that transform structural factors into collective action. These processes - the social construction of protest - do not proceed in a vacuum but in interaction among social actors. Klanderman's basic argument is that all of these interactions occur in the context of the movement organisations *multi organisational field* - the set of organisations in the organisations environment. It is there that grievances are interpreted, means and opportunities are defined, opponents are appointed, strategies are chosen and justified, and outcomes are evaluated. Interpretations and evaluations are as a rule controversial and each of the various actors may challenge the interpretations of others. As a social movement organisation competes to influence public opinion or the opinion of its constituency, its multi-organisational field determines its relative significance as an individual actor.

Klandermans (1992) proposes to employ the concept of a multi organisational field in theories of social movements (the model was originally formulated by Curtis and Zurcher, 1973). In exploring and analysing the social construction of protest, scholars have become increasingly interested in networks of groups and organisations which serve as carriers of the cognitive processes involved in these constructions. As a result, a much more dynamic model is currently emerging in the social movement literature, and movement groups and organisations are now seen as elements in changing configurations. It is argued that co-operation,

opposition and competition for resources and opportunities within the multi-organisational field share *episodes of protest*.

Until recently social movements literature focused primarily on the support a SMO receives from sectors of the multi-organisational field. Resource mobilisation made this support one of its core tenets by pointing to the significance of external support (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977) and later by stressing the importance of indigenous organisations. Generally the literature says little about the fact that multi organisational fields need not necessarily be supportive (although Curtis and Zurcher do note that opponents of the anti-pornography movement also constitute a multi-organisational field). In fact, some part of the multi organisational field of a movement organisation always consists of opponents. The multi-organisational field of a social movement organisation has both supporting and opposing sectors. These two sectors are described as - (1) a SMO's alliance system, consisting of groups and organisations that support the organisation and; (2) its conflict system consisting of representatives and allies of the challenged political systems, including counter movement organisations.

The boundaries between the two systems remain vague and may change in the course of events. Specific organisations that try to remain aloof from the controversy may be forced to take sides. Parts of the political system (political parties, elites, governmental institutions) can coalesce with SMOs and join the alliance system. Coalitions can fall apart, and previous allies can become part of the conflict system. Alliance systems serve to support SMOs by providing resources and creating political opportunities - conflict systems drain resources and restrict opportunities. Different SMOs have different but overlapping conflict and alliance systems. This creates overlap among organisations from the same social movement industry. However, movement organisations from different

social movement industries will also have overlapping conflict and alliance systems. Many activists from the peace movement, for example, were also involved in the women's movement, civil rights or the environmental movement. The cleavage between a SMOs alliance and conflict system may coincide with other cleavages such as those created by social class, ethnic division or left/right affiliation.

Adaptation of Resource Mobilisation Theory: The Model Developed in the Study

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of distinctive theoretical approaches in the field. The theoretical perspective I will be adopting in this study is both a synthesis of and adaptation of the central tenets of resource mobilisation. This synthesis *emerged from* analysis of complex and rich primary and secondary empirical data. Strict adherence to a rigid hypothesis in the analysis of this data would dilute what is qualitatively an extremely interesting and original case study. Resource mobilisation split into two perspectives, with one maintaining an organisational focus and the other developing a political process emphasis. While the political process model is emphasised in the following analysis, it is demonstrated how the former takes the economisation of politics too far and obscures the informal characteristics of social movements (see Mayer, 1991: 64). The resource mobilisation framework reflects the stage at which research into the women's movement in Ireland is at - 'how' it mobilised. There is no body of research in feminist or political sociology which has theorised the Irish women's movement between 1970 and the present.

The strengths of other paradigms have been considered in this chapter. The question of why I chose the resource mobilisation paradigm to frame an analysis of the contemporary Irish women's movement is based on a number of considerations. The first concerns the aims of the study. A central aim is to provide an in-depth process analysis of the women's

movement - *how* it actually mobilised as a social movement between 1970 and the present, and what were the central dynamics, themes and tensions across the movement. It is postulated that this task is worthy of study in itself. In short, the current level of sociological understanding of the distinctive nature of the women's movement as a social movement is minimal and inaccurate. In this respect, the study aims to redress this in a competent manner by providing an in-depth analysis of the workings of the movement based on lived experiences, the publications and writings of activists and the movement's archives. The resource mobilisation paradigm provides a useful emphasis on the actual processes of mobilisation and dynamics that occur *within social movements*.

A second consideration was the current state of the art in the field of social movements in Irish sociology. There are *no* major, detailed studies of contemporary social movements with which to compare or contextualise the women's movement or any other social movement in contemporary Irish society. The NSM perspective attributes the rise of social movements since the 1960s to new political, economic and social strains that have accompanied advanced capitalist society in post-war Europe and assumes common characteristics between new social movements. These processes are described as having undermined traditional ways of life, reduced the political and social importance of various social groups and decreased the ability of society and its political institutions to respond to social problems. In this respect, drawing on the NSMs emphasis on broader social change would prove difficult as a necessary basis for macro-sociological analysis and comparative studies of Irish social movements does not exist. Analysis of the dynamics within the women's movement, from a feminist epistemological stance, is a fundamental pre-requisite to identifying parallels with other movements and analysing the broader issues raised by theories of NSMs. The current deficit of empirical studies in the field of social

movements in Irish society impedes analysis of the Irish women's movement at the level of broad social change and the inherent conflicts in industrial society. This is, however, an area for further research and development. This study focuses on key resources and external opportunities and constraints which mobilised the Irish women's movement in this period. The question of whether the presence of macro social strains in Irish society sheds light on the mobilisation of the women's movement is considered at the end of the study.

A third important consideration concerns the view that the distinctive nature of *feminist* collective action must be theorised. The assumption that the actual dynamics of collective action within the women's movement are distinctive and can be theorised in their own right, by conducting research from a feminist epistemological stance, is pivotal. A sociological appraisal of an indigenous style of *Irish feminism* is developed.

While resource mobilisation forms the basis of the study, significant modifications of this approach are developed throughout the analysis. A social movement is a phenomenon which, internally, encompasses many layers of contested meanings. It simultaneously evolves at the margin and the centre of the polity in several interacting movement centres. Resource mobilisation in itself is a disparate field, with theorists tending to specialise on a specific layer of meaning. In order to capture the nuances particular to the Irish women's movement inclusively, I *adapt* resource mobilisation theory and build upon the original conceptual scheme. This serves to enhance the applicability of the model to the analysis of other social movements in the Irish context.

The key elements of resource mobilisation theory which are drawn upon as tools of analysis to conceptualise the mobilisation of the women's movement include, tangible resources, the political opportunity structure, external alliances (in particular the media), sympathetic elites, organisational

bases and strategies. In order to reify the model, it is revealed in the analysis that apposite concepts need to be incorporated to further illuminate the processes through which particular organisations changed over time. The importance of collective identity to make sense of inter/intra organisational conflict is illuminated. The centrality of competing ideologies as a resource and principal movement dynamic are conceptualised. The role of the State in the political opportunity structure is developed. These concepts are developed further in Chapter Eight, in light of the analysis. An elaboration of resource mobilisation theory is used to trace the mobilisation and political processes which have formed the contemporary Irish women's movement.

Irish sociology has tended to ignore the impact which the women's movement has had in changing Irish society and this is, in part, due to the difficulty with addressing a social movement as a real and significant social phenomenon. The twin legacies of Parsonian structural functionalism, and in opposition to that, structural Marxism, have not gone very far in developing ways of dealing with *process* in relation to Irish society. In theoretical terms, a *meso* analysis of a specific movement is a necessary starting point for a macro analysis of new social movements in Ireland.

CONCLUSION

The New Social Movements approach, which has dominated the field in Europe, places specific emphasis on conflict as a core element of a social movement. Touraine (1981), for example, connects the emergence of a social movement directly with the dominant conflict in a given society. Contemporary social movements in general are amorphous, complex and multifarious. Diani (1992), for instance, identifies three basic components of social movements: (1) networks of relations between a plurality of actors; (2) a shared collective identity; (3) engagement in conflictual issues.

Diani argues that social movement actors are primarily engaged in political and/or cultural conflicts, aimed at promoting or opposing social change either at the systemic *or* non-systemic level (1992: 11). It is clear that there is broad agreement in the field that in the process of social change, conflict is a distinctive feature of a social movement. However, there is a difference in emphasis.

Resource mobilisation tends to relate the emergence of a social movement to public action and the political process. It focuses on the conditions which facilitate or constrain the occurrence of collective action. Networks link social movement organisations (SMOs) and underpin the distribution of resources for action (including information, expertise, material resources) which create the necessary preconditions for mobilisation. Resource mobilisation theory emphasises political opportunities and an indigenous organisational base as major factors in the rise and decline of social movements. The availability of *resources* and a *pre-existing network* of SMOs play a central role in the generation of a social movement. Grievances are present in the rise and decline of social movements, but are peripheral to resources and organisational structures. Resource mobilisation provides an appropriate framework to elucidate the specific conditions which conceptualise the resurgence of the women's movement from 1970 onwards. The respective success of SMOs in attracting media attention, executing campaigns, accessing resources and recruiting members, and how such factors influence the size and shape of the movement, are central to this framework.

In addition, the generation of a collective identity is an important catalyst in the mobilisation of a social movement and in defining its boundaries. Actors define themselves as part of a broader movement and, at the same time, are perceived as such by those within the same movement, and by opponents or external observers (Diani, 1992: 8). A plurality of

ideas and orientations within social movement networks are integral to the generation of a collective identity. A collective identity is not static and is not based on a homogeneous set of ideas within and between SMOs. A wide spectrum of shared beliefs and orientations co-exist at any given stage of movement transformation and factional conflicts may occur at any given time. In particular, changing definitions and meanings of ideology over time influence intra-movement relations. These factors are incorporated into the present study. The central unit of analysis in the study is the SMO. The four main theoretical strands in social movement literature attribute a different meaning to SMOs (Klandermans, 1989: 7):

<p>1. Traditional Grievances and Deprivation perspectives (Breakdown theories): organisations as a symptom of institutionalisation,</p>	<p>2. New European Theories: organisations as goals in themselves</p>
<p>3. Resource Mobilisation Theory: organisations as resources, that is means to goal-achievement,</p>	<p>4. Constructionist approaches: organisations as sponsors of meaning.</p>

The approach taken in this study is to draw on the central tenets of resource mobilisation heuristically as the core framework to theorise the social movement dynamics that occurred within the women's movement in Ireland between 1970 and the present. Klanderman's analysis (1989), outlined above, suggests that a theoretical framework for the study of SMOs must include four core considerations: grievances, resources, opportunities and meaning. The current challenge to the field clearly concerns the exclusion of a social psychology of resource mobilisation (McClurg, 1992; Ferree and Miller, 1985; Klandermans, 1984). This has raised many questions about the relevance of resource mobilisation and its ability to dominate the field of social movements in the future. A synthesis with the new European theories is also currently being addressed (Rucht, 1991; Klandermans, Kriesi and Tarrow, 1988; Diani, 1992). Zald (1992) notes that the primary task for social movement scholars is to incorporate the significant challenges posed into the resource mobilisation framework. The present study develops a conceptual scheme which takes into account the weaknesses of resource mobilisation.

Notes Chapter One:

- 1 Rule (1988: Chapter 3) provides a useful discussion of earlier 'collective behaviour' theories, including the 'irrationalist' treatment of collective action by European theorists (such as LeBon) and the American tradition in this field associated with the Chicago School of sociology (see Staggenborg, 1991: 189).
- 2 Zald and McCarthy (1977) define the social movement sector (SMS) as consisting of all social movement industries (SMIs) in a society. A SMO, in their terminology, includes all social movement organizations oriented toward the same general goal(s). Tarrow (1989: 16) defines the concept of a social movement more specifically as "the configuration of individuals and groups willing to engage in disruptive action against others to achieve collective goals."
- 3 One of the outcomes that may result is the growth of a countermovement. Depending on its strength, a countermovement may severely limit the strategic and tactical options of the original movement, while at the same time increasing the movement's resources as supporters become alerted to threats from the opposition. The pro-choice movement, for instance, is somewhat unusual in that it has provoked one of the most vigorous and lasting countermovements in the history of reform movements.
- 4 In 1988 a conference was held at Michigan to discuss the issue of a social psychology of resource mobilisation. The proceedings of this conference were published in 1992 (McClurg Mueller and Morris, 1992).
- 5 Melucci's analysis of collective action centres on signs and symbols (Melucci, 1989). He contends that in complex societies contemporary movements operate as signs, in the sense that they translate their actions into symbolic challenges to the dominant codes. In other words, collective action is a form. Power resides in the codes that order the circulation of information. Melucci's central point is there are some issues which cannot be solved in the institutional sphere. These issues are confronted in the production of signs and social relations.
- 6 As a result, specialists usually only have selective knowledge of the field. In comparison to subdisciplines of science, for example, which are co-ordinated at a national and international level and have established institutes and journals, the field of social movements has been uncoordinated and underdeveloped until recent initiatives (see Kriesi, 1995).

Chapter 2

The Socio-Historical Context of the Contemporary Irish Women's Movement

Introduction

"Social movement change does not occur in a vacuum. It is an ongoing process of responding to other forces in society. By integrating the study of social movement transformation with social history, we can see the interactive effects of change in the larger society with change in a social movement." (Ryan, 1992: 31)

Elucidating feminist activism in the Anglo-American sphere provides a context for understanding the Irish movement, but does not claim a global reach. The mobilisation of the Anglo-American strand of the women's movement encompasses two peak waves which occurred globally. The first wave of feminist activism advanced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and receded during the middle years of this century. The second wave of the women's movement resurged in a number of countries in the 1960s. The late 1960s and early 1970s were periods of intense activity in a plethora of new social movements in both the US and Western Europe. These movements represented new and emerging interests and most of their activities took place outside formal politics. Their main emphasis was on self-awareness, de-centralised mobilisation and the transformation of society, though they did incorporate pressure group activity and political lobbying. Hoskyns (1996: 34) suggests that within such movements individuals found their personal problems lessened or resolved by collective action.

The development of an Anglo-American type of feminist activism since the turn of the century is intrinsically connected to social and intellectual factors in Western Europe and the United States. The women's movement in Ireland did not evolve in a vacuum since the late nineteenth century. Networking and symbolic links with women's organisations cross-culturally have been significant at all stages of its development. The ideas and practices of the Anglo-American women's movement were consciously

incorporated by Irish feminists in their attempts to engage in a emancipatory project on behalf of women.

This socio-historical contextualisation draws on major studies of women's movements in the US (Ryan, 1992; Freeman, 1975) and Britain (Banks, 1981; Randall and Lovenduski, 1993). This cursory review provides a broad frame of reference for analysing the nuances particular to the women's movement in Ireland, within a social movements framework. The women's movement is perhaps the oldest social movement in the world. At different stages the collective action of women has gathered momentum in a number of countries for the past 300 years or so, including Western Europe, the United States, India, New Zealand and Australia. Women's movements are culturally specific, but theoretically tend to occur in epochal waves. The founding 'fathers' of sociology identified broad social processes coinciding with industrialisation, such as the rationalisation of social life and the spread of Western capitalism. However, mainstream sociology excluded an equally significant process - the *feminisation* of social life, which refers to the combined effects of the collective efforts of conscious women to change the structures of Western society, from a woman-centred perspective, of which extensive empirical evidence exists since at least the nineteenth century. The effects of and reaction to industrialisation by women are not central to classical and contemporary social theories. The collective action of women in their own movement has remained invisible as a central agent in the development of modern states.

Analysis of the Anglo-American women's movement helps to explain many of the salient features of Irish feminism in the study period and emphasises the importance of past activism to current mobilisation. Of particular interest is the kind of analysis developed and goals sought by feminist organisations, the forms of organisation and their relation to

mainstream politics, and the extent to which movements in one country were linked to or influenced by developments in others.

The contemporary women's movement, whether examined as a whole or separately in each country, was made up of a kaleidoscope of activities, experiences and responses (Hoskyns, 1996: 34). Out of this, certain sets of ideas and types of action - often conflictual - began to emerge, which proved complementary over time. Attempts have been made to identify and explore these different tendencies (Ryan, 1992; Freeman, 1975) and it is interesting that similar developments occurred cross-culturally. It is contended in this analysis that feminist ideas and styles of activism emerging from the women's movements of the US and Britain were the main influences on the mobilisation of the Irish women's movement from 1970s onwards. This chapter attempts to: (1) Sketch the first and second waves of feminist activism and their intellectual antecedents; (2) identify the link between the two peak waves despite the dormancy of the movement during the intervening years; and (3) elucidate the fragmentation which has occurred in the contemporary women's movement. This provides a context for interpreting the evolution of the Irish women's movement which has been historically influenced by and practically implicated to developments at the international level.

1. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The term feminism did not come into English use until the 1890s (Marshall, 1994). Diverse, sometimes competing, images of the feminist are discernible throughout the social history of the women's movement and these acquire their own social meanings. The persistent construction of new images is a conscious process in feminism. Socio-historical representations of the feminist stem from Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of*

the Rights of Women at the end of the eighteenth century, which called for "a revolution in female manners."

Literature in the field tends to analyse the first wave of the women's movement in terms of ideological currents (see Banks, 1981). The roots of feminist ideas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are connected to the social thought of influential thinkers.¹ Banks (1981: 7) hypothesises three intellectual traditions within feminism, originating in the eighteenth century, and argues they are characterised by continuity in the contemporary wave of the women's movement:

1. Evangelical Christianity:

Both Britain and the US were swept by religious revivals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This movement was primarily missionary in orientation, but eventually led to a concern with social issues of which the most significant was the campaign against slavery. Women began to emerge from domesticity and take on a more public role in this revival. They became increasingly involved in issues of moral and later social reform. According to Banks, accompanied by ideas of the moral superiority of women, "it finds its most modern expression in the pro-woman sections of radical feminism" (Banks, 1981: 7).

2. The Enlightenment Philosophers:

The particular Enlightenment principles congruent to first wave feminism was the appeal to human reason rather than tradition. The work of Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill falls within this intellectual tradition. Differences between men and women are considered to be shaped by the environment rather than as natural, and the potential similarities between the sexes are emphasised. Women and other oppressed groups are denied their natural rights and an end

to male privilege is argued for. The Enlightenment thinkers also influenced feminist emphasis on self-realisation, freedom and autonomy. The legacy of this tradition is reflected in a long history of equal rights feminism, "the rise and fall of which is sometimes treated as the rise and fall of feminism itself" (Banks, 1981: 8).

3. Socialism:

Banks argues that socialist feminism does not have its roots in Marxism as frequently argued, but in the much earlier tradition of communitarian socialism. This derives from the Saint-Simonian tradition in France which was significant for its attack on the traditional family and advocacy of a system of communal living that would take collective responsibility for the burden of child-rearing. They also advocated 'freedom' regarding sexual relationships. This strand only ever represented a small minority of feminists, but has been a persistent undercurrent in both feminist and socialist thought. It reappears in a different form in Marxism and within contemporary radical feminism.

The distinction between intellectual feminist ideas and the organised women's movement 'raises its head here' (see introduction). The ideas and mobilising issues underpinning the first wave of the women's movement were further shaped by socio-political conditions particular to the society from which the organisational life of the movement evolved. In order to demonstrate this point, I focus on unfolding the main themes in the development of the women's movements of the US and Britain. Broad social processes frequently cited as accounting for the widespread mobilisation of the women's movement in this wave includes geographic expansion, industrial development, demographic change, expanding educational opportunities for women and the growth of other social reform movements (Andersen, 1993: 278). It is contended that the specific actions

and lived experiences of feminist activists, which are largely invisible in the literature, were as important in precipitating mobilisation as external structural changes and intellectual developments.

The First Wave

The mobilisation of the first wave of the women's movement in the US, which coincided with the anti-slavery and temperance campaigns, was led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Ryan, 1992). The exclusion of women delegates from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 resulted in the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. The resulting *Declaration of Sentiments* sought to apply the principles of the American Declaration of Independence to women. However, the nominal enfranchisement of blacks was not followed by that of women after the American Civil War. As a result, the National Woman Suffrage Association was founded by Anthony and Stanton. Lucy Stone founded the more conservative American Women's Suffrage Association.

Other important organisations emerged at this time, including the International Council of Women in 1888. The suffrage organisations merged in 1890 to form the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). This was supported by prominent activists such as Alice Paul who founded the Congressional Union (later organised as the Woman's Party in 1914) and Harriet Stanton Blatch (daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton), who founded the Equality League in 1907.

Socialist feminism consolidated in the US during this era, represented by the settlement movement and by Sharlott Perkins Gilman in *The Man-Made World* (1911), which argued that women should be economically independent from men. NAWSA petitions, autonomous state by state campaigns led by Carrie Chapman Catee and the militant direct action of the Woman's Party (including special suffrage trains and anti-Woodrow

Wilson demonstrations) culminated in 1920 with the Nineteenth Amendment which gave women the vote.

The first public declarations in Britain which describe 'women' as a distinct social category with unequal social status date from before Aphra Behn. Mary Astell's *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700) is the most concrete example of the emergence of feminist ideas. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was the first comprehensive treatise of women and combines an appeal on behalf of women with a general social critique, which employs key themes from the Enlightenment. Wollstonecraft used these ideas to illuminate women's position and needs. The demand for free individual development in a society open to talent, for example, is a demand of the French Revolution. Wollstonecraft extended this idea to women, widening out criticism of hereditary rights, duties and exclusions, to include those which derive from sexual difference. She based her argument on the analysis of the psychological and economic effects of women's dependent relationship and exclusion from the public sphere (particularly education).

The drive to extend the field of social criticism to encompass women was carried forward in the name of women's basic humanity. The claim is first and foremost that women are members of the human species and therefore have the rights due to all humans. In making this claim several elements are combined. There is a Lockean Christian argument that God has constructed the world according to the laws of reason, and that humans can reach an understanding of the laws of God by use of that reason. If women are human, they have reason and have the right to develop their reason in pursuit, not least, of religious knowledge. Further argument is elicited against women's confinement to the world of artifice and their consequent exclusion from the world of natural rights. Rousseau's *Emile* was specifically targeted because in this work women are deliberately

constructed as objects of sexual desire, and consequently are confined to a lifetime's subordination within limits defined by male needs. Wollstonecraft argued that, as members of the human species, and in the interests of their own development, women should have the same considerations applied to them as are applied to men. This is a natural rights argument - a plea for equal human rights.

Chartists and Owenites did hold suffrage debates in Britain, but existing evidence suggests that it was not until the 1850s that feminism diffused from intellectual circles into the arena of public politics in Britain (Dahlerup, 1986). It is important to note that in times of structural decline of the organised women's movement, the publication of feminist works ensured that the ideology of gender equality remained vibrant within intellectual contexts. This continuity was a necessary pre-requisite for the spread of feminist activism in cycles of widespread mobilisation, and at important stages feminist texts have been important catalysts to movement mobilisation (for example, Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* influenced the contemporary wave of the American women's movement).

A number of campaigns in the second half of the nineteenth century highlighted gender inequalities in Britain - Josephine Butler's campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, which allowed for medical examinations of women *suspected* to be prostitutes; Barbara Leigh-Smith Bodichon's *A Brief Summary in Plain Law of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women* (1854) inspired the campaign for a Married Women's Property Act; and the Langham Place group organised a petition to Parliament on the question of widening the electorate. The debate on electoral reform resulted in the founding of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. J S Mill and his wife Harriet Taylor co-authored *The Subjection of Women* in 1869 and were both supporters of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. This work is regarded as a classic liberal

argument for equal rights. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was established with 18,000 members by the turn of the century, which combined Labour women, women in the arts, the Women's Co-operative Guild and other suffrage groups (Humm, 1992: 5). Alongside this organisation, the Women's Freedom League (WFL) and the Women's Protective and Provident League, which was comprised of radical working class feminists, were also mobilised. However, the Women's Social and Political Union (WPSU), founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, was the largest mass organisation of first wave British feminism. In 1908 the WPSU attracted around half a million people to an open air meeting in Hyde Park, London (Humm, 1992: 5). The NUWSS similarly attracted large numbers of people. The women's movement during this era was characterised by militancy and direct action, a high public profile and intense political campaigning. The culmination of these efforts was realised with the granting of a limited franchise, for women aged over 30, in 1918.²

A number of core characteristics in the first wave can be identified at this point. Ray Strachey's classic work (1928) stresses a coincidence of factors which acted as a catalyst for the mobilisation of the women's movement in the Anglo-American context, including: women's shared exclusion from political, social and economic life, with a rebellion against this; middle-class women's sense of uselessness; and the formulation of common objectives, culminating in the demands for political citizenship through the vote. A central notion raised at the outset of this chapter is how the mobilisation of first wave feminism was intrinsically linked with intellectual life and political activities of middle class women. The intellectual antecedents of first wave feminism informed mobilisation around common mobilising issues and direct action in a number of areas, including suffrage rights, repeal of marriage and property laws and women's right to education. There are nuances particular to the Anglo-American

context. A striking difference was the predominance of socialist feminist ideas in Western European countries. For example, Clara Zetkin was a prominent German socialist, who addressed the first International Congress of Socialist women in 1907. In contrast, the ideas underpinning the Anglo-American stream of the women's movement were strongly informed by liberal feminist thinkers, occupying a niche within reformist politics. This implies that the first wave of the Anglo-American women's movement did not involve a radical departure from liberal political philosophies, and merely applied the abstract values of male defined liberal movements to protest their exploitation and exclusion, to demand an equal share of the benefits enjoyed by men.

In the aftermath of the achievement of suffrage, the vitality of the movement receded significantly. The women's movement advanced in the first wave as a social movement primarily as a symptom of the cohesive effect of a single, unifying mobilising issue - suffrage. The women's movement proliferated in the wake of success on this issue of the vote for women. However, legal advances by women in the 1920s and 1930s became the focus of the American women's movement. The Woman's Party proposed equal rights amendments in order to enforce federal equality, but were opposed by the League of Women Voters. Welfare feminism became a core focus of anti-poverty campaigns and pacifist feminism was established by Jane Addams who formed the Women's Peace Group (later the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1915). Crucially, it was the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) first proposed to Congress in 1923 by the Woman's Party as an amendment to the Constitution which subsequently stimulated the mobilisation of the 'new' feminist movements of the 1960s and highlights the direct continuity between the first and second waves. The ERA stated: "*Men and women*

shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction" (Humm, 1992: 3).

The NUWSS in Britain became the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship in 1919 and by the 1920s and 1930s its energy was devoted to the political education of women. The group's six objectives in 1921 when it joined the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Women's Labour League and the Six Point Group, included - equal pay, widows pensions, equal rights of guardianship, laws on child assault, equal civil service opportunities and provision for unmarried mothers. Campaigns during these years also included activism in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the anti-fascist activities of feminist women.

Ultimately, in the period between the granting of women's suffrage and the resurgence of the contemporary women's movement, a marginalised group of women's organisations ensured continuity between the two waves of Anglo-American feminism. The IAW (International Alliance of Women, founded in 1902) played a crucial role in the maintenance of the international women's movement in this period. The Irish women's movement was affiliated to the IAW. The social history of the first wave and middle years of the women's movement in Ireland is thus connected to, although separable from, the Anglo-American context.

2. SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

The changing course of the Irish women's movement since the last century is invariably related to the opportunities for women to organise on their own behalf, the resources available to them, and their collective identity. The first wave of the women's movement (from about 1870 to 1921) was dominated by the question of suffrage and had extensive links with the nationalist and labour movements (Ward, 1989). Post-

independence Ireland was particularly hostile to women's rights and the women's movement receded (between 1922-1969). However, a small number of women continued to participate in traditional women's organisations and maintained an indigenous network of organisations throughout the middle years of this century (see appendix 2 and 3 for a detailed chronology). The potential of these organisations was severely limited by the social and political climate in the middle years of this century, manifested in a series of regressive laws excluding women from the public sphere in general. A ban was imposed on married women working in the Civil Service, local authorities and health boards; the Conditions of Employment Act (1935) granted government powers to obstruct women from working in certain industries; women were effectively banned from sitting on juries; the Censorship of Publications Act (1935) banned the advertisement, sale and importation of contraception (see appendix 1).

The contemporary, second wave of the women's movement in Ireland can be traced to the early 1970s when a number of groups increasingly mobilised, including the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) and an *ad hoc* committee on women's rights set up in 1968, which was comprised of organisations that had maintained their organisational base in the post-independence period.³ The first wave of the women's movement in Ireland has been significantly documented by feminist historians (Ward, 1989; Cullen-Owens, 1984; Murphy, 1989; Cullen, 1985) and recent publications have begun to look at the second period denoted (Tweedy, 1992; Coulter, 1993). The following section reviews the central characteristics of first wave mobilisation in Ireland.

The First Wave in Ireland (1870-1921): Interaction of Suffrage, Labour and Nationalist Causes

Irish women were heavily involved in social movements throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in secret agrarian societies, and in the

nationalist movement since the turn of the century (Ward, 1995). A number of social movements interweaved during the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence - cultural, labour, nationalist, emancipatory - with *feminist* activists directly involved:

"These were not distinct, separate movements, but part of a generalised disruption of resistance to the status quo, and most of the leading personalities were involved in more than one area." (Coulter, 1993: 20)

The first wave of the *autonomous* women's movement in Ireland was dominated by Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland), Cumann na mBan (the Women's Association) and the Irish Women's Franchise League. Some of these organisations were radical and socially active agents in the *other* social movements of the time, but frequently in a subordinate role. The campaign for suffrage was distinctly autonomous in its organisational focus throughout this period.

Heron contends that pressure for women's rights has come in waves in Ireland (Heron, 1993: 131). She sources the first push for gender equality in the 1870s with the demand for "votes for ladies, as distinct from women - based on property owning qualifications" (Heron, 1993: 131). This expanded into the militant suffrage movement (involving women such as Constance Markievicz, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Eva Goore Booth, Louie Bennett and Helen Chevenix). Between 1912 and 1914 there were twenty-six convictions of suffragettes (Heron, 1993: 131). Initial mobilising issues included the Married Women Property Acts (1870, 1874, 1882, 1907) and the repeal of the series of Contagious Diseases Acts passed in the 1860s⁴ (Cullen, 1985: 191). There is empirical evidence of the first significant attempt to organise Irish women collectively to demand equality since the 1870s - exactly a century before the beginnings of the second major attempt. The pioneers of the first wave of the women's movement

emphasised the fact that until full *political* equality with men was achieved, equality in other areas could not be achieved.

The demand for equality between the sexes and for female participation in all areas of life in Irish society is thus not a new phenomenon and the first such demand was voiced in Dublin over one hundred years ago (Cullen-Owens, 1984: 7). Cullen-Owens cites how the improvement of educational opportunities for women in the last quarter of the nineteenth century served to highlight the limited sphere open to women. In particular, women were prevented from holding public office and had no voice in choosing their parliamentary representative:

"Consequently they had no say in the making of laws to which they were held accountable." (Cullen-Owens, 1984: 7)

The organising focus and strategic challenges of the women's movement were shaped by the social values of this period. For example, the demand for equal suffrage was "couched in terms acceptable to the social values of the time" and was confined to the constraints of property owning qualifications (Cullen Owens, 1984: 7). Many men did not have a right to vote on the basis of their class and qualified women *only* sought parity with their male counterparts. In other words, votes for 'ladies'. This acceptance of a privileged class system was later challenged in the early twentieth century by liberal and socialist reformers active in the new women's groups which emerged in this period. Some of these groups were elements of the labour and nationalist movements. However, suffrage organisations provided a cohesive, autonomous feminist strand which formed a collective identity within a plethora of organisations within the women's movement between 1870 and 1921:

"All women's groups believed - naively perhaps to modern eyes - that the granting of votes to women would ensure female influence in legislation affecting all areas of women's life, and women's participation in public life." (Cullen-Owens, 1984: 7)

By the turn of the century, the women's suffrage movement became more militant. At first this involved the strategy of heckling male politicians and demanding votes for women. This extended into symbolic direct action against government property. Between 1912 and 1914 there were thirty six convictions of Irish suffragists, some of whom went on hunger strike in support of their demands (Cullen Owens, 1984: 8). A counter group emerged to stem the agenda of these activists - an anti-women's suffrage organisation, composed of women and men.

Organisational Base

The early women's movement in the first wave was thus comprised of distinct organisations. An autonomous/radical strand which originally mobilised around the question of suffrage, continued to mobilise into the turn of the century. In 1908 the Irishwomen's Franchise League was formed by a militant group of women. The campaign for suffrage was directed by a number of high profile and articulate women, including, Louie Bennett, Helen Chevenix, Constance Markievicz, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Eva Gore-Booth. However, in practice many active suffragists were not well-known leaders and their crucial involvement in social movement organisations within the women's movement in the first wave remains invisible.

The Irish Women's Workers Union (IWWU), founded in 1911 by Jim and Delia Larkin and reorganised by Louie Bennett in 1916, was the first attempt to organise working women. While the IWWU was in favour of equal pay, it was ambivalent on the question of married women's right to

work (Heron, 1993: 131). Its leaders (Louie Bennett, Helena Maloney and Helen Chevenix) were middle-class and played a leading role in the trade union movement. Each of them held the presidency of the ITUC.

When Maud Gonne came to Ireland in 1888, all nationalist organisations excluded women from membership (Ward, 1995: 3). Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Erin) was formed in 1900 and she became its first president. They published a feminist journal entitled *Bean na hÉireann*, which indicates how Irish feminists saw themselves in this period. The stated objectives of Inghinidhe na hÉireann were nationalist based:

1. The re-establishment of the complete independence of Ireland;
2. To encourage the study of Gaelic, Irish Literature, History, Music and Art, especially among the young, by the organising of classes for the above objects;
3. To support and popularise Irish manufacture;
4. To discourage the reading and circulation of low English literature, the singing of English songs, the attending of vulgar English entertainments at the theatres and music hall, and to combat in every way English influence, which is doing so much injury to the artistic taste and refinement of the Irish people;
5. To form a fund called the National Purposes Fund, for the furtherance of the above objects.

In 1908, however, Inghinidhe na hÉireann launched the first distinctly nationalist-feminist journal, *Bean na hÉireann* which was edited by Helena Maloney. In the same year a feminist critique of nationalism emerged. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington was among those who refused to join Inghinidhe na hÉireann and co-founded the militant Irishwomen's

Franchise League in 1908. Her articulation of the subordinate role of women within the nationalist movement provoked debate (Ward, 1995: 32).

Cumann na mBan (the Irishwomen's Council), formed in 1914, was the female counterpart of the Irish Volunteers (established in 1913). Its stated aims were (see Ward, 1995: 44):

1. To advance the cause of Irish liberty;
2. To organise Irishwomen in furtherance of this object;
3. To assist in arming and equipping a body of Irish men for the defence of Ireland;
4. To form a fund for these purposes, to be called the 'Defence of Ireland Fund.'

Disagreement arose over whether the women would be part of the Volunteers, or would be content to perform tasks, such as fund-raising, when requested by the male leaders. The women's role was viewed in terms of an extension of their domestic responsibilities. Members of the Irish Women's Franchise League attended the first meeting of Cumann na mBan. Heated exchanges concerning the relationship between Cumann na mBan and the Volunteer movement persisted over several months in the *Irish Citizen*, the newspaper of the Irish Suffrage Movement. Despite such criticisms and the widening gulf between nationalist and feminist, the membership of Cumann na mBan grew rapidly and this sector of the women's movement expanded:

"And so Cumann na mBan was launched. From the start it had in its body some of the gallant fighters of the Land League days - women who had worked hard in that great conquering movement and who saw in the new Volunteer force the salvation of Ireland. They were an inspiration to the younger women who brought their youth and strong inspiration to the younger women and strong faith and

eagerness into the new fight. Soon branches began to be formed in the country, slowly at first, then more quickly until now at the movement of writing there are over half a hundred branches in Ireland and several in England....What are recognised as the best drilled and most efficient regiments in the country are backed by the strongest force of women." (Mary Colum, *Irish Freedom*, September 1914 in Ward, 1995: 45).

Constance Markievicz, active in the Irish Citizen Army, strongly criticised the subordinate role of Cumann na mBan in a speech to the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1915:

"The Ladies Land League, founded by Anna Parnell, promised better things. When the men leaders were all imprisoned it ran the movement and started to do the militant things that the men only threatened and talked of, but when the men came out, they proceeded to discard the women - as usual - and disbanded the Ladies' Land League. That was the last of women in nationalist movements, down to our time. Today the women attached to national movements are there chiefly to collect funds for the men to spend. These Ladies' Auxiliaries demoralise women, set them up in separate camps and deprive them of all initiative and independence. Women are left to rely on sex charm, or intrigue or backstairs influence." (Constance Markievicz, *Irish Citizen*, 23 October 1915 in Ward, 1995: 47).

Women became increasingly involved in the nationalist struggle before the 1916 Rising. Mary Spring Rice, for example, suggested the use of yachts to bring weapons from Germany and was on board the *Asgard* in July 1914 which landed ammunition at Howth Harbour. The experience of women in the Irish Citizen Army was different to that of Cumann na mBan during the 1916 rising. Male and female members of the Citizen army assembled at Liberty Hall and women were able to undertake a military role because of a shortage of manpower. Margaret Ward suggests that:

"Given the confusion of orders and countermanding orders that characterised the start of the Rising, many women found that their branches of Cumann na mBan had been forgotten about. They had to find a way to the various outposts alone; crossing streets that had

become dangerous and pleading with Volunteer officers to be allowed to join the garrison." (Ward, 1995: 55)

The women's movement transformed in the wake of the 1916 rising and greater cohesion between the nationalist, suffrage and labour sectors of the movement was mobilised. In April 1917, an informal group, the Conference of Women Delegates, met. Their resolution was adopted by Sinn Féin at its convention of 1917:

"Whereas, according to the Republican Proclamation which guarantees 'religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens,' women are equally eligible with men as members of branches, members of the governing body and officers of both local and governing bodies, be it resolved: that the equality of men and women in this organisation be emphasised in all speeches and leaflets." (Ward, 1995: 75)

The suffragists reacted favourably to the Sinn Féin Convention:

"The splendid recognition of women's equality with men by the Sinn Féin Convention is a triumphant vindication of the sound political wisdom of the Irish militants in placing suffrage first, especially during the trying period of the European War, and perhaps the still more trying period since the rebellion." (*Irish Citizen*, 1917 in Ward, 1995: 77)

At the Cumann na mBan convention of 1917 a shifting organising focus was apparent. Significant changes were made to the policies of the organisation as nationalist women continued to assert feminist claims to political equality. In 1918 British and Irish women over the age of 30 were granted the right to vote and stand for election to parliament. Constance Markievicz, who was elected, and Winifred Carney were the only female candidates in the election, however.

Although there was still clear disagreement on many issues, the general opposition to British rule, the suppression of organisations and

ensorship of the nationalist press led to important coalitions across the autonomous women's movement. In 1920 Constance Markievicz (Cumann na mBan), Hanna Sheehy Skeffington (Irishwomen's Franchise League), Helena Maloney (Irish Women Workers Union), Louie Bennett (Irishwomen's International League), Maud Gonne McBride (Inghinidhe na hÉireann) and Dr. Kathleen Lynn (League of Women Delegates) signed the following statement which was sent to women's organisations in Europe and America:

"We address this appeal to our sisters in other countries, asking them to use their influence to demand the formation of an International Committee of Inquiry, composed of men and women, who in the interests of humanity would send Delegates to inspect the prisons used for the detention of Irish political prisoners." (*Irish Bulletin*, 1 January 1920 in Ward, 1995: 89)

The War of Independence constrained the activities of all of these organisations. The Cumann na mBan conference of 1920 was conducted in difficult circumstances and no details were reported (Ward, 1995: 107). Some six women were elected to the Second Dáil and the debate over the acceptance of the Treaty was intense. It was increasingly difficult to organise across a broad base in the aftermath of the Civil War in 1922 and the capacity of the women's movement retreated dramatically.

The autonomous women's movement between 1870 and 1921 was directed by the tensions that arose in the relationship between nationalism and feminism. The *Irish Citizen* vividly illustrates the widely articulated debate between feminist-nationalists and militant suffragists. After 1918, when women became a potentially valuable electoral constituency, Cumann na mBan broadened its focus to political equality for women. However, the *feminist* demands and strategies of the suffragists were clearly more autonomous and radical. Ward (1989) concludes that throughout the long history of women's involvement in the various phases

of the struggle for national liberation, a tension has existed between those women who demanded equality of status (and who, on occasion, were more radical than the men in their conception of the political direction to be taken) and women who were content to perform unquestioningly whatever services were demanded of them. Relations with their feminist contemporaries were often acrimonious because, while both agreed that women were at a disadvantage within society, the nationalists maintained that to place the needs of women before those of 'the nation' would be divisive and criticised suffrage feminism for its implicit lack of commitment to the nationalist cause.

The outcome of the intensified involvement of autonomous women's organisations in the nationalist and labour movements became more apparent in the post-independence period. Cullen-Owens concludes:

"Unfortunately,...such political involvement too often required the suppressing - or at least the postponement of feminists demands. That it took some fifty years for such demands to be voiced again by Irishwomen is perhaps a lesson to be noted by their successors."
(Cullen-Owens, 1984: 9)

Coulter (1993) tends not to focus on how the autonomous women's movement operated as a social movement in its own right, and over-emphasises the interaction between organisations such as Cumann na mBan and the other male-dominated nationalist organisations. This obscures the distinctive, underlying organisational life that characterised first wave Irish feminism and distinguished the women's movement from the other social movements in this epoch. Cullen proposes a strategy to redress this prevailing analysis:

"The extension and deepening of our knowledge of Irish feminists will probably be best served at this stage by trying to find as much information as possible on how they themselves, as individuals and as groups, saw their aspirations, opportunities, problems and limitations, how they related individual and group strategies to these,

and how they differed among themselves on analysis and tactics. In other words, we need to aim at understanding as best we can the range of complexities, contradictions and differences that underlay the lives of the women who created Irish feminist movements." (Cullen, 1985: 200)

The Middle Years of the Irish Women's Movement (1922-69)

When women were granted the vote in 1918, and full adult suffrage in 1922, it was considered the last piece of progressive legislation affecting women for many years (Fennell and Arnold, 1987). Successive governments of the Irish Free State introduced legislation which restricted the rights of women on a number of levels (see appendix 1 for a full list). The (albeit limited) opportunities for women in Irish political life, previously available in the nationalist movement in particular, were closed off (Coulter, 1993: 27).

Cumann na mBan unsuccessfully attempted to maintain interest amongst its members at the end of the Civil War. The Women's Prisoner's Defence League (The Mothers) was formed to maintain opposition to the Free State Government's efforts to crush republican dissidents (Ward, 1995: 153). By 1932, Nora Connolly O'Brien (daughter of James Connolly) stated that Irish women's rights were seriously threatened (Ward, 1995: 156). In general, the social and political climate post-independence mitigated against women's involvement in public life and constrained mobilisation. A factional split occurred in Cumann na mBan at the 1933 Convention as a result of the decision to abandon the idea that the Second Dáil of 1921 was still the legitimate government. The organisation reverted to their previous allegiance to the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Mná na Poblachta (Women of the Republic) was formed by the 'breakaway' faction.

In 1935 the government introduced restrictions on women's employment in certain industries. Cumann na mBan did not become

involved in protests against this legislation. However, some of those who were active in the nationalist movement mobilised. A small number of women had remained active in the labour movement and the Irish Women's Citizens Association (formed in 1923 to carry on the work of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association). The IWWU held a protest meeting at the Mansion House on November 20, 1935 which was addressed by figures such as Louie Bennett, Helena Maloney and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington.

Article 41 of the 1937 Constitution included a specific clause relating to women but focused solely on the position of women in the home:

"In particular the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved." (1937 Constitution of Ireland, Article 41.2.1)

"The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home." (Article 41.2.2)

Margaret Ward argues that: "With the introduction of the 1937 Constitution, the defeats of women's hopes for equality of status in the twenty-six county state was complete" (Ward, 1995: 164). However, contrary to the received view the women's movement 'disappeared' in this period, women *did* organise and their opposition is central to understanding the State's development in this period. *Prison Bars* (edited by Maud Gonne McBride), which was the only remaining feminist paper, published objections to the Constitution from women who had been prominent within the nationalist movement (including, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Kathleen Clarke, Kate O'Callaghan and Maud Gonne McBride). In 1937 Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and a group of women, including members of the Women Graduates Association and the Irish

Women Citizens Association, protested against the curtailment of women's freedom in the Constitution. The group sent postcards to the electorate headed "Vote No to the Constitution." After the referendum Hanna Sheehy Skeffington contemplated the formation of a women's political party, but instead formed and chaired the Women's Social and Progressive League. Its aim was to monitor legislation affecting women. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington advised the IHA (Irish Housewives Association) in their formative period and they endorsed her candidature for the Dáil in 1943 (Tweedy, 1992: 20). In the 1943 elections four women stood on an independent feminist platform. It was hoped a woman's party would evolve, however, all four were unsuccessful. The failure of these women independents reflected the hostile social and political climate to women's rights, and the dormancy of the women's movement in this period. However, the movement was sustained through explicit organisational links with first wave social movement organisations and activists were still clearly mobilised.

The ICA (Irish Countrywomen's Association), founded in 1910, concentrates on providing educational, social and cultural opportunities for rural women. It played a major role in campaigning on issues such as adequate water supplies, the rural electrification scheme and housing conditions (see Tweedy, 1992). The IHA, founded in 1942, was linked to the remaining organisational base of the suffrage movement. It was also politically active on behalf of women and was responsible for setting up the Consumer's Association (which organised an extensive march in 1974 to protest to the Government against rising food prices) and nominated candidates to contest Dáil elections in the 1950s. Both the IHA and ICA were pivotal organisations in the mobilisation of the contemporary women's movement, which contradicts the 'sudden conception' view of contemporary activism.

The Irish women's movement in the Anglo-American context clearly experienced parallel waves of peak and decline. However, juxtaposing the social history of first wave activism in Ireland and the Anglo-American context highlights three key nuances:

1. Nationalism shaped the themes and tensions within Irish feminism and is a constant in current movement mobilisation;
2. There was less emphasis on the intellectual antecedents of classical liberalism and on intellectualising the subordination of women in the Irish context;
3. Suffrage was *the* pivotal issue on which Irish feminists had a common identity with British and American feminism.

These nuances clearly emerged in interaction with the political context particular to the socio-historical development of Irish society. The contemporary wave of the women's movement in Ireland is the core subject of this study. As a pre-requisite to embarking on that analysis, this chapter concludes with a general appraisal of the contemporary Anglo-American women's movement.

3. THE EMERGENCE OF THE SECOND WAVE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN FEMINISM IN THE 1960s

The women's movement resurged in the 1960s in a number of countries. The contemporary phase of the women's movement is simultaneously marked by continuity with and a departure from the first wave. The Anglo-American women's movement was 'kept alive' in the years between the passage of suffrage and the 1960s by small, exclusive and affluent groups of activists (Rupp and Taylor, 1987). The dramatic change in the role of women during the Second World War and its aftermath is

generally cited as a root cause of the upsurge in feminist politics in the 1960s (Andersen, 1993). American society went from a situation of women performing male designated work during World War II to what was termed the 'tranquilliser 50s.' It was in this climate of the 1950s that Betty Friedan published the influential text *The Feminine Mystique*. However, recent work has criticised these findings as being somewhat inaccurate. For example, it can be shown that women's participation in the labour force continued to grow after World War II, contrary to women returning to the home (Ryan, 1992). In addition, working class and African American women have articulated very different histories from the middle-class women to whom the "tranquilliser 50s" term applied (Hooks, 1981).

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), first proposed to Congress in 1923 by the Women's Party as an amendment to the US Constitution, became a unifying mobilising issue for women's organisations during the 1960s, which marked a clear link and continuity with the first wave of the women's movement. Furthermore, both the first and second waves of mobilisation coincided with the limitations of women's role in Black Civil Rights movements. However, while the wider cycle of protest facilitated the mobilisation of a plethora of social movements in the 1960s, it was not the *sole* cause of the resurgence of the women's movement. Firstly, change was taking place at the level of government - the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - which fomented a more receptive political climate to feminist organising. The Equal Opportunity Commission was charged with overseeing Title 7 but it took no action to ensure implementation of the special sex provision. This triggered the formation of NOW in 1966, of which Betty Friedan became the first President. The founders of NOW were mainly white, college-educated women who found their ambitions limited by their sex category (Ryan, 1992). Their organising efforts were initially informed by liberal feminist

politics. NOW began by challenging the policy arena of the male dominated power structure. It has expanded from a core group of 300 in 1966 to over 175,000 today, making it the largest feminist organisation in the world (Bouchier, 1983: 48). Ryan (1992) notes a membership of 35,000 in the mid 1970s and a quarter of a million by 1982. The issues contested by NOW were, for the most part, central to the American liberal agenda. There is no mass-based, formal organisation of this extent comparable in the women's movement of any European country.

Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) articulated the frustrations of white, educated, heterosexual, middle-class women, "locked" in domesticity. NOW pursued a predominantly reformist agenda, focusing on educational and legal reform, but gradually radicalised in reaction to the spread of radical feminist ideas and style of political organising. Following its 1970 strike for abortion on demand, 24 hour nurseries and equal opportunities, abortion and gay rights were added to NOW's demands at the 1977 National Conference at Houston.

By 1977 the struggle for the ratification of ERA was a unifying mobilising issue for American feminism. Ryan (1992: 75) proposes that the ERA became the core symbol of women's equality and that the failure of a constitutional amendment prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex became representative of women's secondary status. The ERA became a highly valued mobilisation resource as it became more symbolic than tangible. The ERA campaign gathered a large number of women's organisations to fight for state by state ratification until the amendment expired in 1982. Affirmative action, in particular, was viewed as necessary in a society unwilling to confer women with constitutional equality.

Coinciding with the mobilisation of this strand of American feminism on a mass scale, the core elements of the ideas of women's liberation were fusing in the 1960s which extended feminist analysis from mainstream

politics and the economy to sexuality and other previously invisible aspects of the 'private' sphere. New forms of political organisation also emerged with radical feminism. Hundreds of non-hierarchical, consciousness-raising groups proliferated across the country, with a preference for direct action and alternative living strategies. This branch of the movement derived from radical groups such as New York Redstockings founded by Anne Koedt and Shulamith Firestone. The first women's studies programmes included Naomi Weisstein's seminar at the Free University of Chicago in 1967 and coincided with the emergence of a number of influential radical feminist texts (for instance, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*). Extensive confrontational direct action was mobilised (for instance, the demonstration at the Miss America pageant in 1968).

The impact of the women's movement decreased in the 1980s. The defeat of the ERA in the Reagan era, the mobilisation of a highly organised pro-life movement and the rise of the radical right constrained the women's movement and had a fragmentary effect. However, new campaigns that emerged throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s included Women Against Pornography, Women Against Violence Against Women, Coalition Politics, Aids Activism, Third World Women Against Violence and the National Coalition of Gays (see Evans, 1994). These developments were the result of the diversification of a central feminist agenda into issue-based political action campaigns, where gender identity is linked with race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, and occurred in the context of the consolidation of New Right campaigns and Republican cutbacks in budgets for women.

A critical issue is that the 1980s saw not only fragmentation, but serious conflict among different groups of feminists - between women of colour, liberal feminists, radical feminists and sexual libertarians. The anti-pornography movement, in particular, led to bitter divisions, manifested at

the Barnard Conference of 1982 (Segal, 1994). Criticism of mainstream feminism on the part of black women (such as Bell Hooks) engendered a climate of self-doubt on the part of former feminist activists. These developments point to the post-feminist genre of literature published in the 1990s (Paglia, 1992; 1994). On the other hand, the mobilisation of women of colour represented a vibrant, positive development within American feminism overall.

There were direct parallels between the resurging women's movements in the US and Britain: involvement and disenchantment with the New Left, the student movement and other social movements, in particular. The militant Ford Strike by British women in 1968 for equal pay was a precipitating factor to mobilisation. The aims of the British WLM (Women's Liberation Movement) were agreed at the first national conference at Ruskin College in 1970. Four demands were adopted: equal pay; equal education and opportunity; 24-hour nurseries; free contraception and abortion on demand. Three feminist publications emerged in this era: *Shrew* (1969), *Spare Rib* (1972) and *WIRES* (1979). In 1974 two further demands were added at the Edinburgh Conference, namely financial and legal independence for women, an end to all discrimination against lesbians and a woman's right to choose her own sexuality. In 1978, at Birmingham, the seventh and last demand adopted was freedom from intimidation by threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status, and an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women. Feminist activity, mobilising issues and groups grew around each of these demands.

One of the most prolific campaigns during the 1970s was the advancement of employment rights, encapsulated in the Women's Charter in 1974. This was supported by the National Trade Union Council and led

to the practical affirmative action programme of the municipal women's committees.⁵ Throughout the 1970s, women's liberation groups proliferated, gained in confidence and developed beyond the consciousness raising stage. Particular importance was attached to setting up women's centres. Here women could meet, put together some sort of newsletter, provide a drop-in centre and so on. By 1980 women's centres existed in most British cities, along with alternative institutions, including rape crisis centres, women's refuges, lesbian lines and cultural groups.

By the late 1980s, the climate of vibrancy altered within the women's movement. Many women's centres were in serious financial trouble and some had to close down. There were some regions, such as Scotland and Leeds, where the movement appeared creative and alive. However, the broad national picture was one of lessening energy and activities in the WLM. The factors underlying this trend are multifaceted, related to both internal and external forces particular to the Thatcherite era. Internal conflicts within the movement did play an important role. The most prolific was the conflict between radical and socialist feminists.

The prevailing conflict was one of tactical divisions, as well as ideological variation. An increasing number of activists prioritised work in mainstream political institutions and significant disagreement did take place about the danger to the women's movement of too much reliance on State institutions, political organisations and charitable foundations (Randall and Lovenduski, 1993). The apparent decline of the autonomous WLM during the 1980s has been linked by many observers to excessive reliance on state sponsorship, raising doubts about the capacity of mainstream institutions to adapt adequately to the challenges of feminist politics and, simultaneously, the capacity of feminists to resist incorporation by powerful established organisations.⁶ In many ways, the British women's movement experienced overall decline (in membership, networking and organisational base) which

was exacerbated in the early 1980s by conflicts mirroring the theoretical debate, especially between radical and socialist feminists and mainstream feminists and the black women's movement.

The resulting transformation of the British women's movement, however, encompasses positive developments within the autonomous, grass roots campaigns that engaged feminists during the Thatcher era, the movement of influential feminists into political institutions and sustained mobilisation in a number of areas (such as reproductive rights, health, male violence and child-care). This transformation precipitated new surges of activism. There were several major campaigns, which were short-lived and narrower in focus, but mobilised large numbers of women and brought new energy into the movement, including:

1. The mobilisation of support for the Greenham Common, anti-nuclear demonstrators in the early 1980s;
2. The action of the miners' wives in 1984, which activated a new sector of working-class women in a way they had not been before;
3. Widespread consolidation around the issue of pornography;
4. Women active in animal rights campaigns.

Much of the innovativeness of the women's movement in the 1980s and 1990s has evolved from black women's groups, which have challenged the ethnocentrism of feminist theory and practice in the established women's movement. The Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) was founded in 1978. Initially, it focused activism on racist immigration and Third World issues, as well as issues of Black British identity, at the National Black Women's Conference in Brixton in 1979. Underlying this development was the important issues of self identity and

commitment to the widening activities of the British WLM, which alongside black activism included Greenham peace actions (from 1981), socialist feminist links with the traditional Left, reproductive and abortion rights campaigns and lesbian activism around Clause 28 (banning the public advocacy of homosexuality) consolidating earlier lesbian campaigns (Humm 1992: 6).

At a broader international level, second wave feminism in some form emerged throughout the 1960s in all of the six original member states of the European Community and in each of the three to join in 1973: Britain, Denmark and Ireland. The women's movement was thus a widespread phenomenon across the Community. Hoskyns suggests that the countries concerned were all pluralist States with mixed economies, but within that framework economic, political and social conditions varied and influenced distinct movements considerably:

"The spread of feminism in these circumstances showed the force of the pressure for change, and the ability in the right climate for ideas to be carried 'across the boundaries of socio-economic conditions and across frontiers'." (Hoskyns, 1996: 34).

It is clear that the original ideas of radical, liberal and socialist feminism informed the women's movement in different cultural contexts. In the US, feminist groups with an organising focus on equal rights now constitute the mainstream women's movement. For example, NOW is autonomous to a degree, but much of its effort has gone into supporting party candidates (Klandermans, 1991: 22). Klandermans points out that, in contrast, neither Germany nor the Netherlands has a similar co-ordinating organisation, and the women's movement in these countries is divided between autonomous and party-connected socialist and radical feminist organisations. In Germany, the term feminist refers only to the radical branch of the women's movement (Klandermans, 1991: 22) and the

women's movement is for the most part autonomous, non-hierarchical and decentralised. The Dutch movement, on the other hand, is situated in an intermediate position and works both within and outside the system. Despite these differences, feminism diffused across and within country-specific women's movements which have common characteristics in ideas, mobilising issues, strategies, organisation and themes. The prevailing themes and strategies of the Anglo-American strand had a particular influence on the development of the contemporary Irish women's movement.

It is important to state that the evolution of the women's movement is not just a Western phenomenon. By the Second World War there were national women's councils in sixteen Third World countries (Humm, 1992: 7). Second wave feminism was even more far-reaching. Women in the Third World have made significant challenges to the whole fabric of life, including demonstrations against the veil and women's rights in Egypt in 1923, demonstrations against rape in India in the 1980s and mass demonstrations for peace in Palestine. Today, more than a hundred women's peace camps exist, including Greenham Common, the Italian Comise and Pine Gap in Australia.

The women's movement is thus historically and culturally diverse and is composed of distinct, though interacting, movements in different States. Its common aims have been endorsed on international or intra-nation state platforms - including the UN Decade for Women 1975-85, the women's rights political agenda of the European Union, and international women's conferences at Nairobi (1985), Copenhagen (1990) and Beijing (1995). A most exciting development is Third World feminists re-evaluation of the ethnocentrism of the Western women's movement by challenging feminist concepts that are not applicable to their experiences (for instance

sexual hierarchies and where the sexual division of labour crosses the public/private divide can vary enormously) (Humm, 1992).

CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on tracing the intellectual antecedents of first wave Anglo-American feminism. First wave feminism is intrinsically related to the political ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Nineteenth century feminism emerged as one particular strand of the Enlightenment doctrine of natural rights.⁷

Throughout the history of the women's movement it is suggested that upheavals in the role of middle-class women have been crucial. Working-class women have their own history of activism, but it is largely less a result of their sex than of their class (Banks, 1981: 5). Middle-class women have always possessed the necessary resources for mobilisation - education, time for the development of feminist ideas and strategies, and political skills and resources that translated into action. Banks suggests that the prominence of philanthropy in feminism implies that much of middle-class feminist activism was for others and that their movement commitments were much more linked to their position as women rather than their class. However, their view was coloured by their class position which gave feminism this distinctive character throughout its history.

Parallels have been made in relation to contemporary feminism. Juliet Mitchell (1971), for instance, suggests that modern feminism emerged as a consequence of the conflict between the ideology of women's perceived role and actual position in society, accentuated by industrialisation. In particular, she cites the contradictions in the domestic ideology and women's productive role; their dual role in the family and the workforce; and the ideology of sexual freedom and women's actual sexual exploitation (Mitchell, 1971: 174).

Feminism starts and achieves itself within the form of a *social movement* of women for their emancipation or liberation. When the women's movement re-emerged globally in the 1960s it mobilised as a social movement already influenced and shaped by earlier waves of feminist *activism*. Feminists were the representatives of a subordinate group throughout the middle years of this century. However, the logic of first wave feminism - that there could be a specific politics directed towards women - had been accepted since the turn of the century, even if women have not generally acted as a united political constituency in the intervening period. It had become acceptable before contemporary women's liberation to think about women as a separate group with needs and interests of their own.

One of the most striking contrasts between first and second wave Anglo-American feminism is the language of liberation rather than emancipation. Radical sociology and Marxism, for example, were drawn upon extensively to analyse women's position. Crucially, there were new forms of practice, including consciousness raising, non-formal structures of political organisation, emphasis on participation rather than representation and a new central notion - sexual politics - which threw political focus onto a range of new issues which became one of the meanings of 'the personal as political.'

A competent sociological conceptualisation of second wave feminism must follow from a greater understanding of how the women's movement mobilised in different countries as a social movement, and what were the similarities and differences. The first and second waves of feminism emerged from Britain and the US in similar ways, while specific to the political context of each society. During the first wave, feminist writings emphasised common issues such as emancipation through education. In the second wave, common concerns were related to equal

pay and employment, contraception, abortion, sexuality, pornography and violence.

One of the most important characteristics of both first and second wave feminism was its ability to 'shock.' This led to very public international events, for example, the disruption of the Miss World competition in London in 1970. Lateral thinking in the contemporary wave involved the prioritising of, and celebrating for its own sake, the private, the domestic and the sexual - aspects of life previously 'invisible' in political discourse. Sexuality became a central terrain of women's oppression, previously confined to the economy, and tremendous creativity was released. The core organisations of contemporary feminism were small consciousness-raising groups in which women shared their experiences, dealt with personal problems and expanded them into a new world view, which mobilised a collective consciousness. The extent to which these translated into action varied from one group to another - some concentrating on education, cultural and social activities, self-help and politics. Out of this ebullience a plethora of writing and theorising emerged. Rowbotham (1989) points out that, at a certain point experience needs theory, as a challenge to men's hold over ideas, and to help others follow. Analysis was moved from discussion of sex difference to more complex analysis of how gender power relations are produced.

The slogan 'the personal is political' recognises that politics is too diverse to be contained in the rigid categories of political parties. The small collective groups of radical feminism which engaged in consciousness-raising, direct action and radical campaigns shaped the political themes of contemporary feminism and transformed the women's movement in the second peak wave. The Anglo-American strand of the women's movement engendered the creation of alternative institutions (for example, women's aid refuges), alternative political processes (networking, participation and

decentralisation) and alternative political cultures (Greenham pacifism, for instance).

The subsequent analysis will demonstrate how these mobilising features were adopted strategically by the Irish women's movement, in the particular socio-economic climate of the late 1960s, and were shaped, constrained and facilitated by political factors unique to the Irish State and social movement sector. The Irish women's movement was clearly influenced by the Anglo-American context at all stages of its development and in many respects looked outside of Irish society in the organising years for resources to mobilise.

The next chapter elucidates the research methodology which underpins the analysis.

Notes Chapter Two:

- 1 Writers active in the first wave of feminism or the middle years of this century, include: Olive Schreiner, *Women and Labour*, (1911); Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, (1929) and *Three Guineas*, (1938); Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, (1928); Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (1949).
- 2 Feminist mobilising in France in this period is relevant to this analysis. Women demanded political rights for the first time in France during the French Revolution in 1789, when they were not permitted to join men's political clubs. They began to form their own clubs, published articles and campaigned for reform of the marriage laws. Olympe de Gouges rewrote the "*Declaration of the Rights of Man*" in 1791, substituting Woman for Man wherever it occurred (Duchen, 1986: 1). However, her efforts were ridiculed and women's activities were suppressed for the most part during this period by both revolutionaries and conservatives. According to Duchen, traditionally, working-class women demonstrated for economic reasons while middle-class women concerned themselves with ideological issues. Such women either joined socialist movements (influenced by Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier or Louis Blanc) or they pressed for legislative reforms in relation to the status of women in French society. In other words, women did not share a common identity and created their identity along *class* lines. However, these boundaries were crossed at different stages - in 1832 a women's political newspaper was produced and this was repeated during the 1848 revolution when a daily feminist newspaper was founded by Eugenie Niboyet (bourgeoisie) and Jeanne Deroin and Suzanne Voilquin (proletarians). The aim of this newspaper was to apply the principles of the French Republic to women - *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*. The most prolific feminist at this time was Flora Tristan (often proclaimed the first socialist feminist) who proclaimed, even before Engels, that "The most oppressed man can oppress someone else - his wife. She is the proletarian's proletarian" (quoted in Duchen, 1986: 2). The ongoing tension between the socialist movement in France and feminism, which is still manifest today, originated during the Third French Republic. The mainstream socialist movement equated feminism with bourgeois women's concerns, regarded as the enemy of socialism. There were over 123 feminist organisations by the First World War in France, primarily philanthropic and reformist in nature (Duchen, 1986: 3). There were 35 feminist newspapers produced between 1875 and 1914, representing a wide spectrum of issues. The most prolific of these was *La Fronde* founded by Marguerite Durand (a former actress) in 1897, which was published daily for six years. The central mobilising issues of the women's movement in France at the turn of the century were women's allegiance to class or sex, and suffrage. The suffrage campaign did not reach the level of militancy as it did in Britain and the US, and women only succeeded in getting the vote in 1944 from a reluctant de Gaulle. Women continued to fight outside parliament for reforms. In particular, the campaign of the *Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial* (the French Family Planning Association) began the campaign for the reform of the 1920 law prohibiting abortion and provision of contraception. After the granting of suffrage in 1944, French women began to participate in politics, as well as continuing the traditional, voluntary work carried out by women. This type of activity was to have a strong influence on those women who formed the *Mouvement de Liberation des Femmes*, but it was also a radical departure from the past in many respects. This 'new' feminism shared many of the continuities with 'old' feminism, but was also influenced by the current of other political thinking in the late 1960s - in particular the events of 1968.
- 3 Staggenborg (1991: 8) delineates how, in a similar fashion to the Irish women's movement, the American women's movement in the years between the passage of suffrage and the 1960s was kept alive by its "elite sustained" structure consisting of a small, exclusive and affluent core of women activists.
- 4 This Act regulated prostitution in designated areas in Ireland (the Curragh and Cork-Queenstown). Prostitutes were liable to compulsory examination and treatment of venereal disease. Feminists objected to this on the basis that it encouraged vice and that it "did not interfere with the men involved but treated the women as commodities to be periodically cleansed and recycled as 'clean harlots for the army and navy'" (Cullen, 1985: 191).
- 5 The largest and most successful was that of the Greater London Council in 1982. However, this programme which gave over £4.5 million to women's projects was abolished in 1986 by the Conservative Government (Humm, 1992: 6).
- 6 Randall and Lovenduski state: "Such debates are recurrent features of NSM discourses, because they address the issues that are raised by the development of different kinds of activities and

priorities, by the emergence of distinct branches of a once-singular movement" (Randall and Lovenduski, 1992: 93).

- 7 Banks (1981) noted that the rise of first wave feminism is invariably associated with liberal Protestantism, suggesting that Protestantism seems to provide a suitable environment for the growth of feminist ideas. These include the notion of religious individualism, the nature of marriage and the family, and sexuality. Some radical sects within Protestantism allowed women a considerable amount of religious autonomy, particularly the Quakers which were an important source of feminist ideas and leaders. Historical evidence also suggests that certain extremist sects advocated doctrines of 'free love', which later played a role in feminist history (Banks, 1981: 4).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

A central research problematic at the outset of this study was that written and/or oral data, which encompasses the contemporary women's movement in Ireland, did not exist. The research methodology was designed to record this data systematically and interpret it (on the basis of the lived experiences of the participants themselves) from a social movements perspective. The methods used to assemble information are determined in part by ease of access and whether the study is accepted by the subjects. Unstructured interviews with key informants and analysis of the archives of the contemporary women's movement and other documents (which included personal documents, information in administrative records, and analysis of documents relating to significant events within the research period) are central to this type of case study research.¹

Qualitative research encompasses to approaches which employ methods of data collection and analysis that are non-quantitative, are aimed towards exploration of social relations and describe reality as experienced by the respondents (Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Sarantakos, 1993; Robson, 1993). Qualitative research permits the researcher to get first hand knowledge of the 'world' in question - to get close to it, and to develop one's approach and analysis *from it* (see Hayes, 1990). Qualitative research generally involves a small number of cases, often chosen by means of non-probability sampling procedures. The logic of theory in qualitative research is inductive and the direction of theory building begins from reality. Data generation, analysis and theory verification take place concurrently. The research begins with orienting, sensitising or flexible concepts and analytic or exemplar generalisations are formed.

The qualitative methodology employed in the present study was informed primarily by existing empirical orientations in the field of social movements and feminist research methods.

1. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS IN THE FIELD

The classical tradition in the field of social movements research included such a plethora of collectivities in the category 'social movement,' no typological unanimity emerged (Mayer, 1991: 77). The field consisted primarily of literature reviews, typologies and case studies of noteworthy forms of collective behaviour. Few systematic studies and even fewer comparative analyses were undertaken.

Mayer (1991) provides a useful review of empirical studies in the field. New dimensions to the study of social protest emerged in the 1960s. More thorough case studies of pedestrian forms of collective behaviour were undertaken (Lipsky, 1968; Gerlach and Hine, 1970). In addition, quantitative research was undertaken in the form of survey data (Sears, 1969 research on black attitudes in Mayer, 1992: 77); ecological analyses of the correlates of mass disturbances (Gurr, 1970; Spilerman, 1970); and historical reconstruction of collective action (Tilly, Tilly, Tilly, 1975; Tilly, 1978). Trend analysis was later adopted which used multiple regression combined with cross-sectional analysis on trend data from survey research archives.

Tarrow (1983) pointed out that much of this quantitative research is not directly relevant in the study of social movements "since the aggregate data merely record incidents of collective action without implying any necessary organisational or group presence in such behaviour" (Mayer, 1991: 77). Tilly (1985) acknowledges that a further problem is that frequently records come from courts, police departments or other State agencies. Attitudinal data derived from methods focusing on the individual

remain distant from a research object consisting of mobilised networks and collectivities.

Tilly (1978) and Gamson (1975) analysed written documents to develop more systematic and semi-quantitative indicators and data banks on collective mobilisation. The major studies within the resource mobilisation approach includes Tilly's (1975) work on protest, riots and social movements in Europe since the eighteenth century; studies of contemporary movements such as civil rights and women's movements (Freeman, 1975; 1979; McAdam, 1982); analyses of the relevance of organisation in social movements (Gamson, 1975; Piven and Cloward, 1977; Goldstone, 1980); work on the importance of conscience constituencies and sympathetic elites (in the political institution and the mass media) in the career of social movements (Lipsky, 1968; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; Molotch, 1979; Gitlin, 1987); studies on the relationship between political opportunity structures and social movements (Piven and Cloward, 1977); analyses of counter movements and repression (Staggenborg, 1991); and analyses of the composition and change of national movement sectors (Tilly, 1975).

Resource mobilisation theorists generally engage in in-depth process analysis of particular movements in preference to quantitative analysis. Most of this work reconstructs a mobilisation process in great detail and presents it in the form of a case study or narrative on the developments of movements in a given setting, with the intention of arriving at generic statements which serve to explain and predict radically different movements.

Gamson (1975) collected information on an unbiased sample of all relevant collectivities in the US from 1800 to 1945. He read a variety of historical accounts to generate a list of protest groups, to sample from that list, to exclude groups which did not meet his operational definition of a

challenging group and to use the accounts for information on group characteristics (such as size, goals, organisation, involvement in violence) and on the outcome of the political challenge. Tarrow (1983) gathered a large sample of systematic information from public records (using a single newspaper) and coded the articles on protest events. Jenkins (1985) employed research assistants to conduct a content analysis of *New York Times* entries after identifying relevant headings in the index under which movement actions are reported. They then scanned for movement actions, content coding these for type of action, type of acting unit and major issues.

According to Mayer (1991), problems arise from the fact that the *New York Times*, for example, tends to de-emphasise populist politics and civil disobedience. Other resource mobilisation theorists showed that the use of such secondary sources does not provide data on most resources and not at regular enough intervals, and suggested therefore reliance on internally generated data sources of the groups studied (and on newspapers which Jenkins and Tarrow, for example, also used). This strategy (also used by Snyder and Kelly) requires 'samples of convenience' (i.e. choosing groups for which the appropriate information exists over a long time span).

These difficulties are avoided in analyses based on *primary* data. Morris (1984) collected data from archives *and* in-depth interviews with grass roots leadership in the civil rights Movement. Ladd et al. (1984) used questionnaire survey data from demonstrators combined with a thematic review of the anti-nuclear literature. Snow et al. (1980) gathered data on the American peace movement by extensive ethnographic participation in local and regional peace movement activities. In order to explore the signifying work of social movements, the researchers were involved in ongoing encounters with movement members and they conducted formal

and informal interviews with local participants, local and national activists and also analysed movement-generated documents and periodicals. McAdam (1988), although not analysing an ongoing movement, accessed information in a systematic manner. For his case study of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom summer project he analysed archival data (the 1,068 completed application forms of participants, rejects and withdrawals) to assess the relative importance of various factors in recruitment to activism. He found, for instance, that the motivations for participation did not differ significantly for withdrawals and participants, but that integration into a variety of micro mobilisation contexts did differ.²

Many scholars within the resource mobilisation perspective are not merely 'detached observers' (Mayer, 1991: 80), since they frequently come from the movements they analyse (in the case of the women's movement, see especially Freeman, 1975; Ryan, 1992; and Staggenborg, 1991). I came to this research through my own observations and experiences of the women's movement and feminist campaigns and involvement in the fields of community groups, women's studies and adult education.

2. THE STUDY: SOURCES OF DATA

Previous studies of women's movements have been primarily descriptive, focusing on the differences between groups. Given the aim of this study, to examine how change in a broad-based, interactive movement came about, data was gathered on groups and activists that represented a broad spectrum of organisations that have consistently transformed since the 1970s. A broad historical view with an analytical framework drawn from the theory of social movements is employed. The research methods conducted were primary and secondary literature review and intensive interviews. The interactive and transformative relationship of feminist

groups to each other, and to processes of social change within the larger society, are edified.

Intensive Interviews

Intensive interviews with feminist activists provided the major source of data for this study. These interviews furnish information on current mobilisation ideology and actions from the perspective of participants involved at each stage of the movement's transformation. The structure of the interview was open-ended, flexible and informal. The purpose was to gain factual information and experiential insights from varied perspectives. Intensive interviews are considered long-lasting, discussion-based and interviewer guided. As qualitative interviews, they are based on the principles of the underlying methodology, with an emphasis on the everyday-life world of the respondent and interpretative natures of reality. The interviewer works towards maintaining and reinforcing the principle of openness.

An interview guide acted as a broad, flexible guideline in the course of the interview. There were no specific questions stated on the interview guide, just headings of subject areas to be discussed, which allowed for the interview to be primarily *flexible* - that is, the qualitative researcher follows the course that emerges through the interview.

Qualitative interviews do not use a strictly standardised approach (Sarantakos, 1993; Robson, 1993). They employ a readiness to change, to correct and adjust the course of study as required by the research. Interviewers engage in an open discussion with the respondent, and are expected to maintain a passive and stimulating, but not dominant, role. Findings emerge through the study and are interpreted during the process of interviewing. According to Sarantakos (1993), qualitative interviewing is a demanding and time consuming task which requires important and

difficult demands, including the development of trust and collegiality between interviewer and respondent. A high competence on the part of the researcher is required, including the ability to use listening and empathy as significant tools of interaction. A degree of commitment on the part of the respondent and their interest in the relationship and discussion, combined with a high ability of the respondent to verbalise views, opinions and ideas is necessary.

The Sample

Some fifty intensive interviews were conducted with past and present activists (see appendix 4).³ The interviews generally lasted between one and two hours and were carried out in a variety of locations (including interviewees' homes, Dáil Éireann, offices, or public places). The data was recorded by tape recorder (subsequently transcribed) and by taking detailed notes during the interviews. Field notes and observations were written after each interview.

Concern for the quality and quantity of data is central to any significant sociological work. Initially I had a clear idea about who to interview and how to proceed. At the outset, four main criteria were adhered to in the interview selection:

1. Long term activism;
2. Balanced representation of the broad spectrum of organisations - autonomous and mainstream - and ideological perspectives;
3. Individuals who were leaders or prominent scholars;
3. Acknowledgement of that fact that although my respondents and data is generally Dublin based, there are very active feminist organisations operating outside of Dublin (for example, the Cork Women's Collective).

An initial group of twenty well known activists were interviewed. It was clearly feasible to continue to interview an extensive sample of prominent, well-known activists at that stage. However, some modifications were adopted subsequently. The initial group thereafter took part in a snowball sample, where they were asked to identify a number of other participants, the various SMOs these women were affiliated to and their time of involvement (see appendix 4). This led to the development of a highly extensive list of movement participants. In particular, it enabled the interview sample to be broadened beyond public profile activists and resulted in the loosening of my original selection criteria. Intensive interviews were subsequently conducted with non-aligned feminists, activists who only recently became involved in SMOs, and 'unknown' women suggested in the snowball sample. In addition, interviews were conducted with activists I discovered as part of a growing recognition that the women's movement consists of more than those organisations and individuals explicitly stating their goal as that of women's liberation.

The initial selection criteria were thus expanded to select interviewees of diverse orientations. It emerged in the research process that the sample interviewed revealed a high level of cross membership, congruent ideology and dual activism roles (Ryan, 1992 also discovered this). This finding is important later in understanding the problem in current definitions of 'types' of feminism within the women's movement.

The majority of the interviewees were middle-class, university-educated women and reside in urban areas. This feature emerged in the course of the research methodology as opposed to being a further pre-defined criterion for choosing the sample. In general, the interviewees were highly politicised, articulate and defined themselves as 'feminists.' A small minority of the sample did not explicitly describe themselves as 'feminist.' In

essence, the interviewees were an elite sub-sample of the population and selected to reflect diverse sectors within the women's movement since 1970. Activists' movement commitments encompassed work in service organisations, State agencies for women, women's studies and other disciplines, non-aligned feminism in a number of areas (in particular, community development, law and business), politics and different aspects of women's culture.

The Interview Process

The interview process employed in this study reflected the central characteristics of intensive interviews. Intensive interviewing requires extensive knowledge of the research topic and the ability to communicate effectively and establish rapport with respondents. The format of intensive interviewing is unstructured and flexible. The interviewer is expected to develop the questions as required and as best fits the particular interview situation. For this reason, the actual formulation and order of the questions generally varied from interview to interview.

Questions asked to interviewees were broadly related to ideology (personal definition of feminism and the women's movement, what ideological label they applied to themselves, how they acquired their feminist beliefs and how they changed over time) and activism (why they were members of a particular organisation/s, how the type of activists affected the goals of the women's movement and how their groups method of goal attainment had changed over time) (Ryan, 1992). Many interviewees discussed sensitive issues and intra organisational conflicts and tensions. Consequently, I use anonymous quotations in the text and state *some* organisations the informant is/was a member of, to contextualise the subject under discussion.

A questionnaire or more quantitative type method was not sufficient for the type of insight required to conceptualise the women's movement. In addition, the in-depth interview method is more congruent to interviewing women. The methodology was primarily chosen to reflect the process of transformation within the women's movement as reflected by the experiences of a sample of women who are/were core participants. The data obtained from the interviews is the empirical core of this thesis. Ryan (1992), in her study of feminism and the women's movement in the US, reiterates the importance of interviewing:

"In viewing the world through the eyes of feminist activists, the aim is to understand activism in participants' own terms in order to interpret meaning of diverse forms of feminist groups and the changes that evolve over time within and between groups." (Ryan, 1992: 4-5)

Themes and strands overlapped considerably in both the interviews and documentary analysis. This data allows for theoretical generalisations to be made in the remaining analytical chapters.⁴

Analysis of Documentary Evidence

Analysis of documents is usually referred to as secondary analysis because these documents are not primarily developed for the study in which they are used. In the course of the research, an extensive collection of movement archives was made available to me by a leading feminist activist, who has participated in a plethora of organisations and campaigns since the 1970s and has actively collected archives from wide-ranging feminist SMOs.⁵ The documents included contemporary documents (those compiled at the time the events took place) and, to a lesser extent, retrospective documents (produced after the event took place). The

diverse nature of the documents shaped the research process, according to the following stages:⁶

1. Identification of relevant documents:

all of the documents were relevant and related systematically to a multitude of SMOs, campaigns, central movement events and turning points since 1970.

2. Organisation and analysis of the documents:

because the research process was qualitative, reading and note taking was sufficient. The documents were, however, filed chronologically and thematically for this purpose.

3. Evaluation of the information:

The data was recorded in accordance with the themes identified in the interview process (which frame the themes/concepts for analysis in the study) and complemented the degree to which the findings of the interview data were valid.

Documentary methods thus enhance a researcher's ability to study past events and issues in social movement research. In the present study, this is particularly the case in view of the high quality of documents researched. However, generally documents are not reliable as the only source of information.

The movement archives included banners, posters, leaflets, flyers, letters, workshop reports, annual reports, minutes, internal memos, financial documents, reports, newsletters, position papers and feminist networking publications. A limited collection of feminist publications/literature from the women's movements in Northern Ireland, the US and England was also included. As the research progressed informants provided additional archival documents and I collected more from attending a variety of movement events between 1993 and 1997. The movement archives

encompassed the substantial majority of SMOs (some unknown) which have evolved within the Irish women's movement since 1970, and some suffrage material. For example, the material included, the first 'Reclaim the Night' banner and flyer circulated at an extensive march through the streets of Dublin in 1978, along with the newspaper articles in the main Irish newspapers surrounding the event; IWU posters, flyers, position papers, minutes, internal memos and the entire collection of *Banshee*, IWU's publication; a collection of radical publications/journals including, *Wicca*, *Belljar* (Trinity Women's Liberation Group), *Women's News*, *Bread and Roses* (UCD Women's Liberation Group), the *Fownes Street Journal*, the *Irish Housewife*, *Forum*, *Rebel*, *Wimmin*, *Ms. Chief*, and *Spare Rib* (British feminist magazine officially banned in Ireland); documents (organisational correspondence/legal letters, newspaper articles) concerning the campaign for a unified social welfare code in 1985; the advertisement of the first Commission on the Status of Women, inviting submissions from the public (see appendix 5 for a detailed list of archives consulted). The documents were analysed for similarities and differences between groups; changes over time in definitions of problems/solutions; and the use of ideology for creating meaning in issues and actions. They were categorised thematically and chronologically as follows (see appendix 5):

- Information in organisational administration records:
letters, minutes of meetings, position papers.
- Campaign literature:
posters, pamphlets, flyers, banners around a plethora of feminist campaigns.
- Feminist Magazines/Publications
- Reports/Periodicals/Internal Documents of Service Organisations:

for example, the Rape Crisis Centre; Women's Aid; AIM; Adapt; Cherish.

- Advertisements for women's services/campaigns:
for example, abortion information, family planning information, the CAP (Contraceptive Action Programme).
- Newspaper articles:
an extensive collection of reports on movement events, campaigns, court cases etc. between 1970 and the present (see Bibliography).
- Special feature editions of magazines/publications on feminism:
including *In Dublin* and *Magill*.
- Legal documentation concerning court cases.
- Conference Material
- Personal documents:
including letters, notes, writing.

These archives were analysed extensively and are integrated into each stage of the analysis.

The following table constitutes SMOs *within* the women's movement encountered through this research process:

Organisations: The Irish Women's Movement

IWLM, IWU, Rape Crisis Centre, Well Woman Centre, Women Against Violence Against Women, Women's Aid, Trade Union Women's Groups, Campaign to Repeal the Social Welfare Code, Women's Right to Choose, Campaign for Women's Centre, IFI (Irish Feminist Information), Attic Press, IHA, National Association of Widows, Association of Business and Professional Women, AIM, WPA, UCD Women's Studies Forum, Forum, WICCA, CAP, Women's News Collective, WERRC, Women's Studies Centre UCG, Trinity Women's Group, UCD Women's Group, IFPA, CSW/National Women's Council, Women's Aid, WIN, Open Door/Line Counselling, Repeal the 8th Amendment Campaign, ICA, Marie McMahon Release Campaign, LOT, Christian Feminist Movement, Basic, Clár na mBan, Waterford Women's Network, International Alliance of Women, Irish Federation of University Women, Ms. Chief.

Diverse SMOs sustained but transformed completely between 1970 and the present, were short-lived, or no longer exist. In addition, the women's movement coalesced with external organisations, which were also encountered in the research, such as the ICCL (Irish Council for Civil Liberties), EEA (Employment Equality Agency), Planned Parenthood, Revolutionary Marxist Group, Divorce Action Group and political parties (see appendix 5).

Inter-method triangulation (intensive interviewing and documentary analysis) was employed to obtain a variety of information on the same issue; to use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other; to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability of findings; and to overcome the deficiencies posed by a single-method study. From a

feminist stance, Reinharz states that triangulation is thought to "express the commitment to thoroughness, the desire to be open-ended and to take risks" as well as to "increase the likelihood of obtaining scientific credibility and research utility" (Reinharz, 1992: 197).

3. FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS

The methodologies favoured by a growing number of feminist authors in recent years (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Ryan, 1992; Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984; Lentin, 1993) provide a radical critique of mainstream sociology. The methodology underpinning this study was fashioned by the task of applying a theoretical framework of social movements to an Irish case study, in a heuristic fashion. The research subjects were all women. While acknowledging that the study is not framed entirely within feminist theory *per se*, the research aimed to make analytical generalisations based on the lived experiences of the women themselves. In addition, as stated above, the methodology was chosen because it was more conducive to researching women's lives. In view of this, a fundamental theoretical issue arises in relation to how the study impinges on the debate surrounding the nature of feminist research.

Proposals for feminist research methods have been directed to the elimination of unconscious sexist bias in research. Feminist research has broadly speaking been directed to the replacement of objective structured interviews and quantitative analysis by more reflexive and interactive unstructured interviews, and a sociological method that is said to allow the subjects to speak for themselves. In this respect, the present study *is* informed by a feminist epistemological stance.

However, the question about what constitutes feminist research has been answered by feminist sociologists in diverse ways. Following Reinharz (1992: 6), feminist research methods are used (1) in research

projects by people identifying themselves as feminists or as part of the women's movement; (2) in research published in journals that publish only feminist research or in books that identify themselves as such; and (3) in research that has received awards from organisations that give awards to people who do feminist research.⁷ Reinharz (1992) argues that feminist research involves an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship, is guided by feminist theory, may be transdisciplinary, aims to create social change, strives to represent human diversity, includes the researcher as a person, frequently attempts to develop social relationships with the people studied and, finally, frequently defines a special relationship with the reader.

In terms of epistemology, one view is that striving after objectivity, truth and control over nature is a masculine urge - women are thought to make less of a distinction between knower and known, self and other, mind and body, subject and object, and to be more tolerant of ambiguity and multiple truths (Marshall, 1994: 327). Alternatively, the feminist standpoint suggests that women as a subordinated group are in a better position to arrive at an adequate representation of social reality than men who are caught up in their project of control. This epistemological advantage is not necessarily reflected in women's actual beliefs and attitudes but requires a feminist political effort and analysis. It leads towards an understanding of society which incorporates issues such as, women's' reproduction and sexuality - the concrete realities of women's everyday existence - rather than working with abstract notions of isolated individuals making rational choices. The standpoint position sees feminism as being capable of getting a truer picture of reality than masculinist science. In terms of ontology it is a reality position.⁸

These principles are taken into account in the actual practice of sociological research by feminist scholars. Stanley and Wise (1993), for instance, state that mechanistic ascriptions for research are misleading and

simplistic. The emergent aspect of the research process is characterised by "personal idiosyncrasies" and "confusions" which are "at the heart of it" (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 150). Stanley and Wise emphasise the importance of placing the "personal within research" and argue that the presence of the researcher cannot be denied:

"Because of this we must devise research of a kind which can utilise this presence rather than pretend it does not happen" (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 150).

Conventional ideas about research omit the personal.⁹ A more realistic account of research is 'research as it is experienced' as opposed to 'research as it is described'. Stanley and Wise further suggest that involving emotions gives the opportunity for a radical critique of sociology and other social sciences by including women's perspectives on and in social reality:

"One's self cannot be left behind, it can only be omitted from discussions and written accounts. But it is an omission, a failure to discuss something which has been present within the research itself." (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 152)

Oakley is primarily concerned with the gap between the theory and practice of interviewing:

"This lack of fit between the theory and practice of interviewing is especially likely to come to the fore when a feminist interviewer is interviewing women (who may or may not be a feminist)." (Oakley, 1981: 31).

Ronit Lentin's (1993) overview of feminist methodologies and assessment of feminist research in Ireland raises a number of important challenges to this study. While this study allowed the dominant themes and generalisations to emerge from the lived experiences of the women who participated in the women's movement between 1970 and the present,

an established theoretical framework (resource mobilisation) was adopted from the outset and applied to the case study. Lentin presents a series of definitions as to what constitutes feminist methodologies and research.

Lentin's axial point is that feminist methodologies should be primarily reflexive and, furthermore, remain a *separate paradigm*. The views on the latter are diverging (Clegg, 1985; DuBois, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Lentin outlines how feminist methodologies form a separate paradigm because they are committed to women's lived experiences; gender relations are viewed as social constructions; reflexivity and the inclusion of the researcher and her relations with the women she is researching in all stages of data production is essential; and the emancipation of women is central (Lentin, 1993: 135-6). It is envisaged that if Irish feminist sociologists incorporate these principles into the research process, it will contribute to greater visibility of Irish women which assists emancipation and narrows the gap between academics and 'ordinary' women.

In contrast, Mahon (1994) provides a critique of Lentin's conceptualisation of feminist research:

1. It is not confined to women in the sense that men can also conduct feminist research provided they take *feminist theory* into account;
2. It focuses on women's lives but need not do so exclusively. Feminist research and publication has in effect changed and formed substantive theory in a whole range of sociological fields: work; family; class. These are quite simply major theoretical developments in substantive areas.

In effect, Mahon contends that sociology has been enriched and transformed by feminist contributions. Feminist research does not simply make women's lives visible - "one is depicting social processes by which

their lives are constructed and reproduced in a way which has generally led to their oppression or unequal treatment in society" (Mahon, 1994: 166).

The most revealing method for this study was in-depth interviewing, and the research findings *are* reflective of the lived experiences of the women themselves who are/were participants in the women's movement in Ireland since 1970. The methodology was essentially qualitative and the case study was framed by a theoretical paradigm. In other words, it was not a 'feminist' study in congruence with Lentin's definition of feminist research as a separate paradigm (Lentin, 1993). In addition, while empathising with the respondents, I did not aim to 'emancipate' the interviewees or place myself in the writing up of the analysis. This does not deny the importance of reflexivity and empathy in the interview process - which I argue produces a higher quality of data concerning women than is traditional in social science. Total identification with each interviewee was not achieved, as Lentin advocates. In agreement with Mahon (1994), "...I would question whether reflexivity must be written about explicitly or whether it is an almost inevitable aspect of competent research" (Mahon, 1994: 168).

As a sociologist, I was informed by a feminist epistemological stance in interviewing feminist activists, which takes into account the concrete reality of women's experiences (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 88). This was combined with documentary analysis and theoretical analysis from a social movements perspective. The aim of the combination of methodologies was fundamentally to produce a competent sociological study, which at the same time makes visible the lived experiences of feminist activists. This data provides a tool to redress the prevailing inaccuracies surrounding the women's movement in Irish academe in the following analysis.

Notes Chapter Three:

- 1 During the course of the research, the archives of the contemporary women's movement were made fully available to me. These archives have since been deposited to the National Archives, but have not been accessed or analysed by any other social researcher to date.
- 2 In assessing the importance of three different micro-mobilisation contexts, McAdam (1988) looked at them separately in terms of how well they differentiate Freedom summer participants from withdrawals. The effects of all three were measured simultaneously by means of a regression equation predicting participation and computing an interpersonal contact score for each participant. He found a strong positive relation between participation and the weighted sum of an applicant's interpersonal ties. From this McAdam could conclude that both the nature and the greater number of interpersonal ties enjoyed by the participants had a significant effect on their decision to go to Mississippi. He also conducted over 80 in-depth interviews as a follow-up study.
- 3 One group of interviewees requested that the interview be conducted collectively (the Ballymun Women's Group).
- 4 Recent examples of this type of empirical work in Ireland includes O'Carroll's (1992) research on Irish Women and Irish Work, Hayes' study of three community groups, *Working for Change: A study of three community groups* (1990) and O'Neill's account of working class women's lives, *Telling it like it is* (1992).
- 5 R. Conroy's archive.
- 6 Note: the documents were stored in a number of boxes and were not formally catalogued.
- 7 Nielsen (1990: 6) alternatively describes feminist research as being "contextual, inclusive, experiential, involved, socially relevant, multi-dimethodological, complete but not necessarily replicable, open to the environment and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced."
- 8 In this respect it is different from feminist post-modernism which is sceptical about all claims to scientific objectivity, sees all knowledge as being produced in specific historical and local situations and recognises important differences among women (of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation) as well as between men and women.
- 9 They criticise the positivist and naturalist methods on the basis that such methods don't: "...describe what happened, when it happened, how it happened and how people feel about it. Instead, research reports within both these models utilise abstractions from reality organised and presented within a pre-chosen framework. This framework organises material for us, the readers, in a 'logico-temporal' manner. We aren't given information about the temporal occurrence of events, but a form based upon the logical development of theory and argument" (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 152).

Chapter 4

Abeyance Organisations: Growth, Maintenance and Decline of a Social Movement

Introduction

"The new women's movement that arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s in most Western countries was not the first feminist movement in history. The term 'second-wave feminism' has been attached to the new movement to indicate that we are witnessing the second peak of a movement that has existed for more than 100 years, ever since the second half of the nineteenth century." (Dahlerup, 1986: 2)

The resurgence of the women's movement in the early 1970s is intrinsically related to the activities of SMOs in the middle years of this century, at a time when feminism operated in an inhospitable political and social environment. The women's movement has been persistently active as a social movement since at least the 1870s in Irish society (Cullen-Owens, 1984; Ward, 1989; Cullen, 1985). A theoretically accurate sociological account of the women's movement is one which *links* activity over this period as opposed to dealing exclusively with peak periods of activism in isolation. The task here is to trace the conceptual roots of the contemporary phase of the women's movement in previous waves of activism.

This chapter aims to demonstrate how social movement dynamics between 1922-1969 were a necessary precondition for the mass mobilisation which occurred from 1970 onwards, and influenced the shape of feminist protest in later peak phases. The small, elite sustained women's movement between 1922-1969 (1) was constrained by the patriarchal and conservative agenda of the newly emerging State; (2) adapted its structures, networks and repertoire of strategies to maintain its individual organisations in the context of the prevailing social and political climate as opposed to mobilising a mass-based social movement; and (3) maintained a network of SMOs which were capable of contributing to the movement's resurgence by 1970.

There is little published work which conceptualises movements in decline phases. Hilda Tweedy states, in her social history of the IHA:¹

"One of the objects of writing the story...is to make people aware of the link with the feminist movement of the past. So many people believe that the women's movement was born on some mystical date in 1970, like Aphrodite rising from the waves. It has been a long continuous battle in which many women have struggled to gain equality, each generation adding something to the achievements of the past." (Tweedy, 1992: 111)

Existing literature which attempts to conceptualise women's movements tends to relate the '*formation*' of the contemporary women's movement to other social movements, such as the Civil Rights and New Left movements (Andersen, 1993: 282-285). This approach ignores the roots of women's discontent which led to the movement's *resurgence* and fails to recognise the conceptual importance of groundwork accomplished by abeyance organisations. In addition, past efforts to promote change in the political-legal arena have frequently been ignored or disregarded as conservative forms of activism.

The task of redressing the prevailing, inaccurate theoretical reasons cited for the resurgence of the women's movement in 1970 is undertaken in this chapter by utilising an abeyance model of SMOs and processes. Taylor's (1989) model (see Chapter One), which is grounded in original data encompassing the women's movement in the US from 1945 to 1960, challenges the received view that the contemporary women's movement emerged out of 'nowhere' or primarily out of the other social movements already mobilised in the 1960s. This model challenges the misconceptions which arise in relation to the Irish movement's resurgence in 1970. How unsuccessful women's rights activism was during the period of abeyance in comparison with post-1970 is not the central question. It is, rather, what consequences did the actions of feminists in this period have for the resurging movement in the early 1970s? The analysis focuses on the

development of particular SMOs in this period (Gamson, 1975; see Chapter One). The central contention that the activities of those SMOs which mobilised between 1922-1969 are pivotal to explaining the second peak wave of mobilisation in 1970, challenges orthodox assertions that overarching social processes, such as modernisation, explain the wave of social movements in this epoch.

When the contemporary wave of the women's movement mobilised in the early 1970s, it was "just a brave tiny army" (Staggenborg, 1991: 13). There were no national organisations with professional staff advocating women's rights initially. Nevertheless an expanded social movement did form organically and spread from 1970 onwards.² Upon close examination of empirical data, it is clear that the roots of this resurgence can be traced in the two previous waves of activism - the first wave (1870-1921) and period of abeyance (1922-1969). Conceptualising social movements dynamics in periods of decline illuminates the processes of continuity which were reflected in the interview data itself. Some of those interviewees who are activists in this wave of the movement were in fact also active in the abeyance phase denoted, or represent those SMOs that were pivotal in these middle years (in particular, Hilda Tweedy, IHA; Doris Molloy, Business and Professional Women's Association; May O'Brien, trade unions; and Eileen Proctor, National Association of Widows). All previous accounts of the women's movement have not dealt with this crucial aspect of the movement conceptually.

The Social and Economic Context 1922-1969

Between 1922 and 1969 political and social factors in Irish society were not propitious to feminist activism. O'Dowd (1987: 3) reiterates that there is considerable agreement among modern historians and feminists that women's role in politics and public life diminished in the aftermath of

partition. Qualitative data about the Irish women's movement in the post-independence period (1922-69) is piecemeal (Tweedy, 1992; Coulter, 1993). It is clear that the social and political climate mitigated against the widespread mobilisation of the women's movement and it is widely assumed that it 'disappeared' in this period. However, there *was* clearly a women's movement still in existence, which was structurally and ideologically connected to the first wave, and in a state of abeyance. Between independence and the 1940s, the abeyance women's movement was dominated by three distinct branches (see Chapter Two):

1. Women in trade unions;
2. Women in politics;
3. Reformist Women's organisations with links to the suffrage and nationalist era (including the ICA and the Women's Suffrage Association/later the IHA).

Following the Civil War, the numbers involved in organisations such as Cumann na mBan were diminutive (see appendix 2). Few women took leading positions in the emerging parties of the Free State (for example, Kathleen Clarke and Jenny Wyse-Power were the only two women who campaigned persistently for women's rights in the Senate). As stated in Chapter Two, the Cumann na nGhaedhael Government, the first government of the Irish Free State, introduced legislation which restricted the rights of women on a number of levels. A small number of women remained active in women's organisations or in the labour movement (such as Helena Maloney and Nora Connolly O'Brien). The Irish Women's Citizens Association persisted and the ICA remained active during this period.³ However, in general, the social context of the time impeded women's involvement in public life. The intensified patriarchal nature of

Irish society after 1922 and the institutional arrangements which oppressed women had a profound effect on Irish feminism:

"...politically active women of the early twentieth century came out of a pre-existing tradition of women's involvement in nationalist struggle...this offered them scope for a wider range of activities in public life than that experienced by their sisters in imperialist countries, and... all this was then closed off to them by the newly formed patriarchal state, modelled essentially on its colonial predecessor." (Coulter, 1993: 3)

The maintenance of a core inter movement network mobilised resources in a hostile political environment to feminism and "kept alive" a women's rights agenda which was crucial to sustaining the women's movement - albeit on a diminutive scale. This point is demonstrated through an examination of the dynamics specifically within the IHA, as an abeyance organisation.⁴

Margaret MacCurtain aptly coins the socio-political climate in the 1940s, in the wake of the enshrinement of a particularly narrow aspiration of women's role in the Constitution:

"The Irish Free State had by then become a state where gendered political forces had limited women's access to political and economic power. It was a critical time for the citizens of the Irish Free State. Removed from the theatre of the European war by its constitutional stand on neutrality, the state paid the price in scarcity of money, food and fuel. There was stark poverty in many households and the spectre of tuberculosis struck with deadly effect at families. Children suffered woeful malnutrition with little hope of medical alleviation." (MacCurtain in Tweedy, 1992: 7)

The IHA (Irish Housewives Association) mobilised in reaction to these social issues in 1942. The constrained political work that traditional women's groups *did* carry out (including the ICA and IHA) in the middle years, 1922-1969, was a necessary precondition for the resurgence of the women's movement in 1970. Apart from structural influences which facilitated widespread mobilisation in 1970, inter movement processes between 1922-1969 were creating the necessary networks and repertoire

of strategies which were pivotal to later resurgence and advancement. Mobilisation dynamics within the IHA and the networks garnered with other SMOs are analysed. The reasons for this is are firstly, the IHA is directly linked to the Suffrage movement of the earlier part of the century. Secondly, empirical data was most accessible for the IHA. Thirdly, it is contended that the IHA was a pivotal organisation in the resource mobilisation process which precipitated the resurgence and advancement of the contemporary women's movement in 1970.

1. ABEYANCE: THE CASE OF THE IHA

The original aim of the IHA was: "To unite housewives, so that they may realise, and gain recognition for, their right to play an active part in all spheres of planning for the Community."(5) The organisational structure and membership of the IHA linked the first and second peak waves of feminist activism in Ireland. Similar to the Suffrage campaign and the IWWU, for example, the IHA was consolidated by a network of middle-class, educated, Protestant women:

"At first the IHA was built up by word of mouth. Members invited small groups of friends to their homes, members of the committee spoke to them about the work of the IHA and so, people joined..."
(Member IHA, *ad hoc* committee, CSW)⁶

Hilda Tweedy, founder member and author of the organisation's social history, and a small circle of like-minded women formed the organisation in 1941 with a view to drawing up a petition in response to their outrage at the level of food shortages and family poverty during the 'Emergency.' The IHA initially formed independently of the remaining suffrage-linked groups and consolidated in reaction to adverse social conditions:

"Each person that was there took a petition and got people to sign it, and it sort of snowballed. The idea was that they tried to get a small group together and get them to sign it...It was a great idea."
(Member IHA, *ad hoc* committee, CSW)

Subsequently dubbed the 'housewives petition' the organisation demanded fair prices for producer and consumer and equitable distribution of food and goods. They sent a copy of the petition to each member of the Dáil before Budget Day and government rationing and a book of coupons were subsequently introduced. The organisation's remit quickly expanded beyond the concerns of the housewife:

"At first it was more consumer oriented, but very soon we discovered we needed women in where the decisions were made, so that gave us some more 'feminist push.'"
(Member IHA, *ad hoc* committee, CSW)

A feminist consciousness and mobilising style within the organisation resulted from the absorption of the retreating suffrage network that survived into the 1940s.⁷ *Feminist* ideas were clearly incorporated by the leadership of the IHA in this period (Tweedy, 1992). However, broader acceptance within the organisation and concerted mobilisation around feminist ideas were significantly constrained by internal factors related to the collective identity of the group. Quite clearly a significant number of members did not publicly align their activism to a feminist ideology.

There were few groups still in existence since the first wave of the women's movement in the early part of the century and in particular nationalist feminists were acutely marginalised in public life:

"A group called the Irish Women's Citizens were originally a suffrage group looking for votes for women - when they got the vote in 1922, they tried to show women how to use the vote. We got established in the forties when they were a dwindling group."
(Member IHA, *ad hoc* committee, CSW)

A direct organisational link and process of movement continuity was forged between the IHA and the suffrage movement. Susan Manning of the Irish Women's Citizen Association and Louie Bennett of the IWWU were two of the four convenors of the IHA in 1942, along with Hilda Tweedy and Andree Sheehy Skeffington. For instance, Lucy Kingston (née Lawrensen), who assisted the IHA in its formative years, had been a member of the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation, the Irish Women's Reform League, Irish Women's Franchise League, and Irish Women's International League (which later became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) from 1912 onwards. In 1949 the IHA merged with the Irish Women's Citizen Association, linking with the older Suffrage Society of 1874 which in 1915 became the Suffrage and Local Government Association. The implications of this link were far-reaching and transformed the collective identity of the IHA:

"Then the Women's Citizens asked if they may be incorporated in 1949 and they brought a new dimension with them because they were affiliated to the International Alliance of Women. We took over their affiliation and their group who were all well known - people like Rose Jacob, Louie Bennett, Susan Manning, Rosalie Mills, Ella Mills and Lucy Kingston. All these people joined and they were of course much more feminist than we would have been at this time." (Member IHA, ad hoc committee, CSW)

The IHA assimilated a network of long-time, highly committed feminist activists. Crucially, it forged a pre-existing link with the international women's movement, through membership of the IAW (International Alliance of Women), which was a crucial resource in the contemporary wave.⁸ Between 1946 and 1986 Hilda Tweedy, along with other members, represented the IHA at IAW congresses and recognised the long-term strategic importance of networking with international organisations. She became an important and active member of the executive (the IAW congress was held in Dublin in the early 1960s). A central point is that the

IHA, which mobilised during a period of abeyance, maintained direct continuity between the first wave suffrage movement in Ireland which peaked in the early 1900s, and retreated after 1922, and the second wave of the women's movement, which mobilised internationally in the late 1960s. Although the feminist constituency was limited, the level of commitment was intense. An organisational link with the suffrage branch of the first wave of the women's movement was important symbolically and synthesised a sustainable collective identity:⁹

"The IHA is proud to trace its connection with the Irish Women Citizens Association and through them to the Irish Women's Suffrage Society and the Women's League for Suffrage and Local Government, and to be the link between them and the Council for the Status of Women and the present women's movement. In this way we have played our part." (Tweedy, 1992: 112)

The interactive networks developed with other SMOs within the women's movement included coalition work with the Irish Women Workers Union through Louie Bennett (as a result women gained recognition from the Trade Union Congress) and affiliation to the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers, formed in 1931 to campaign on issues dealing with social policy and legislation. The ICA (Irish Countrywomen's Association) was a very important abeyance organisation in this period:

"At the time the IHA was founded there was no other organisation dealing with consumerism and the status of women in the way we did. The Irish Countrywomen's Association, with whom we have always had close and friendly relations, came nearest." (Tweedy, 1992: 112)

The membership of the IHA, though not the focus of its political actions, remained predominantly middle class:

"One of our troubles had always been we weren't attracting the working class - although we did go out to the housing districts and hold meetings and so on. But we didn't seem to catch them and we

got the reputation of being a middle class group. That arose from the original snowball effect because you went home and asked your friends and it was more or less the same group being repeated over and over again." (Member IHA, ad hoc committee, CSW)

The segmentary, decentralised pattern of recruitment and mobilisation highlights the organic nature typical of the women's movement, which reflected a repertoire of recruitment strategies mobilised in later rounds of collective action (Tilly, 1979). The decline in the total membership and size of the women's movement resulted in the component SMOs tactically adapting to the inhospitable political and social environment:

"We were never a large organisation. At our biggest I don't know if we ever reached the 1,500, probably 1,000 odd. But, we had something to contend with...If you were one step ahead with public thinking at the time you were a communist. And we got branded on occasions just by making a suggestion and often lost a branch overnight." (Member IHA, ad hoc committee, CSW)

Mobilising strategies were purposefully activated to ensure movement survival:

"Conscious of the dual role of women in the mid-century they presented to the public the solid frontage of the Irish housewife; strategically they instructed their members on how to negotiate the complex maze of the Irish party machinery." (Tweedy, 1992: 8)

The case of the IHA reveals that, with the unifying issue of suffrage dissipated, the women's movement in Ireland fragmented. The committed cadre of activists in the Irish Women's Suffrage Association emphasised that women should not be complacent because they had received the vote and continued to mobilise, which ensured movement continuity in this period. This supports the contention that it is a radical, autonomous cadre of activists that sustains a movement in the long term and are integral to creating the necessary preconditions for broader mobilisation in peak waves. Carden (1979) suggests that because radical activists engage in

high-risk activism and the movement is a central part of their life, they are characterised by sustained participation, even in periods of decline in a broader social movement.

Repertoire of Collective Action

The IHA inherited the goals and tactical choices that this small network of radical women, who emerged from *suffrage* organisations primarily, had developed to sustain the movement in the hostile post-independence climate. Tilly's (1979) hypothesis claims that the array of collective actions that a movement develops to sustain itself should influence the goals and tactics adopted by the same movement in subsequent mass mobilisations. Although the militant characteristic of suffrage organisations was abandoned in the aftermath of independence and the achievement of the vote, the abeyance movement retained a similar repertoire of tactics and goals of the first wave. Direct action on poverty and children's needs was mobilised by the IHA, for example:

"Despite rumours that it was pink the Irish Housewives Association with its energetic executive...developed a solidarity with women's organisations country-wide, forming coalitions that worked as a pressure group if an issue concerning consumer problems arose. Drawing upon remembered tactics which had been used earlier in the suffrage campaigns such as deputations to cabinet ministers, submitting evidence to Dáil committees, writing to county and city councillors as well as feeding the newspapers with their own press statements, they showed a shrewd sense of where to lean as a lobby." (MacCurtain in Tweedy, 1992: 9)

Tilly's (1979) model applied to abeyance structures reveals that movements have links with previous peak/decline phases and available repertoires of action are used again by movements and adapt accordingly to new social contexts:

"The comparison between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century patterns of contention in America and Britain provides

encouragement in its evidence that people on both sides of the Atlantic adapted *the available forms* of action to new problems as the problems came along." (Tilly, 1979: 152) (*my emphasis*)

In the US the goal of a constitutional amendment (ERA) was maintained by a small group of marginalised feminists in the NWP, in the abeyance phase. Paradoxically, by the 1970s, the ERA became a unifying goal and chief mobilising issue across the contemporary women's movement. In a similar fashion, the demands of abeyance SMOs, and in particular activists in trade unions (such as Sheila Conroy and May O'Brien) in the Irish women's movement became central mobilising issues in the 1970s (particularly equal pay and employment rights):

"Equal pay was something the unions paid lip service to. 'Congress would have passed resolutions on equal pay every year since the 1920s, but it wouldn't have been a critical issue,' says Donal Nevin, who was a research officer with ITUC and later General Secretary of ICTU. 'People didn't take it that seriously. The economic situation was such that it wasn't likely to be tackled and it wasn't until the EEC Equal Pay Directive in the 1970s that anything significant was done.' Given the culture of the times and the predominantly male membership of the unions, there was probably underlying hostility to equal pay on the grounds that it might bring down men's wages." (Heron, 1993: 134)

Existing repertoires of action can both facilitate and constrain a movement. For a movement to survive periods of relative hiatus, it must develop a battery of specialised tactics that can be carried by an activist cadre without the support of a mass base. These become part of a group's repertoire of collective action and influence the subsequent range of actions available to future challenges.

This analysis suggests how Tilly's concept of repertoires of collective action provides an insight into the ways that actions of a challenging group at a given point in time can affect the actions of a subsequent group. The forms of action available to a group are not unlimited but are restricted by

time, place and group characteristics, as in the case of the IHA. By the late 1960s the IHA's repertoire of collective action was crucial to the animation of extensive movement mobilisation that advanced throughout the 1970s. The array of collective action that a movement develops to sustain itself should influence the goals and tactics adopted by the same movement in subsequent later mobilisation.

Political Opportunity Structure

Collective identity is the shared definition of a group that derives common interest and solidarity from its members. A social movement mobilises a collective consciousness strategically in a period of abeyance:

"In an abeyance phase, a SMO uses internally oriented activities to build a structure through which it can maintain its identity, ideals and political vision. The collective identity that it constructs and maintains within a shared political community can become an important symbolic resource for subsequent mobilisation." (Taylor, 1989: 772)

Taylor reiterates that resource mobilisation theorists minimise the importance of group identity and consciousness in the rise of social movements. The non-political, autonomous organisational dynamics within the IHA mobilised internally oriented activities, which ensured the maintenance of feminist ideals, a collective identity and political vision. Inter-organisational dynamics were dominated by the persistent need to maintain cohesion in an environment hostile to feminism and the women's movement. This was achieved partly by upholding a non-political identity, which avoided the threat of internal disputes and external suppression. The development of radical discourses was impeded. For example, in 1949 a letter sent to the British Cultural Committee for Peace by the IHA was misconstrued by the press as supporting communism:

"This was a major set-back for our membership, as individual members also resigned. It indicates the fear of communism at the time and the damage which could be done to an organisation by the mere suggestion of having anything to do with such politics. Unfortunately the IHA had been branded, entirely unjustifiably, but this was used against us on more than one occasion by those who did not agree with some aspects of our work." (Tweedy, 1992: 70)

Continuous allegations of communism were particularly disruptive and the Bray and Mount Merrion branches resigned in 1949:

"These continuous allegations of communism or of communist leanings, were extremely upsetting and disruptive for our members, especially in the climate of the time. Not only did it frighten many of our members, but also their husbands who feared that their livelihoods might be affected. This led to resignations and much turmoil in the Association." (Tweedy, 1992: 71)

However, the work of the IHA persisted and during the 1950s membership was increasing, and the scope of work in consumer affairs and feminist issues expanded (see appendix 3 for a detailed social history and list of political activities).

During the abeyance phase of the women's movement, the IHA had always been strictly non-party political, and this tactic reflected the central task of ensuring group survival. Despite strategic manoeuvres by the IHA's leaders, attempts were made to discredit and demobilise the organisation. The IHA mobilised internally oriented strategies, resources and external alliances to ensure survival and organisational maintenance, as opposed to radicalising feminist goals and mobilising a national, mass-based women's movement.

2. PROPERTIES OF ABEYANCE ORGANISATIONS

The case of the IHA demonstrates how properties of abeyance organisations maintained the women's movement in this period and retained potentially dissident participants. The restraints to participation were

significant and the costs to participants were high. An abeyance organisation embodies the following properties (Taylor, 1989), which apply to the case in question:

1. high longevity of attachment;
2. intense levels of individual commitment to its goals and tactics;
3. high exclusiveness in terms of membership;
4. high centralisation that ensures a relatively advanced level of specialised skills among core activists;
5. a rich political culture that promotes continued involvement in a movement.

The length of time that a movement organisation is able to hold personnel is crucial. It is clear that the high risk, militant activism of some activists during the first wave of the Irish women's movement stimulated activism after the Civil War. Involvement in suffrage, nationalist, labour rights and cultural SMOs had an enduring effect on a core cadre of participants who continued to be active in organisations such as the IWWU, Cumann na mBan (until the 1930s), the Women's Prisoners Dependants League, the Women's Social and Progressive League, the Suffrage and Local Government Association, the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers (formed in 1931), the ICA, and the IHA in the 1940s. During the 1940s there was in fact a short cycle of broad-based resurgence in the women's movement. In 1941, the same year the IHA petitioned the government for improved distribution of food, Helen Chevenix of the IWWU was pushing the management of Dublin's laundries to have their premises disinfected once a month, and to provide cooking facilities, cloakrooms and bicycle sheds for their workers (Heron, 1993: 20).

In 1938 the Women's Social and Progressive League had distributed an *Open Letter to Women Voters of Ireland*:

"The Women's Social and Progressive League asks you to consider carefully the following facts and to reassure yourself before casting your vote for any candidate as to his or her attitude on matters vitally concerning the position of women. Do not accept platitudes. Under the Constitution our position has deteriorated and is further menaced by the implications of Clauses 40, 41 and 45." (Women's Social and Progressive League: *Open Letter to Women Voters of Ireland*, 1938, leaflet. National Library of Ireland in Ward, 1995: 167)

This *open letter* highlighted issues which in fact became central mobilising issues in the 1970s, including the disadvantages of women workers; the marriage bar on primary women teachers, and the compulsory retirement age of 60 which deprived women of their full pension rights which were only awarded after 40 years service; the fact that women and girls who work in agriculture had no fixed rates of wages, though there was a fixed rate for men; how women in the Civil Service had neither the same pay nor opportunities of promotion as men; the injustice and marked contrast to professional women's treatment by local authorities and the universities; and the exclusion of women from jury service, which deprived women from the right of being tried by their peers. It was concluded:

"Instances could be multiplied of discrimination against women in practically every walk of life. This menace can only be met by women taking active measures to resist such encroachments upon their rights as citizens." (Women's Social and Progressive League: *Open Letter to Women Voters of Ireland*, 1938, leaflet. National Library of Ireland in Ward, 1995: 167)

The IHA conserved a collective identity and organisational ties among SMOs within the women's movement between 1941 and 1968. When it was officially established in 1942, there were several women's organisations in Ireland working to improve the place of women in Irish

society - a key indicator of the persistence of the women's movement in this period. A number of these SMOs emerged out of the radical suffrage branch of the women's movement. It is evident that radicalism and participation in autonomous SMOs is a key factor in long-term activism, including into decline phases. This reiterates a key contention of the study - that a core cadre of radical feminist activists are *crucial* to the maintenance of the women's movement at any stage of growth or decline.¹⁰

The IHA developed a feminist consciousness in the network of SMOs that comprised the women's movement in the middle years:

"The Irish housewives always had an interest in feminist issues. We learned that making pleas to the government was not enough. We needed committed women in political life, women in the places where the decisions were being made." (Tweedy, 1992: 22)

These activists were extremely radical in political terms in this period. A minority group of feminist activists, who remain 'invisible' in sociological analysis of Irish society, mobilised abeyance organisations which created the necessary organisational base for contemporary resurgence:

"The coalitions of interest that women developed in the middle decades of the twentieth century prepared the climate for establishing the Council for the Status of Women of which Hilda Tweedy was chairwoman, first of the *ad hoc* committee, 1968-70, and when the Council for the Status of Women was set up she was elected its first chairwoman 1972-78." (MacCurtain in Tweedy, 1992: 9)

Zald and Ash (1966) originally contended that organisations, such as the IHA, which was exclusive in the period in question here, are most likely to endure than inclusive ones. The IHA was led by a small circle of Protestant, educated, middle-class women. Mizruchi's (1983) hypothesis contends that the expansion-contraction of an abeyance organisation's personnel occurs in response to changes in the larger social system's

requirements for absorption, mobility, or expulsion of marginal populations. To absorb large numbers of people who are unattached to other structures requires organisations to be inclusive, as happens during the peak of social movement organisations. In cycles of decline, when challenging groups lack widespread attitudinal support, organisations become exclusive and attempt to expel or hold constant their membership. They often devise strategies to give the appearance of a mass constituency - even though there is not a mass indigenous base of support, as was the case in the IHA. Exclusiveness is an important characteristic of the IHA as an abeyance organisation because it ensured a relatively homogeneous cadre of activists suited to the limited form of feminist activism undertaken before the 1960s.

Organisations vary in their centralisation of power. Some operate through a single centre of power, whereas decentralised groups distribute power among sub-units (Gamson, 1975). Piven and Cloward (1977) contend that centralisation contributes to a decline in direct action tactics, but has the advantage of producing organisation stability, co-ordination and technical expertise necessary for movement survival (Gamson, 1975).

Tweedy recalls:

"The IHA has been fortunate to have a succession of quite remarkable women who have been willing to use their talents in working for the Association with no material gain for themselves. We never had a large membership. A little over 1,200 was the most we ever reached, but we acted as a very effective pressure group. From the beginning we wrote to the press on consumer issues and anything affecting the health or welfare of women and children; we took part in radio and television programmes; we wrote to government ministers, sent memoranda to them and deputations to discuss the points we raised; we gave evidence at the sittings of the Prices Advisory Body, the Milk Tribunal and the Restrictive Practices Body; and we had representatives on various bodies set up by the government. To carry out this work effectively and efficiently we needed a team of researchers to do the back-up work." (Tweedy, 1992: 85)

Centralisation contributed to the abeyance process by ensuring the maintenance of the organisation and at least minimal activity during periods when conditions did not favour more extensive networking with other SMOs and the mobilisation of resources.

The culture of a social movement organisation is embodied in its collective emotions, beliefs, and actions. Although all social movements create and bear culture, movement organisations vary in the character and complexity of their cultures. In order to make participation more attractive in abeyance phases, organisations must elaborate alternative cultural frameworks to provide security and meaning for those who reject the established order and remain in the group. Previous research suggests that the more highly developed an organisation's culture, the more it offers members the satisfaction and other resources necessary for its survival (Lofland, 1985). For example, the NWP in the US developed an elaborate and expressive culture. The IHA's symbolic link to the Suffrage movement was intrinsic. Personal ties are also an important cultural ideal, as was the case with the closely-knit IHA. Movement organisations that cultivate and sustain rich symbolic lives enhance the abeyance function by helping to hold members. This finding is consistent with other research that demonstrates that commitment to peers and to a shared political community promotes sustained involvement in social movements (McAdam, 1988).

These characteristics applied to other SMOs in this period, such as the Association of Business and Professional Women. The IHA was, however, a central SMO (as became clear in the late 1960s). According to Taylor, these characteristics are the ideal combination of factors necessary to hold a movement in abeyance until external forces make it possible to resume a more mass-based challenge. It is clear that Taylor's work has broken new ground and challenged dominant theoretical assumptions both in relation to the nature of social movements in general and regarding the

evolution of the women's movement. The notion of abeyance provides a useful tool for moving towards a more accurate interpretation sociologically of the origins of the contemporary phase of the women's movement in Ireland and for continued research and unearthing of archives for this important period of feminist activism.

3. 1968: CHANGING POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

It is evident that the contemporary women's movement focused on undoing a large amount of legislation implemented in the post-independence period. The erosion of women's rights culminated in the 1937 Constitution of Ireland, laws enacted during the 1930s to restrict the type of industrial work undertaken by women, and the censorship and prohibition of contraception in a law dealing with the 'suppression of brothels' (Jackson, 1986: 49). As demonstrated above (see also Chapter Two), these grievances, which were explicitly adopted by the institutions of Irish society since the inception of the State, were influential in mobilising the women's movement during the abeyance stage (particularly in the 1940s). However, the non-receptive political opportunity structure obstructed widespread movement success and mobilisation. This analysis demonstrates clearly that institutionalised grievances felt among Irish women were long-standing, and the accentuation of women's exclusion from public life by the onset of rapid modernisation in Irish society in the 1960s, are not the sole root causes of the dramatic mass mobilisation that occurred during the 1970s.

The IHA were central in generating a collective identity among a *new* mass-based social movement sector. As the only Irish women's organisation affiliated to the IAW (International Alliance of Women), the IHA delegates at the 1967 IAW Congress (held in London that year) were told that the UN Commission on the Status of Women had issued a

directive to women's international non-governmental organisations to ask their affiliates to examine the status of women in their respective countries and encourage their governments to set up a National Commission on the Status of Women. In 1968 networking with other SMOs culminated in a mobilisation unprecedented since the first wave of feminist activism. The Association of Business and Professional Women had received the same directive at their international congress that same year. As a result, the two organisations decided to work together towards the goal of setting up a National Commission on the Status of Women in Ireland. In 1968 a meeting with a view to setting up an *ad hoc* committee on women's rights was organised with members from the IHA, Association of Business and Professional Women, Altrusa Club, ICA, Irish Nursing Organisation (INO), Dublin University Women Graduates Association, The National Association of Widows, The Soroptimists' Clubs of Ireland, Women's International Zionist Organisation, Irish Council of Women, Association of Women Citizens and the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI). Following intense lobbying and extensive research by this group, the First Commission on the Status of Women was established by the Taoiseach in 1970.

The initiative on women's rights taken by SMOs persistently active in the abeyance phase of the women's movement was facilitated by other resources. The political opportunity structure was more propitious to its aims, as a consequence of several factors, in particular, the international impetus engendered by the UN and the European Community, and the media's increasing receptivity to women's rights. The 1970s was an optimistic period of rapid industrialisation and modernisation in Irish society, and the external opportunities available to women had been heightened by the advent of free secondary education in the 1967 (Breen, 1990). A series of legislative changes in women's rights did not evolve

passively in the political sphere as a by-product of modernisation. An organised, active, strategic women's movement directly impacted change in a number of areas.

This analysis illustrates the importance of pre-existing links and organisational ties among individuals for the rise of collective action. The feminist network of the women's movement between the 1940s and 1960s affected the resurgent movement in a number of ways. It was *the direct catalyst* for the setting up of an *ad hoc* committee on women's rights in 1968, which resulted in the First Commission on the Status of Women in 1970 and later the CSW in 1972. These strategies mobilised a distinct, mass based movement sector of the contemporary Irish women's movement. Many of the participants in the women's movement from the 1940s to the 1960s continued to be active in the resurgent contemporary movement - particularly in the CSW and its affiliate SMOs. This highly committed core group of activists, though small in numbers, took a crucial initial step in the resource mobilisation process in 1968. The women's movement was maintained between 1922 and 1969 by a peripheral group of feminist SMOs significantly limited by social and political conditions integral to the State building agenda of successive governments. These SMOs were driven by radical members of Irish society informed by a sharp feminist consciousness and capable of articulating organised opposition to the erosion of women's rights in this period. This is clearly evident in empirical data presented here which records the diversified demands and strategies mobilised in response. The long-term action of abeyance organisations in a number of areas was *the* primary catalyst to the widespread mobilisation of a key, mass women's rights sector within the broader women's movement from 1970 onwards.

Because resource mobilisation locates social movements within the realm of rational political action, as such, social movements should be as

responsive to the broad political trends and characteristics of the regions and countries in which they occur, as are institutionalised political processes. The political opportunity structure of the Irish State in 1968 (when the First Commission on the Status of Women was set up) was increasingly more receptive to the demands of abeyance organisations. In part, this was due to the liberalising effect of reforms implemented in the 1960s, which indicated a more favourable political opportunity structure - including the Succession Act which abolished distinctions in the rights of inheritance between males and females. In addition, the rights of widows to a just share of their husband's estate were increased and clarified (see Chapter Two). This development preceded the formation of the National Association of Widows in 1967 and interview data reveals that it is clear that the political impetus provided by the Act incited this SMO to engage in political lobbying and subsequent direct action. In addition, the broader climate of social protest enabled this SMO to mobilise in a more confrontational fashion (Fennell and Arnold, 1987).

The reproductive rights debate which came to prominence in the women's movement in the 1970s follows a similar pattern. In 1966 Michael Viney wrote a series of articles for the *Irish Times* newspaper, entitled "*Too Many Children*", which outlined the problems experienced by large families. Shortly after that, a small group of doctors and lay people began meeting to discuss what could be done about the problem. In 1968, they opened the first centre where advice and encouragement on limiting family size was available, the discreetly named Fertility Guidance Clinic. In May 1971, the IWLM:

"....used the word 'contraception' out loud and with determined flamboyance confronted the sham of a legal prohibition which punished only the poor and uninformed by declaring the illegal devices purchased in Belfast to Dublin Customs officials." (Mary Maher, *The Irish Times*, 31 October, 1980)

Mobilisation was further advanced by a more receptive media which was a pivotal resource and provided the necessary exposure of the demands articulated by abeyance organisations within the women's movement. This was facilitated by the media's intense interest in the confrontational direct action engaged in by the plethora of *new* social movements emerging in Irish society (such as, the civil rights, women's, anti-Vietnam and student movements). However, in terms of social movement processes, these external factors were not passive impulses to mobilising new recruits to this sector of the women's movement. The rational actions of long-term, traditional groups of women mobilised the resources which brought a number of feminist strands together. The external impetus of the UN was adopted *tactically* as a political resource by the IHA and Association of Business and Professional Women when they formed the *ad hoc* committee in 1968. Traditional abeyance SMOs, in particular, strategically engaged in intensely lobbying the State to act upon international developments on women's rights by the European Community and UN, in particular.

The civil rights movement in Northern Ireland consolidated at this time and radical women were active in republican, student and socialist movement organisations in 1970. The inequality experienced by Irish women in other social movements and protest groups motivated some radical activists to form women's groups within these movement and/or to endeavour to form radical, women's liberation organisations in an autonomous women's movement (Ryan, 1992; Freeman, 1975). The diffusion of the international mood of protest and civil rights during the 1960s clearly engendered a more favourable climate to the formation of *new, autonomous* SMOs with a focus on women's liberation. The abeyance sector, which was in a process of expansion and transformation

throughout the 1970s, did not adopt the typical characteristics of new social movements in the first stage of the contemporary women's movement (including direct action, decentralisation, participatory democracy and emphasis on the 'personal as political'). The long-time, close links of abeyance SMOs with established political parties in this period meant that their aims and repertoire of strategies intersected more closely with those of the State.

In achieving the unitary goal of a First Commission on the Status of Women, long-standing, pre-existing feminist networks were integral to the translation of widespread grievances (manifest in the articulation of feminist demands since the 1940s) into collective action by a larger constituency of feminist activists. A central contention of this chapter is that a core, autonomous cadre of women with a radical feminist consciousness are necessary to the continuity and maintenance of the women's movement *at all stages* of growth or decline, as was the case between 1922 and 1969. It is clear that the term 'radical' varies in diverging political/social climates (see Ryan, 1992).

Communication networks between women have existed in terms of how receptive external institutions and authorities were to women's rights. Before the late 1960s in Ireland, the political and social mood was dominated by conservatism, rural fundamentalism and the 'sanctity' of the family, which is overt in the 1937 Constitution and social legislation. The activities of grass roots women's groups between 1922 and the late 1960s outside the political system was a crucial, necessary precondition for the resurgence of the women's movement in the 1970s. Core SMOs, like the IHA, were 'outsiders' to the political system in this period but employed 'insider' tactics, such as political lobbying. The closing-off of public opportunities to Irish women in this period prevented feminist activists from participating directly 'inside' the political system. However, the IHA

tactically mobilised 'insider' strategies, in relation to campaigns and issues that were more 'acceptable' to women's social role. In the long term this ensured the continuity of a women's movement and prevented the professionalisation and institutionalisation that occurs in the implementation of these tactics in phases when the political opportunity structure is more susceptible to feminist demands.

This chapter demonstrates how, in the pre-resurgence phase, the women's movement was not entirely an 'outsider' to the political system. The trend towards State involvement which was embryonic in the 1960s points to the roots of professionalisation which later occurred and highlights the fact that movements can emerge from or evolve within the system. These points are developed further in the next chapter, which analyses the role and changing course of the traditional abeyance sector in the advancement of the contemporary women's movement. Immediately felt grievances do not explain the mobilisation of this key sector of the women's movement in 1970. Changing political conditions and an increased flow of resources activated the advancement and rapid expansion of the pre-existing organisational base which emerged from the traditional, abeyance sector.

CONCLUSION

Support for women's rights and opportunities declined sharply after 1921 and the women's movement further declined in membership size and fragmented into reform organisations.¹¹ Following World War II, a variety of social forces helped to re-institutionalise traditional family life in the US and Western Europe, supported by rigid sex role distinctions. This trend is reflected in demographic factors - in particular, Ireland had one of the highest marital fertility rates in Europe. For the most part, married women were prohibited from working outside the home. Furthermore the media

denounced feminism. Few women's groups retained the label feminist. The retreat of a broad-based women's movement left few outlets for feminist activists to express their views either inside or outside the political arena. As the political and cultural mood that had once advanced feminism receded, lifelong committed feminists suffered a degree of alienation, marginalisation and isolation. However, abeyance SMOs retained a structure capable of absorbing these intensely committed feminists - particularly in the guise of the Women's Suffrage Association and then the IHA. It is evident that the role of the IHA as a link between the first and second wave of feminist activism in Ireland has been foremost.

Resource mobilisation stresses that the mobilisation of new resources is a crucial process in the growth of a social movement. Similarly, resources mobilised by one movement may be used by new movements. Women's networks or groups were created within the other social movements of the late 1960s. Cycles of social movements may be linked by personal and political ties, and movements often share a common protest against traditional values and the establishment. Women's experiences in other movements have stimulated them to participate in their own movement (the best example of this in history is when women were unable to campaign side-by-side with men in the anti-slavery movement in the US). Women in trade unions, radical or left wing political parties and civil rights movements also experienced this marginalisation. However, the importance of these factors has been overemphasised to the exclusion of abeyance processes within the Irish women's movement.

While there is no doubt that external structural supports which emerged in the 1970s served to push the movement to centre-stage, those supports were merely resonating the concerns and grievances which had animated a committed cadre of feminists during the abeyance period. Traditional autonomous SMOs, like the IHA, were significantly more

integral to the resource mobilisation process in the immediate years preceding 1970 than groups or activists that overlapped their activism in other social movements. What are today defined as traditional SMOs rationally pursued the unitary goal of a National Commission on the Status of Women in 1968 (a tactic employed in a number of countries, including the US and Britain). They successfully mobilised a mass-based sector in the process, by extensively utilising internal and external resources. By the 1970s, the CSW's strategy replicated many of the IHA's institutional tactics and repertoire of collective action during the abeyance phase. The abeyance movement simultaneously adopted the more moderate tactics of the first wave of the women's movement, and provided key resources, pre-existing goals and tactical choices during the contemporary resurgence.

The consolidation and expansion of this sector and the changing role of SMOs dating from this phase of abeyance in the contemporary context are analysed in the next chapter.¹²

Notes Chapter Four:

- 1 I draw heavily on Tweedy's (1992) work in this chapter, in view of the high quality of empirical data in the text and general deficit of publications on this period of women's history.
- 2 An "insider" model of social movements stipulates that the women's movement arose from within established institutions, with support from elites, or that professional movement organisers engineered the movement (Staggenborg, 1991).
- 3 The ICA are currently collecting their archives and have commissioned a social history of the organisation.
- 4 Previous accounts of the women's movement have not dealt with this crucial aspect of the movement conceptually, overemphasising the importance of external factors, and the activities of other social movements (such as, the civil rights and anti-Vietnam movements) of the 1960s, to current mass mobilisation (see Andersen, 1993).
- 5 In 1946 the following objectives of the IHA were adopted: (a) To unite housewives so that they shall recognise and gain recognition for their right to play an active part in all spheres of planning for the community; (b) To secure all such reforms as are necessary to establish a real equality of liberties, status and opportunity for all persons; (c) The aims and general policy shall be to defend consumers' rights as they are affected by supply, distribution and prices of essential commodities, to suggest legislation or take practical steps to safeguard their interests, as well as generally to deal with matters affecting the home; (d) To take steps to defend consumers against all taxation on necessary food, fuel and clothing (Tweedy, 1992: 18).
- 6 All interview quotes are italicised. In order to ensure anonymity and objectivity, throughout the study I list selected SMOs of which interviewees were members, after each quote.
- 7 The following were chairwomen of the IHA between 1942 and 1992: Susan Manning (1942-1947); Marie Mortished (1947-1949); Jen Coote (1949-1953); Beatrice Dixon (1954-1955); Elsie Sawyer (1955-1956); Maureen Curran (1956-1959); Hilda Tweedy (1959-1962); Eileen Hackett (1962-1965); Maude Rooney (1965-1968); Nora F. Browne (1968-1972 and 1985-1989); Betty Morrissey (1972-1973); Molly Cranny (1973-1975 and 1978-1981); Maura O'Rourke (1975-1978); Moira Guiney (1981-1985); Cíarín Doherty (1989-1992).
- 8 The IAW was formed in 1902 when American feminists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carrie Chapman Catt and Susan B. Anthony, organised an International Suffrage Conference which was attended by delegates from ten countries.
- 9 Mary Cullen (Unpublished address to WERRC Conference, 'The Irish Suffrage Movement,' May 1997) suggests that Protestant, middle-class women predominantly mobilised the women's movement in the suffrage era and this is also true of the IHA. Cullen suggests that a large constituency of Catholic women fulfilled their public activist roles as nuns in this period, actively engaging in the provision of social services and education.
- 10 The IHA was affiliated to the following SMOs:
The ICA:
Tweedy (1992) states "Down the years we have considered the ICA as a sister organisation, and we have supported each other on various issues";
IWWU :
Louie Bennett of the IWWU was a founder member of the IHA and coalesced in preparing a charter to improve the rights of women in domestic service;
The Irish Women's Citizens Association :
merged with the IHA in 1948;
Women's Social and Progressive League :
IHA supported Hanna Sheehy Skeffington in the 1943 election, for example;
Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers :
IHA joined them in 1946 and campaigned on a number of issues concerning the welfare of women and children, including the issues of 'boarded-out' children, legal adoption and prison reform;
The Dublin Club of the Soroptimists International -
founded in 1938, a service club interested in the status of women;
Women's Emergency Conference -
IHA affiliated to it in 1943. Its aim was to deal with the effects of the War.
- 11 There are parallels with the American women's movement in this period. In the US, NWP members played a crucial role in the establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the inclusion of sex in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,

-
- against discrimination in employment. Of the ten individuals who signed NOW's original Statement of Purpose, four were members of the NWP (Taylor, 1989: 770).
- 12 By 1968 the unifying goal of setting up a national commission (and subsequently a Council for the Status of Women) precipitated the consolidation of a shared feminist ideological and structural base among the established network of abeyance organisations, which was constrained in this period of abeyance. McClurg Mueller's (1987) research on women's movements suggests that such a change in consciousness can have long-term significance because it can serve as a resource for future mobilisation. The creation of a shared collective identity requires the group to revise its history and develop symbols to reinforce movement goals and strategies. For example, the significance of the NWP grew as younger and more radical women discovered the legacy of militant feminism and the leaders of the NWP became heroic symbols for those women (Taylor, 1989). Ironically as the contemporary women's movement grew stronger and more militant, the actual heirs of the early militants grew increasingly isolated and less central in the struggle for women's "liberation" during the 1960s. In a similar vein in Ireland, the emerging radical feminist organisations of the 1970s (including the IWLM) treated the abeyance women's groups who formed the 1968 *ad hoc* committee on women's rights with suspicion and more closely identified with the suffragettes, unaware of the actual direct symbolic and structural links between the three phases of the same movement.

Chapter 5

The Contemporary Women's Movement: Advancement, Confrontation and Direct Action 1970-79

Introduction

Having elucidated the roots of resurgence, this chapter outlines the rapid advancement and complex proliferation of the contemporary women's movement between 1970 and 1979 by conceptualising how the structures and organisation of the contemporary women's movement were consolidated; identifying key movement dynamics and resources, within a resource mobilisation framework; and examining the crucial role of ideology as a movement resource in this period. Three main social movement trends are traced in detail:

1. Collective action through established means: The women's movement and the political process;
2. The diffusion of women's liberation: Radicalism, conflict and diversification;
3. Submerged internal conflict and the advancement of the women's movement as a whole.

The trajectory of the contemporary wave of the women's movement was shaped by a combination of the skills of constituents with long-standing experience in traditional voluntary organisations and institutionalised politics, with the energy and innovation of radical activists in autonomous grass roots organisations. Early tactics in 1970 were shaped by a process of continuity with the pre-existing organisational life of the movement and the changing structure of political opportunities. The use of institutionalised tactics (which were facilitated by the continuity of abeyance organisations) and the use of direct action tactics (animated by the changing political opportunity structure, expanded social movement sector, and the background of younger constituents in the movement) are examined in this chapter. Widespread collective action in the social movement sector from the 1960s onwards was a principal source

of political opportunity for the emergence of new autonomous organisations in the women's movement. During a cycle of protest, the social movement sector expands in size with important consequences for the movements and organisations that compose it, including the potential for both co-operation and competition among movement organisations and other actors drawn into movement activity. It is demonstrated how long-term activism prior to a cycle of protest was integral to the mobilisation of a resurgent women's rights sector in the women's movement. It is clear that the wave of social protest and direct action by other social movements changed the political opportunity structure, because once a cycle of protest is under way, "early riser" movements provide models of action and evidence of elite vulnerability for movements that emerge later in the cycle (Tarrow, 1989: 23).

The model within resource mobilisation that suggests the women's movement emerged *solely* from within established institutions with elite support is not substantiated in the analytical findings. The scope of that support, particularly evident in empirical data concerning the State's role in the consolidation of the CSW in this period, was in fact quite narrow. External organisations and individuals (in the media, for instance) were more helpful in creating communications networks than in providing direct organisational support and resources for the early movement. In addition, contrary to the professional model of movement mobilisation (Zald and McCarthy, 1977; 1979), the 'entrepreneurs' of the women's movement were not career movement leaders looking to create an issue; rather they typically were volunteers who had strong feelings about women's rights and from their background of activism had direct experience of women's grievances in diverse areas (Staggenborg, 1991: 28). A significant number of early activists were both conscience constituents and potential beneficiaries of the broad objectives of the women's movement. While

resource mobilisation correctly emphasises the importance of organisational factors, it is clear that immediately felt grievances by women who were conscientised by the action of early activists was a factor in the successful mobilisation of the movement in the early stages (see McAdam, 1988). However, widespread consciousness of grievances and the recruitment of a mass feminist constituency were not generated out of a system of social strain. The movement spread in response to the tactical mobilisation and consciousness raising strategies employed by radical SMOs within the women's movement and their impact.

'Traditional' SMOs, such as the IHA, transformed from within in response to the changing political opportunity structure and broader movement resurgence that occurred in several movement centres in the 1970s. New SMOs aligned to the long-established feminist network throughout the 1970s and formed a unique cluster within the movement, with a predominant focus on women's *rights* (including, organisations comparable to Cherish, AIM and the Women's Political Association. A parallel, second nucleus of grass roots SMOs consolidated in this period, with the expressed (more radical) goal of women's *liberation*. These groups resembled SMOs in the small group sector (Ryan, 1992) of the American and British women's liberation movements - small, loosely organised, participatory, radical feminist, autonomous and engaged in consciousness raising. The major forerunner of this style of activism in Ireland was the IWLM (Irishwomen's Liberation Movement).

The contemporary women's movement is frequently categorised and conceptualised in terms of static, polarised ideological schisms (Fritz, 1979; Hole and Levine, 1971). The empirical data reveals that in practice it is a feature of the women's movement that activists interact with a plurality of movement organisations simultaneously or at different stages of movement transformation, and inter-movement alliances are mobilised across the

movement (in the form of coalitions, for instance). The challenge here is to make sense of how diverse strands intertwine at different stages of the movement's development and the related outcome *for the inclusive women's movement as a whole*. The contemporary women's movement evolved out of two distinctive styles of activism, animated by a complex array of available resources, ideologies, tactics, indigenous networks, sources of elite support and external constraints. The movement did not diffuse internally in a linear, segregated ideological pattern from the original 'pioneering' SMOs, that fused a collective identity around two main styles of activism. In essence, as the movement advanced, there was considerable overlap between strategies, ideologies and themes, and the movements development was organic with several offshoots from the original core SMOs (the CSW and IWLM in particular). It is suggested that the fluid character of the women's movement contributed to the rapid level of mobilisation in the 1970s and is at the core of the way in which the movement is organised and evolves.

The Consolidation of Movement Sectors

The emergence of radical SMOs, which mobilised a collective women's liberation axis, undoubtedly shaped the 'new' women's movement. The ideas and politics of Anglo-American radical feminism had a major transformative impact:

"Lacking, with notable exceptions, the support of female intellectuals, the women's movement failed to explore in depth many cultural, political and ideological issues during these early years. The void was filled by influences from British and US feminism." (Jackson, 1986: 50)

Women's rights organisations represented a high degree of continuity with past phases of activism but transformed in reaction to shifting political opportunities and contact with the parallel radical strand.

Core SMOs formed in the first stage of rapid advancement included: the IWLM (Irishwomen's Liberation Movement), which was formed in 1970 primarily by a small group of journalists, left wing and professional women, and had proliferated by 1972; the CSW (Council for the Status of Women/now the National Women's Council), which grew out of an *ad hoc* committee on women's rights established in 1968 by the IHA (Irish Housewives Association) and the Association of Business and Professional Women; and the more radical IWU (Irishwomen United) which emerged in 1975 for a period of about 18 months and was the main catalyst for the formation of the CAP (Contraceptive Action Campaign) in 1976, the first Rape Crisis Centre in 1977 and the first Women's Right to Choose group in 1979. A number of SMOs (frequently in the form of small consciousness raising groups, single issue campaigns or with the function of providing services for women), were further offshoots from or formed independently of these core organisations throughout the 1970s. SMOs that produce a collective social movement can take the form of social networks among grass-roots activists as well as formal organisational structures (Killian, 1984).

Previous analyses of the women's movement contain common assumptions:

1. The feminist movement mobilised directly along the lines of two opposing ideological branches - women's rights and women's liberation (Hole and Levine, 1971) - and did not subsequently deviate from this pattern. The women's rights branch works from a strategy of extending equal rights to women, particularly through legal reform and

anti-discrimination policies. From this perspective, the inequality of women is the result of past discriminatory practices and is best remedied by creating gender-blind institutions in which all persons are given equal privileges.

The women's liberation branch takes a more far-reaching analysis, seeing that transformation in women's status requires not just legal and political reform, but the radical transformation of basic social institutions (including, family, sexuality, religion and education). The women's rights approach is centred on liberal political theory, while women's liberation has its roots in radical philosophical theories.

2. Most work on the organising stage has centred on labelling the constituent groups rather than understanding their relation to each other and the overall formation of the movement. The two movement sectors have often been presented as polarised to each other. For example, NOW (the largest feminist SMO in the US) has been singled out falsely as a reform organisation with limited goals (Fritz, 1979).
3. The literature tends to source the '*birth*' of the contemporary women's movement to the social movements of the 1960s, such as the civil rights and New Left (Andersen, 1993: 282-285). This ignores the continuity between the first and second peak waves; the long-articulated roots of women's discontent, and related activism, which mobilised the movement's *resurgence*; and fails to recognise the conceptual importance of abeyance organisations.
4. Efforts to promote change in the political or legal arena have frequently been ignored or disregarded as conservative forms of activism. In essence, the activities of *both* women's rights and women's liberation SMOs were radical departures from the prevailing conception of women in Irish society.

Following Ryan, this "...new literature provides us with a view of a transformed women's movement; however, for the most part, it fails to tell us how this change came about" (1992: 67). Social movement theorists have provided more sophisticated models which challenge these assumptions:

"The tendency now is to view the phenomenon of second-wave feminism as a whole, and to see it as consisting of fluid and eddying currents, influencing and responsive to a wide variety of circumstances." (Hoskyns, 1996: 35)

Freeman (1975) argues that the differences between the two observable branches in the initial years of mobilisation were primarily structural and stylistic, and secondarily strategic and methodological. She labels the two distinct sectors the 'younger' and 'older' branches - one came into being a year before the other and each initially organised within different age groups. Freeman uses the term 'older branch' for organisations such as NOW, formed by comparatively older, professional women several years before the formation of what she calls 'younger branch' movement organisations which were formed by younger women who typically had experience in student, anti-Vietnam or New Left organisations. Her attempt to neutralise the reform/radical dichotomy fails, however, because radicalism is associated with youth and conservatism with age (Ryan, 1992: 41). Freeman contends that the two branches are distinguished largely by structure rather than ideology, with the older branch organisations adopting more traditional organisational forms. Ryan hypothesises the more neutral categories of mass movement and small group sectors. Although theoretical distinctions have some relevance, and identifications along these lines were often the cause of intra-organisational disputes, more detailed accounts reveal them to be too rigid

and determining. In particular, as interest in tackling mainstream politics was adopted more widely as the movement progressed, more sympathetic and complex evaluations are being made of what tended to be dismissed as liberal feminism.

The limitations of previous work in the field and the misconceptions surrounding the resurgence of the contemporary Irish women's movement are addressed here by taking an emergent approach to the analysis of interview and documentary data, which systematically reveals the themes, tensions and interconnections within the women's movement (see Glaser and Strauss, 1970). The analysis demonstrates that SMOs with either an axial reformist (women's rights) or radical (women's liberation) feminist identity *overlapped* in this period. Furthermore, *both* styles of activism were combined and informed distinctive SMOs, to varying degrees. In the case of the Irish women's movement, there was significant coalition and interaction between SMOs aligned to each style of activism, broadly labelled women's rights and women's liberation sectors. The observable movement style of these two sectors is not based on the direct translation of hegemonic feminist ideologies into specific, rigid types of activism. The dynamic of ideology in movement activism is examined in the case of major SMOs that emerged in the 1970s. It is suggested that while *feminist* ideologies informed members' preferences, ongoing strategic dilemmas and the opportunities posed by the availability of resources mediated their direct impact on action. Ideologies were especially drawn upon as a *resource* in the broad-based confrontational, direct action that occurred in autonomous SMOs throughout the 1970s.

Diverse ideologies are present in every social movement by definition. In short, the terms women's rights/women's liberation refer to two distinctive sectors of the Irish women's movement comprised of diverse SMOs which persistently intersected in their movement activities

and were capable of coalescing and mobilising resources interactively when the need arose. In addition, the original conceptualisation of women's rights and women's liberation sectors diversified by the mid-1970s and gradually converged. Reference to women's liberation or women's rights SMOs in the analysis indicates two axial orientations in the structure, tactics and ideas underpinning the movement. In practice the dynamic of feminist SMOs combines *both* autonomous and reformist styles of activism to a greater or lesser degree. Furthermore, studies have shown that, apart from ideology, incentives for commitment are related to other complex factors, such as the movement's stage in the mobilisation process (Ryan, 1992).

The set of ideas (feminisms) underpinning the broader movement were in a constant state of flux, rather than 'hardened' against each other in a static manner throughout the 1970s. This does not suggest, however, that conflict over feminist ideologies was not inherent to movement transformation at particular stages. Interview and documentary data reveals that this was particularly the case in key radical SMOs. The primary difference in this period between the two interacting sectors was largely based on their relationship to the State and the political process. There were diverse ideologies co-existing both within and between these two interacting sectors. Conflict and debates about ideology were, for the most part, confined within the radical sector which was marked by its autonomous relation to the State. In reality a plethora of SMOs aimed to mobilise towards improving the status of women but disagreed as to the appropriate means of achieving this. Understanding the complex basis of these themes and tensions is central to analysing accurately what produced a broad-based, collective social movement which is inherently conflictual and diverse.

By the end of the 1970s the expression of autonomous and reformist tactics in each sector had transformed and a degree of convergence between the two original sectors occurred. Intense ideological debate waned in radical SMOs. Throughout the 1970s, *both* sectors gradually engaged the political establishment and institutions of the State (particularly through the courts). In addition, women's rights SMOs (especially the CSW) increasingly adopted some of the original mobilising issues of radical feminism (such as domestic violence).

A key analytical point in this chapter is that the processes of resource mobilisation varied significantly across the movement which produced a dynamic reproduction of ideologies, responses and structures over time and place. The persistent transformation of the movement from within, and the influence of the flow of resources, are central themes of the following sections.

1. COLLECTIVE ACTION THROUGH ESTABLISHED MEANS: THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Political opportunities and an indigenous organisational base were major factors in the consolidation and expansion of the contemporary women's movement. At different stages of mobilisation the political opportunity structure is more open to social movements, and several consequences flow from this conjunction. The social movements of the 1960s that emerged world-wide are generally associated with confrontational direct action (Staggenborg, 1991: 29). The women's movement in Ireland was no exception. As the movement spread, feminists 'took to the streets.' In tandem, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, there was a distinctive sector within the movement which utilised conventional channels of influence from the outset. Throughout the

period of abeyance and into the 1970s, SMOs continued to work through the 'system,' particularly by political lobbying and taking test cases through the courts. This section examines the factors which enabled movement actors to adopt institutionalised means of influence, how successful they were in using the tactics of political 'insiders' and the long-term consequences for the resurgent movement as a whole (Staggenborg, 1991: 29).

The organic diffusion and proliferation of SMOs from a core women's rights organisation (the *ad hoc* committee/CSW) in the early 1970s, coincided with the emergence of a women's liberation nucleus mobilised by the IWLM. The women's rights sector was shaped *on a gradual basis* by statutory-linked and service organisations for women with a predominantly reformist agenda. The CSW was a pivotal women's rights organisation. From the outset it worked closely with the State, employed a formal hierarchical structure, had several affiliate members, and was as a co-ordinating, mass-based, umbrella SMO. The IHA absorbed and linked a committed cadre of activists who were 'new' to the feminism of equal rights from the 1940s onwards; those who were conscious, militant feminists since the suffrage period and wave of nationalism and labour movements; and, through the CSW, constituents who were 'new' to feminism in the 1970s. The increased receptivity to the political activities of long-standing women's organisations in the late 1960s and their strategic mobilisation of resources in response to these opportunities is intrinsically related to the consolidation of an indigenous women's rights movement sector. Abeyance structures promote movement continuity and, crucially, are employed in later rounds of mass mobilisation. Activists in this sector were characterised by their level of experience and long-term commitment to women's rights.

Consolidation of the CSW

The formation of the *ad hoc* committee on women's rights in 1968 facilitated the mobilisation of this sector, primarily because it precipitated a shared political orientation and collective identity among women's rights proponents, which was absent in the middle years of this century. These activists also became active in a plethora of newly formed SMOs with a conscious reformist agenda, throughout the 1970s. The skills of these women were important catalysts in the formation of new SMOs and the expansion of the broader movement. This is most evident in the role of key actors (such as Hilda Tweedy, Eileen Proctor and Sheila Conroy) in the gradual consolidation of the CSW as the chief interest group concerning women's rights in Ireland. The commitment and active participation of activists constitutes the main resource of any social movement. This is particularly true in the case of the women's movement which was devoid of adequate material and financial resources in the initial stage of contemporary mobilisation.

Following intense lobbying by the *ad hoc* committee, the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, established the First Commission on the Status of Women on 31 March 1970, to:

"...examine and report on the status of women in Irish society, to make recommendations on the steps necessary to ensure the participation of women on equal terms and conditions with men in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the country and to indicate the implications generally - including the estimated cost - of such recommendations."

Heron recalled:

"The Commission began its work in April 1970 against the backdrop of a growing clamour for change, meeting once a week on average." (Heron, 1993: 138)

The Commission's agenda coincided with the implementation of a series of political reforms. In the interim, the Minister for Finance requested a report dealing with the question of equal pay, particularly in relation to the public sector. The Commission sought submissions from trade unions, employers and women's organisations. This report directly challenged the main thrust of discriminatory legislation progressively institutionalised after 1922. The interim report was published in August 1971 and recommended the implementation of equal pay and the removal of the marriage bar.

The Commission on the Status of Women presented its findings to the Government in 1972. The Commission had received submissions from forty-one groups (which *included* a women's liberation group and a number of non-aligned individuals). This provides an indication of the overlap in practice which was loosely evident between activists in autonomous and reformist SMOs across the movement, from the outset. Some seventeen of the forty-nine recommendations related to equal pay and women in employment. The moderate tone of the document made it broadly acceptable to both the public and Government. The extent to which its aims did not meet the goals of autonomous women's liberation groups is addressed below. The report included detailed recommendations in the areas of equal pay, promotion and equal opportunity - grievances persistently articulated by women's groups since the 1940s. This document was *the* primary resource for the gradual establishment of the CSW and was integral to the advancement of the women's rights sector in this period:

"It was a definitive document, forming the basis for government reform and giving pressure groups a blueprint for change." (Heron, 1993: 139)

The *ad hoc* committee, having met again to consider the Interim Report of the Commission, tactically decided it would be necessary to form a permanent Council for the Status of Women to monitor the implementation of the Report's recommendations. Accordingly, they wrote to the press inviting interested women's organisations to join with the *ad hoc* committee (see appendix 6). The decidedly non-confrontational stated aims of the CSW were (R. Conroy's Archive):

1. to provide liaison between Government Departments, the Commission of the European Communities, Women's Organisations and the Council;
2. to press for the implementation of the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women (the Beere Report);
3. to provide educational and developmental programmes for women aimed at giving women the opportunity of participating fully in the social, economic and political life of this country and to highlight areas of discrimination;
4. to examine cases of discrimination against women and, where necessary, to take appropriate action;
5. to consider any other legislative proposals of concern to women;
6. to be non-party political.

The Council was chaired by Hilda Tweedy, maintaining direct structural and symbolic continuity with the suffrage phase of the earlier part of the century, the abeyance movement and the resurgent contemporary women's movement. It had an explicit focus on achieving women's rights *through established means*:

"The objective of the council was the implementation of the report, *de jure* and *de facto*, and to deal with specific cases of

discrimination against women as these arose. It also saw the need to educate the public to accept women as equal citizens and to break down prejudice in customs and practice. Our priority would be to work for a change in the law, where necessary. Change in the law is the first most important step, but after that is monitoring the implementation of the law and creating an acceptance of the changes made." (Tweedy, 1992: 48)

This approach was 'out of step' with the cycle of protest in the decade in which the movement took shape, which had already seen the spread of direct action tactics when the IWLM emerged in 1971. However, it was consistent with the background of activists and the environment in which local SMOs (such as, the IHA and ICA) operated.¹

At the outset, the CSW was a relatively small, core SMO:

"The Council for the Status of Women started very small...we were a much closer group, communication was much better between the groups. We originally started with an ad hoc committee of ten women's organisations." (Founder member CSW)

Its membership in October 1972 included the following organisations:² AIM, Altrusa, Association of Women Citizens of Ireland, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, Cork Federation of Women's Organisations, Dublin University Women Graduates Association, the ICA, Irish Association of Dieticians, the IHA, National Association of Widows, National University Women Graduates Association, Soroptimists Clubs of Ireland, Women's International Zionist Organisation, Women's Liberation Movement, Women's Progressive Association (later Women's Political Association), ZONTA. The early membership indicates how its constituency was recruited from inside established institutions or from long-standing reform organisations.

Initially the Council had no funding. The Dublin University Women Graduates Association continued to provide their room free of charge, where the *ad hoc* group had met. Later the ICA provided free

accommodation for enlarged meetings at their headquarters. These basic resources were integral to the growth and consolidation of the organisation. Empirical data shows that the constraints to mobilisation are particularly demonstrated in the political strategies the Council mobilised to gain official recognition as a government liaison body which could claim national representation of women in Ireland. On 30 May 1973 the CSW sent a letter to the Minister for Finance stating:

"We welcome the publication of the Report of the National Commission on the Status of Women, which we are studying in-depth. We are particularly interested in the paragraphs on the setting up of a single body representing women's organisations interested in the Recommendations of the Report and to act as a liaison between Government Departments and the various organisations." (Letter to Richie Ryan, Minister for Finance, 31 August 1973, quoted in Tweedy, 1992: 53)

The Minister's reply stated that some of the recommendations were already being implemented and that the remainder were under consideration by various Departments. However, for the remainder of 1973 and 1974, the Council consistently passed information and cases of discrimination to the Government and other relevant bodies, and continued to write to Government Ministers - urging them to consider giving recognition to the organisation:

"...because it could be helpful to the different government departments which are now studying the report, in view of the amount of information which we have at our disposal through research by our member organisations." (Letter to Richie Ryan, Minister for Finance, 31 August 1973, quoted in Tweedy, 1992: 53)

Events surrounding the holding of a seminar in Dublin for the UN International Women's Year in 1975 suggests that the increased receptivity of the political opportunity structure should not be exaggerated. The Executive Committee persistently lobbied the Government to fund the

event. A letter from Monica Barnes, Honorary Secretary in July 1974, reiterated the financial constraints on the organisation in its initial stages:

"It is such a shame we have not got the funds to get ourselves more publicity, we are running out of stamp money at the moment. But it (news of the UN International Women's Year) is filtering through to the public, and if we get government money we can really launch ourselves." (Tweedy, 1992: 51)

The CSW was crucial in publicising the contents and recommendations of the Report throughout the 1970s and continuously pressed for their implementation.³

The Women's Representative Committee (WRC) was established by the Minister for Labour as the officially recognised body to represent women's interests in December 1974. This was a tangible constraint to mobilising an autonomous, nationally-based women's rights organisation and could be interpreted as the State's attempt to demobilise the indigenous women's rights movement sector:

"When the Minister for Labour Michael O'Leary, announced his new Women's Representative Committee (the liaison body for action) and it was seen to have a heavy trade union and employer representation, chaired by a member of the Government, women began to question the goodwill and intent of the Coalition Government. And in the light of the recent withdrawal from the commitment to equal pay by January 1, that pessimism is surely justified now." (Nuala Fennell, Was it a success or a failure?. *Irish Press*, 1 January 1978)

Ironically, the CSW's leadership and executive tactically commended the Minister's impetus and agreed to nominate three representatives onto the WRC.⁴ This led to disagreement within the Council's affiliates, particularly from younger activists who mobilised in the contemporary phase. Gemma Hussey, for instance, wrote to the Council's executive stating that the Women's Political Association overwhelmingly rejected the Minister's

proposals and that AIM and Senator Mary Robinson publicly added their voices to protest. According to Tweedy, the executive believed that this was the first concrete step in gaining recognition as an umbrella organisation representing women's organisations (Tweedy, 1992: 55). The WRC examined a number of issues including, training facilities available to women; the need for free legal aid and advice in family cases; discrimination in social security; the domicile of married women; family planning legislation; and the law of nullity in Ireland. The Council strategically worked closely with the WRC.

By 1975 the CSW was anxious to give a platform to new women's organisations and expand its base. The seminar held by the Council to mark International Women's Year in 1975 when it received its *first* grant from the State (the Minister initially *lent* £500 to run the seminar and the decision to give the Council this money as a grant was only made *after* its success) acted as a catalyst for the expansion of its movement base beyond the initial group. Diverse types of activists were conscientised and recruited in the mobilisation process, which involved both the political strategies of the CSW and its affiliates, and the confrontational direct action tactics of other organisations within the broader women's movement:

"The seminar was a tremendous success. It brought women together, members of the various women's organisations. But perhaps more important, women belonging to no organisation had travelled long distances to attend." (Tweedy, 1992: 59)

It was three years after this before the Council received any significant State recognition and regular flow of resources, which became the mobilising focus of the organisation. In 1978 the term of the WRC expired and the Government set up the Employment Equality Agency to deal with employment, while the CSW were assigned the task of monitoring the

implementation of the remaining recommendations of the Report and the working of the Talent Bank.⁵

The political opportunity structure was by no means permeable to the (what are now considered) moderate demands of the CSW. For example, the UN first set up a Commission on the Status of Women in 1947. As a member country, Ireland is honour-bound to ratify UN charters of which there were a number after 1947. The 1952 Charter on the Political Rights of Women, for example, was not ratified by Ireland until 1968 and "even then only with reservations" (*Irish Independent*, 26 February, 1975). The 1952 charter dealt specifically with a woman's right to vote and to run for public office. Article 11 dealt with jury service. Ireland refused to comply with this on the basis that since jury service was not obligatory for a woman, she could not be considered discriminated against. The International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1963) contains specific provisions to enable countries to ratify its contents on a phased basis and:

"Ten years after its adoption (that is, two years ago) Foreign Affairs Minister Garret Fitzgerald was still promising "fairly early" ratification." (*Irish Independent*, 26 February 1975)

The experienced leaders of the CSW in the 1970s were accustomed to a rigid political environment. They were capable of framing their demands in a non-threatening manner calculated to win support from elite sources, conservative politicians and the mainstream public. The careful pursuit of its aims through established means persistently encountered strong resistance. This is particularly highlighted by examining the resource base of the CSW, which implemented mobilising strategies that were dependent on State funding.

The initial establishment of the Council was thus erratic. In the beginning the Council was financed by the £5 affiliation fee paid by the affiliate organisations. The International Women's Year Conference grant was the first formal source of funding allocated to the CSW. In 1977, 1978 and 1979, the government provided a grant of £3,500 each year. In 1980 this was raised to £30,000 and to £54,000 in 1981. The continuous supply of monetary resources from the State is central to reformist mobilisation. The operation of the CSW as a mass based, umbrella organisation (primarily directed at change in the political/legal arena) was intrinsically linked to the opportunities posed by a constant supply of resources from the State. The growth of new SMOs around the CSW (including the WPA, AIM and Cherish) also utilised these channels (including the mobilisation of tangible resources from the State; accessing government members, professionals and officials; reaching the public and raising awareness about the issues they were highlighting; and in recruiting members). The CSW provided a national platform and redistributed political opportunities and resources to associate SMOs, which had a very limited local resource base and constituency.

Political Opportunity Structure: Persuasion Vs Confrontation

A cluster of SMOs consolidated a nucleus which was co-ordinated by the CSW and formed a key movement sector. The intersection of a social movement with the institutions of the State is a crucial facet to analysing the women's movement in Ireland. It is also at this juncture that a movement tends to impact on legislative change. The CSW and its affiliate SMOs concentrated on mobilising towards gaining women's *rights* through established channels. The Chairwoman of the WPA, Maeve Breen, reiterated this mobilising strategy in the organisation's newsletter in June 1976:⁶

"To transform and improve society for the common good requires the participation of all men and women. It is precisely for this reason that the choice should not be left to men alone. Women too must participate at a decision making level. The transformation and improvement of society which implies another way of educating the young, reform in professions, political involvement, and the family - these are problems common to men and women which should be conquered together....The only solution to the problem is to counteract the imbalance of men to women now existing in Dáil, Senate and Local Government." (*WPA Newsletter*, June 1976)

While a common identity was consolidated, this sector was diversifying and transforming internally throughout the 1970s. Abeyance SMOs, which expanded in this mobilisation stage, generally employed political 'insider' tactics. *New* SMOs within the women's rights sector mobilised in the climate of a generic, new wave of collective protest in the 1970s. In addition, a parallel movement sector emerged out of this cycle of protest which had a radical, confrontational focus and had a further transformative impact on the original women's rights sector.

The position of a social movement in a cycle of protest affects opportunities for mobilisation and collective action. The women's movement was unique in that it had two distinct but interacting sectors, each composed of a loosely organised network of SMOs that engaged in both the mainstream institutions of Irish society and autonomous direct action.

The consolidation of professional staff and formal organisational structures within the CSW would gradually facilitate more concentrated institutionalised tactics in later years. However, the broader women's movement in general was to a large degree decentralised in the 1970s, preventing the CSW's leaders from controlling the tactics of local activists in new affiliate groups. Furthermore, there was a proliferation of groups critical of the tactics of the Council and oriented towards confrontational direct action in the women's liberation sector. The CSW did not in one co-

ordinating organisation encapsulate all SMOs within the women's rights sector, or indeed the broader movement which was advancing organically in a number of centres, during this period.

The CSW was, however, a crucial SMO in synthesising a women's rights agenda and mobilising resources, that could be utilised by affiliate SMOs. In other words, a collective identity around the need to work within the State was manifest despite significant intra-group diversity and fluid organisational structures. Before 1980 the CSW was a small organisation and was limited in the extent to which it could co-ordinate and fund a mass-based campaign of lobbying and litigation. A large constituency or a constant flow of State resources did not ensure gains in the early years (of which the establishment of the First Commission on the Status of Women, the publication of the Report and the resulting series of reforms were the most effective). Rather, the strategic position, high degree of commitment and experience of its leaders, and tactics in response to the political opportunity structure were pivotal. This sector of the movement compensated for its organisational and resource deficits with the skills of a core cadre of individuals who voluntarily donated their time and expertise to the movement. The CSW inherited a repertoire of collective action and resources of abeyance organisations, which facilitated institutionalised types of mobilising activities, oriented towards persuasive rather than confrontational direct action tactics. Key members knew how to lobby politicians, trade unions and professionals. Some of these organisations had long term connections with professional associations (see membership list of the original *ad hoc* committee, the Commission and the CSW). Notwithstanding the extensive use of 'insider' tactics, the CSW mobilised primarily outside of the polity in the first stage of advancement. It did not secure official recognition until 1978 nor significant funding until 1980.

The CSW routinely relied on the politics of persuasion and non-confrontational tactics (although the National Association of Widows, a central SMO aligned to the CSW, also engaged in direct action tactics). This contrasted with the dramatic rise in the direct action of a variety of social movements in this period. This strategy was clearly consistent with the backgrounds and experiences of leaders in this sector, and the political environment in which it mobilised initially. Although the international cycle of social movements further normalised the increasing mobilisation of this sector, it was more attuned to the political structures of Irish society. The CSW was attempting to bring about change in a very conservative State. A cautious approach (which generated much criticism from newly emerging confrontational, direct action, radical groups) seemed necessary and useful (Staggenborg, 1991: 30). Activists felt they had to build on whatever sources of support were in evidence.

The CSW was clearly influential in many of the political/legal gains for women in the 1970s. As an organisation it was unique in the context of the international women's movement. In no other European country is there an organisation like the Council for the Status of Women, a mass-based organisation directed by paid, professional staff and funded by the State.⁷ The CSW, in contrast to national organisations with a focus on women's *rights* in other Western European women's movements, which sought to obtain key allies within the system, attempted to obtain widespread political influence in the established political parties which were, for the most part, conservative (Dahlerup, 1986). This is explicitly implied in its objectives. In contrast, members of autonomous SMOs were for the most part involved in left-wing or Republican non-establishment parties (such as Sinn Féin or People's Democracy). A close type of relationship between a social movement and the 'system' runs the risk of a co-optative relationship with the State, and this in fact occurred over time.

Monica Barnes, Nuala Fennell and Gemma Hussey, for instance, all became Fine Gael TDs in the early 1980s. The WPA has provided a supply of women candidates for the established political parties since the mid-1970s.⁸

The emergence of a process of policy innovation in the political system is, according to Tarrow (1983; 1989), evidence of successful goal achievement by a social movement. The Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974, the Employment Equality Act 1977 (which created the Employment Equality Agency), the removal of the marriage bar in the Civil Service in 1973, and maternity leave under the Maternity Protection of Employees Act 1981 were concrete gains in equality legislation. However, these changes were by no means immediate. Regardless of the 1975 EC Directive on equal pay, the Government sought a derogation on the grounds that it could not afford to grant it to the Civil Service. Joy O'Farrell, chairwoman of the Women's Political Association in 1975, took a case against the Government in 1976 (she was represented by Mary Robinson, a European law expert). The relationship between the State and the CSW during the 1970s was in fact a dynamic one and, at different stages, the goals of the CSW were inherently conflictual and marginal to the State's goals. In reality, this sector was not conservative or moderate, but strategically mobilising on a gradualist/incremental basis. The extensive use of 'insider tactics' has inaccurately been disregarded as a conservative form of activism. However, the consequences of such alliances for social movements in the long term are a fundamental theoretical concern.

While the establishment of specific agencies or commissions for women's rights (including the WRC, the CSW and the Employment Equality Agency) were crucial resources for legal/political gains throughout the 1970s, such alliances may also have an adverse effect.

Piven and Cloward (1977) in their analysis of 'poor people's movements' argued that the principal incapacity of social movements is to protect themselves from co-optation. In other words, protest is successful only so long as it challenges the State. They relate their research to the collective energy of the 'poor' being diluted by formal organisations because they divert their energies into routine politics. In the particular stage of activism

has been a crucial modernising force and influenced a great deal of the equality legislation that was adopted (even if not fully implemented) in the 1970s.⁹ These ideals did not simply permeate the political opportunity structure. The women's movement rationally adopted these initiatives as resources.

There is no linear relationship between governments and their response to women's political activity:¹⁰

"The relationship between the articulation of feminist interests and policy outcome is mediated not only by the opportunities for alliances with political parties but also by the relations of other organised interests to the state" (Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987: 13)

The women's movement thus had to compete for resources (media coverage, for example) with other social movements within the social movement sector (Zald and McCarthy, 1979). During the 1970s, the State's modernisation project incorporated participation in the EC, which endorsed the demands of women's rights SMOs at an institutional level, that translated into a series of concrete reforms in specific areas (see appendix 6). Women's rights that had been eroded between 1922 and the 1960s were gained progressively in the 1970s. A pragmatic reformist branch of the women's movement, strategically achieving moderate reforms through the institutions of the State, was an integral strand in the modernisation of Irish society in this period.

The Expansion of Women's Rights Activism in the 1970s

By the middle of the decade, the women's rights sector subsumed three interacting strands: service groups (such as Cherish); single issue campaigns (such as Joy O'Farrell's case); and political activities (such as the WPA). The proliferation of this sector from its original organisational base

stimulated a process of diversification in movement style, strategies and ideas. It is evident that new groups that emerged from/to this sector selectively adopted characteristics and tactics initiated in the first women's liberation SMO, the IWLM.

The political activities of the National Association of Widows in Ireland (NAWI) were mainly in the areas of social welfare and taxation. Organisational gains were as a result of the incorporation of annual budget proposals submitted to successive governments by the Association. The statement of priorities highlighted by the Association includes the establishment of a figure representing a poverty level below which means from any source should not fall in order to maintain human dignity; adequate financial provision for single parents to maintain their children within the home; state funded child care centres to be provided in workplaces and local community centres; the speeding up of probate, a simple legal procedure to free resources, and the introduction of some type of surveillance of the activities of solicitors, especially in regard to the handling of the financial affairs of widows (source: NAWI literature). The Association's literature states:

"Enriching the lives of all Widows and campaigning for social justice on their behalf, is the prime objective of the Association. NAWI is recognised as the voice of the widow. It has been instrumental in eliminating many discriminations, changing at least three social welfare acts and improving tax allowances. It has contributed to a very valuable service to the community and the nation by pinpointing the areas of neglect and proposing the necessary reforms. We are not a group of elderly ladies, sitting around mourning our fate. Within this busy, active and progressive organisation, are some of the most splendid women in the Country." (NAWI Information Literature)

In November 1972, hundreds of widows from all over Ireland took part in a march to Liberty Hall where a mass meeting was held. This is cited as the first occasion in modern times when the women of Ireland 'took to the

streets' to publicise their cause (Fennell and Arnold, 1987: 17), a tactic widely adopted by radical SMOs. The formation of the NAWI preceded the *ad hoc* committee by a year but swiftly integrated their mobilisation strategies. It was more militant than other organisations in this original movement sector. In practice these tactics overlapped with the IWLM's repertoire of collective action, but the NAWI relied more heavily on political lobbying and was a founding SMO in the CSW.

The NAWI was formed by Eileen Proctor, widowed in 1960, by writing a letter to the newspapers asking interested people to contact her. Cherish was formed in the same way in 1970 when Maura O'Dea, a young accountant and single parent, advertised in two evening papers.¹¹ Cherish went on to become an extensive service for single parents, dealing with issues such as accommodation, legal advice and day care. It played a significant role in lobbying for the Unmarried Mothers Allowance (introduced in 1973) and later campaigned for the Status of Children Act 1987.

AIM (founded by Nuala Fennell and Bernadette Quinn, among others) came together in January 1972, in the wake of the IWLM. However, it mobilised resources within the consolidating women's rights sector. AIM lobbied vigorously for the Maintenance Orders (1974) Act and the Family Law (Maintenance of Spouses and Children) Act, 1976. It also campaigned for the Social Welfare Act 1974, which transferred the legal right to the Children's Allowance from the father to the mother, and the Family Home Protection Act 1975, which introduced the Supplementary Welfare Allowance. This could be availed by women in immediate need until they qualified for the Deserted Wives Allowance or other allowances/benefits. Nuala Fennell was pivotal in setting up Women's Aid in 1974, which introduced the problem of domestic violence into mainstream political discourse.

In general, SMOs within the women's rights sector were more concerned with concrete achievements than ideological purity. The CSW had an explicit goal of integrating women into the mainstream of society and is a structured organisation which has evolved into the largest feminist SMO in Ireland. The CSW had a National Executive, headquarters and staff by the end of the 1970s. Its structures were capable of accommodating diverse women's groups which under one aegis. In practice, SMOs affiliated to the organisation had a limited degree of contact and pursued interests of their own. The national executive of the CSW presented a common stand on feminist issues, but in practice it represented an array of groups, characterised by diverse ideological positions and strategies framed by their specialised field of activism. Regardless of its hierarchical character, the CSW provided a type of flexibility which enabled grass roots SMOs to utilise resources mobilised at a national level and the autonomy to specialise at local level. Gerlach and Hine's (1970) characterisation of movements as decentralised, segmentary and reticulate relates to the women's rights sector in the first stage of advancement. Although the CSW was centralised in its internal decision-making structures, decision making in its affiliate organisations and the wider social movement was decentralised. The movement was segmentary in that it consisted of a number of independent local groups, and it was reticulate in that personal networks and overlapping memberships in movement organisations, and affiliation to the CSW, tied this sector of the movement together. The extent to which autonomous SMOs with a focus on women's *liberation* interacted with this sector is assessed in the next section.

A key conclusion is that engaging in the State became the focus of SMOs affiliated to a women's rights sector, consolidated by the CSW, and was an essential element in the rapid mobilisation of the women's

movement in this period. This style of feminism is more susceptible to the ebb and flow of State resources and how open or hostile the political opportunity structure is to its aims. While early political gains propelled the advancement of SMOs in this sector throughout the 1970s, it is inaccurate to imply that the Irish Government responded positively or exclusively to every demand of the CSW and its affiliate SMOs. In reality, these SMOs utilised their resources rationally to bring about gradualist reforms.

Women's rights policies stipulated by agencies of the State were key resources in this period (in particular, the Report of the First Commission on the Status of Women). Change in the legislature is important in raising consciousness outside the woman-centred activities of radical feminism. In addition, these strategies benefit and reach a broader constituency of women who are not proclaimed 'feminists' and may have been 'put off' by the confrontational direct action of 'women's lib' in the early 1970s.

The fact that SMOs not formally aligned to this sector gradually utilised similar tactics by the 1980s suggests that each sector progressively utilised a common repertoire of feminist collective action in a strategic fashion, and a more inclusive collective identity gradually developed across the movement.

The next section analyses the complex processes which determined the advancement and proliferation of a parallel women's liberation sector. The empirical data is particularly rich, in view of the tremendous creativity, vibrant debate and analysis of the situation of Irish women that occurred.

2. RADICALISM, DIRECT ACTION, CONFRONTATION

A movement's 'success' is typically measured in terms of substantive reforms. This is generally connected to the activities of SMOs with a women's rights identity. However, as Staggenborg states:

"...movements can also succeed in bringing about changes in "collective consciousness". In the case of the women's liberation movement, changes occurred in the way in which women thought about their sexuality, their health and their reproductive rights. To achieve this change in women's consciousness, the movement bypassed established organisational channels to reach women directly through new kinds of educational forums." (Staggenborg, 1991: 43)

In 1970, the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) mobilised extensively in the public realm. A multitude of radical women's groups, mainly based in urban areas throughout the country, actively campaigning on a range of issues, subsequently mobilised. The IWLM had a dramatic impact on Irish society:

"...the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) burst forth upon a surprised public followed by a mushrooming of women's groups each campaigning all over the country vigorously against different areas of injustice. These women aroused hostility, anger, fear and derision, especially in the corridors of political power, but they succeeded in bringing about many badly-needed reforms and radically improving conditions for women. For many the early years of the 70s seemed to herald a new dawn." (Fennell, 1987: 7)

This group of activists were extremely radical in the context of Irish society at that time and aroused widespread interest. Their methods of protest were highly controversial:

"A small group of women succeeded, in a remarkably short space of time, in attacking the sacred cows of social and political life in Ireland. They caught the attention of the media as no group of Irish women had ever done before shocking, controversial, galvanising substantial numbers of women to take action - or to publicly voice their support - on a whole range of new issues." (Smyth, 1993: 251)

The distinctive nature of the IWLM is related to the particular social composition of the group and the resources central to its emergence. This group of women had no direct structural links with the historical women's movement in Ireland, or indeed with the parallel *ad hoc* committee on women's rights:

"Until comparatively recently I believed that the...24 members of that group...were the women's movement of Ireland. Well no they weren't - because recently I was asked to research the forthcoming edition of the Field Day anthology which writes Irish women into history. I discovered that three years before we came on the scene a group of Irish women had got together to pressure the Fíanna Fáil government into a First Commission on the Status of Women..." (June Levine, address to WERRC Conference, May 1995.)

The IWLM was clearly more attuned to the style of activism mobilised in the new social movements of the late 1960s. The radical sector of the American women's movement was a central influence:

"I was a founder member...none of us knew what we were at! It was a time when we were taking a lot of our political ideas from America - the Vietnam war was at its height and the Civil Rights movement. I was a member of the anti-Vietnam and anti-apartheid movement. So when the women's liberation movement was started in America it just seemed like an extension of other things we had been at - housing action, all that sort of thing was going on at the time... I don't think we would have ever started it if we hadn't seen it happening in America...Our initial ideas came from the States and then we had to look at the Irish situation." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

The IWLM encompassed three distinct groups of radical feminist activists - political women (mainly left-wing and Republican activists), women in the media, and professional/university educated women:

"The original founders of the IWLM movement would have been maybe that little bit older and professional women - journalists and that. And so they had a social confidence, a skill and a place in the world of work. But the kind of people their ideas appealed to were the next generation...the young women coming through the free education system which I would be part of; women of

their age who were hemmed in by discrimination and lack of opportunity and to whom their ideas appealed; and older women who had come through certain experiences of life, who had formed a critical view...these ideas of making the aspirations a reality did appeal to a large cross section of women. I would say sociologically more from the kind of skilled working class person upwards, I would think for the unskilled and the unemployed, of whom there were significant numbers but not as many as now, those ideas didn't percolate that easy." (Founder IWU, Trade Unionist, Nationalist feminist)

Journalists, in particular, mobilised a distinctive confrontational style and symbolic direct action:

"It was mostly journalists in the first lot...We met for a long time. We didn't plan to go public for a long time because we recognised we hadn't got a programme; we had to study. We knew vaguely that women were of a lower class than men, weren't on juries, needed their husband's signature for a passport, child benefit was paid to the man...These were things we knew and learned as we would go along...What we eventually had was a six point programme." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

The rise of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland and the flowering of Republican, student and left-wing organisations crystallised into a social movement sector in Irish society. The women from the left in the IWLM tended to be involved in other movements (such as, the Labour Party, the occupation of the Hume Street Houses in 1969-70, the anti-Vietnam war demonstration of 1971, People's Democracy organisation and the Civil Rights Association) and knew how to organise strategically, within a radical framework:

"I was more politicised....some of those other women were not. A tension was there as a result. Mostly we won out - we didn't discuss abortion at all because we reckoned the time wasn't right." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

It is frequently cited that the support of radical movements/socialist political parties stimulated the advancement of the women's liberation movement. In practice, there was no direct attempt by the leadership of

political organisations to resource the mobilisation of the Irish women's movement and often direct opposition to women's liberation was expressed:

"I was seriously involved in politics only up until 1977...When I was in the party I set up a women's group which was strongly opposed by a strong element of the party. I remember being on a picket once outside some embassy or other and I was walking with...a stalwart of the communist party. We were chatting and I said to him that I was going to call a meeting and start a women's liberation movement. He said... 'you're not going to get involved in that rubbish are you!' A communist! A lot of them would have had that idea, he just said it out straight...They usually gave me my head anyway because it was easier than trying to stop me. I went ahead and set up a women's group within the party. Then we had resolutions at each annual conference which were passed, for the most part." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

The politics and ideas of radical feminist writers and organisations in the US and Britain underpinned the parallel developments to women's rights activism in the Irish women's movement. The IWLM's repertoire of strategies included meeting weekly with a view to producing a set of demands (which resulted in the manifesto *Chains or Change*). The intense level of inter-organisational activity included regular consciousness raising; planning confrontational direct action tactics (such as a protest at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin and the staging of a 'Contraceptive Train' to Belfast); radicalising the mobilising issues of the CSW; ideological discussion; and fostering a close relationship with the media.

It is significant that the direct action of Irish feminists in the 1970s was *not* unprecedented, as widely interpreted by the media and perceived by the public. For example, the Irishwomen's Franchise League was a militant, confrontational organisation (Cullen, 1985). Feminist direct action had been progressively inhibited since the establishment of the State in 1922. The interview data revealed that radical activists in the IWLM had no detailed insight into the historical legacy of militant feminism in Ireland (which highlights both the success with which the Free State

deconstructed the politicisation of Irish women achieved in the early part of this century and the exclusion of women's history from mainstream education).

Consciousness Raising

Consciousness raising formed a source of collective knowledge about women's lived experiences which were 'invisible'. It transmitted feminist issues into the public discourse. Guidelines for consciousness raising in a 1968 edition of Redstockings (journal of the US women's movement) included:

"...recommendations that each participant must testify in turn on whatever question was being discussed, no one else must interrupt her or pass judgement on her individual testimony, and generalisations should only be attempted once testimony was completed." (in Randall, 1991: 258)

Consciousness raising was introduced by activists in the IWLM who had experience of the American women's movement, in particular. It became a popular activity in the 1970s, predominantly in women's groups in suburban/urban areas and the universities. One member recalled:

"Consciousness raising was Mary Kenny's idea and was great 'craic'...Both Mary Kenny and Mary Andersen were very much plugged into the American scene. As journalists they had been very much backwards and forwards to the States but, we had to 'cut our cloth' because in the States they were looking for abortion on demand! We hadn't even contraception on demand never mind abortion on demand! Apart from which at least half of our members might have been against abortion on demand...I don't remember abortion having come into the discourse...The Mary Kennys of this world were always trying to leap forward at a pace that at least some of us thought was going too far. But they were very much clued into the American scene and that's where the consciousness raising came from." (Founder IWLM, Left Activist)

The function of consciousness raising was both political insight and collective support in the face of a hostile community/society. As a technique, it was particularly helpful in politicising women and was underpinned by the philosophy of the 'personal as political' (Randall, 1991):

"Central to the development of radical feminist ideology was the strategy of forming small groups for the purpose of "consciousness raising." Pioneered initially among New Left women, consciousness raising can be understood as a kind of conversion in which women come to view experiences previously thought of as personal and individual, such as sexual exploitation or employment discrimination, as social problems that are the result of gender inequality and sexism. Because it enables women to view the "personal as political," for most women, consciousness raising is an identity-altering experience. Becoming a feminist can transform a woman's entire self-concept and way of life: her biography, appearance, beliefs, behaviour, and relationships (Cassell 1977)." (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 537)

Consciousness raising in the IWLM was integral to both individual perspective transformation and the collective identity necessary to mobilise a social movement:

"The need for solidarity was incredibly strong. Consciousness raising created a tremendous bond and was enormously liberating...." (Founder IWLM, Journalist, Left activist)

In the US there was a consciousness raising group in almost every area and it was extremely fashionable (Ryan, 1992). It was out of these groups that the major writings on radical feminism emerged (Ryan, 1992). However, it had its drawbacks. Many women felt the need to do more practical work after engaging in the process for a long period (for example, Nuala Fennell). Not all of these groups made the transition to directly tackling patriarchal structures and political campaigning. Numerous consciousness raising groups in the 1970s were not structured to move

participants into activism after reaching a point of 'analytic saturation' (Ryan, 1992: 47):

"Consciousness raising, then, has played an invaluable part in revitalising the women's movement and continues to be important in the induction of new members but, it is argued, can lead into a political cul-de-sac." (Randall, 1991: 258)

Morale was very high as a result of consciousness raising in the IWLM and it was described by interviewees as a source of great enjoyment. Although it was premised on open, participatory *analysis* of women's lives, activists recalled that there were 'unspoken rules' of what was open for discussion (as demonstrated above, discussion of abortion was avoided for example).

Gerlach and Hine (1970: xvi) contend that "a successful movement is the point of intersection between personal and social change." Many members of the IWLM participated in the movement for personal transformation and companionship, and subsequently went on to express their feminist politicisation either in individual careers or in the formation of new, structured SMOs. Consciousness raising techniques were incorporated into the practices of subsequent radical SMOs who adopted non-hierarchical, collective structures throughout the 1970s (such as the IWU and the Rape Crisis Centre). The women's movement was qualitatively transformed from within through engaging in consciousness raising and versions of this mode of activism are still an integral strategy of the women's movement today, particularly in the praxis of women's studies. The feminism of the personal as political had a profound politicising effect throughout the Irish women's movement in the 1970s.

The Impact of Direct Action

Tarrow elaborates upon the concept of 'movement events' and protest formations (such as, demonstrations, strikes, marches, boycotts, occupations and obstruction) (Dahlerup, 1986: 218). Social movements make more extensive use of such tactics than conventional organisations and political parties. The general public as well as political decision makers get their main impression of social movements through media events. Expressive and interactive groups in the women's liberation sector have tended to follow two directions: (1) to use direct action tactics in their social movement involvements; (2) to work in the service and cultural arenas where they have a direct impact on women's lives (Randall, 1991). This kind of action lends itself well to the size limitations of women's liberation groups which were not formally co-ordinated at national level. This sector was informal and de-centralised. Radical SMOs especially relied on the media to disseminate their ideas.

The IWLM was invited to manage an entire programme of the *Late Late Show* in 1971. The IWLM's appearance was intended to mark the official launch of the movement and the event generated widespread public reaction. The demands outlined in *Chains or Change* were fully reviewed in the newspapers. The core mobilising issues of the IWLM included one family one house, removal of the marriage bar, equal pay, equal access to education, legal rights and availability of contraception (see appendix 6). The mobilising issues of the IWLM did not diverge substantially from the CSW's published demands - it was rather their strategic method in achieving them and style of activism.

Mary Robinson agreed to appear on the panel to point out the legal inequities in Irish law, despite the fact she was not a member of the group. Mary Cullen, a historian at Maynooth College, made the case for working mothers. Lelia Doolin, one of Ireland's few female television

producers, spoke on education and social conditioning, with particular reference to the effects of the media. Máirín Johnson, a journalist, talked about discrimination in the workplace. And Nell McCafferty made the case for deserted wives, single mothers and widows. The rest of the IWLM group were "armed with facts in the audience" (Levine, 1982: 161). The programme was extremely dramatic and a 'free for all' outspoken debate ensued.

The first indication of proliferation emerged in the aftermath of this movement event. Intra-group tensions surfaced *within* the IWLM partly because key activists were more strategic and political than tumultuous. In addition, a core group increasingly identified with the feminism of equal rights, predominantly mobilised by the *ad hoc* committee/CSW, rather than socialist or radical feminist ideas:

"Some of us weren't happy with the Late Late - we thought it was too soon. I suppose looking back on it, it wasn't as disastrous as we thought it might be. We just thought we were going public far too soon, We were not one hundred per cent certain or sure of what we were doing and where we were going. We started off as one group of about twenty women and for ages we were just one group, anybody who wanted to come came to Mrs. Gaj's attic room. And then we broke up into branches and we were all sent out to all the new branches to get them to accept the six point plan. That was quite difficult...for example, the notion of one family one house. I remember having a very difficult time in Donnybrook trying to get this through because they weren't into the social aspect of it, they didn't want to get into Left wing politics. They just wanted contraceptives and equal rights. But we got it through in the end - I don't think there was any branch that did not accept the six point programme." (Member IWLM, Left activist)

The IWLM staged a mass meeting in response to the widespread coverage and subsequent media attention. A public meeting was held in the Mansion House in April 1971. This movement event was a major turning point. Over 1,000 women attended, which was far in excess of the numbers expected. The demands of the movement were outlined and

discussed. Following the meeting, a plethora of women's liberation groups formed. On the surface, there was overall consensus between the large audience of women that night. Immediately felt grievances were activated for many women by these events, which further precipitated mobilisation:

"I have something here I found in a drawer and 25 years ago it was handed out in the Mansion House to a meeting which was amazingly large. We thought the Mansion House when we saw the room was far too big and a woman called Mary Shearan had booked it and she was shivering in her shoes because she thought we would have a little group in the corner of it. But actually on the night there wasn't room for everybody and they had to squeeze in...The circular which was given out then was "Equal rights for Irish women - do you think it's just that for every 26p a woman earns a male counterpart gets 47; do you think it's just that the civil service and state sponsored bodies...sack women upon marriage; do you think it's just that the tax structure actively works against women..."...I am sure that, that is very old stuff for you but when people read that they were shocked. That night the meeting was absolutely electric. People were jumping up and shouting...I remember in particular a woman called Helen Weavy stood up and said 'I'm an unmarried mother' and we had to wait for the applause to die down...it was so brave of her to do what she did at that time." (June Levine, address to *WERRC Conference*, May 1995.)

The professional resource mobilisation model de-emphasises the role of grievances as a dominant motivation in the process of collective action. Grievances were a mobilising factor to participation in the early radical branch of the women's movement. However, a pre-existing organisational base with a consciousness raising focus, although unstructured and autonomous, was necessary for translating grievances into collective action. Consciousness raising was a key resource and a form of collective action in itself. The mobilising strategies of the IWLM propelled the advancement of this sector. The feminist consciousness of a radical constituency of Irish women was raised because of strategic mobilisation and confrontational direct action staged by the IWLM. Grievances alone were not sufficient to generate successful collective action in this sector. Women's liberation mobilised a distinct style of *organisation* which drew on key resources from within the 'new' social movement sector - the

energy of young women; consciousness raising; the mass media; radical politics. An important theoretical issue in this study is concerned with assessing how necessary are grass roots activists and their grievances compared with professional movement organisers. As Staggenborg states, "is the real work of social movements carried out behind the scenes rather than in the streets?" (Staggenborg, 1991: 7).

At the first delegate meeting, following the Mansion House meeting, a consensus was reached that contraception was a cardinal issue for women's liberation. The famous 'Contraceptive Train' was staged in May 1971. IWLM members and other women travelled to Belfast and brought contraceptives (of which the sale, import and advertisement was banned since 1935) illegally and in a confrontational manner through customs at Connolly Station, Dublin. After half an hour of chaos, the women were let through customs without being stopped, chanting and waving banners. This created huge *international* media attention and publicity. Negative reactions (both within the movement and across Irish society) were numerous:

"The scheme backfired and an ideal opportunity to demonstrate the idiocy of the contraceptive laws was lost. The gleeful women blew up the condoms like balloons and customs officers found it embarrassing to be confronted by women demanding to be arrested. The incident made press headlines the next day and greatly alarmed both the moderate elements within the movement and the ordinary women outside it. The outing was condemned from the pulpit by a priest who said it was 'unworthy and undignified.'" (Fennell and Arnold, 1987: 10)

A large number of resignations and bitter exchanges ensued. Nuala Fennell, for instance, blamed "the alignment of women's liberation with all left wing issues" (Rose, 1974: 83) and, in a letter to the newspapers upon her resignation, stated that IWLM was "anti-American, anti-clergy, anti-Government, anti-ICA, anti-police, anti-men..." (Levine, 1982: 233). A core faction diverted their energies and mobilised direct action through the

provision of services for women. Others were more political and maintained their radical commitments through involvement in specific campaigns (for example, contraception and reform of the Juries Act). The direct action tactics of the movement had both a positive and negative effect. These strategies successfully animated a broad women's liberation constituency for the first time, but in the process alienated more moderate activists both within this sector and in women's rights SMOs. Significantly, the organising focus and related impact of the IWLM raised Irish women's consciousness of their grievances. This organisational base proliferated organically and in the process augmented this style of feminist activism.

Confrontational movement events as a tactic, however, frequently produced disunity in the organisation. Activists oriented towards achieving women's rights on a gradual basis recognised the merits of political lobbying and were alienated from what were extremely radical tactics in the context of Irish society. The women of the left tended to be involved in other political movements and knew how to organise radical groups, recognised the long-term political consequences of these strategies. The "undignified" nature of events like the contraceptive Train led a broader, more representative constituency of cautious activists to call for the IWLM to moderate its tone. The political experience and pragmatism of these factions clashed with the personal liberation and resulting sense of urgency articulated by influential idealists.

The impending fragmentation of the IWLM after the Mansion House meeting became more pronounced because of internal divisions over preferred tactics. These divisions were exacerbated by dissension over feminist ideologies, diverging views on the Northern Irish question and resentment by new members of a 'hierarchy of personalities' within the movement. Activists diffused into diverse SMOs and concentrated on

initiatives more congruent with their ideological and action-oriented preferences.

The Proliferation of the IWLM

One activist critically recalled the dominant schisms which consolidated within the IWLM and subsequently dispersed:

"There were three ideological divides in the IWLM: Left wing women - who knew how to organise, people like Máirín de Burca and Máirín Johnson. Separatist women - who varied in focus. Men were the problem. At the end of the 1970s it was lesbians who consolidated this ideology...and this led to concern about alienating women - in fact they weren't as bad as the women in the next decade. And another group, who's ideology was 'mé féin' - women who feared being labelled feminist...Many of these later became 'careerist feminists.'" (Founder member IWLM, Left activist, journalist)

The notion of the 'free rider' conceptualised by resource mobilisation theorists suggests that women can benefit from the movement's successes without participating or declaring themselves 'feminists,' but will participate when rewarded by selective incentives (Oberschall, 1973). Incentives vary from personal ambition, prestige, respect, friendship and leadership opportunities. Participation in the women's movement during the 1970s brought diverse selective incentives - companionship of like-minded women; the enjoyment of demonstrating, planning, campaigning; the challenge of legal cases and dealing with the media; or the basic relief of 'getting out of the house.' It gave women an arena to use skills denied to them in established political groups - political organising, leadership, research, providing social services.

Gamson states that a movement's incentive structure is more complicated (Gamson, 1975: 66-7). The "satisfaction of working for a just cause" is conceptually distinct from selective incentives. Carden (1978: 179-196) later adopted this notion in relation to the women's movement

and coins this class of incentives 'ideological,' which are supplementary to selective incentives.¹² Ideological differences occur both over strategies and goals. Members of the women's movement have disagreed over the distribution of resources to implement these. Internal conflict resulted in factionalism and fragmentation in the IWLM. During the 1970s radical feminists progressively realised it was not possible to pursue *all* of the relevant issues under one organisation. When conflict arose in women's liberation SMOs it was often solved by proliferation - by one faction founding a new SMO in which it was possible to co-operate in areas where ideologies overlapped (Carden, 1978: 187). The central point here is that the movement's proliferation resulted in part from activists' consensus that organisational diversity could be a practical means to achieve radical feminist objectives at the same time as coping with participants' diverse interpretations of a general ideology. This also applied to non-ideological interests or selective incentives. Women particularly anxious to exercise certain skills, for example, may focus on a single issue SMO. Political women, business women and lesbian women formed their own SMOs, for instance. Carden's basic premise is that an individual will be most satisfied in an organisation which offers a number of highly valued selective incentives combined with personally rewarding ideological incentives (Carden, 1978: 187).

Some activists became alienated from the IWLM because it offered them neither ideological nor selective incentives. Ideologically they objected to the radicalism or nationalism of some of the group and focused their action on SMOs which complemented their interest in practical action and reformist, moderate tactics. When an organisation fails to offer ideological and selective incentives, members create new groups of their own (Oberschall, 1973; Gamson, 1975). According to Carden, by creating small, differentiated groups activists can avoid the internal disputes that

threaten the personal support that is integral to feminist organisations facing a hostile society. In addition, feminist activists are ideologically committed to bringing about change in a highly committed manner, characterised by long-term activism and the slow pace of change. Because members have made this sort of life long, emotional commitment to the 'cause' and the movement is a central part of their lives, their SMO must cater for this.

Ideology was a resource in terms of raising consciousness and politicising activists in the process of intense debate in the IWLM and in the resulting production of new meanings and symbols around the associated mobilising issues. Feminist ideologies were thus an integral element of the discourse of radical SMOs. Tensions arose on the basis of conflict between socialist, radical, separatist and liberal feminist ideas. These debates were further nuanced by political issues particular to Irish society, such as nationalism and socialism. Diverging views on the Northern Ireland question were a frequent source of discontent in both the IWLM and in later SMOs (IWU in particular). Debate around ideological purity was not a conscious activity in women's rights SMOs. In fact, it is clear that some activists in women's rights SMOs did not define themselves as feminists at all. In 1970s Ireland, the label 'feminist' was still considered subversive in the 'corridors of power.' Younger, radical women did not experience the same degree of constraint. *Intrinsically* ideologies are present in every movement organisation and clearly feminist ideologies informed the praxis of both sectors of the women's movement - 'feminists' *led* each sector, for example. The degree to which ideology influences mobilisation and acts as a resource varies greatly. Freeman (1975) points out that a common assumption is that ideology largely determines a movement's strategy. In reality it is a dynamic relationship, and is

developed in the context of several other confines and ongoing tactical dilemmas.

Carden (1978) poses the question, "given that the new feminist ideology attracted recruits in great numbers, why did the resulting social movement proliferate into thousands of independent groups instead of developing one or a few large organisations?" (Carden, 1978: 183). Carden's analysis demonstrates empirically the distinction between selective and ideological incentives and shows how individual variation in both types of incentives (particularly ideological incentives) provides a pressure towards proliferation. The conflicting ideals of individual autonomy and sisterhood interact to promote proliferation without causing the movement to disintegrate completely (Carden, 1978: 183). The ideal of sisterhood produces unity and a collective identity between a diversity of SMOs. Within the theoretical model adopted, ideology and incentives work together to predict the observed movement structure - a large number of autonomous but co-operating groups. Carden's analysis further suggests that this is the case in women's rights SMO. The same forces operate in the CSW, a mass-based, umbrella organisation with a liberal feminist identity. The CSW proliferated *internally* into a large number of largely independent but networked organisations. A core issue is thus how different ideological orientations co-existed, conflicted and transformed within the life course of a singular social movement.

Sympathetic Elite: The Media

Jenkins and Perrow (1977) downplay grievances and stress the importance of support from established organisations and elites with access to political power in the mobilisation of social movements. Their research on the farm worker movement of the 1960s, for example, reveals the critical role of liberal support organisations in the success of the

movement. The relationship between the print media and the women's movement during the 1970s is described by one interviewee as "*almost collusion...all we had to do was pick up the phone and we got publicity*" (Member Well Woman Centre, IWU). The initial group which formed the IWLM in 1970 were mainly journalists, and other activists strategically positioned within the media subsequently joined.¹³ Catherine Rose states:

"The real revolutionaries in this decade and those who sparked the initial enthusiasm for an end to discrimination against women are journalists;...who whether reporting on or editorially commissioning work for the women's pages of the national newspapers consistently focused on the injustices and discrimination suffered by women in Irish society. Since the late 1960s they have done their utmost to waken the consciousness of Irish women to the necessity for upgrading the status of women" (Rose, 1974: 8)

Before the 1970s the media was hostile to feminism, frequently labelling SMOs 'communist':

"For instance, the Irish Housewives Association is one body that, although its membership is largely made up of people who have no Red sympathies, has always been used as a medium of expression by others whose ideological allegiance is not in doubt....It is a mistake to play into the hands of these people. Governments can be removed by popular vote in this country. The government of Russia cannot be thus removed and if a crowd assembled in the Red Square in Moscow to demonstrate against Stalin's budget we know what would happen to them." (*The Roscommon Herald*, 15 August 1953 quoted in Tweedy, 1992: 70-71)

The inimitable relationship between the women's liberation sector and the media in Ireland was a critical factor in advancing all centres of the movement. A member of the CSW stated that "*there wasn't a day that went by there wasn't something in the media.*" A journalist in the IWLM described how "*the press was very protective of the women's movement.*" The IWLM included editors of the (then fashionable) 'women's page' in the

national newspapers. These activists utilised this resource extensively to secure direct coverage of the movement's agenda, events and strategies:

"The two key resources were RTE and the Irish Times. They recruited very independently minded women who 'got away with murder'..." (Member Well Woman Centre, Radical activist)

Molotch (1979) deals with the relation of social movements to the media, from a resource mobilisation perspective, and conceptualises the interactive relationship between the two. The news media is particularly interested in the activities of social movements. The media was a vital resource in disseminating radical feminist ideas and in animating the direct action of women's liberation SMOs in the public sphere. According to Molotch, there is a certain dependency between social movements and media, but in a context with high potential for tension (Molotch, 1979: 71). The question of how media processes facilitated the mobilisation of the IWLM and the contingencies framing these intersections is examined.

The initial core group of radical activists were especially aware of the strategic importance of the media to mobilisation. The fact that founding members of the IWLM were *themselves* strategically positioned in both the print and broadcast media was advantageous (see Molotch, 1979: 73). The extent to which this awareness influenced tactics was explicit in the interview and documentary data. The *Late Late Show* appearance and the Contraceptive Train were both staged to gain widespread coverage. The IWLM utilised the media as a key resource in these movement events. A flamboyant/expressive style of activism, mobilised by key leaders, alerted the attention of the media (see appendix 6). The effect of publicity on the group was to increase morale and resources, which resulted in the formulation of an extensive repertoire of confrontational tactics - skills which were not developed in the traditional

branch of the movement. Direct action further aimed to satirise and display the perceived 'absurdity' of discriminatory practices and laws - and to simultaneously normalise and generate a broader awareness of the group's mobilising issues beyond the woman-centred, consciousness raising activity within the group.

The position from which a social movement struggles for access derives from the fact that it is not routine. In contrast, established interest groups do not have this difficulty. Their grievances are easily translated into institutional settings that bear little resemblance to autonomous social movements and their goals are supported by the legal system and other institutions.

The women's liberation sector formulated their expressive style of direct action tactics in order to gain maximum publicity. The 1970s experience was unprecedented. In their deliberate strategy to utilise this resource, the IWLM clearly facilitated mobilisation in a plethora of new movement centres. Molotch suggests there are two possible directions a social movement can go: (1) create non-routine events for coverage; (2) the presumed insanity of the movement is capitalised upon rather than dealt with as a liability. In order to display the *status quo* as absurd, the IWLM activists frequently displayed themselves as unresponsive to normative behaviour (Molotch, 1979: 81). For example, Garret Fitzgerald was spurred to go the RTE studios during the *Late Late Show* broadcast because of his outrage at the extent of Mary Kenny's criticism of politicians. The IWLM were viewed by the Irish public at large as 'outrageous.'

The difficulty in assessing whether a certain form of coverage will provide net benefit constituted much of the internal politics of the movement organisation. A leading activist stated:

"What I do remember coming into the discourse is that we had to go slowly and step by step. I wouldn't go on the contraceptive train because I didn't want it to look as if single women were looking for contraceptives and we were moving too fast. I mean I was in favour of anybody needing them having them. We were always looking over our shoulders at rural women and I thought it would give the wrong impression... of all these 'single hussies' in Dublin wanting contraceptives! I organised the demo for them coming home but I wouldn't go on the train." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

Some activists were more pragmatic and strategically sensitive to the net benefit of certain forms of coverage. The outcome of such decisions not only affects the success of the movement, but also shapes its leadership and its meaning to the general public and to its own conscience constituency. Debated options in social movements include the possibility of dealing with only certain 'trusted' media (typically the underground press or certain left-liberal establishment organs) or certain favoured media individuals. In the relationship between the women's movement in Ireland and the media, the number of activists working as journalists was in itself a resource.¹⁴ However, the success with which the IWLM gained massive publicity is related to their tactic of non-normative behaviour and creating non-routine events. In the wake of national media events, awareness of the movement grew rapidly. *"Chains or Change"* (the first manifesto of the IWLM), for example, was widely debated and disseminated following the invitation to appear on the *Late Late Show*. It was, for instance, highly unusual for a woman to publicly declare herself an 'unmarried mother' before the 1970s.

Molotch contends that media and movements, are part of a single process which guarantees stability in the face of continuous challenges (Molotch, 1979: 91). Media, at different stages, is either a supporter or an antagonist of social movements. The media and the wider social movement sector persistently interact. The media is an important influence

on the course and direction of any social movement. In particular, the short-lived mobilisation of the IWLM between 1970 and 1972 was by and large dependent on the sympathetic support of the media. An erratic style of activism characterised by a high turnover of activists was counteracted by the group's impact through the media. A combination of the strategic position of independently-minded activists within the media, the direct action tactics and strategies of the IWLM (formulated to gain maximum publicity), and the chaotic and flamboyant style of key movement activists aroused widespread public reaction. The collective action of a sympathetic elite within the media has diminished since the 1970s and this places constraints on the feminist agenda of both individual members of the media and the women's movement in general.

Conflict in Women's Liberation Organisations

Interviewees acknowledged that they did not foresee the growth of women's liberation on such a scale. The IWLM rationally set in motion a chain of events that had repercussions far beyond the expectations of their members. A radical feminist sector was mobilised on a scale unprecedented since the mobilisation around suffrage at the turn of the century.

This chapter identifies the reasons why the media was so supportive and hence crucial to the advancement of the IWLM, how the tactics of the group gained widespread publicity for the mobilising issues and how consciousness raising was integral to the politicisation of Irish women. The divisive effect of these social movement dynamics have also been alluded to.

The IWLM did not harness a national radical movement organisation:

"We had no idea how to organise a mass movement...Early efforts failed and it just couldn't be done." (Founder IWLM, Journalist)

It quickly discovered that it was impossible to pursue a common agenda under the umbrella of one radical organisation. It could be suggested that the media presented a distorted picture of the capacity of the IWLM to mobilise a mass social movement. A small group of about twenty women prompted a broader recruitment of activists largely because of their privileged position within the media. There was a gap between the potential of the IWLM portrayed by the media and the ability of its structures and organisational base to absorb and mobilise that potential. The group subsequently fragmented.

A combination of internal conflict, the absence of ideological and selective incentives for some activists, and a lack of formal organisational structures encouraged proliferation. There were three ideological strands: (1) Radical feminists, who believed that women's liberation through autonomous direct action and consciousness raising was paramount; (2) Nationalist feminists, who fused nationalist and feminist demands; (3) Equal rights feminists, who preferred moderate tactics and gradual reform through established means, and tended to focus on the issues of contraception and employment. The emergence of a "hierarchy of personalities," despite the efforts of the group to remain participatory and leaderless, occurred when the constituency expanded. In addition, the IWLM quickly dissipated when a key leader suddenly withdrew. The IWLM was very reliant on Mary Kenny's flamboyant leadership and style of activism. New women conscientised by the ideas of radical feminism rejected the hierarchy that in reality reflected the friendship bonds and close personal networks that developed within the initial core group (particularly through engaging in consciousness raising). There was

another cohort of women who would have left anyway - they felt the need to accomplish practical gains and consciousness raising resulted in a state of inertia. Political differences among the members were pivotal and one faction was particularly hostile to nationalism.

The original core group fragmented but diversified sufficiently to mobilise a constituency who had formed more specialised, issue oriented groups by the mid-1970s (such as, AIM). The self-help strand of the movement embraced a number of issues. In addition, radical activists endeavoured to preserve a non-hierarchical, autonomous mode of mobilisation across the women's movement. This galvanised the persistent expansion of SMOs across the movement throughout the 1970s, in the form of proliferating small group, specialised radical SMOs. Activists frustrated with the radicalism of the IWLM, including Bernadette Quinn and Nuala Fennell, transferred their social movement commitments to mainstreaming SMOs. In agreement with Dahlerup, (see Chapter One) proliferation resulted in increasing complexity and diversification within the women's movement, and the movement mobilised in several centres at the same time. One member reflected on the implications of this process:

"The IWLM was short-lived but it went on to live in other organisations - Women's Aid, Cherish...A lot of them saw being mainstream was the way to go...Nuala Fennell saw a particular niche....Looking back on it now, at the time I suppose I didn't feel anything much about it breaking up because I was too active in other things. But I suppose if I was asked I would have said it was a pity. But now I wouldn't - I think it did what it set out to do. If it had gone on it would have either dwindled away or gone into bickering or different camps...It stayed together for as long as it could have stayed together and then it broke up. There was no decline in the women's movement as far as I could see." (Founder IWLM, Left activist)

This analysis suggests it is not large numbers that necessarily maintain a social movement in the long term - it is a highly committed cadre

of radical activists who successfully mobilise resources, *even* in a hospitable political environment, and relocate their energies from fragmenting SMOs into new, proliferating organisations. There was a sufficient number of new SMOs engaged in the movement's proliferation and organic growth. There was simultaneously a large turnover of activists in loosely structured local SMOs. When the IWLM ceased to create less spectacular events and attempted to mobilise resources at a national level it diffused rapidly. A significant constituency of activists focused their attention on practical women's projects and the mass media "went for newer news" (Dahlerup, 1986: 235). New SMOs were mobilised in a multiplicity of movement centres which is a crucial indication of social movement advance.

The IWLM in general developed in an erratic, disorganised and chaotic fashion between 1970-72 and was short-lived. However, the group's activities provided an important resource for future action and women began to rediscover and incorporate the historical legacy of militant feminism in Ireland. The IWLM pioneered a loosely organised, autonomous, decentralised and participatory mode of mobilisation. Those who activated radical 'offshoots' increasingly formed alliances with women who were active or conscientised in the traditional women's rights movement sector. This process of diffusion and cross-fertilisation occurred in other social movements and was typical of how loosely structured, radical SMOs evolve over time. The strategies of a small group of women in the IWLM mobilised a far-reaching feminist constituency which expanded the potential of the women's movement beyond the more structured and self-contained women's rights sector.

The prominence of the IWLM, combined with the consolidation of the CSW (elucidated above), provided the necessary organisational base for the formation or progression of organisations which either emerged in

the 1970s or were established organisations. New SMOs formed between 1970-1975 included AIM (1972), Adapt (1973), Women's Aid (1974), the Women's Progressive Association (subsequently the Women's Political Association, 1970), Ally (1971), Family Planning Services (1972), The Cork Federation of Women's Organisations (1972, representing seventeen local associations, and responsible for opening the first Citizens Advice Bureau) and Cherish (1972) (see appendix 7). Feminist SMOs developed into effective political lobbyists, and activated practical women's services which were in increasing demand by Irish women. The capacity of the movement diversified and broadened significantly beyond the original concerns of the IWLM and the CSW. The movement's growth was not strictly guided by ideological considerations or according to previous membership of a particular group. It was organic and diffuse.

After the break up of the IWLM, no mass-based women's liberation organisation emerged on a similar scale. The Fownes Street group mobilised cultural aspects of women's liberation and produced two issues of the Fownes Street Journal.¹⁵ It was not until 1975 that a women's liberation group of equal impact to the IWLM emerged - Irishwomen United.

Irishwomen United

IWU held their first conference in Liberty Hall on 8 June 1975. The principles of internal democracy and a communal approach to the administrative work of the group was explicitly adopted. *Banshee*, the groups magazine, had a rotating editorial committee.¹⁶ Their advertisement stated:

"Irishwomen United works on the basis of general meetings (discussions and action planning), joint actions (e.g. pickets, public meetings, workshops; at present on women in trade unions,

contraception, social welfare and political theory) and consciousness raising groups." (Fennell and Arnold, 1987: 12)

IWU used a similar repertoire of tactics to the IWLM. However, this group as a whole were more politicised. IWU's strategy was a mixture of participatory democracy, direct action, consciousness raising and political campaigns. Between 1975-1977 the organisation's mobilisation was intense. The CAP (Contraceptive Action Programme) was initiated by members of IWU in 1976 and became a focal mobilising issue. Members of this same group of women were involved with the setting up of the group that preceded the abortion referral/information SMO, Open Line Counselling, in 1980. IWU mobilised in a far more organised and political fashion than IWLM. Organisational minutes record:

"The most sustained public campaign of IWU has been centred around the contraception issue. There are many voices in favour of a change in the law but our perspective is distinct from others in that our demands are based on the fundamental right of all women to control their bodies. Legislation in this area has persistently denied this right and discussion on this issue persistently excludes the voice of women. While IWU supports Mary Robinson's bill our campaign has gone further than that. Our demands as stated at the rally in Liberty Hall November 12th 1975 include: State financed, community run, birth control clinics throughout the country, staffed by those trained to advise on all aspects of birth control. That contraceptives of all types and attendant services be provided FREE. For full, free, sex education programmes in these clinics, in maternity hospitals and in schools. The legal right to advocate contraception through literature, meetings and discussion. That the best and safest forms of contraception be available." (IWU, *Contraception Workshop Minutes*, May 9th-10th 1976)

IWU was formed by activists with a background in radical and socialist politics (for example, Anne Speed was a trade union activist and member of the Revolutionary Marxist group, and later became a member of Sinn Féin). IWU's membership encompassed a diverse grouping of left-wing philosophies, including the Movement for a Socialist Republic, the

Communist Party of Ireland, the Social Socialist Workers Movement, the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the International Lesbian Caucus. The Working Women's Charter drawn up by the ITGWU (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union) was utilised as a basis. In addition to the key demands of the IWLM, IWU added free contraception, self determined sexuality, equal pay based on a national minimum wage, and the establishment of women's centres. Few activists were former members of the IWLM and IWU was in many respects a different style of radical SMO - primarily on the basis of ideology and politicisation. However, they were organically related. One radical activist suggests that IWU became a breeding ground for the more ideologically radical women that emerged from the IWLM era:

"IWLM was colossal and in other ways it was terribly radical. You had women in the core group in Dublin going around all over the country and the ICA having arguments among themselves whether you would invite these women to speak or not...You had issues of contraception which were hugely radical at the time. If you look at it in the context of other countries you don't realise how radical they were. Of course, they did get into ideological problems as a result of the differences within the movement, which meant that IWU was in fact the radical part of that that stayed together...I would say to a woman in IWU they were radical, but that brought its own problems. Some of them were very involved in other politics." (Member IWU, Radical Activist)

This raises the question of how such diverse feminist ideologies, intersecting with alternative political philosophies and orientations, could mobilise collective protest and act as a major resource in this period.

The majority of activists in IWU were politicised in other radical social movements:

"Just after IWU was set up I got involved....When I was a student in UCD I had been involved in a lot of Left wing politics....When I lived in London I taught in East London which was highly politicised at the time (early 1970s)...At a personal level I had always found the organisations I was involved in very unsatisfactory - the women were always treated badly....the men

did all the talking." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis Centre, Radical Campaigner)

Ita Hynes reported in the *Irish Independent* newspaper in 1975:

"Irishwomen United, founded last April, is the umbrella under which Women's Lib groups from the Universities, the Sandymount Self-Help Group, and the Revolutionary Marxist group work together in order, as they say, 'to change society'." (Fennell, 1987: 11)

IWU's stated aims centred on the need for an *autonomous* women's movement. Documentary data reveals that contraception was a pivotal mobilising issue:

"...IWU has undertook and correctly so that the issue of contraception today still remains the most immediately vital and central issue to most Irishwomen. We have tried to raise this in the context of the right of women to control their own bodies..." (*Discussion paper for Teach-in of IWU, "How to Build a Women's Movement"*. A collective effort presented by V. Purcell, Linda Hall, Anne Speed, Máire Casey, Ann O'Brien, Betty Purcell, Jackie Morrissey).

From the outset, the group had a clearly defined purpose:

"...the need for a charter rather than one or two single issue campaigns, grew out of the need to build an on going movement to combat the whole sphere of women's oppression in Ireland and the need of that movement to have a clear programme to give its different tendencies a direction for action and resultantly its growth. What has been important about our charter, was that women adopted the idea of the need for women to organise and to have a programme to work on...It is a platform which will enable that broad layer of women whose consciousness extends beyond their own immediate and burning problems (such as contraception) to a new awareness of a whole series of problems and fight a continuing battle against women's oppression. What is qualitatively different from that period with today's situation, is that the instrument with which to mobilise these masses of women has now emerged - IWU. It is not an 'artificial' creation placed at the centre of the stage by a handful of manipulators, as some like to assert, but represents women in capitalist society today. This is not asserting that we are the elite, the best, that all other women should be forgotten about, but recognising the specific role we have as IWU...And that is to

- win the best currents of the women's movement to our understanding of the pre-requisites of women's liberation; to initiate struggles; activate women on particular issues, according to the sector we are working in e.g. among women students, among housewives, among women workers." (*Discussion paper for Teach-in of IWU, "How to Build a Women's Movement"*, a collective effort presented by V. Purcell, Linda Hall, Anne Speed, Máire Casey, Ann O'Brien, Betty Purcell, Jackie Morrissey).

While there was consensus around core principles of women's liberation, ideological preferences among activists were inherently diverse. Ideological schisms within IWU were based on nationalism, socialism, lesbian separatism and radical feminism:

"I think the Irish feminist movement was affected...by what was happening in the North...There were huge arguments within, not so much the Irish Women's Liberation Movement which was just a kind of an incredible flourishing of great anger but also great enjoyment...The more political IWU which came afterwards, it was within this that there were colossal arguments about the North. I mean, every single Sunday we would have an argument about the North. But funny enough we managed to stay together despite the huge differences, because there were huge blocs within IWU... a lesbian bloc which felt that anything that wasn't directed to sexuality was creating diversion. Then you had ones that thought that the North was very much part of our conflict...Having ties with Republican women and the Armagh strikers was very much part of that. Then you had another section of women who felt that 'yes' they wanted to be involved politically with the other socialist movements around - in the trade unions, very specifically in education - and they felt that they didn't want anything to do with women in the North...They saw the history of women in the South as having been damaged by Republicanism. So these arguments would be had, and then you had a fourth group who was in with everybody but just wanted to get on with the actual practicalities of what needed to be done." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis Centre, Woman's Right to Choose Group)

Inter-organisational archival sources, including IWU discussion/position papers, workshop proceedings and minutes of meetings, provide evidence of vibrant ideological debate within the organisation. These documents are particularly rich and reflect detailed analysis of the nature of Irish women's oppression that occurred. The relationship of the autonomous

women's movement to socialism, anti-colonialism and other political movements was particularly contentious (R. Conroy's archival collection provides extensive documentation of this dynamic). For instance, two contrasting perspectives within IWU state the following:

"As we come out of the stupor of our enslavement, women display all the characteristic reactions of the colonised. We have a great anger; we search for our lost culture and for a sense of our own identity...and we insist on separatism...That the women's movement is not socialist today is therefore not surprising." (*IWU Teach-in, "Dual Membership,"* 8-9 May 1976)

"There is a need for an autonomous women's movement which is both Feminist and Socialist. At present there are two strong currents in Irishwomen United and in the women's movement in general. Rather than join forces to effect greater strength, they often proceed on parallel lines. The purpose, or one of the purposes of this paper, is to isolate such a tendency and offer a corrective....Feminist organisation is necessary to allow women to co-operate with men on issues of mutual concern without being co-opted by them. We cannot liberate ourselves as a ladies auxiliary; nor will women overthrow imperialism and capitalism alone." (*IWU Discussion Paper, "Feminism and Socialism."*)

Inter-group Conflict

From the outset, conflict was inherent in IWU over ideological purity and between those who promoted what was termed the 'revolutionary struggle' and adherents of the radical feminism which many believed was the original purpose of the organisation. For example, the minutes recorded that at one point members had to state their political affiliations before speaking (R. Conroy's archive). The group was comprised of radical feminist activists who fervently articulated their ideological beliefs:

"When I came back from England in 1975 I heard about IWU and went along to a meeting in Pembroke Street, I started to go to the meetings every Sunday...I was very shy at the time...there was a huge spectrum of views in IWU - ranging from separatists to Republicans...There was a lot of women like me in the middle...I

was very anti-Republican....I couldn't identify with their politics."
(Member IWU, Radical campaigns)

A radical feminist focus intersected with individual activists' radical political ideas and fomented a distinctive collective identity in the organisation:

"It was radical in terms of what was going on in society at the time...Within the group itself there was a huge spectrum of views right across the board...The only thing which united us was our belief in feminism. Feminism to me is not like a member of a party - it is like climbing over a very high wall...once going over it there really is no going back. It's a whole way of life that pervades your being for the rest of your life. That's how I feel about it now...I think feminism becomes part of your soul, if you like, and it pervades everything you do..." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis Centre, Radical Campaigns)

There was a high capacity for discord in IWU and 'rows' were constant and acrimonious. Internal divisions and personal exhaustion became divisive. Interviewees recall open friction and anger between radicals, socialists, lesbians and Republicans as an inherent movement dynamic. For some activists this was oppressive:

"It is probably too soon - it will probably be another 20/30 years - before someone can really look back and say why it was that so many feminist organisations ended up in the most dreadful rows...In IWU...the rows would be most unbelievable. It was pretty awful in the end, people were literally at each others throats. It's not really what feminism is about...For me working for a feminist organisation was not the best thing I could do. I don't think I would be unique in that experience." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis Centre, Woman's Right to Choose)

The political situation in Northern Ireland is a contentious issue in the history of SMOs in the radical movement sector, even though there were constrained links between the two parallel women's movements (Evason, 1991). This strand mobilised in solidarity with the women prisoners in Armagh.¹⁷ This campaign was widely articulated and debated through publications like *Wicca*:¹⁸

"The fact that women patriots are engaging in a separate struggle with the British administration in pursuit of status as political prisoners, even to the point of death, has had widescale repercussions within the women's movement and in society as a whole....Whilst the Armagh prisoners have declared themselves that they do not wish to be supported as women - but as patriots, nevertheless the fact that women are standing in the forefront of this struggle has raised the issue of political status in a very sharp way in the women's movement." (Wicca, 1977, no. 13: 14)

Factions within both the IWLM, and particularly IWU, clearly defined their feminism in terms of nationalist politics. One IWU activist articulated this viewpoint:

"There was a parallel development [in the North] but it was very confined by the nature of the state - by the conflict between nationalism and unionism. Within each community there has been developments. But I would say there has been, by could say I am prejudiced... but I think it's a fact that the greater developments have taken place within the nationalist community which is seeking to seeking to break out of the status quo...Whereas within the unionist community its a question of a siege mentality, retrenchment and therefore little questioning. I think within the third level educated milieu there has been some developments in the unionist community, but not deep into the heart of it. But I think in the nationalist community that development has percolated through. The dynamic is for change, openness, wanting to 'fight back' so there's a different dynamic there." (Member IWU, CAP, Woman's Right to Choose, Trade Unionist)

Interviewees critical of nationalism held the view that historically nationalism has persistently reinforced the oppression of Irish women.

One proponent responded:

"When you say nationalism what I think you are really talking about is the male leadership of the nationalist movement. Depending on your political view,...from the point of view that nationalism is a bad thing, I don't have that view. I think nationalism has had an anti-establishment dynamic and it depends on what political ideas it has been informed by as to whether it has gone progressive or reactionary. The progressive I believe is what has grown out of the republicanism of people like Sinn Fein and Gerry Adams to which I am now part of whereas the more reactionary being the 'De Valera concept'...a Catholic

Constitution for Catholic people. Counterproductive, reactionary and has contributed to the situation we are in."
(Member IWU, CAP, Woman's Right to Choose)

The relationship between nationalism and feminism is a nuance particular to the Irish women's movement, in the context of Western Europe. Moane (1996) analyses the legacies of colonialism for women in modern Irish society from the perspective of a feminist social psychology, which focuses on the interrelationships between psychological and sociological patterns. She argues that the exploration of the legacies of colonialism for Irish women offers considerable insights into both Irish feminism and Irish society. Nationalist feminism has evolved since the last century and contemporary nationalists clearly saw themselves differently within IWU:¹⁹

"The partition of the country, the war in the 6 counties and the different material and legislative conditions that this has generated since 1922 has given rise to divergent political and social trends in the 6 and 26 counties of the country, producing the same tensions between nationalism and feminist thinking as confronted the Irish suffragettes and women nationalists at the turn of the century."
(Jackson, 1986: 49)

In the 1970s, conflict tended to occur *within* autonomous SMOs in the women's liberation sector over ideologies, and *between* women's rights and women's liberation organisations over tactics. Whereas women's liberation organisations espoused ideals of participatory democracy, anti-hierarchy and openness, often these very factors were integral to their fragmentation. A leading member of IWU recalled:

"I have become very disillusioned with radical organisations because I think they can become very repressive. I think you can have more impact maybe as an individual in another organisation, bringing your personal refusal to accept values other than those that equate women and men as equal. You can have quite a lot of influence as a woman - especially if there is a couple of you in an organisation...I have suffered a lot of abuse at

the hands of feminist organisations, as a lot of women have. I think women can be as abusive as men and more abusive at times and I certainly wouldn't like you to write up a report indicating that feminist organisations are some kind of mecca or bliss - they are not. I don't know how honest people are being with you but if they are being honest they will tell you that there can be a lot of abusive behaviour in feminist organisations. Power struggles, politics and also the fact that women are very jealous of their positions. A lot of women who get to a position of power in an organisation are scared stiff that they are going to be toppled off it by somebody else. In order to maintain their position they become quite abusive of other people." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis Centre)

In the organising years of the contemporary women's movement in Ireland, an informal decentralised structure, while encouraging tactical innovation, did not foster the necessary conditions for organisational maintenance (Freeman, 1975; Staggenborg, 1989). For those activists who actively participated in the small groups in the women's liberation sector, after a short period of time a gradual organic process of redirecting their involvement or dropping out of activism all together occurred. The majority of these activists transferred their activism to direct action through the provision of services and campaigns connected to male violence, in particular (such as women's refuge, rape crisis services and anti pornography campaigning). This process ensured that the movement survived and continued to evolve. The campaign for reproductive rights was further radicalised by a core group of activists who directly emerged from this sector at the end of the 1970s.

By 1977, IWU had fragmented, largely due to activists fatigue, excessive in-fighting and factionalism. One activist reflected:

"In some ways I would definitely say its a pity it broke up - if a core group of radical women had stayed together and you had these other things as offshoots...They became the social work areas, facilities, services...There was, for instance, only about 70...who turned up to the various meetings and got involved in several areas. It was really a matter of people just not having energy...eventually after 3 or 4 or 5 years - I mean we would be picketing 'every single

night' or whatever, and putting Banshee together. So that would have been the reason it broke up..." (Member IWU, Radical Campaigner)

On the surface, it seemed that the radical style of activism in IWU had fragmented permanently by 1976 (it was widely assumed it was already defunct since the fragmentation of the IWLM). Pat Brennan speculated on the state of the women's movement in 1979, in relation to a radical campaign mobilised for a Women's Centre in Dublin:

"The organisers say they want the centre to include women from as broad an area as possible. The present campaign, however, doesn't represent as wide a range of opinions as they're hoping to attract. At a recent fund-raising function there was only a fair representation from the radical feminists. The Left was there with a sprinkling of Communist Party and Socialist Labour Party members. There was no sign of what was once called the "Old Guard of Women's Lib". Nor was there any one from the ranks of organisations like the Women's Political Association. The leaders of the women's centre hope to reunite the Irish women's movement. Whether or not they succeed will depend largely on how capably they embrace the political differences between existing women's groups. For a steering collective so heavily biased toward radical feminism it is a big challenge." (Brennan, 1979: 6)

In terms of social movement dynamics, radical feminism was less visible, and diversified and expanded beyond the original organisational base of key SMOs (IWLM and IWU) which fostered a collective identity among a broad constituency of radical activists. A series of sporadic attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to mobilise a national women's liberation movement subsequently. For example, an All-Ireland Women's Conference was held at Trinity College Dublin, on 9th June 1979, to "relaunch a national women's movement". The next chapter will demonstrate how core activists in the IWLM and IWU were 'still there' by the 1980s, but were diffused into different initiatives, which did not resemble the organisational profile of the radical movement sector of the 1970s elucidated in this chapter.

IWU was a core SMO in the Irish women's movement because it systematically addressed radical mobilising issues of revolutionary potential in Irish society. For example, abortion on demand *was* adopted as a mobilising issue within IWU initially. Internal documents reveal the strategic dilemma posed:

"Some months ago Irish Women United took a decision to make free, legal, voluntary abortion a demand in the Charter. An abortion committee was set up to bring forward suggestions to the general meeting on the future policy of Irish Women United on abortion. After one meeting the committee ceased to function on the basis that no campaign was to be launched and therefore there was no necessity for a full workshop. The result of this decision for other members of the organisation has been that individual members find it very difficult to confront the issue publicly. Is this due to: lack of information on the subject; fear of the individual woman to combat the moral question either privately or publicly; or just lack of interest? Irish Women United have distributed a charter which includes a demand on abortion but has yet left it a dead issue. We are the only organisation in the country who demand publicly the right of women to control their own bodies and therefore we must accept some responsibility in combating the church and State ideology." (*IWU, position paper "Abortion,"*)

Irish feminist interpretations of abortion were clearly framed within the constraints of the national political opportunity structure and cleavages:

"The movement must grapple with the problems in the specific Irish situation - our own members are in some doubt on the type of stand we make regarding the relationship between contraception and abortion. Contraception as an issue within the liberal bourgeois establishment is no longer the emotional issue it was in the sixties, therefore in our fight for contraception we can draw on outside support for political action. Abortion on the other hand has already become the stick to beat the Radical Feminist Movement. the debate in Ireland - limited though it has been - has already shown very clearly that Irish Women United are the only voice shouting, or rather whispering, in the wilderness of a society still dominated by a Catholic ideology." (*IWU position paper, "Abortion."*)

The Irish lesbian-feminist debate developed in IWU:

"Apart from the sense of sisterhood and common cause that Irishwomen United generated, the group was noteworthy because it

was a place where lesbians felt free to express their views openly. But alas, due to the pressures of publishing and selling a monthly journal without financial backing and trying to solve problems in relation to the premises where the group held meetings, along with conflicting political priorities, the group eventually split up. Many of the most out-spoken lesbian feminists emigrated to England. Emigration continued over the years with the result that there is now a large population of Irish lesbians in London and smaller communities in Leeds and Bristol." (Crone, 1988: 342)

In both the US and Britain, prior to the 1960s, feminism was not the major reference point for lesbians, and those who were organised at all aligned to the gay rights movement (Randall and Lovenduski, 1993). Lesbians in the US and Britain were confronted with the question of aligning with gay men or women's liberationists. In the beginning, there was silence within both sectors of the women's movement in Ireland. A number of influential works were published in the early 1970s in the US which suggested, for instance, that if gender-appropriate behaviour is a social construction then perhaps lesbians were not 'psychologically flawed' (Ryan, 1992: 49). The international dissemination of these ideas and links with the International Lesbian Caucus were key resources in the mobilisation of Irish lesbians in the radical women's movement.

Ti-Grace Atkinson coined the term political lesbian which had three different meanings: women who adopt a separatist lifestyle; women who live their lives in total commitment to women even though they do not engage in sexual relations with women; lesbians who become politicised to the nature of sexism through feminism. Because of rigid social attitudes to sexuality in Irish society, lesbian activity in this period of advancement was concentrated almost exclusively within the movement and remained underground until recent years. These three political lesbian orientations manifested themselves extensively in the radical branch of the women's movement in the US and Britain. However, difficulties arose. For some activists, lesbianism and feminism became synonymous. As the political

lesbian viewpoint was adopted, interviewees recalled that heterosexual women found it necessary to defend their lifestyle in radical SMOs, such as IWU.

Although there were advantages from the diversity of positions in IWU, including the political knowledge, skills and confidence that members gained, many activists left to pursue more practical or specialised objectives. IWU was the last radical feminist group to successfully mobilise a national profile. Its political dimension diffused into a number of SMOs, which were to mobilise during the 1980s around lesbian organising, the reproductive rights campaign (culminating in the anti-amendment group in the abortion referendum of 1983) and the provision of radical services for women. The radicalism of this constituency had an important effect on the transformation of the movement throughout the 1980s. However, no organisation subsequently mobilised on a systematic basis to the same extent as IWU.

A process of organic diffusion can be traced. Key SMOs were direct offshoots from IWU, including the first Women's Right to Choose Group and Rape Crisis Centre. The organisation's proliferation resulted in part from its members' consensus that organisational diversity could be a practical means to achieve feminist objectives at the same time as coping with participants' diverse interpretations of a general ideology, in a similar pattern to the IWLM (Carden, 1978: 187).

The Rape Crisis Centre was a most prolific radical SMO to mobilise from IWU: *"About six of us were founder members of the Rape Crisis Centre and all of us except maybe one were in IWU"* (Founder member Rape Crisis Centre, radical campaigner). The experience of the women's movement in other countries was drawn upon as a resource in the establishment of the organisation. In contrast to the reformist and mainstream focus of many self help groups set up during the 1970s, the

Rape Crisis Centre was radical in structure and emphasised 'the personal as political':

"When some of us started to set up the Rape Crisis Centre we realised that it was going to take a lot of commitment and we realised that we had to spend not just a lot of time but do a lot of research. We had to make contacts with the various groups in England, and we made quite a lot of contact with a Dutch group as well...what had happened was that Noreen Winchester was an Armagh prisoner at the time and she had been continuously raped by her father and she had been at home minding the children...because the mother had died....She murdered the father one night....A Dutch group were very involved with getting her released and in fact she was released. So the first political action of the Rape Crisis Centre was to be involved with was with them."(Member IWU, Founder member Rape Crisis Centre)

Rape became a central radical mobilising issue for the Irish women's movement from 1977 onwards, but transformed as awareness grew and new activists who were not active in the radical sector in the 1970s mobilised in this area:

"We were kind of conscious of how society was going to react to the Rape Crisis Centre but we really didn't realise just how deeply ingrained the notion of the rape joke, for instance, was in our culture. That whole area in itself became very radical. As it went on you couldn't work any more than three or four years as a rape counsellor - you just couldn't. It's quite a depressing scenario. We ended up just being totally involved in that area. People who came in after us in the Rape Crisis Centre tended to be less radical. First of all they didn't have the radical tradition, they hadn't been there in IWU, they hadn't had all the arguments." (Rape Crisis Activist)

In general, there was a tremendous advancement of voluntary agencies for women in this period which increasingly consolidated and interacted during the 1970s, including the Well Woman Centre, Women's Aid, Adapt and Cherish. Many of these SMOs were set up by women who were activists in the CSW, the IWLM and/or IWU.

The radical sector of the women's movement grew exponentially and advanced rapidly in this period. A key activist in IWU and the Rape Crisis Centre articulated this process:

"I was one of the people who started the Rape Crisis Centre. In a way if somebody said to me in 1977 that by the time I left it... that we would have a building in Leeson Street with a sign above the door and 12 people on the staff I would have said don't talk rubbish. This will never happen! These things are just organic, you start something off, you meet a demand, you react, you respond etc. I think myself that very often people who are involved in the initial process of starting off an organisation are particular kinds of people and I don't know if they are necessarily the best kind of people to continue to run something when it's up and ready and running. Because, in order to start something off by nature you are a pioneering type of person and really I think I have just too much of a loud mouth to remain in that kind of position. An organisation once it gets very established needs people who are operating from a different philosophy - of running the organisation effectively...rather than people who are very committed and politically driven - because I would see myself as very politically driven." (Founder member Rape Crisis Centre, Radical activist)

Contraceptive Rights

The growth of the radical sector of the movement in the wake of disputes over ideology and preferred strategies was further advanced by the cohesive effect of key mobilising issues. In particular, the multifaceted campaign for contraception produced unity and was characterised by co-ordination and coalition between SMOs. Contraception was a core demand of the IWLM, IWU, individual politicians (Mary Robinson moved a bill in 1971 in the Senate), service organisations, the CAP, and was a ground-breaking issue in the McGee Case. Contraception was practically provided by SMOs (such as the CAP and Well Woman Centre). In 1979, the Family Planning Act was passed, legalising contraception for married couples only. This did not meet the radical demand for a framework of public family planning services. The launch of the CAP in 1976 by members of IWU synthesised a coalition of various women's groups, the

Labour Women's National Council and family planning organisations. The structure of the campaign and repertoire of strategies broadened in scope from 1976 and received support different constituencies - Trade Unions, Students Unions, Community and Tenants Associations, the CSW, Bray Women's Group, Limerick Women's Action Group, Young Socialists of the Labour Party and the Women's Group of the Socialist Labour Party, and individual activists (*Wicca*, 1977, p.16). Direct action tactics which included opening an illegal contraception shop and stall at the Dandelion market, had a considerable effect. The objectives of the CAP included (*Wicca*, 1977: 16):

1. Legislation of contraception and the end of restrictive legislation;
2. Availability of all methods to all who wish to use them;
3. Provision of contraception advice and counselling in all maternity and child welfare clinics;
4. Introduction of education programmes on sex, birth, contraception and personal relationships in schools and colleges;
5. Inclusion of methods of birth control in the training of doctors, nurses, health visitors, social workers and lay counsellors;
6. Distribution of contraceptives free through Health Service Clinics and at a controlled minimum cost through general practitioners, pharmacies and specialised voluntary clinics.

CAP employed a concerted campaign of radical strategies. Activists went directly into housing estates and distributed contraceptives, for example. *Wicca* reported in 1979:

"...the thing that brought the most discussion was the actual introduction and passing of legislation that gives the Minister power to put total responsibility for the Family Planning Service in the hands of doctors, a lot of whom have no training, and pharmacists. This will make a service more expensive and for some people harder to obtain. The law gives the Minister the power to

close the clinics and fine or jail people for a year, who sell contraceptives illegally, as CAP does in the Dandelion...CAP's fight has included things like the opening of the shop in Harcourt Road last year, which later moved to the Dandelion Market, the Festival to celebrate 10 years of contraception in Ireland, the Women's Health and Sexuality Conference, and several meetings and demonstrations, the 'pregnant poster,' and the mobile clinic...which sold non-medical contraceptives, gave out information and most importantly talked with people in suburban areas where there is no local service." (*Wicca*, 1979: 14.)

Interacting SMOs mobilised around the contraception question throughout the 1970s, and there was a multi-level strategy which encompassed campaigning at the level of political and legal reform; direct action and dramatic movement events (such as, the Contraceptive Train and breaking into the Senate during the hearing of Mary Robinson's Bill chanting "we shall not conceive"); and the practical provision of services by SMOs (such as the Well Woman Centres, the CAP and the Irish Family Planning Association).²⁰ Although autonomous, radical, feminist organisations were short-lived during the 1970s, the cross-movement campaign for contraceptive rights and services demonstrates how radical feminism continued to informed activists' movement commitments.

Radical feminists who identified with different factions within IWU went on to participate in newly formed grass roots SMOs *and* within the mainstream during the 1980s (for example, Anne Speed, Evelyn Conlon, Róisín Conroy and Anne O'Donnell) (see appendix 4). The interweaving and fusion of both styles of activism - mainstream and autonomous - which advanced the movement as a whole during the 1970s laid the foundations for a more concerted process of resource mobilisation, based on mainstreaming dynamics, that subsequently intensified. However, the continued mobilisation of radical activists, a core movement dynamic in the first stage of advancement, was far from imminent.

3. SUBMERGED CONFLICT AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The period 1970-1979 marks a stage of dynamic growth in a distinctive women's liberation sector of the contemporary Irish women's movement. Through a process of fragmentation and diversification, this development had a qualitative effect on the broader movement that was mobilising generically in several interacting centres. However, tangible conflict arose between and within the two original movement sectors. This raises the question, how did these strands interact and gradually converge to form a collective broad-based social movement?

The gradual consolidation and advancement of the traditional reformist branch of the movement coincided with the emergence of the IWLM. A common assumption is that the IWLM represents the beginning and the end of the contemporary women's movement. In reality, this group of feminist activists were one element of the broader organisational structure at a given stage of the evolving contemporary women's movement. There were clearly two distinct original movement strands in the early 1970s - a traditional, reformist, mainstream sector (CSW) and a radical, autonomous sector (IWLM). As demonstrated above, prolific conflict occurred within individual SMOs, particularly in the women's liberation sector throughout this period. In addition, tensions *between* these two original movement strands were acknowledged by my interviewees. Inter/Intra-organisational conflict is thus a principal movement dynamic and requires sufficient analytical treatment.

The IWLM and *ad hoc* committee had no direct structural links initially. The IWLM was more influenced by events in the radical sector of the American women's movement. Organisations such as the IHA and ICA were viewed as 'conservative' in outlook. Flamboyant members of the IWLM were opposed to institutionalised lobbying tactics, and in any case

they lacked a pre-existing network, repertoire of institutionalised tactics and the experience to lobby effectively. Leading members of the group had no interest in gaining such experience.

The two original strands progressively interacted. A member of the IHA explained:

"There was quite a bit of tension between us. They thought we were 'old hat' and we were an establishment. In actual fact, we weren't an establishment. We were not funded (like the Council), we had nothing to do with the government, but we got that sort of thing. There was the feeling from our side that these young ones were coming up and we didn't object to what they wanted to do - but the methods they were using. People went so far as to say that they were putting back the women's movement. In the Council we didn't like their methods but we felt they were pinpointing the things that needed to be looked at and in fact we looked into their suggestions. Gradually now the strands have come together, there are so many facets to women's associations. There are women who say you can't be a feminist unless you are a lesbian and others that feel we are all part of the same thing." (Member Council for the Status of Women)

Groups such as the ICA were viewed in negative terms by the younger, radical members of organisations like the IWLM and IWU:

"The women's liberation movement didn't come out of anything that had gone before...there was nobody old enough to be involved in anything that had gone before and I suppose we wouldn't have been too pleased to be bracketed with the ICA at the time. We mightn't have minded being bracketed with the suffragettes..." (Member IWLM, Left activist)

Traditional abeyance organisations were frequently labelled 'conservative':

"Both these organisations were conservative in outlook, and were careful to disassociate their members from controversial issues, despite gradual awareness of injustices and inequalities towards women." (Fennell and Arnold, 1987: 7)

Empirical data suggests that abeyance SMOs were far from moderate in the middle years *and* in the context of the prevailing representation of Irish women in the 1970s. The constraints and hostile social climate are vividly recalled by activists during the period of abeyance:

"I remember lobbying the Medical Association and two of us going around Fitzwilliam Square sticking the letters into post-boxes because we hadn't the money for postage stamps...We never had a phone of our own, that was one of the difficulties...we never had a proper office and it was difficult to keep track of records."
(Member IHA, CSW)

These SMOs organised their activities strategically around the many constraints to women's participation in the public sphere.²¹

However, while it is inaccurate to suggest that activists in this sector were conservative *per se*, the treatment of contraception within the CSW in its early years indicates a significant level of indecisiveness. While working with the WRC on its memorandum on family planning, the CSW decided that it should make a statement regarding family planning.²² Each affiliate was asked if the Council should express an opinion on the issue as it is stated in the Report of the First Commission on the Status of Women, or if each organisation should be left to deal with the matter as it chose? With few exceptions, affiliates replied that there was no consensus amongst their members and they could not express an opinion on family planning. This was the majority decision in the IHA, for example (even though key leaders disagreed). The CSW decided that no statement could be made and that the matter should be dealt with separately by each organisation. This provides an indication of the conscious sensitivity of the CSW regarding such issues to the conservative values of Irish society and of the ideological orientation of the majority of its constituent organisations and members. However, contraceptive rights were later adopted as a central mobilising issue by the end of the decade.

There was distinct difference in the political backgrounds of activists in both sectors throughout the period of advancement. SMOs within the women's liberation sector interacted with radical and left-wing politics:

"All social movements are initiated and constructed and organised by the relatively more privileged among us - middle class. My evaluation of anything is not so much the sociological composition of the organisation...but what political interests they seek to pursue and in what manner they seek to pursue them...I am of the Left, I consider myself a working class person, I have made common cause with women from the middle class on the issues of the day and if we had differences - it was a feminism bound us together, your aspirations - it was how we sought to pursue them and in what way we wanted them realised. For example, we made common cause - women from different social backgrounds - around the demand to legalise contraception. It was when we got to discuss how a service should be established and in what way should it be delivered that's when we had class differences which were political in character. The current of the movement that I belonged to in the mid late 1970s would argue that contraception should be legalised, available and free as part of the health service. We had common cause with, for example Gemma Hussey about legalising it. We didn't have common cause in how the service should be delivered...who suggested something like "sexual activity should not be paid by the rate payers." I would say people like that have moved on to be fair....but their political approach was determined by their own social and political background - and who ended up in political establishment parties." (Member IWU, Trade Unionist, Nationalist feminist)

IWU, in particular, coined and opposed the ideology underpinning the approach to reproductive rights within women's rights SMOs. For example, in relation to abortion, it was recorded internally:

"Nuala Fennell as a representative of the reformist Irish Women's Movement on her return from Brussels said that the Irish Women's Movement would have to dissociate itself from the International Women's Movement because of the different strands on abortion....Irish Women United have to come to a decision as to whether they are the vanguard of the struggle for abortion or whether they are prepared to allow themselves to be dominated by reformist priorities and allow 10,000 Irish sisters without our public support. These sisters are bombarded with anti-abortion propaganda and are left to deal with their problems in isolation, and they are rarely in a position to hear the counter arguments...It is to be noted here that the Council for the Status of Women have made no statement on abortion while they defend the right of "married" couples to family planning. The answer to the problem of the unwanted child is not free milk or extra subsidies as the church proposes the reason that we as a radical feminist movement must state our position on abortion is because the issue is no "more cash" but the fact that women must have the right to choose." (IWU position paper "Abortion.")

The CSW was comprised of older, long-standing activists with a reformist style and long-standing experience of lobbying established political parties. As already stated, the social composition of the IWLM was dominated by political women, women in the media and professional/university educated activists. IWU was politicised by socialist, lesbian and nationalist feminists. Events in the small group sector (Ryan, 1992) of the American women's movement were pivotal resources in the mobilisation of the Irish women's liberation sector, whereas events in cross-national political bodies were key resources for women's rights activists. Tweedy recalls the resulting friction:

"There was considerable tension between the two women's movements, although both were basically working for the same objectives. The new group of justifiably angry young women, who expected immediate responses to their demands, looked upon the *ad hoc* committee, and the CSW, as 'establishment,' and anything we did, or had done, was suspect to them. The CSW group resented the value of their work being negated and feared that methods used by the younger group would result in a backlash which would further delay the reforms we all desired." (Tweedy, 1992: 49)

However, while there were two distinctive women's rights and women's liberation movement sectors originally, in practice many of the strategies and themes of radical, socialist and liberal feminism increasingly overlapped. The interrelationships, formed in the process of organic diffusion and diversification across the women's movement, became more visible by the end of the 1970s. Both equal rights and radical activists strategically drew upon the same repertoire of strategies in a rational fashion in grass roots and mainstream SMOs when the need arose - for example, both pursued legal changes through the courts (see appendix 6). The two interacting styles of activism - autonomous and mainstream - were increasingly characterised by ideological, tactical, and organisational

diversity with converging themes, concepts and goals. Ferree and Hess (1985) found diverse feminist groups by the 1980s interacting in a complementary rather than a competitive fashion. Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) suggest that convergence between the two original movement sectors took place much earlier than the literature on the women's movement acknowledges.

A number of generalisations can be made in relation to the proliferation of the women's movement by the late 1970s. Firstly, the movement's proliferated structure ensured that a broad spectrum of action on a plethora of mobilising issues was retained and further developed within the movement. The continued presentation of these issues in the public arena is a necessary precondition for success. Coalition activism alleviates the problems of small groups not acquiring enough resources to directly affect established institutions and bring about change individually. The capacity of small autonomous groups to innovate is demonstrated in the case of the formation of the Rape Crisis Centre. This once taboo issue became a legitimate social problem as a direct result of the strategic mobilisation of limited resources by a small group of six radical feminists in 1977. This highlights the crucial importance to movement continuity of the consolidation of a women's liberation constituency in the 1970s. A women's rights sector alone could not have brought about the need to recognise the necessity for more fundamental changes than first envisioned. Ultimately the diffusion process of distinctive ideas pertaining to women's *liberation*, and the corresponding creativity released, shaped the transformation of the indigenous women's movement, expanded its boundaries and changed the role of Irish women in general. Following Carden, the maintenance of this type of activism is integral to the movement's continuity and capacity:

"Only in the independent, relatively encapsulated group and sub-groups of the movement's proliferated non-establishment wing have radical feminists been completely free to experiment with ideas and strategies, that have been able to devote themselves exclusively to the feminist cause, and have been given genuine support by like-minded people. The independent groups are therefore necessary if the movement is to continue to develop the far-reaching implications of its ideology and, thereby, to provide the intellectual leaven for contemporary feminism." (Carden, 1978: 193).

Despite the advantages of the extensive proliferation that occurred, a valid question is: can a diffuse movement present itself accurately and forcefully in the long-term? Paradoxically, this perceived weakness hides an important strength: the movement's opponents cannot identify a vulnerable centre of the movement. No single organisation, leader, group of organisations, or group of leaders is indispensable. Whenever a group fails, another can take over its work. If the women's movement were a single unified group, defeat or victory over some single key issue could lead to movement demise.²³

SMOs, particularly in the service arena, employed a very loose definition of feminist ideology which appealed to potential recruits. The expressed incentive of 'getting on' with practical tasks avoided over-concentration on ideological discussion. A clear sense of urgency expressed by activists in this stage of mobilisation spurred the emergence of a multitude of SMOs. By encouraging independence and personal growth, the ideology itself legitimates the motivation to create new, autonomous SMOs - and the ideal of sisterhood maintains a collective identity across the movement against the pursuit of diverging projects for change relating to women.

The experience throughout the 1970s was that there are real differences in ideological orientation among Irish activists. However, diversification did not threaten movement survival. In fact, the scope of the movement expanded rapidly during this period. The plurality of

ideologies and SMOs that exists within the women's movement did not undermine the capacity of the women's movement to organise in the form of an autonomous and unified social movement after the 1970s. Ideological conflict and factionalism within SMOs was dealt with by proliferation and the formation of new groups. While this process facilitated the continued expansion and maintenance of the movement in a multiplicity of sectors (combined with the persistent generation of a feminist constituency and synthesising mobilising issues, such as contraception), it also suspended the actual level of differences in movement identity clearly evident among activists in the 1980s.

As demonstrated here, during a cycle of advance various sectors and organisations (SMOs) within a social movement undergo significant change. By 1975 the IWLM had ceased and IWU proliferated in 1977. The clearly distinctive structures of the women's rights and women's liberation sectors which consolidated in the early years of this first stage of the contemporary movement became more amorphous in the wake of this process of proliferation. Participants in these SMOs further mobilised in new centres outside the autonomous women's movement, including individual careers, various campaign groups, services for women, and mainstream party politics (see appendices 4-7).

One of the core aims of the ideology of women's liberation, to develop a consciousness among women, was advanced by the flat, decentralised organisational structure mobilised. However, the consequences of this type of structure and organisation is that no effective national organisation has evolved in this branch of the movement in Ireland (Dahlerup, 1986: 8) and the rapid acceleration of this style of movement activism was short-lived. SMOs with a focus on women's liberation concentrate on the intersection between personal and social change, whereas SMOs with a women's rights agenda stress the point of

legislative change. The main activities of the women's liberation sector in the period of intense activity included consciousness raising, alternative ways of living, creation of a counterculture (women's literature, art, music, festivals) and creating alternative institutions (rape crisis centres, women's centres). Both kinds of feminism tended to exist side-by-side in most Western countries, but the balance varies at different stages of the movement's development. It is clear that following the abeyance period radical feminist SMOs, such as the IWLM, made a distinct impact on Irish women. The ideas of radical, socialist or liberal feminism were not confined solely to one particular sector, and often they co-existed in a single SMO. It was a particular concentration on either autonomous direct action (women's liberation SMOs) or engagement in the institutions of the state (women's rights SMOs) which distinguished types of feminist activity. Feminist ideology was *only* openly discussed in SMOs focusing on women's liberation and, in short, did not sustain the type of feminism it was promoting over time - non hierarchical, participatory and democratic. In other words, it is inevitable in a mass-based social movement that a group as diverse as women will clearly possess a mixed set of ideological perspectives which do not translate directly into structural divisions within the movement or static types of activism.²⁴

CONCLUSION

The women's movement in general was transformed and advanced by the loose, participatory structures in the women's liberation sector. Klandermans (1988) suggests that:

"...contemporary social movements such as the environmental movement, the peace movement and the women's movement can afford to maintain loose structures because they are rooted in dense subcultural networks that serve as communication and mobilisation channels in case of need." (Klandermans, 1988: 174)

It is widely documented that internationally there are two predominant branches of the women's movement which co-exist - generally labelled a women's rights and women's liberation sector (Dahlerup, 1986; Randall, 1991; Banks, 1981; Randall and Lovenduski, 1993; Freeman, 1975). In terms of structures, the women's rights sector is typically characterised by a coalition of more bureaucratic, centralised, liberal feminist SMOs utilising 'insider' political tactics and developing alliances with the State. The women's liberation sector tends to be characterised by a plethora of small, radical, loosely organised, decentralised, participatory, direct action, radical feminist, autonomous groups. In this first stage of advancement these categorisations apply to:

1. The traditional reformist SMOs which persisted during the middle years, were liberal feminist in character, were crucial in the consolidation of the CSW and transformed and expanded through interacting with new SMOs with a reformist identity formed in the 1970s and the parallel women's liberation mobilisation.
2. The new, radical feminist SMOs which emerged during the 1970s and expanded the focus of feminist politics in Ireland from social reform through established means to women's liberation through radical means (including consciousness raising and direct action). The women mobilised were part of a younger generation of women who drew on the resources and opportunities generated in the social movement sector in the 1970s, including the interest of the mass media (in the impact of confrontational direct action generated by the generic wave of

social movements occurring both in Ireland and particularly in the US) and an upsurge in radical political action in general.

However, empirical analysis reveals that the primary distinction between these two interacting sectors derived from their relationship to the State and on the basis of a concentration on particular strategies - persistently lobby the State for moderate, gradual legislative change and funding, on the one hand, and engaging in controversial, direct action tactics (pickets, protests, expressive action), on the other. Even though these methods were more concentrated in each sector, each increasingly drew on the same repertoire of tactics (involving symbols, ideologies and tangible resources) in a strategic fashion when the need arose from the mid-1970s onwards. For example, resources were mobilised through the courts - a tactic utilised both by activists located in the mainstream and autonomous SMOs,²⁵ as were petitioning, political lobbying, mass meetings and demonstrations. The wider movement promoted a feminist perspective on a range of issues through the media and the creation of new kinds of educational forums. Crucially, alternative feminist institutions were created which have since percolated the institutions of the State. Service projects were both responses to the immediate needs of Irish women and part of a long-term strategy of creating alternative institutions that would empower women.

Ideological schisms do not alone conceptualise the intra-group themes and tensions that emerged. Ryan (1992) accurately suggests:

"For, even if feminist ideology did not play an important role in these early divisions, the fact is that many participants perceived themselves as philosophically opposed and acted on those assumptions as if they were true. Whether they were actually ideologically opposed or not, ideology was used to distinguish activists from each other." (Ryan, 1992: 41)

It is by no means clear that the advancement and proliferation of the movement between 1970 and 1979 was guided by ideological forces. A systematic qualitative analysis of the internal dynamics, proliferation and alliances of these groups provides a more accurate account of the complex way in which the women's movement diffused at a number of interacting levels as a social movement. Empirical data consistently raised the importance of ideology as a dynamic resource for consolidating early movement organisations, which formed a women's liberation cluster. However, ideologies were also an intrinsic transformative dynamic. This classification scheme is useful for tracing the contemporary movement's establishment in 1970. As the women's movement in Ireland progressively advanced and proliferated (particularly after International Women's Year in 1975) the autonomous identity of each sector become blurred and the movement mobilised multifariously.

It is evident that the modern women's movement in terms of its structure and organisation had, by the end of the decade, evolved into a broad-based, complex social movement. The movement as a whole broadened its objectives and repertoire of collective action. It diversified and fragmented in the process. This did not result in its decline, and by the 1980s feminism diffused widely into the institutions of Irish society and the women's movement continued to evolve and transform in new movement centres.

Notes Chapter Five:

- 1 The core mobilising issues first pursued by the Council in the early period of establishment were: equal pay; the elimination of discrimination in income tax allowances and social welfare benefits for married women; provision for a full single person's tax allowance for married women whether working in the home or employed outside; the same tax allowance for the single parent with dependent children as for the married man.
- 2 The first executive of the CSW re-elected the officers of the *ad hoc* committee, with the exception of Dr. Blanche Weekes, as follows: Chairwoman, Hilda Tweedy; Honorary Treasurer, Dr. Hazel Boland; Honorary Secretary, Margaret Waugh (founding member of the WPA).
- 3 For example, on 31 October 1973, the Council wrote to the Minister for Labour, Michael O'Leary, stressing the importance of combining the legislation on equal pay with anti-discrimination clauses to avoid negating the benefit from equal pay and to avoid further legislation. The Council also suggested incorporation of anti-discrimination clauses, such as on the grounds of sex or marital status in respect of employment, trades and professions, education and training. They called for the phasing in of equal pay in graduated stages to be made obligatory and for equal basic rates for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled categories and for female workers (Tweedy, 1992: 53).
- 4 The WRC included the following appointees: Mrs Eileen Desmond TD; Nominated by ICTU - Nuala McGinly, Derry McDermott, Joan O'Connell, Peter Casells; Nominated by FUE - Michael Hannigan, CE Hilliard (later replaced by Joe Colgan), John Dunne, Deirdre Murphy; Nominated by the CSW - Monica Barnes, Dr. Hazel Boland, Hilda Tweedy; Nominated by ESRI - Kathleen O'Higgins; Nominated by the Minister for Labour, Michael O'Leary - Yvonne Murphy.
- 5 The talent bank is a list of women available for public office/appointments.
- 6 Committee members of the WPA at this time included, Hazel Boland, Monica Barnes, Gemma Hussey, Nuala Fennell and Dr. Mary Henry. They worked closely with the CSW.
- 7 It is analogous to NOW (National Organisation for Women) in the US.
- 8 Past/Present Members of the Dáil who were active members of the WPA includes, Nuala Fennell, Monica Barnes, Gemma Hussey, Niamh Breathnach, Helen Keogh, Liz O'Donnell and Eithne Fitzgerald. The majority of female public representatives who had no previous relative in the Dáil were facilitated by WPA membership.
- 9 *75/117/EEC, February 1975:*
Recommended that national provisions should be approximated as regards the application of the principle of equal pay.
76/207/EEC, February 1976:
Principal of equal treatment of men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and working conditions.
86/378/EEC, July 1986:
Recommended the implementation of equal treatment for men and women in social security schemes. Article 12 directed all member states to bring legislation into effect at least three years after this date.
- 10 More recent developments show that the alliances of women's movements in Europe and the US have contrasted greatly since the 1970s. Because the Reagan administration was conservative, NOW had to ally with and support candidates of the Democrat party. In Britain and Europe alliances have traditionally been with the Left and trade unions. However, the impact of close alliances with parties in the case of France is intriguing. Under a socialist government in the early 1980s funds were distributed on an unprecedented scale by the Ministry of Women's Rights. However when a new conservative government took over in 1986: "French feminism seemed to be left high and dry, a warning against too close an alliance with the Left, however sympathetic and popular it may appear." (Randall, 1991: 260) which points to a movement vulnerable to changes in the economic and political environment and it is demonstrated how this was the case in Ireland by the early 80s.
- 11 Placing a letter/announcement in the national newspapers was a crucial tactic in the formation of key SMOs such as the *ad hoc* committee, the National Association of Widows and Cherish.
- 12 Carden (1978: 184) suggests that women participate in the women's movement because they are committed to the new feminist ideology - they find it personally rewarding and try to resolve the frustrations and conflicts inherent in the traditional female role. Intellectually and emotionally they become convinced that the traditional role of women is wrong and the role should be expanded, and situate this experience in a general ideological framework.

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- 13 Including Nuala Fennell (freelance journalist and subsequent Minister of State for Women's Affairs), Mary McCutchan (women's editor of the Irish Independent), June Levine (freelance journalist and writer), Janet Martin (journalist, Irish Independent), Mary Anderson (journalist, Irish Independent), Bernadette Quinn (journalist) and Nell McCafferty (journalist, Irish Times).
 - 14 For example, Mary Kenny, Mary Andersen and Mary Maher.
 - 15 These were included in R. Conroy's archive.
 - 16 The first printing of 3,000 copies of *Banshee*, resulted in distribution and/or sale of 2,500, yielding profit of approximately £100 (Source: Editorial Committee Report 2, *Banshee*, May 1976, R. Conroy's archive).
 - 17 There were 30 women in Armagh prison. Three of them, Mary Doyle, Mairéad Farrell and Mairéad Nugent went on hunger strike.
 - 18 *Wicca* was published by a group of women drawn together by: "the need we all felt for an Irish feminist magazine. Since the demise of *Banshee* there's been a void that can't be filled by the capitalist press. So we got together and with much discussion and laughter, produced this first issue...We are a collectively run magazine, dedicated to ending sexism and capitalism. Any woman is invited to join the collective or send letters or contributions. If you live in Dublin or are passing through, drop into the meetings to help or just to see how we're getting on. A creche is provided...In *Sisterhood*, Elanor Lamb, Mary Purcell, Geraldine Moane, Wendy Wells, Carmel Ruane, Brigid Ruane, Oonagh MacNamara, Miriam McQuaid, Mary Phelan, Mary O'Sullivan, Carol Phelan, Mary Doran, Cristín Ní Gainigh, Ruth Smith, Maura McGuinness, Joni Sheerin, Clodagh Boyd, Mary MacNamara, Gillian Burke, Anne Marie Walker, Ethel Galvins, Doreen McGouran, Róisín Boyd, Anne O'Brien, Sandra Stephen, Ger Nolan, Carmel Byrne, Kate O'Brien" (I, no. 1, 1977).
 - 19 '*Mother Ireland*', a documentary produced by the Derry Film Group and subsequently banned, provides an excellent account of feminism and nationalism.
 - 20 The Catholic Church authorises the use of family planning for married couples but restricts this to the use of 'natural methods.' It is interesting that the Catholic church sponsored its own parallel services following the establishment of SMOs by the women's movement (for example, CURA and Life).
 - 21 See Tweedy, (1992) for a more detailed examination of this period.
 - 22 This occurred, despite the fact that the Council endorsed all of the recommendations of the Report two years previously, which included: "We recommend accordingly, that: (1) Information and expert advice on family planning should be available through medical and other channels throughout the country. Such advice should respect the moral and personal attitudes of each married couple. (2) Medical requirements arising out of the married couples' decisions on family planning should be available through channels to be determined by the Department of Health" (Report of the First Commission on the Status of Women, 1972: Paragraph 574).
 - 23 For example, in the US if ERA was a success it could have led to lack of unity and purpose as the suffrage victory signalled in the first wave.
 - 24 The archives of IWU (including minutes and position papers), in particular, reveal a sophisticated level of feminist theorising and debate among radical Irish feminists, which has not been recorded or analysed.
 - 25 In 1974 Máirín de Burca and Mary Andersen (both journalists, members of IWLM and active in left wing politics) took a case to the Supreme Court, claiming the 1927 Juries Act (which banned women from sitting on juries) unconstitutional. In contrast, the National Association of Widows were represented on the *ad hoc* committee and the first Council for the Status of Women. However, widows were in fact important activists in the women's movement in the guise of the National Association of Widows, founded in 1967 by calling a public meeting. Their direction action tactics included a march to Liberty Hall in 1972 followed by a mass meeting as well as, yearly budget submissions and extensive political lobbying.

Chapter 6

Changing Orientations in Feminist Activism: Reappraisal and Movement Maintenance in the 1980s

Introduction

A key question in the field of social movements is, where did the new social movements 'go' after the 1960s-70s? Nuala Fennell and June Considine speculated in 1981:

"Many people feel the question now is, not what has gone wrong with the Women's Movement, but just how many movements are there? And which of them speaks for the majority of women? Gone, it appears is the comfortable complacency with which most women regarded those groups and individuals involved in the women's campaign. At a time when we have had a plethora of high level seminars and public meetings on women's issues, (such activity has in fact not been seen since 1975 International Women's Year), the groans of discontent from various women indicate that all is not as ideal as it might be. Yet, all the public meetings were packed. Betty Friedan, the mother of Women's Liberation addressed an audience of 1,500 women and men at a Women's Political Association seminar last December. In November, we heard Ms Lucille Mair of the United Nations and Danish Minister for Culture, Lise Ostegaard, at a Council for the Status of Women weekend. And, this year, around 1,000 women packed Liberty Hall for a day of speeches, and discussion at the launching of Status magazine. All the while the other regular meetings relating to women in politics, trade unions or work were happening all over the country. Surely this initiative, debate and publicity must indicate a healthy and vital state of the women's campaign here?" (Considine and Fennell, *The Women's Movement V Women?*, In *Women's AIM* magazine, Issue no. 8, April-June 1981: 6)¹

A central contention of this chapter is that the women's movement in Ireland did not 'disappear' from 1980 onwards, but in fact transformed from within and continued to mobilise in new movement centres. The transformation of the women's movement in this stage of reappraisal from 1980 to 1988 is based largely on three dynamics which are examined in detail:²

1. The constraints on the continued expansion of autonomous radicalism within the women's movement, particularly manifest in the campaign around the 1983 Abortion Referendum;

2. The challenge of a broad-based counter right movement to previous gains and future success;
3. The intensified mainstreaming and professionalisation of SMOs, with roots in both the reform and radical sectors of the 1970s, which was a purposeful strategy prompted by a combination of decreasing political opportunities, retreating autonomous mobilisation, and the maturation of the original SMOs.

The gradual interweaving and fusion of both styles of activism - mainstream and autonomous - which advanced the movement during the 1970s in two distinct sectors, laid the foundations for an inclusive, generic mainstreaming process. The women's movement formalised and mainstreamed throughout the 1980s. The scaling down of autonomous radicalism and the recruitment of activists around new autonomous movement centres occurred against a background of social and economic retrenchment. After the first stage of intense, radical activity on several fronts in the first stage, the organisation of a counter right movement, intensified mainstreaming and professionalisation of SMOs in movement centres across the movement, and constraints on autonomous activism, were key factors in the reappraisal and changing movement dynamics that occurred from within throughout the 1980s. One radical activist recalled the transformation:

"If anything, in the mid-1970s we suffered from a lack of understanding about how to mainstream feminism and a lack of political expertise. I think you have to mainstream because you have to get into the institutions of power and you have to change and turn them around...I also want fundamental change so you need both...I see those who joined the established political parties as pure reformists. I think the radicals were in IWU and then were diffused into different things - initiatives like Rape Crisis Centre, women's aid, pregnancy counselling centre which achieved its greatest prominence when it was run by Ruth Riddick. It was established two years before that by a collective of women, I was involved in that. And we really sought to push the boat out. We had won the argument about legalisation of contraception in '79, albeit in a very distorted way and we felt now is the time to push the boat out. The right wing coped that on very quickly because they came back with their strategy of a constitutional amendment. We were trying

to move strategically and they responded strategically. The women were there - they were diffused into different initiatives."(Member of IWU, CAP, Woman's Right to Choose, Nationalist feminist)

There was a general acceptance among activists of the need to concentrate their social movement commitments "within" established institutions and to forge alliances with the State. This coincided with a significant decline in the formation of grass roots radical groups engaged in autonomous direct action:

"Some people have gone into very radical left-wing parties, some people have gone into social work, some people have gone into like maybe the Rape Crisis Centre, or Women's Aid or the Well Woman, so I'm not sure if is quite mainstream in terms of say the commercial sector or something. But I think 'yes' - they have just moved into the positions where they have a bit more authority and a bit more power, in the sense that they have the power to make some influence on things and can build some bridges...And I think that's positive." (Member Women's Right to Choose Campaign, Women Studies Forum, Well Woman Centre)

A core group of radical feminists focused their social movement commitments on the politics of reproductive rights in Irish society throughout the 1980s, an era described by interviewees as demoralising.

As Ailbhe Smyth recalls:

"These were to be difficult and demoralising years, leading many feminist activists to a point of weary disenchantment. In retrospect, the encounters of the 1970s over contraception, rape, equal pay, appeared as mere skirmishes, a phoney war, prior to the battles of the 1980s against the serried ranks of church and state, staunch defenders of the faith of our fathers and the myth of motherhood." (Smyth, 1993: 264)

The formation of the Women's Right to Choose Campaign and the marginalisation it experienced in this period exemplifies this point. The course of an autonomous pro-choice sector, while limited in scope for much of the 1980s, is traced in this section. The pro-choice sector *within the women's movement* was comprised of a small number of SMOs and activists

which mobilised specifically around the Anti-Amendment Campaign in 1983 and subsequently through the provision of abortion information and referral services. These SMOs included, the IPCC (Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre) which was later replaced by Open Door Counselling (subsequently Open Line Counselling), the Women's Right to Choose Campaign, the Irish Women's Abortion Support group in London, the Dublin Well Woman Centre and the WIN (Women's Information Network).

SMOs established in the 1970s with both autonomous and mainstream roots, expanded and increasingly professionalised. Major movement organisations formalised (including, the CSW and the Rape Crisis Centre) and mobilised largely institutional tactics. Modest gains continued to be made by the women's movement in the political mainstream (for example, an increasing number of *feminist* women participated in party politics, particularly through the WPA; service SMOs expanded and secured more regular funding from the State; and further action through the courts was mobilised on various issues, such as Róisín Conroy's social welfare case in 1985 (see appendix 13).

While pro-choice activists were constrained and marginalised for most of the 1980s, at the same time, the movement was able to mobilise grass roots activists and conscience constituents around the single issues of abortion information and referral from the mid-1980s onwards. In essence, the degree of urgency, regularity of movement events, intensity of activism and continued recruitment of activists, which were mobilised extensively in autonomous SMOs in the first stage of advancement, waned as the flow of resources decreased and the strength of a counter movement grew. In addition, the political opportunity structure altered. By 1980 the movement had diversified, scaled down and, at the same time, become more specialised and formalised in particular areas. This occurred in new social movements

generally, partly as a result of the changing course of SMOs over time and the retreat of the social movement sector.

1. CONSTRAINTS ON RADICAL MOBILISATION

A substantial decrease in the formation of new SMOs and a decline in confrontational direct action was evident by 1980. The changing economic climate of deepening recession, endemic unemployment and emigration (see Kennedy, 1986) resulted in a lack of resources and sweeping government cutbacks. The changing political opportunity structure was a tangible constraint for feminist SMOs (particularly service organisations such as the Well Woman Centres, Women's Aid and the Rape Crisis Centre which are vastly under-resourced). The changed economic and political climate set the context for other movement setbacks during the 1980s. The anti-abortion movement escalated and hardened its tactics internationally in the early 1980s. In the US, anti-abortion activists bombed abortion clinics, picketed clinics, and confrontationally dissuaded women from having abortions (Ryan, 1992: 144-52; Staggenborg, 1991). The goals of the radical SMOs became increasingly narrow in response to the mobilisation of a counter movement.

Feminist demands for reproductive rights were central to the mobilisation of various SMOs during the 1970s. As already demonstrated, contraception was a core demand of the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women, the IWLM, IWU, individual politicians (Mary Robinson moved a bill in 1971 in the Senate), the CAP, legal cases (the McGee Case) and was provided practically by newly formed SMOs of the proliferating women's movement. Contraception was partially legalised in 1979, which was already provided illegally by the Well Woman Centre, the CAP and Family Planning Clinics for some time. Autonomous direct action in this case clearly preceded political reform.

Prior to 1981, when the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) lobbied for a referendum to insert a pro-life clause into the Irish Constitution, there had never been a public, comprehensive debate on abortion in the political arena in Ireland. However, abortion (and infanticide in the past) has been part of the social reality of Irish women (Jackson, 1986; 1987). Irish women have gone to the UK for abortions throughout this century. Today, it is estimated that over 4,000 women travel each year to England for abortions.³ Backstreet abortions in Ireland were more prevalent in periods when travel to England was restricted, for example during World War II. The 1954 Commission on Emigration reported that a sharp rise in prosecutions for backstreet abortion, cases of infanticide and illegitimacy occurred in this period (Jackson, 1987). Legislation pertaining to the right of Irish women to access abortion services is a highly divisive issue both within the women's movement (contrary to the consensual image of feminism on the question of abortion portrayed in the media) and in Irish society in general. Few women's organisations confronted the Irish abortion rate systematically as a feminist issue, apart from IWU and the Women's Right to Choose group. Until the genesis of the political debate in 1981, with the exception of these SMOs, contraception and abortion tended to be treated as entirely separate issues (Jackson, 1986).

The changing direction of the women's movement in the 1980s is intrinsically related to a generic process of mainstreaming and mobilisation of resources within the institutions of the State. A diminutive autonomous sector unsuccessfully mobilised a radicalised reproductive rights campaign across the movement.

The continuity of an autonomous, radical style of activism encountered the organisational strength of conservative organisations, in the form of a successful, highly resourced, politicised counter movement in

1981. As already demonstrated, abortion was debated in IWU but tactically it was decided not to engage in direct-action or institutionalised tactics. In view of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the State since 1922, it is not surprising that a radical feminist SMO with a pro-choice focus was late in development in Irish society.⁴ A pro-choice strand was integral to women's movements in other countries at least a decade before it was (partially) confronted by the Irish women's movement. Abortion was legalised in Britain in 1967 (see appendix 14) and with the landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling in the US in 1973. Staggenborg suggests that the 'pro-choice movement' was in fact a distinct social movement in the US since the 1960s as "a loose coalition of women's movement, single issue 'abortion' movement and population movement activists and organisations" (Staggenborg, 1991: 3).⁵

The traditional values of Irish citizens on the issues of abortion and divorce were vividly portrayed in the findings of the European Social Values surveys of 1981 and 1990:⁶

Average scores on extent to which divorce and abortion can ever be justified in the Republic of Ireland, by time of survey

	Divorce Average	Abortion Average
1981	3.3	1.7
1990	4.1	2.4
European average, 1990	8.3	7.0

Whelan, 1995: 34

The only circumstance in which a majority of Irish respondents in 1990 were willing to approve of abortion is when the mother's health is at risk:

Circumstances under which abortion is approved of: comparison of Irish and European views

	<i>Percentage approving:</i>	
	<i>Ireland</i>	<i>Europe</i>
When the mother's health is at risk by the pregnancy	65	92
Where it is likely that the child would be physically handicapped	32	79
Where the mother is not married	8	27
Where a married couple do not want to have any more children	8	34

Whelan, 1995: 36

Against this background, the right to abortion information and referral were marginalised as radical feminist issues, but were a catalyst for a significant transformation of the wider social movement sector in Irish society - particularly the consolidation of the Right. New developments in the arena of social movements in Irish society since the 1980s have had a profound impact on the course of social change in Irish society and infuse several layers of meaning. Girvin outlines the political complexities of the abortion debate in Ireland:

"By placing the Irish position in context with that of its European partners, it should be possible to determine why the Irish government pursues a specific strategy and what the formative influences on this policy are...The study of abortion policy in this context also highlights a number of unique features about the politics of abortion. It is a relatively new political object, a product of the changes which have taken place since the 1960s. It is also a cross-cutting issue, in that predominant and established voting patterns are not predictable on this subject. It is also an extremely controversial area of debate since it confronts traditional values, beliefs and process. It juxtaposes conservatism with liberal or radical politics within a new political and social arena." (Girvin, 1996: 166)

The Genesis of the 1983 Amendment Campaign and Its Outcome

The principal strategies of the first Women's Right to Choose group in late 1979 were the decriminalisation of abortion and the establishment of a feminist pregnancy counselling service (Riddick, 1993). The first Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre was set up in June 1980. Early in 1981 a conference on 'Abortion, Contraception and Sterilisation' was organised by activists at Trinity College Dublin. In March of that year, a public meeting was held at Liberty Hall to publicise the demands of the group and recruit members. Ruth Riddick addressed the meeting:

"A woman, who admitted to having an abortion, spoke out strongly in favour of a woman's right to control her own body last night. Ruth Riddick said that the men of this country are not enlightened enough, or chose not to be, when it comes to the question of taking positive steps to avoid pregnancy. They have a right to choose whether they will take responsibility for their actions or not. So why should the basic right of control of one's body be denied to women, she asked." (*The Evening Herald*, Wednesday 11 March, 1981)

Riddick (previously uninvolved) quickly became a key leader in the pro-choice sector.⁷ She is an example of a second generation feminist of the contemporary women's movement (the first generation provided the impetus in 1979 which was carried through the 1980s by an influx of radical activists around new mobilising issues). The recruitment of new activists around pro-choice mobilisation was, however, constrained in comparison with the previous decade.

Counter pickets were mounted on the Liberty Hall meeting and the audience was generally antagonistic to the pro-choice platform (Riddick, 1993). Counter right mobilisation on the question of abortion dates from before the formation of the Women's Right to Choose group. It was widely perceived as the issue around which to 'halt the permissive tide in other areas' (John O'Reilly,⁸ *Need for a Human Life Amendment*, January 1981 in Riddick, 1994: 142). The Pro-life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) in 1981

crystallised a highly organised counter movement which had its foundations in the 1970s. The pro-life campaign took as its model the American 'Human Life Amendment Campaign' which was launched in the 1970s and remains a mobilising issue today. The counter right visibly mobilised in 1981 by diverting the abortion debate into the legal/constitutional arena - an area which required extensive resources and legal expertise. The PLAC rallied an alliance of conservative forces, which were opposed to changes in the status of women in a number of areas, around the single issue of abortion. The campaign was launched on a rather quiet note in April 1981, and few political activists at the time could have realised the impact it would generate later. Pro-choice activists began to realise its implications after the Fianna Fáil wording of the proposed amendment was disputed and the campaign intensified in February 1983. Gradually all sections of Irish society became embroiled in a complex political debate, which culminated in the referendum of September 1983 (appendix 15 provides a detailed chronology of the main events in the campaign).

The rancour of the debate intensified during 1982 and 1983. Tactically the counter right proceeded to block pro-choice SMOs from providing information/referral services by actively lobbying for a constitutional referendum, with a view to *copperfastening* the 'right to life of the unborn.' The campaign was long, bitter and divisive. A complex series of initiatives were simultaneously mobilised by pro-choice SMOs (which coalesced with an Anti-Amendment Group), the PLAC, Church organisations and the Government, culminating in the issuing of a proposed amendment to the Constitution:

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect and as far as practicable by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

Right to choose groups, prominent journalists, family planning clinic workers, students unions and other feminist activists tentatively formed an Anti-Amendment campaign. It was an extremely difficult task for a disparate group of this scale, with a limited constituency and scarce resources to embrace a national referendum campaign:

"Most women had never discussed abortion in public - indeed, not outside an intimate circle of friends! None knew how to make a speech on the subject. None of the left-wing political parties would agree at first to join the campaign. It seemed for a time that every official legitimate political faction was going to support an amendment to the constitution to 'give an absolute right to life of the foetus'." (Jackson, 1986: 54)

Pro-choice activists within the women's movement were increasingly marginalised and reactive. As the campaign progressed, the feminist basis of the issue - a women's right to choose - became increasingly side-lined in the Anti-Amendment Campaign's strategy and in the general political debate. Opponents of the amendment produced leaflets and canvassed the electorate giving several reasons why the amendment should be opposed. Principally they argued that an amendment to the Constitution was unnecessary and would do nothing to help those Irish women who had sought, and were continuing to seek, abortions in Britain. Strategically, a women's right to choose was not among them. The politics of the campaign silenced women's reproductive control as an issue. Thus, the practical concerns of those feminist activists engaged in the direct provision of abortion information and non-directive pregnancy counselling were marginalised.⁹ The strategies and dynamics within the counter movement successfully demobilised the anti-amendment alliance in this period, in which feminist activists were key leaders:

"Condemned to marginality, women's groups found themselves on the defensive, confronting a *national* referendum that they were ill-equipped, ill-financed and ill-prepared to oppose." (Jackson, 1986: 54)

The referendum was a ubiquitous political issue in Irish society between 1981 and 1983. The PLAC was supported by the main opposition party, *Fíanna Fáil*; the majority of senior maternity hospital consultant obstetricians; and the bishops of the Catholic Church. The Irish Nurses Organisation and Catholic lay organisations (such as *Opus Dei* and the *Knights of Columbanus*) actively campaigned for the amendment (see O'Reilly, 1992). Pamphlets and leaflets were issued to Catholic churchgoers on Sundays. Church-run hospitals and schools were used as organising centres in favour of the amendment. Anti-feminist women who regarded changes in contraception and abortion laws as threats to the traditional status of motherhood mobilised in this period, and today have diversified into a number of women's organisations affiliated to the counter right.

The constitutional referendum campaign concluded with the Anti-Amendment Campaign appealing to Catholic priests not to preach about the amendment. PLAC tactically warned that if the amendment was defeated, abortion was more likely to be legalised than ever. Several Catholic bishops spoke out individually before and after the statement issued by the Irish Bishops Conference. This statement, which said that each person has the right to vote according to their conscience, repeated that abortion was "the direct taking of an innocent life" but acknowledged that people who opposed the amendment were not necessarily pro-abortion. The Methodist Church urged a general vote against the amendment, while the Church of Ireland said voting was a matter of individual conscience. Dean Victor Griffin, of St. Patrick's Cathedral, who said that the mother's right to life is superior to that of her unborn child, was

rebuked by PLAC chairperson, Dr Julia Vaughan, for being "out of step with his church." Following this, the Chapter of St. Patrick's Cathedral fully supported the Dean.

Political intervention in the three-week campaign started with the Minister for Finance, Alan Dukes, stating his opposition to the amendment, and was followed by Ministerial colleagues Gemma Hussey and Nuala Fennell (both of whom were activists in women's rights SMOs in the 1970s, including the Women's Political Association and AIM). Some eleven members of the Irish Farmers Association who spoke out against the amendment were suspended, along with Donal Cashman, President of the organisation who proposed his own suspension. In medical organisations, seven professors of paediatrics came out against the amendment, while a new group of several hundred pro-amendment doctors was formed. The emotive nature of the campaign intensified after the circulation of an unfounded allegation that the Government was considering allowing the abortion of handicapped foetuses.

In September 1983, the Tánaiste and Leader of the Labour Party, Dick Spring, said that a concerted campaign was being waged with the support of the hierarchy to 'roll back the tide on social issues.' He issued a statement strongly criticising the amendment and urged people to vote 'no'. The same month, the Taoiseach Dr. Garret Fitzgerald acknowledged that he shared equal responsibility for accepting without adequate legal advice wording which he described as both doubtful and dangerous. He stated that he considered it his duty "as a Christian concerned about the protection of human life and about peace and reconciliation in Ireland to vote against the wording" (*Irish Times*, September 7, 1983: 10).

In a final rally of the Anti-Amendment Campaign Dean Victor Griffin said that sectarianism was unavoidable in the referendum. A letter from Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Ryan, was read out at all Catholic masses in

Dublin on the Sunday preceding the referendum, stating that a rejection of the amendment would leave open the possibility of abortion becoming legal sooner or later in Ireland. The letter concluded by advising the electorate to vote 'yes.' The same day, on RTE television Charles Haughey, leader of Fianna Fáil, said that "by passing the amendment we will put into our Constitution a guarantee that abortion cannot be introduced into our country."

An Irish Times/MRBI poll published before the referendum found a majority of more than two-to-one in favour of the amendment. On 7 September 1983, some fifty three per cent of the electorate went to the polls - sixty-six per cent voted in favour of the amendment, with the majority more pronounced in rural areas. Only one constituency voted against the amendment:

The result of the 1983 referendum, selected constituencies		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
All constituencies	67%	33%
Dublin (all areas)	51.6%	48.3%
Dun Laoghaire	42.1%	57.9%
Roscommon (rural)	83.8%	16.2%

Irish Press, 9 September 1983 in Jackson, 1986: 57.

A number of loose alliances were forged between the women's movement and alternative/radical parties under the aegis of the Anti-amendment campaign. People's Democracy, Revolutionary Struggle, Socialist Worker's Movement and the Democratic Socialist party all joined the Anti-amendment campaign. In particular, student's unions *generally*

opposed the referendum along with women's organisations. However, most interested parties and organisations did not mobilise resources within the Anti-amendment group and simply stated their opposition to the clause at a late stage in the campaign (see appendix 15). The Irish Congress of Trade Unions issued a statement of opposition. The Women's Committee of the Labour Party, the Communist Party and the Worker's Party also took up the issue.

The broader Anti-Amendment campaign had attempted to be pragmatic in the sense that the right to abortion on demand did not enter the discourse. Campaigners clearly presented their set of demands within the confines of the long term legislative potential of the proposed amendment arguing, for instance, that the proposed amendment would make the introduction of abortion *more likely* than ever. It was, however, a highly unsuccessful and deferential campaign.

Tactical Reorientation within the Women's Movement

Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution fulfilled the counter movement's central strategic goal of *copperfastening* the "right to life of the unborn". Demanding a constitutional amendment in which voters simply voted 'yes' or 'no' was a highly successful tactic. Monica Barnes, feminist activist and Fine Gael TD, remarked at the time:

"We are now into the third Act of a lunatic farce, where politicians have voted to present to the people of this country the wording of an amendment to the Constitution that is deliberately vague, ambiguous and downright dangerous. What has divided doctors, lawyers, churches and politicians will now be put for the people to vote 'yes' or 'no' on and an attempt will be made to claim that this is democracy." (Barnes, 1983 in Jackson, 1986: 54)

This long political campaign had a serious effect on retreating pro-choice activists within the women's movement and the sector fragmented. Riddick recalls:

"During this campaign, the Women's Right to Choose Group suffered a number of important body blows: the group split internally; the official opposition to the amendment, known simply as the 'Anti-Amendment Campaign,' distanced itself from 'The Right to Choose'; and, finally, the Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre collapsed under financial pressure, to be replaced, in July 1983, at the height of the Amendment Campaign, by Open Line Counselling." (Riddick, 1994: 143)

Both the Women's Right to Choose Group and the breakaway Right to Choose Campaign eventually disbanded. Ultimately, crisis stimulated reappraisal and an ascendancy of pragmatic over animated radical feminist politics was adopted by SMOs within the women's movement. The organising focus of marginalised pro-choice activists that remained within the women's movement became confined to the practical right to access information about legal abortion services *in other jurisdictions*.

Interview data reveals that individual activists were highly demoralised and connected the 1983 result to a decline of the women's movement. Ursula Barry recalled:

"The Anti-amendment campaign represented a new era characterised by outright confrontation, formal co-ordination between groups and individuals and a focus on abortion, an issue on which the reproductive rights movement had less power and much disunity. As a result, the success of the PLAC's campaign saw the demoralisation and partial defeat of a movement that had achieved so much in the previous decade." (Barry, 1992: 115)

An outside threat stimulated the mobilisation of new resources after the 1983 outcome. Pro-choice activism was strengthened by the visibility of the counter movement. Prior to 1981 the counter right was:

"...under the surface. It wasn't identified as an organised political force, you couldn't engage with it...Its public consolidation has been a very positive thing, it's identifiable now and people can make choices and decisions and have discussions. We can engage with them, confront them, expose them." (Member Woman's Right to Choose Group, Anti-Amendment Campaign)

In practice, a wider, mass-based constituency within the women's movement was sustaining activism and mobilising resources in mainstream contexts. Pro-choice activism was clearly a central radical feminist issue. It is important, however, to contextualise it within the less visible mobilising strategies of the generic movement. Throughout the 1980s, pro-choice activism was *one marginalised strand* of an expansive social movement engaging in a multitude of mainstream arenas.

Court Cases in the 1980s: the Outcome

A combination of pragmatic reappraisal and a strategic response by pro-choice feminists after 1983 contrasted starkly with the concerted direct action tactics of radical SMOs in the period of advancement. A core group of remaining members re-appraised their activism. This group had to become legally astute and mobilise resources in this arena, because the subsequent 'battle' was almost completely fought through the courts. Considerable expertise and alliances with sympathetic parties had to be mobilised to conduct a court campaign. The demoralised pro-choice centre of the women's movement that sustained (Open Line Counselling and the Dublin Well Woman Clinic) responded strategically by continuing the practice of abortion information and non-directive pregnancy counselling services in an *underground* fashion. This was viewed as both a movement tactic and a practical means of helping women in crisis (Jackson, 1986: 52). Riddick recalled:

"My decision to establish this service was taken for professional, political and personal reasons; specifically, my colleagues and I would not abandon our (future) clients, nor would we allow our service to be intimidated by the anti-choice lobby." (Riddick, 1994: 143)

A year after the referendum, the President of SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, the subsequent leading anti-abortion organisation) issued the following challenge:

"In order to defend the right to life of the unborn, we must close the *abortion referral agencies* which are operating in Dublin quite openly and underneath the eyes of the law. These clinics must be closed and if the 1861 Act cannot close them, we must have another Act that will." (in Riddick, 1994: 144)

Counter groups increasingly employed more expressive, confrontational tactics as well as legal challenges. The two non-directive pregnancy counselling services that operated in Dublin (Open Door Counselling and the Dublin Well Woman Centre) had confrontational pickets placed at their doors by counter right groups. In June 1985, SPUC issued civil proceedings against these SMOs. They argued that the provision of non-directive counselling was counter to the constitutional guarantee afforded to the unborn in Article 40.3.3. On 19th December 1986, the President of the High Court declared:

"The right to life of the foetus, the unborn, is afforded statutory protection from the date of its conception...The qualified right to privacy, the rights of association and freedom of expression and the right to disseminate information cannot be invoked to interfere with such a fundamental right." (High Court Record, No. 1985/5652P)

It was no longer tenable to offer a counselling service in premises when the High Court order came into effect, on January 12th 1987. As a temporary measure, the Open Line telephone helpline (Ruth Riddick's home number)

was established immediately to continue the provision information and counselling. Originally envisaged as an emergency response, calls were still being made to this number years later (Riddick, 1993). Open Door Counselling subsequently appealed the High Court decision to the Supreme Court. The appeal was rejected in a judgement delivered in March 1988. The existing criminal law was extended to add further abortion offence - that of prohibiting professional service providers from giving practical information to women seeking legal abortion outside the jurisdiction (Riddick, 1993):

"The Court doth declare that the activities of the Defendants, their servants or agents in assisting pregnant women within the jurisdiction to travel abroad to obtain abortions by referral to a clinic; by the making of their travel arrangements, or by informing them of the identity of and location of and method of communication with a specified clinic or clinics are unlawful, having regard to the provisions of Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution.

And it is ordered that the Defendants and each of them and each of their servants or agents be perpetually restrained from assisting pregnant women within the jurisdiction to travel abroad to obtain abortions by referral to a clinic, by the making for them of travel arrangements, or by informing them of the identity and location of and the method of communication with a specified clinic or clinics or otherwise." (Supreme Court Record No. 185/7)

These cases had a further demoralising effect on the minority, core cadre of pro-choice activists within the women's movement. This avenue was exhausting and expensive - and had been undertaken largely in *reaction* to the strategies of the highly resourced counter right movement.¹⁰ In addition:

"By-passing the parliamentary process has consequences....It is extremely expensive to take a Constitutional case and it is also long-drawn-out and time-consuming...it creates a situation whereby the population at large, as well as those directly concerned and affected, are reduced to spectators, watching experts slogging it out within the highly technical and formal atmosphere of the courts." (Barry, 1992: 114-5)

The mobilisation of grass roots initiatives in these autonomous SMOs, with an organising focus on abortion information and referral, was thwarted by the intense level of energy and resources concentrated in the legal arena.

A central analytical question here is, how did these cases influence broader social movement dynamics in other sectors of the movement? What impact did these cases have on the reappraisal and transformation that was occurring from within the women's movement as a whole? The movement's repertoire of direct action was generally more limited in the 1980s:

"I believe that the defeat in '83 and in '86 did much to demoralise the next generation - the radical women. I mean, I came in '70/'75. The next decade of younger women suffered a severe blow to their morale politically...There was an acceleration of emigration in the early 1980s and I think the radical feminist movement actually suffered because of that." (Pro-choice activist)

Young women who might have brought about change and new dynamism were leaving the country in significant numbers (Corcoran, 1992).¹¹ The Anti-Amendment Campaign involved high personal cost and alienation for activists involved directly in the pro-choice sector. Radical activists who maintained their movement commitments and activism in SMOs outside the core pro-choice SMOs were also affected by this climate of counter mobilisation, which opposed feminist demands in general. Interview data reveals that personal constraints on key radical activists, active since the 1970s, and the acute climate of stagnation following the success of the pro-life referendum in 1983, and subsequent 'no' vote on divorce in 1986, had a profound effect on the ability of the women's movement to mobilise more effectively in new autonomous centres. In general the *radicalism* of the women's movement was curbed.

The political opportunity structure had altered significantly:

"1983 was an alienating experience for those supportive of the feminist experience. Post-referendum Ireland was very lonely...especially the experience with the 'male' left and its tacit support and patronising of the women's movement. This was just a minor irritation until 1983, but then we expected their support and they deserted us in the aftermath." (Pro-choice activist)

Interviewees recalled how the counter mobilisation elicited an atmosphere of hostility throughout the 1980s. The Women's Right to Choose Campaign, for instance, tried to organise a public statement of prominent women who would admit to having had an abortion. Only three women publicly declared they had. Jackson recalled:

"A picket on the port terminals where boats carry women to Britain for abortions was physically attacked by a male on-looker....On the rare occasions when women were invited to discuss the issue of abortion on national media, they had to be ready to be accused of being 'baby-murderers.' A woman senator who spoke in opposition to the amendment received hate mail and obscene phone calls. Women in employment in religious-run schools, hospitals and social services feared their jobs if they wore badges opposing the amendment. One woman put opposition stickers on her car and had the windows smashed in." (Jackson, 1986: 56)

Pro-choice activists were persistently demoralised:

*"The 1980s experience was very close to despair, I was so personally ground down by it...the number of court cases I was personally involved in, especially the High Court injunction..."¹²
(Pro-choice Activist)*

Radical feminists either retreated from activism altogether after 1983 because of limited options, or tactically redirected their activism into mainstreaming SMOs:

"After the abortion referendum I reckon I had made up my mind that I was living in a society where I was absolutely and utterly alienated and that I wasn't going to do anything about it...I was just going to retreat back into the house. If I had been younger I might have fought it but I just thought - this society has nothing to say to me..." (Radical, Left activist)

The frustrations and marginalisation of radical activists is a key sign of movement retreat in this period. Those that pragmatically maintained their social movement commitments through the court campaign from 1985 onwards, and simultaneously provided practical information and counselling services, maintained an autonomous, radical movement centre and stimulated tactical innovation. The perceived need for alternative strategies in the face of hostility was grounded in the increasing demand recorded for these services by Irish women and a rising abortion rate:

"Through this involvement I have come to realise just how significant the question of fertility control is to women's everyday lives and also to see the political importance of offering woman-to-woman help, a "self-help" process which the women's movement had developed in the 1970s in such groups and campaigns as the establishment of birth control services, the rape crisis centres and the refuges for women survivors of domestic violence. While this has been a richly rewarding experience personally, the years since 1981 have been particularly difficult for reproductive rights in Ireland..." (Riddick, 1993)

Underground Abortion Information and Referral

In the aftermath of the 1983 referendum, the consolidation of the counter right was encouraged by its significant victory and the pro-choice sector of the movement continued to be limited in its strategic and tactical options by counter initiatives in the legal arena. At a grass roots level the mobilisation of SMOs in the first stage of activism (for example the CAP) had generated a constituency of radical activists within the women's movement in the area of reproductive rights services, who had long-standing experience of direct action tactics and innovative mobilisation of

limited resources. The pro-choice sector increasingly drew on this repertoire of strategies after 1983 and crucially forged alliances with groups and individuals in organisations *around* the women's movement.

The goals of pro-choice activists became increasingly narrow in response to what was, for the most part, initially a single-issue counter movement. Although the latter did mobilise around the divorce referendum in 1986, it primarily directed its resources and considerable elite support (see O'Reilly, 1992) at prohibiting the provision of abortion information and referral throughout the 1980s. At the same time, the pro-choice sector gradually mobilised an increasing number of feminist activists around the mobilising issues of abortion information and non-directive pregnancy counselling services. By 1988, when the Hamilton judgement placed further restriction on the provision of abortion information, pro-choice SMOs comprised an expanded constituency within the women's movement. Furthermore, an expanded conscience constituency was recruited by forging alliances and mobilising resources outside the women's movement.

However, while alliances with organisations and individuals were cultivated (with students unions, individual doctors, lawyers, politicians and media personalities), the series of legal cases through the courts drove the practical movement action of this autonomous sector of the women's movement *underground*. Crucially, it was solely SMOs within the women's movement which provided a pregnancy counselling *service* in Ireland. External alliances were mobilised in the legal/political arena, outside the remit of the direct provision of services. Individual doctors, family planning practitioners and students union officials, for example, tended either to provide written information on abortion services in other jurisdictions which was distributed by services located within the women's movement, or directly referred women to these information/referral services. The

women's movement was thus the primary source of the provision of these services, despite the fact that the campaign for the provision of abortion *information* (which became the focus of the abortion question) was increasingly taken up by a number of individuals and groups external to the movement. The practical organisation of information/referral services emerged from the radical, autonomous strand of the women's movement which mobilised extensively during the 1970s and mobilised this distinct repertoire of action and mode of feminist politics. This autonomous centre was for the most part marginalised throughout the 1980s within the women's movement. Gradually, however, it became recognised as an integral feminist mobilising issue in sectors which were mainstreaming. A tactical reorientation of the campaign for abortion information/referral occurred in this period. The right to choose crystallised into the right to *procure* an abortion in another jurisdiction which was a more acceptable demand to the mainstream feminist constituency in the women's movement and to the general public.

The legal constraints imposed throughout the 1980s acted as a catalyst for reappraisal within the marginalised pro-choice sector and new intra movement alliances and tensions gradually consolidated. This mobilising issue recruited a growing number of radical activists to the women's movement who were 'not there' in the 1970s - some who had had illegal abortions themselves; discovered the extent of the problem as family planning practitioners or doctors; and/or were drawn into referral work by previous involvement in other related SMOs (such as rape crisis work and women's health services). It is clear that the campaign for abortion information/referral was not confined to a limited autonomous sector over time. The ideology underpinning a woman's right to choose diffused across the movement in the form of mobilisation around the more politically and morally acceptable right to travel and information.

These developments are particularly evident in the formation of WIN, which is the contemporary successor to the Women's Right to Choose group and operated independently of the (former) pregnancy counselling services. The Women's Information Network (WIN) was established in November 1987 as an underground, voluntary emergency non-directive helpline service for women with crisis pregnancies. The helpline was founded by a group of women appalled by the Hamilton ruling, which banned the dissemination of abortion information. It was launched with the support and assistance of the then Defend the Clinics campaign. Contact with British abortion clinics was particularly important as a resource, and the helpline volunteer group undertook continuous training in counselling skills and visited and monitored abortion clinics in Britain. WIN included twenty women working in a variety of professions (including psychologists, film makers, teachers, administrators and students) (WIN *Information Pamphlet*, 1993). These activists did not reveal their identity in their information literature:

"We have produced this booklet in an attempt to break the silence around abortion in this country. Ironically many of us find we cannot follow the logic of this through fully by identifying ourselves publicly - the risks to individuals are still too high. Although the referendum last year was in favour of the right to information, at the time of going to press with this booklet the Government has still not clarified the circumstances in which information on abortion can be made legally available." (WIN *Information Pamphlet*, 1993: 4)

Most women availed of their services clandestinely - obtaining information from a sympathetic doctor, a student's union, a public toilet door, a community worker, a piece of graffiti. The nature of this SMO reflects the underground style of abortion information/referral services and the way in which support was garnered over time, from within the women's movement, and conscience constituents in external organisations.

There are three central movement dynamics discernible in this stage of activism: (1) alliances between pro-choice activists and service organisations across the women's movement (including the Well Woman Centres and later in the formation of the Women's Coalition and the WIN) ensured the expansion of a pro-choice movement centre and the persistence of an autonomous, radical movement sector which is integral to the continuity of the movement as a whole; (2) the simultaneous use of and flouting of the law by pregnancy counselling services was both tactically important and confronted the practical needs of thousands of Irish women with crisis pregnancies; and (3) alliances with groups *around* the women's movement was a key strategy and marked a changing orientation in radical activism (including co-ordinated campaigning with students unions,¹³ population activists, and legal and medical practitioners). As the issue gained more widespread awareness it mobilised a conscience constituency, who did not stand to gain directly from the achievement of the movement's goals.¹⁴ The professional model of movement mobilisation implies that support from groups with resources to spare (such as sympathetic lawyers and students unions), rather than the participation of the aggrieved women, becomes the key to movement success. However, parallel mobilising around women's very immediate concerns was essential in expanding grass roots participation in the abortion referral/information campaign and provided a service in increasing demand by Irish women.

Travel and Information Referenda in 1992

Underground strategies were adopted largely in response to the constraints placed on the continued advancement of radical demands in the sphere of women's reproductive rights. By 1992, the deployment of these strategies, combined with external political opportunities, resulted in partial success. The pragmatic concerns of pro-choice activists (the provision of

abortion information and the right to travel) gained wider receptivity through legal developments and were adopted by the Council for the Status of Women in 1992. This change of opinion in SMOs engaged in the mainstream was influenced by rulings in favour of abortion information and the right to travel by the European Courts of Human Rights and Justice. Following the Hamilton ruling (1986), Open Door Counselling appealed to the European Court of Human Rights, of which Ireland is a signatory to the Human Rights Convention. In October 1992, the Court found that the order of the Irish courts was in breach of the Convention's information rights clause, Article 10:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and without frontiers."

This judgement was regarded as a moral victory by feminist activists and the successful outcome of "eight years of legal wrangling and five years curtailment of much needed services for women" (Riddick, 1993). Open Door Counselling subsequently initiated proceedings to have the restraining order of the Supreme Court lifted in order to restore services.

One of the most important turning points in the campaign occurred in 1992, when the Attorney General successfully sought a High Court injunction against 'Miss X,' preventing a fourteen-year-old girl who had been raped from travelling to England for a termination (see Smyth, 1992). An appeal to the Supreme Court lifted this injunction, but in its judgement found that Article 40.3.3. actually *permitted abortion* in Ireland:

"...if it established as a matter of probability that there is a real and substantial risk to the life as distinct to the health of the mother, which can only be avoided by the termination of the pregnancy, that such a termination is permissible, having regard to the true interpretation of Article 40.3.3. of the Constitution." (in Girvin, 1996)

The Supreme Court interpreted this to mean that an abortion could be performed in Ireland if the woman's health was endangered by her threatened suicide. In addition, the Court decided that there could be restrictions on the right to travel, independent of the X case, if there was a conflict between the right to life of the foetus and that of the mother. The implications of this judgement was that a woman could be prevented from travelling to Britain on the grounds not that her own life was threatened, but that of the foetus was.¹⁵ In a referendum held in November 1992, the majority of the electorate supported the right to obtain abortion information and the right to travel (see appendix 14 for wording):

Voting in Referendum, November 25 1992		
	Yes	No
• Right to Life	34.6%	65.4%
Freedom to Travel	62.4%	37.6%
Freedom of Information	59.9%	40.1%

Girvin, 1996: 172

Girvin contends that in 1992 "liberal and feminist opinion was mobilised in a new and radical fashion and for the first time in a decade seemed to reflect public opinion" (Girvin, 1996: 1770). However, the issues these cases sought to resolve are still being challenged.

The protracted series of legal cases that were sustained by marginalised radical activists in the 1980s ultimately produced partial movement success in 1992. The incorporation of the issue of the right to procure an abortion in another jurisdiction into the remit of mainstream

SOMOs was, however, crucial to this success. The CSW directly negotiated with the Government on the wording of the referenda on travel and information in 1992.

The kernel of radical interpretations of reproductive rights - abortion on demand - remains unresolved and contentious within the Irish women's movement. The mobilisation of the women's movement in the 1980s around the legal questions prohibiting the right to procure an abortion in another jurisdiction was, in practical terms, only one dimension of the more comprehensive agenda of the generic women's movement as a social movement entity. The crucial outcome of pro-choice mobilisation in the 1980s was the parallel consolidation of CMOs (counter movement organisations) in the Irish social movement sector.

Movement-Counter Movement Dynamics and Movement Maintenance

The mobilisation of SOMOs in a particular cycle of protest produces successes and defeats that affect opportunities for subsequent mobilisation and collective action. Snyder and Kelly (1979) examined how the outcomes of one "round" of collective action affect the resources, tactics and organisation of the next. One of the outcomes that may result from a cycle of movement success, which occurred in the Irish women's movement between 1970 and 1979, is the emergence of a counter movement. Depending on its strength, a counter movement may severely constrain the strategic and tactical options of the original movement, while at the same time can increase movement resources as constituents become alerted to threats from the opposition. The counter right's agenda included strategies to reverse the overall achievements of the women's movement in the previous decade and to stymie this trend - specifically in the area of reproductive rights, which culminated in the 1983 referendum. According

to Staggenborg (1991), the pro-choice movement in the US provoked one of the most vigorous and lasting counter movements in the history of American reform movements. Similarly in Ireland, a broad-based counter movement has persistently mobilised since the early 1980s - particularly around the divorce referenda of 1986 and 1995.

The effect of counter movement mobilisation on social movement processes within the women's movement is partly reflected in the change of direction which the pro-choice centre took after 1983. It is clear that this counter movement would not have mobilised extensively unless there had been a perceived threat to traditional values in Irish society. The consolidation of a counter-right movement (which encompassed conservative CMOs such as SPUC, Family Solidarity, Youth Defence, Human Life Ireland, Mná na hÉireann and, more recently, the Christian Solidarity Party and the National Party) is in fact an indication of a previous cycle of success for the women's movement in Ireland. It is evident that there are different factions within the counter movement, which was manifest in the diverse 'No' Divorce campaign groupings in 1995. Nora Bennis, a key leader of the counter right movement and founder of the National Party and Mná na hÉireann, which have an explicit traditional family values and pro-life agenda, has publicly stated on a continuous basis her opposition to the 'feminist agenda' and, in particular, the aims of the CSW. One of the key realisations for the women's movement in the wake of the mobilisation of this counter movement is that there are and always will be women strategically *opposed* to feminism in counter movement organisations.

Whether the 'backlash' (as a sociologically observable phenomenon) exists is not clear. The term was originally coined by journalists during the conservative era of the Reagan administration of the 1980s. Feminism is

presented as a pervasive and negative force in a period of backlash (a number of texts have emerged on this subject including, French, 1993; Faludi, 1991; Wolf, 1993). Arguably a form of 'backlash' is ubiquitous in society, which peaks in periods of economic downturn and conservatism. One interviewee stated:

"The backlash is a Western phenomena. It is culturally specific in each country. In Ireland it had a lot to do with economic recession in the 1980s, which symbolised regression in terms of social change...But the viciousness of the backlash is symptomatic of real change." (Pro-choice activist, Radical campaigner, Academic)

Social movements, such as the women's movement, are more accurately cyclical phenomena which peak and decline at different stages of resource mobilisation, in accordance with the degree of political opportunities, flow of resources and, in recent years, the strength of a counter movement. This stage of activism was, more accurately, a period of diminution in which the women's movement as a whole was constrained by the lack of political opportunities and the impact of the counter right. Intense mobilisation in the mainstream and formalisation was the main response to external rigidity.

The women's movement by definition is a force for change and is mobilised to conflict with the *status quo* of any given society. The escalation of an international movement towards conservatism, Christian fundamentalism and preservation of traditional values has resulted in the mobilisation of new right organisations. It is the level of mobilisation by CMOs at this particular stage of the women's movement's transformation, and how these developments affected movement strategies, which are relevant to the focus of this study.

CMOs tend to become particularly active during periods when traditional values are perceived as being under serious threat.¹⁶ The fact that in the 1980s the social climate and political opportunity structure was less receptive to the aims of the women's movement than in the 1970s

resulted in changing structures and tactics within the women's movement. Original autonomous and reformist SMOs simultaneously mobilised in the direction of formalisation. The continuity of a limited autonomous strand in this climate depended on a high degree of commitment by activists in a small, core group of engaged in the provision of abortion information/referral. The intensity of this commitment increased after 1983 and demoralisation, hostility and constraints stimulated reappraisal and pragmatic tactics over time. The expansion of a conscience constituency mobilised more extensive resources around their goals in formal arenas.

The development of a counter movement (which first consolidated publicly in the guise of the pro-life campaign in Ireland) forces an interaction with the social movement sector - there is a surge of tactical change as movement and counter movement learn from each other, develop new tactics and meet with success or failure (Useem and Zald, 1987: 247-272). Mainstream and autonomous SMOs mobilised the movement's generic strategy of formal alliances with the State, which was embryonic in the tactics of reformist SMOs established in the 1970s. The challenge of the counter right movement re-directed the core group of radical feminists in pro-choice activism into the mainstream, particularly through the courts. Formalisation was thus an inclusive mobilisation process within the women's movement in this period.

The short-term legal-constitutional gains of the counter movement in the 1980s were reversed quickly in the 1990s and there was a change of public attitude in relation to abortion information and referral, particularly following the 'X case.' The advancement of radical feminism was significantly scaled down in comparison to the first stage of resurgence. Clearly autonomous *and* mainstream mobilisation with diverse issues, ideologies and tactics across the interactive movement has been the most successful strategy since 1970. The mainstreaming of autonomous SMOs

was partly a symptom of the lack of opportunities to mobilise radical direct action in the area of reproductive rights, a strategy which advanced a number of autonomous movement centres concentrating on contraceptive rights and women's health services throughout the 1970s. The continuity of this movement process in the campaign for the legalisation of abortion information and referral services did not gather a similar momentum within the movement.

The importance of institutional resistance through the polity worked for the counter right throughout the 1980s, a period of economic stagnation in Ireland. Recent setbacks for the counter right (including the 1992 referenda on abortion information/referral and the 1995 divorce referendum), rising confrontational direct action tactics (by CMOs like Youth Defence), and the level of open confrontation and hostility in the 1995 Divorce referendum campaign could prompt more militant and violent responses from this sector in the future:

"Counter movements can move from institutionally sanctioned strategies to non-violent direct action to violence if the particular movement goal is not attained." (Mottl, 1980: 624).

The increasing viability of the women's movement in Ireland is clearly linked to the fact that counter movement participants develop strategies in reaction to the success of the initial movement and to the amount of social control exerted against them (see Snyder and Tilly, 1972). It is evident that pro-life CMOs, which had an organising focus on undermining the strategies of a marginal group of SMOs engaged in abortion information/referral, did not affect the more numerous and less visible mainstreaming SMOs within the women's movement, to the *same* extent.

2. ORGANISATIONAL EXPANSION AND TRANSFORMATION: THE EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONALISATION AND MAINSTREAMING

While the social movement dynamics surrounding the campaign for abortion information/referral were pivotal in the transformation of the social movement sector and consolidated a new right movement in Ireland, the campaign was not adopted as a central mobilising issue by the majority of SMOs within the women's movement in the 1980s. This section elucidates the equally effective developments that occurred in the wider movement, including the intense professionalisation and mainstreaming of key SMOs.

Resource mobilisation theorists have argued that professionalised sectors of social movements emerge, as more sources of funding become available for activists who make careers out of being movement leaders (Zald and McCarthy, 1979; Jenkins, 1983). In contrast to 'classical' movement organisations, which rely on the mass mobilisation of 'beneficiary' constituents as active participants, 'professional' SMOs rely primarily on paid leaders and conscience constituents who contribute money and are paper members rather than active participants. Examination of the effects of organisational leadership and the structure of SMOs is related to movement outcomes. Piven and Cloward's (1977) thesis argues, for example, that large formal movement organisations diffuse protest. The professionalisation of SMOs that occurred across the women's movement in the 1980s had important consequences for changing movement dynamics. The fact that the Chairperson of the CSW in this period (Frances Fitzgerald) went on to be elected as a Fine Gael TD is concrete evidence of the level of mainstreaming and co-optation that occurred. Similarly, Olive Braiden (Director of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre) was co-opted directly as a candidate for Fíanna Fáil in the European Parliament election of 1993.

The politics of abortion information/referral intertwined with the change of direction in the women's movement as a whole in the 1980s - in

particular, the increased participation of *feminist* women in politics, many of whom campaigned for legal reforms on a range of issues of concern to women (see appendix 13).¹⁷ The impetus of individual women through the courts and a number of highly publicised cases (including an alleged infanticide and subsequent public tribunal - the Kerry Babies case) fomented a more sympathetic climate for the general goals of the women's movement. Furthermore, during this period the CSW persisted, mainstreamed and consolidated its institutional position as the chief interest group representing women. As already stated, by 1992 the Council for the Status of Women was a key negotiator with the Government in relation to the execution of the referenda on abortion information/referral. The Second Report of the Commission on the Status of Women stated:

"There is no automatic right of consultation or obligation on any Government Department to adopt the recommendations of women's organisations. However, the Council for the Status of Women, which is an umbrella body for all women's organisations, does hold discussions with Ministers and Government Departments. The Council is a permanent body." (*Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women*, Dublin, Government Publications Office, 1993: 389)

Paradoxically, SMOs which originally mobilised in the mainstream (especially the CSW) and were progressively professionalising throughout the 1980s, gradually adopted key mobilising issues (rape, domestic violence and lesbian rights, for example) and aspects of the praxis of radical feminism in this period (workshops, for example).

The majority of feminist activists concentrated their social movement commitments within the institutions of the State.¹⁸ The continued advancement of the original autonomous sector of the movement was severely constrained in comparison with the 1970s and was mainstreaming. The intense mainstreaming of the movement as a whole was embryonic in the early 1970s, and culminated in the 1980s both in terms of strategic

responses and direct participation within the State's institutions. This strategy ensured the maintenance of the movement as a whole in reaction to the reduction of political opportunities and counter climate. The methods and tactics of radical feminism became more diffuse and less concentrated in a broad autonomous movement sector. As a result, autonomous radical feminism became more dilute in impact, and was not counteracted by the emergence of new radical ideas and strategies. One activist involved in a women's health clinic reflected on these changing orientations in feminist activism:

"Do we still need a radical women's movement? I think so. I mean, I think that many people who work in the mainstream also have a radical edge to them that could equally be fertilised out there on the radical wing of the women's movement. I mean, people often 'wear those hats', its not only a matter of say, there's this group of women who are working more in organisations, or in the Dáil or in the Civil Service, and there is this group 'out there' who are the radicals. I think its also a matter of people knowing what they can do within the system that they are in - so in my case knowing that of course I need to negotiate with ministers, of course I need to negotiate with the Department of Health, that doesn't mean that I cannot actually have a more radical agenda of my own that may be practised throughout the clinic - but they couldn't be subsidised by funds from the Department. So, you know,... you sometimes have to maintain these things both within your person and the area you work in." (Member Women's Right to Choose, Women's Studies Forum, Director Family Planning Clinic)

A principal transformation within the women's movement in the 1980s was that the deployment of radical feminist ideologies as a resource for maintaining a collective identity and cohesion among autonomous SMOs declined. Autonomous, radical groups engaged in extensive ideological debate and consciousness raising during the 1970s. The term radical in the first stage of advancement applied to the widespread, organic mobilisation that occurred in grass roots centres. SMOs that persisted out of this sector, and sustained activism in their specialised field, progressively mainstreamed and professionalised in the 1980s. In contrast, the term

radical annotates decreased activism, marginality, constrained mobilisation and diversion into the mainstream in this second stage of movement transformation.

A concrete sign of the widespread diffusion of feminist values during the 1980s is reflected in the fact that selective incentives motivated individual women to concentrate their social movement commitments in areas outside the autonomous women's movement,¹⁹ particularly in the establishment of Women's Studies departments in Irish universities; in the publication of Irish feminist texts; in the formation of community groups; and in individual careers.²⁰ Distinctive women's liberation and women's rights sectors which conceptualised the women's movement in the early 1970s were no longer tenable.

Formalisation

While informal movement organisations may be necessary to initiate and sustain movements, formalised SMOs do not necessarily diffuse protest (Piven and Cloward, 1977). Crucially, formalised SMOs are able to maintain themselves, and the movement, over a longer period than informal SMOs. This is particularly important following periods when movement issues are less pressing and the mobilisation of constituents is more difficult, as was the case throughout the 1980s. Jenkins (1985: 10) argues that institutions and Government departments, for example, prefer dealing with organisations that have professional leaders. In the case of the civil rights movement in the US, foundations "selected the new organisations that became permanent features of the political landscape" through their funding choices (Jenkins, 1985: 15). Formalised SMOs do not passively receive support from elite sources and constituents. They actively solicit resources because they have organisational structures and professional staff with the expertise that facilitates the mobilisation of elite resources.

The ability of SMOs to obtain funding from elite sources throughout the 1980s resulted in the broad-based professionalising and mainstreaming of the women's movement in a number of areas (particularly SMOs involved in the provision of services, including the Rape Crisis Centre, Cherish, AIM, Adapt). The trend toward SMOs formalising in a number of areas, and the drive to obtain institutional funding, is part of a broader capacity of a social movement for organisational maintenance. Paid staff and leaders are critical to the maintenance of SMOs because they carry out tasks such as ongoing contact with the press and fund-raising in a routine manner. A formalised structure ensures that there will be continuity in the performance of maintenance tasks and that the SMO will be prepared to take advantage of elite preferences and political opportunities (Gamson, 1975).

However, this analysis does not suggest that informal, autonomous SMOs cannot maintain themselves for a number of years - even in adverse social conditions. Long-term informal SMOs are likely to remain small and exclusive. This point was particularly demonstrated in the period of abeyance. The superior ability of formal SMOs to maintain themselves on a broad-based, national level has been demonstrated in detail in the case of the CSW. Throughout the 1980s its national base strengthened. It is thus a combination of professional leadership and formalised structure that facilitates organisational maintenance in SMOs.

Piven and Cloward's (1977) argument that formalisation leads to a decline in direct action tactics is instructive. Autonomous movement activity is a clear indicator of the *potential* of a social movement. Abortion information and referral activities were regarded by radical activists as a militant means of challenging the system and providing an alternative type of organisation to serve a tangible need of a substantial number of 'invisible' Irish women. While professionalisation of leadership and formalisation of SMOs are important trends in many social movements, there is little

evidence that professional leaders and formal SMOs will replace informal SMOs and non-professional leaders as the key actors in expanding the potential of social movements for radical social change. (Even in the case of the CSW it was a long history of prior informal activism that was crucial to the wider mobilisation of this sector and the securing of concrete institutional reforms in the 1970s). Professional leaders as career activists tend to formalise the organisations they lead, in order to provide financial stability and the kind of division of labour that allows them to use and develop their organisational skills and achieve their goals on a gradual basis. Once formalised, SMOs continue to hire professional activists because they have the necessary resources (the experience of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre is a typical example). A formalised structure can ensure the continuity of an organisation despite changes in leadership or an unfavourable political climate. Formalising SMOs have thus played an important role in maintaining the movement and preventing a reversal of previous gains throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Deradicalisation and formalisation of autonomous radical SMOs was a generic trend across the women's movement and coincided with the general retreat of other new social movements (such as the New Left) and economic recession. New SMOs with a radical structure did not emerge in sufficient numbers to offset these trends. These developments stimulated changing orientations in ideology and activism, feminist practice and mobilising issues. A transformation in structures and organisation, strategy, leadership, arena of protest and tactics resulted. While an autonomous campaign for reproductive rights was mobilised in both the service provision/counselling and the political/legal spheres, autonomous radical feminist activism broadly retreated.

The structure of SMOs within the women's movement are determined to a large extent by the degree of autonomy, and this dynamic

is thus particularly important in view of the mainstreaming process. The formalisation of SMOs also has implications for coalition work within movements. Coalitions among formalised SMOs are easier to co-ordinate. However, formalised SMOs also influence coalitions toward narrower, institutionalised strategies and tactics that make the participation of informal SMOs and new grass roots activists difficult. This became a key movement dynamic in the 1990s.

In summary, formalising SMOs co-operated and formed alliances with each other, depended on the State for resources, and developed into professionalised organisations. Radical activists increasingly found their way into mainstream political and economic organisations outside the movement, and were prepared to work within established structures. In essence, the women's movement reached a stage of *maturation*. A key conclusion is that organisations with a hierarchical structure, specialisation and formal roles became the typical form of SMO throughout the 1980s, in direct contrast to the numerous more loosely organised, decentralised autonomous groups of the 1970s. The effect of a declining autonomous form of activism is an important theoretical question:

"One widely observed tendency is for feminist movements as they grow older and bigger to become infinitely diverse in terms of theory, structure, tactics and activities. This can be interpreted either as fragmentation and dilution or, more positively as a healthy integration into society." (Randall, 1991: 245)

A weakened core of radical activists and autonomous feminist organisations leaves the movement vulnerable in times of economic decline and political reaction, and dilutes its potential to generate more far-reaching social change.²¹ Following Randall, a vibrant, decentralised style of activism "...also enables it to accommodate and promote all kinds of creative initiative from the grass-roots" (Randall, 1991: 255).

CONCLUSION

During the early 1980s, the women's movement increasingly felt the effects of an anti-feminist movement and a growing conservative climate. The strength of the pro-life campaign acted as a stimulant for a re-evaluation of intra-group relations. In particular, throughout the 1980s, activists developed a broadened definition of feminist ideology and activism. Antagonistic relations between groups lessened as it became clear how fragile a divided movement was in the face of powerful opposition forces and a degree of convergence between autonomous and mainstream SMOs occurred. In addition, skills were gained in the political arena and the movement grew more sophisticated in its understanding of mobilisation processes. Three central transformative processes emerged:

1. Traces of more co-operation and convergence between the two original branches, which was already occurring by the mid-70s, resulted in a dramatic reduction in the formation of autonomous, radical feminist groups. Radical feminist ideas, such as abortion information, became marginalised, but persisted in the form of a committed cadre of a core group of radical feminists whose motivation arose primarily from ideological incentives and the provision of a practical service.
2. Mainstreaming of the women's movement as a whole. Women's rights SMOs had mobilised resources within the polity since the early 1970s. Many activists from this original sector joined established political parties throughout the 1980s (including key leaders such as Nuala Fennell and Gemma Hussey who were appointed to senior government positions). The CSW persisted and intensely mainstreamed but, paradoxically, it also selectively

absorbed the original ideas, politics and methods of radicalism that were broadly acceptable to their constituency.

3. Selective incentives were satisfied by feminists who were not core members of the major SMOs and who concentrated their social movement commitments in individual areas. These developments became more manifest towards the end of the 1980s and many new activists were university lecturers (who were pivotal in the establishment of Women's Studies departments in Irish universities); formed community groups; engaged in adult education; and pursued individual careers (for example, as lawyers, doctors, adult educators, trade unionists, social workers, community workers).

The concerted efforts of diverse groups in this period of transformation contributed to the generalised view that the mobilisation process of the women's movement was dependent upon the engagement of many 'types' of women working in multiple arenas. Greater tolerance of difference and less emphasis on 'correctness' allowed radical activists to expand their focus and mainstream. Ryan contends that:

"...the fact that diverse activists recognised themselves as intersecting strands of the same movement and that many participants actively sought more co-operative feminist relations, demonstrates the desire of activists to see themselves differently than feminists had in the organising stage." (Ryan, 1992: 97)

While there were constraints on the inclusive agenda of the Irish women's movement and certain abeyance processes are identifiable in this stage of decreased activism and reappraisal, it is by no means on the same scale as the post-independence period. Firstly, the consolidation of radical feminism since the 1970s mobilised a conscience constituency that was absent in the post-independence period, and which could be tapped into in

times of need (as was in the case in post-referendum Ireland). Secondly, the politics and ideology of radical feminism ensured the maintenance of the movement as a whole. The radical sector adopted more mainstream tactics in response to external threats. While abortion information and referral were overriding mobilising issues within a marginal, autonomous centre of the movement, alternative new *types* of social movement centres did emerge around new mobilising issues relating to nuclear disarmament, feminist spirituality, local community groups and women's education.

The SMOs which comprised the autonomous women's movement converged and increasingly formalised. The original style of activism marked by radical feminist structures and methods of organisation became more dilute, but at the same time diffused into the remit of mainstream SMOs. The movement has been able to maintain itself and grow in strength despite the retreat of the wider social movement sector in this period, by acquiring formalised organisational structures and formal leadership. In part, this transformation occurred because the social movements of the 1970s that provided resources and political opportunities for the women's movement declined. The strength of the social movement sector and the climate of social protest helped compensate for organisational deficits in the first stage of advancement in the 1970s. By 1980, interacting sectors of the movement had to develop formal organisational structures to compensate for more limited political opportunities and converge in the face of organised counter opposition. However, it is clear that these developments in the wider movement did not completely hinder the development of grass roots initiatives in new sectors. A revitalisation of the women's movement was observable in a number of newly emerging sectors, which are now apparent in the 1990s. It is clear that the view that the 1980s marked the 'end' of the contemporary women's movement in Ireland is invalid and that the counter offensive ultimately stimulated innovation and reappraisal.

Notes Chapter Six:

- 1 The Status campaign and conference was held in 1980 with view to re-launching the women's movement.
- 2 These stages of activism are based on key turning points and new directions in the movement's transformation. However, I acknowledge that there are no clear cut watersheds between these stages and that in reality there is continuity between all cycles of activism identified in this study.
- 3 Source: Women's Information Network (WIN).
- 4 An addendum to the 1979 law on family planning was implemented in September 1985, permitting single persons of 18 years of age to obtain contraceptives legally.
- 5 The movement initially organised by mobilising resources from different sources, including the enthusiasm of young constituents, particularly young feminists willing to demonstrate for abortion rights in the streets, the skills of seasoned family-planning activists and volunteers who knew how to raise money and lobby their legislators, the moral concern and counselling skills of clergy members who organised abortion referral services, and the ingenuity of civil liberties and women's movement lawyers anxious to test abortion laws (Staggenborg, 1991: 4).
- 6 See Whelan (1995) for a comprehensive treatment of this survey.
- 7 Ruth Riddick went on to become Administrator of the first Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre, later became Director of Open Door Counselling and recently Education Officer with the Irish Family Planning Association (the national affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation).
- 8 John O'Reilly is a key leader of the Counter Right movement - see O'Reilly, 1992.
- 9 For example, Young Fine Gael published a leaflet stating: "No to the Amendment! No to Abortion!"
- 10 Partial reform regarding access to contraception was not introduced until 1979 under the Health (Family Planning) Act. Article 10 of this Act stated that "Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorising (a) the procuring of abortion; (b) the doing of any other thing, the doing of which is prohibited by Sections 58 or 59 of the Offence Against the Person Act 1861; or (c) the sale, importation into the State, manufacture, advertising or display of abortifacients" (Riddick, 1993).
- 11 According to Corcoran (1993): "Since 1980, net outward migration has totalled 216,000, equivalent to over 6 percent of the population, with the bulk of emigrants leaving after 1985. This followed a decline in manufacturing and building employment during 1984-85 and a comparatively large fall in the numbers at work in agriculture (Holohan and Brown, 1986: 1). Estimates show that the overall population level declined steadily to reach 3.515 million in April 1990. On the basis of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures, about one in twenty of the population is estimated to have left the country between 1982 and 1989. A breakdown of the 1986 figures shows that two-thirds of all emigrants come from the 15 to 24 age group (Taylor, 1989: 7)" (Corcoran, 1993: 8).
- 12 This case involved SPUC Vs Open Line Counselling, USI and Trinity College Students Union, who provided abortion information and non-directive pregnancy counselling.
- 13 The 1991 European Court of Justice Ruling on Travel (Grogan) resulted from a case taken by SPUC against the students to prevent the provision of abortion information in their publications.
- 14 The women's movement mobilised conscience constituents who did not stand to gain directly from the achievement of the movement's goals in this area (Staggenborg, 1991: 6).
- 15 This dilemma underpins the counter mobilisation current demand for a new constitutional referendum to reinforce a total ban on abortion, which is still a major political issue in 1997.
- 16 At this time, unity feminism emerged in the US with the ERA: "...even if unity feminism was a superficial cover for deeply held divisions and was to last only temporarily, the fact that diverse activists recognised themselves as intersecting strands of the same movement and that many participants actively sought more co-operative feminist relations, demonstrates the desire of activists to see themselves differently than feminists had in the organising stage." (Ryan, 1992: 97)
- 17 In the November 1982 election 14 women were elected to the Dáil, including Monica Barnes (Fine Gael), Gemma Hussey (Fine Gael) and Nuala Fennell (Fine Gael) who were involved in various SMOs (including the IWLM AIM, Women's Aid and the Women's Political Association).

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- 18 For example, Nuala Fennell became the first Minister of State for Women's Affairs established at the Department of the Taoiseach in 1982 and Gemma Hussey was appointed Minister for Education.
 - 19 Autonomous continues to refer to the distinctiveness of the women's movement as a social movement in its own right within the social movement sector of Irish society. The women's movement continued to be unique in this period in that it was a movement solely *led by women*.
 - 20 The consciousness of a new generation of radical activists generated a climate which was conducive to mobilisation in a number of new autonomous sectors (such as, peace, environmentalism, spirituality, publishing and education) during the 1980s. Thirty-three women peace protesters, for instance, were arrested in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, near the US Embassy during Ronald Reagan's visit to Ireland in 1985: "Speaking at an emotive press conference held in the Mercy convent in Cork Street, the group, who described themselves as "Women for Disarmament," said that they were held in batches of five and six in cells designed for three...Petra Breathnach, who daubed red paint on the walls of the American Embassy and was arrested under Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act, claimed that she was arrested because of her association with the Free Nicky Kelly Campaign. Mrs. Monica Barnes, the only Fine Gael TD to boycott yesterday's Dail address by President Reagan said she would be raising in the Dáil the arrest of the women." (Evening Press, 1985). The combination of feminist spirituality, non-violence, a reverence for nature and womanist values has been influenced by the model of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. Both Greenham and the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment in Romulus, New York, created an environment which utilised women's spirituality beliefs, witchcraft, healers, psychics, and herbalists along with non-violent direct action challenges to government policy (Ryan, 1992: 138).
 - 21 The 'backlash' has been most vociferous in the US (coinciding with an economic downturn), but has contributed to reappraisal and revival in the cultural and educational spheres.

Chapter 7

New Directions and Grass Roots Re-activism

Introduction

This chapter elucidates current trends in movement activism.

Dahlerup argues:

"In general, I will argue that a social movement is still alive *if* new organisations and centres replace declining ones; *if* recruitment is continuing; *if* new resources are constantly being mobilised; *if* new ideas unfold; and *if* the drive to challenge the established society is still present. Empirical research must study all these aspects in order to determine whether a movement is actually fading away, or just changing." (Dahlerup, 1986: 235)

New developments education and a woman-centred culture are evolving in the context of established institutions, such as universities, but are interacting with grass roots initiatives. The nature of this interaction reproduces the autonomous/mainstream dynamic in a new configuration. Since the 1970s, the contemporary women's movement persistently diversified and diffused into the wider institutions of Irish society. Autonomous developments are clearly capable of emanating from new sources in the 1990s.

By the end of the 1980s, the contemporary Irish women's movement entered a third stage of transformation.¹ A combination of general movement gains were important symbolically, including the election of Mary Robinson as President of Ireland in 1990;² the European Court's ruling in favour of Open Line Counselling in 1992; the election of 20 women to the Dáil in 1992; and the publication of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women in 1993. The Supreme Court ruling in 1988 marked the final significant gain for the pro-life movement. Thereafter, abortion information/referral SMOs changed direction and formalised, in tandem with the inclusive trend of mainstream activism across the movement. The pragmatic strategies and abated aims of abortion information/referral SMOs proved successful between 1989 and 1996.

The dominant trend of formalisation in established SMOs persisted in this current stage. However, this chapter focuses on how, in addition, new directions both *within* and *outside* the autonomous women's movement in the 1990s have ensured its continuity, reshaped the focus of the movement into a third stage of contemporary activism and produced new movement centres. New autonomous dynamics are mobilising in a different structural and ideological form to the dynamics within 'traditional' radical SMOs which emerged in the 1970s. The boundaries and remit of the contemporary women's movement further diversified, diffused and evolved organically. The women's movement co-existed as an autonomous social movement and as an integral component of established institutions.

New sectors were embryonic in the early 1980s, including the formation of the Women's Studies Forum at UCD, the establishment of Irish Feminist Information (which preceded Attic Press as a major feminist publisher) and the emergence of locally-based women's groups in working-class communities (such as KLEAR). Radical activists/leaders pioneered these new developments and generated indigenous grass roots re-activism and recruited new constituents. One interviewee recalled:

"I'm thirty-seven now and the first time I got involved directly in the women's movement I would have been twenty and it would have been really two things I got involved in: one was the Women's Right to Choose group which Anne Connolly was a part of and the other was actually the Women's Studies Forum soon after that in UCD with Ailbhe Smyth." (Member Women's Right to Choose, Women's Studies Forum, Family Planning Clinic)

SMOs established in the 1970s and 1980s (such as the CSW, Rape Crisis Centres, Well Woman Centres) continued to professionalise and to expand into other urban centres in Ireland. In some cases, SMOs moved towards institutionalisation and co-optation by the State. There are three significant *new* grass roots directions identifiable in the wider social

movement sector: (1) the 'mushrooming' of community based Women's Groups; (2) the gradual consolidation of Women's Studies in Irish universities; and (3) the tremendous expansion of feminist publishing.³ The social movement dynamics between these developments and the established women's movement is examined.

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

The establishment of a Women's Studies Forum in UCD in 1983 was integral to the growth of women's studies in Irish education. Women's Studies courses/centres were established at universities in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Trinity and Limerick. Byrne et al. (1996) document the establishment of Women's Studies in the case of University College Galway (UCG). In 1987 a group of students, academics and administrative staff *collectively* voiced their concern about the lack of attention to gender issues within the university. They highlighted the deficiency of women's studies courses on the undergraduate academic curriculum and the absence of equality policies in the workplace. In order to promote contact between staff and students with an interest in these issues, a forum in which to engage in discussion and debate, exchange information and ideas and be a source of support to each other, the UCG Women's Studies Centre was established.⁴

Women's studies programmes primarily operate within the university structure and are for the most part under resourced and voluntarily maintained. Roseneil makes some pertinent observations on the propensity of many feminist academics move continuously between and across the boundaries of their own discipline and women's studies. They teach mainstream courses which are compulsory elements of undergraduate and postgraduate disciplines and also teach relatively autonomous courses both as options within their disciplines and within women's studies programmes

(Roseneil, 1995: 191-205). Roseneil contends that the integration/separation tension results partly from the location of feminism at the margins of mainstream academe and the fact that few lectureships are appointed entirely within women's studies. The challenge facing the autonomous enterprise of women's studies currently in the US is what Marilyn Frye terms 'curriculum integration' - the integration of work by women and people from minority groups into the standard college curriculum (Roseneil, 1995: 194). This, she argues, results in tokenism and a process of colonisation. While many feminist academics choose the dual role as women's studies continue to expand in Ireland, the tension between integration into the mainstream and autonomy is tangible. This presents a strategic challenge from within the women's movement - to endeavour to enhance the position of Irish women's studies autonomously *or* to continue to develop feminist research and theory simultaneously for a mainstream disciplinary audience and for a feminist audience, drawing on theoretical tools from both and seeking to contribute to both areas (Roseneil, 1995: 195).

In practice, however, a wide variety of themes and experiences underpin the remit of women's studies, which is not exclusively confined to academe. Women's studies is undertaken in a variety of contexts (particularly in adult and community education). Through its methods, which are based on the principles of consciousness raising, it validates the diversity and eclecticism of women's *experiences*. Women's studies is thus empowering, as well as posing a challenge to the academy. In addition, one of the major successes of the development of women's studies and women's publishing has been the vast array of literature and research, providing *evidence* of the manifestations of patriarchy in an Irish context. Byrne observes that:

"Establishing Women's Studies in educational institutions embraces many issues: the production of feminist scholarship, developing feminist research methodologies, creating teaching programmes, curricula and feminist media, liaising and negotiating with institutional bodies and committees, setting up Women's Studies centres and departments, looking for long-term funding, negotiating research contracts, networking and liaising with women's groups, providing support for campaigns and social and political issues. And as the work develops, the list of activities grows." (Byrne in Lentin, 1995: 26-27)

The political and educational goals of women's studies are thus organically linked to the women's *movement*:

"The earlier debates in the women's movement concerned the threat of deradicalisation of Women's Studies once it became a component in the formal educational system, as carried out by gendered institutions, such as universities. Women's Studies has struggled with the dilemma of becoming part of the institution so that the feminist agenda of empowerment and liberation can be carried out within the walls, while at the same time seeking to change the very institution which provides a home for academic feminism." (Byrne in Lentin, 1995: 26-27)

Women's Studies, in effect, is structurally an extension of the women's movement into the university and academe, in the same way that the women's movement has diffused into other institutions since the 1980s. The structure and tactical choices of this sector of the women's movement are shaped by its presence in the institutional structures of education.

Women's studies aims to introduce students to alternative teaching methods and to demonstrate the importance of personal experience in learning and problem-solving. Feminist process skills clearly evolved out of the theory and practice of the small group sector of the women's movement which mobilised in the 1970s. Students of Women's Studies practise groups skills in the classroom which envisage "a learning community not defined and structured by patriarchal values based on individual competition, hierarchical structure and the concentration of power in the

rule of the few" (Byrne, 1995: 27). Feminist pedagogical approaches aim to be democratic, co-operative, experiential, integrative of cognitive and affective learning and empowering of students to create personal and social change. The growth of Women's Studies, and the constraints it faces at the margins of academe, is a clear indication of how the theory and practice of the radical women's movement has both diffused into the patriarchal institutions of Irish society and struggles to maintain its autonomy and radical potential for social change. The essence of this integration/separation dilemma is thus a long-standing dynamic within different cycles of the contemporary women's movement.

Since the 1980s, there has been a flowering of feminist publishing in Ireland which was a key resource in the establishment of women's studies. These texts theorised feminist issues in an Irish context, in the fields of literature, sociology, the arts, politics and the law, for example. The impact of *feminist* texts in movement mobilisation are primarily at the level of consciousness. For instance, these publications reach a conscience constituency that otherwise may remain unaffected by the concentration of feminist ideas in political lobbying or within the woman-centred activities of autonomous groups. Feminist texts are clearly integral to the diffusion process which generates the collective consciousness necessary for movement success. In addition, a number of important feminist academic journals have emerged, which record and build upon the themes of the contemporary women's movement since its re-emergence in 1970 (including the UCG Women's Studies Review and the Irish Journal of Feminist Studies). Increased knowledge of women's past activism informs present mobilisation through formal channels. Many important texts have been published by feminist publishers Attic Press, which emerged from Irish Feminist Information in the early 1980s. Feminist publishing is employed as a key movement strategy which emerged from the traditional autonomous

sector. Crucially, these texts have complemented the growth of the women's studies in Ireland and opened up for analysis a multiplicity of feminist issues in an Irish context in current movement sectors.

2. WOMEN AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

The rapid growth of locally-based women's groups is a most exciting grass roots development in the wider social movement sector in Irish society. New forms of structure and organisation are emerging in the plethora of SMOs within this sector (see Collins, 1992). These aspire to be non-hierarchical, autonomous, participatory and empowering. They are mainly based in working-class urban areas, with a focus on personal development activities, and their impact tends to be localised.⁵ A leading community activist stated:

"I wasn't around twenty-five years ago...my contribution began in 1980...I believe that "feminism is alive and well and in constant danger" but actually thriving in working class areas in Dublin...It is a different kind of feminism, it is literally bread and butter issues, it is literally life and death issues that we are now facing on a daily basis." (Cathleen O'Neill, founder of KLEAR, address to *WERRC Conference*, UCD, May 1995)

Groups of this type also formed in rural, peripheral areas (such as the Western Women's Link). In terms of structure and methods of organisation, many of these groups clearly *resemble* the small group, consciousness raising, radical women's sector which emerged in the 1970s (see Collins, 1992). Crucially, the emergence of this new sector is dominated by *working-class women*. Working-class women have been active in various SMOs within the women's movement since the 1970s, but not in such numbers (Collins, 1992).⁶ The class bias of liberal feminist ideas, in particular, and the formalisation of the women's movement have been criticised:

"As several scholars have recently noted, liberal feminism ironically provided ideological support through the 1970s and 80s for the massive transformation in work and family life that was occurring...in the transition to a post-industrial order (Mitchell 1986; Stacey 1987). By urging women to enter the workplace and adopt a male orientation, the equal opportunity approach to feminism unwittingly contributed a host of problems that further disadvantaged women especially working-class women and women of colour, including the rise in divorce rates, the "feminization" of working-class occupations, and the devaluation of motherhood and traditionally-female characteristics." (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 535)

There are two central analytical questions. Firstly, the organic link of these groups with the formal women's movement needs to be explored and established. Some of these locally-based women's community groups are entirely autonomous, highly interconnected and networked with the generic community development movement, or linked to the State/EU through funding programmes (including, the NOW programme, Partnerships, Combat Poverty Agency, and Department of Social Welfare schemes). Secondly, the question of whether such groups are tackling structures and engaging in mainstream political activism is important. Locally-based women's groups have for the most part focused on personal development and the high level of energy evident in these groups has not translated into bringing about structural change in local communities. Mulvey's evaluation of the 'Allen Lane Foundation Programme' states that only 13% of the projects set out explicitly to develop women's analysis of their situation, to empower them to identify its root causes and to act collectively to bring about long term and structural change (Mulvey, 1992: 4-5).⁷

The emergence of this sector raises an important challenge to the manifestation of class in the internal practice of the established women's movement. Daly suggests that certain groups of women were by-passed by this current cycle of the women's movement:

"Collectively, women have had significant achievements over the last twenty years....The extent to which the lives of women on low incomes have significantly improved is far from certain, however. Class and gender forces ensure that general freedoms for women only very slowly affect life in poor communities." (Daly, 1989: 100)

The international women's movement was predominantly mobilised and led by white, middle-class, college educated women. Social movements in general are precipitated by the middle-class, college educated in society. However, interview data reveals that in the Irish case many activists were conscious of class differences (for example, activists in IWU). In addition, a significant number of college educated activists were working class in origin. Many of the successes of the women's movement to date had an impact on women of all classes (for example, contraception). However, essentially, the *distinct experience* of working class women has not been *central* to the movement's agenda. The current upsurge in working-class women's groups is an attempt to address women's issues at the local level. In doing so, such groups reveal their potential to redefine feminism:

"Women's groups operating at community level should in my view claim their space in the women's movement. The women's movement does not belong to any class or group - it is a social movement made up of women who have decided to take action to own their lives and bodies either by themselves or with others. Irrespective of what group or category women belong to, we must be clear that we are seeking change from those who continue by and large to control the structures which will bring about fundamental change." (Byrne in Smyth, 1997: 26)

Current developments in working-class communities are frequently analysed without basing analytical findings on the complexity of the lived experiences of the community activists themselves. For the first time in an Irish context, there are individuals within this sector publishing work that explicitly draws on a working-class perspective (in particular, Cathleen O'Neill and Kathleen Maher).

The Relationship Between Women's Community Groups and the Women's Movement: A New Social Movement?

A key issue is: is this sector organically a cluster of SMOs *within* the established women's movement? Because it takes time for a movement sector within a long-standing social movement to consolidate and form networks of SMOs, the outcome of this phenomenon is not yet clear. By drawing on a framework of social movements, I contend that these clusters of groups *are* organically linked to the women's movement as elements of the social movement sector in Ireland. However, are they part of the autonomous women's movement *per se*?

Recent accounts suggest that women's community groups directly emerged from the women's movement (Mahon, 1995; Coulter, 1993). Such accounts, however, do not provide a theoretically informed analysis which demonstrates *how* this has occurred. There are different categories of community-based groups emerging, including: working-class, urban groups; suburban, middle-class; spirituality groups, often based in community houses; peripheral rural groups with a focus on community development; women's environmental groups; and women's community arts and writing groups. The diversity in types of activism within this sector and their symbolic richness, with a common organising focus on *community*, has not been revealed in existing work in the field (see Ward and O'Donovan, 1996). The limited research that has been conducted focuses on either working class, urban groups (Mulvey, 1992) or specific networks, funded by the State (Ward and O'Donovan, 1996). The majority of funding for women's groups is channelled through State agencies and networks (such as the Department of Social Welfare, the Combat Poverty Agency and the NOW programme). However, tangible resources do not reach a significant number of mobilising autonomous women's groups. The generalisability of the findings of this research falls short. There are three issues in the

literature which need to be addressed in light of this analysis: (1) not *all* women's community groups are 'working class'; (2) many groups remain informal and autonomous and are not affiliated to a State network or indeed any other kind of women's network; (3) there is an urban/rural dimension to women's experiences of community.

Existing evidence does suggest similarities between current urban, working-class women's community groups and the autonomous sector of women's movement in the 1970s. Both sectors adopt strategies to foster a collective identity among participants and a common goal of empowering and liberating women at the level of personal development. Both also face considerable constraints in terms of resources. These parallels imply that locally-based women's groups are a *new*, distinctive movement sector - in terms of constituency (social class composition) and political strategies (community development). However, it can also be argued that these locally-based groups are evolving organically *within* the women's movement. One member of an urban, working-class community group suggested that:

"The women's movement within the communities has evolved organically and is evolving all the time...There is no clear plan about where it is going to go except that it is happening, and within the communities women are identifying their own needs and are responding in as much as they can - depending on the resources that they have (e.g. child care and a number of other things). These are key issues for local women in communities. There are a number of networks emerging - different to the traditional movement. There are different dynamics within the community movement than there is in the Council." (Member of urban based, working class Women's Community Group)

Are locally based women's groups a movement *of* women in an alternative social movement, or part of the historical social movement *led by* women? An accurate conceptualisation of *community* and its relationship to feminism is thus central to understanding this type of movement mobilisation:

"Obviously the community sector and the women's movement have a lot in common. Community development is about participative rather than representative democracy. It is necessary for the community sector to develop decision-making structures which reflect these principles, and women's groups operating at community level have to decide whether they wish to define themselves as being part of the community sector, the women's movement, or both." (Byrne in Smyth, 1997: 26)

Processes which indicate an evolving movement centre are often pervasive, decentralised and amorphous. Previous chapters show that there is no uniform, hierarchical process of 'becoming part of' the women's movement. In past phases autonomous SMOs typically emerged in a non-linear, organic and erratic manner. A social movements analysis demonstrates that the current 'mushrooming' and focus of clusters of locally-based women's groups is not a diverging course in the history of emerging SMOs within the women's movement. The perceptions that the purpose of these groups or networks is not clear, that there is no definite strategy of 'where they are going,' that they are not tackling the 'structures' which uphold poverty and that there is no sophisticated ideological debate articulated by these groups, is typical of a social movement and is particularly evident in the social history of the women's movement. In addition, the difference in style currently evidenced between what is now becoming the traditional movement in the 1990s (that which mobilised originally in the 1970s and is now mainstream) and these newly emerging sectors, reflects the diversity which is inherent between cycles of the women's movement. The increasing professionalisation of SMOs throughout the 1980s and, in particular, the persistent expansion and institutionalisation of the National Women's Council facilitated the formalisation of an extensive network of SMOs. In general the women's movement has evolved more hierarchically in recent years. While grass roots women's community groups pose a striking alternative to the formal image of the women's movement in the

1990s, on the other hand, they represent a connection with the autonomous and more creative radical movement sector which dominated the praxis of the movement in the 1970s. This conforms to Tilly's (1978) contention that a pre-existing repertoire of strategies, resources and organisational base are drawn upon by movements in later cycles. The repertoire employed by women's community groups includes empowerment through consciousness raising, decentralisation and participatory democracy.

In view of the widespread diffusion of the ideas and methods of radical feminism since the 1970s, it is apparent that consciousness raising is an equally radical strategy to that of 'tackling state structures,' because it raises the consciousness of women who are not empowered to lead mainstream SMOs on a professional, hierarchical basis.⁸ Radical women in past phases of activism did not claim ownership of their collective social movement or consolidate links across that movement until a significant period of time elapsed.⁹ Since 1970, there has been considerable overlap and interaction between autonomous and mainstream SMOs (generally mobilised by long-standing pragmatic or radical activists) at various stages, which was not always explicit or apparent to the wider constituency.¹⁰ The boundaries of a social movement are typically fluid and amorphous.

Because these developments in the wider social movement sector are still in a process of consolidation, this analysis is somewhat tentative. Whether these groups are elements of the autonomous women's movement or not, they are influenced by *feminism*. By the 1980s, feminism had become more than just a 'list' of women's issues. Furthermore, feminism is not merely a constituency of women, and in recent years women have organised against feminism, particularly in counter, new right organisations (such as Women in the Home, Solidarity and SPUC). Feminism has become

a transformational politics and a comprehensive ideology that permeates Irish society at all levels, including community.

Visible structures and tangible gains in the political arena are not the sole indicators of feminist activism. The activities of SMOs at different stages were concentrated at the level of consciousness raising and education. It is important that the emergence of women's studies and community activism (which interact with each other) are analysed *within a feminist praxis*. These groups are working towards empowering women at many levels - which is a core element of feminism. In the 1990s there is a certain reluctance about asking such questions within a feminist theoretical and methodological framework.

It is important to acknowledge that there *are* feminist women from the community sector working within and leading organisations like the National Women's Council, and establishing links between the community sector and the established women's movement. For example, Nóirín Byrne, current Chairperson of the National Women's Council, consolidated her position in the community sector as co-ordinator of the Parents Alone Resource Centre (PARC) in Coolock. Katherine Zappone (founder of the Shanty Educational Project in Tallaght) is now Chief Executive of the National Women's Council. WERRC's annual conference of May 1996 was entitled 'Feminism, Politics and Community.' WERRC, and other Women's Studies departments, have networked and supported the development of women's community groups since the 1980s.

These developments are organically linked to the historical legacy of feminist activism and the organised women's movement, which persistently evolved since the turn of the century to the present day. The fact that *all* women do not align themselves to, or participate directly in, the women's movement does not negate the finding of this study that the women's movement has been *the primary agent* promoting women's full

participation in society - particularly at community level. A key point is that new autonomous developments in local communities have the potential to pose an immense challenge from within the contemporary women's movement in this particular cycle of resurgence in the Irish social movement sector. Feminist activists are core participants in other current new social movements, including, the environmental, community development, animal rights and anti-drugs movements. The broader implications of the mobilisation of working-class women in the social movement sector - whether within the autonomous women's movement or not - will become clearer in the new millennium.

3. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: GRASS ROOTS ACTIVISM VS PROFESSIONALISATION

The continued expansion and professionalisation of movement sectors since the 1990s typically represents the course which a successful movement takes over time. Alternatively, one interviewee contended that *"the women's movement has been successful only where it has been most acceptable."* The capacity of the movement to maintain its radical agenda is related to the fact that there is a clear gap in the formal social movement commitments of SMOs (i.e. those established in the 1970s) and new forms of autonomous mobilisation in the social movement sector. This dichotomy has prompted a debate for feminism to be more inclusive of the diversity of women's experiences.¹¹

Current movement developments are unique in the sense that, while they are autonomous, they are in fact simultaneously taking place within institutional settings. Women's groups are evolving within existing hierarchies and structures within local communities, professional adult education organisations/academic departments, and/or rely on State funding. Women's Studies consolidated within the universities and women's publishing has become a profit-making mainstream business in

order to survive. A separation-integration tension has thus re-emerged as a key movement dynamic. Because of the lack of national co-ordination, community-based organisations may be taken less seriously by established organisations - including those within the formal women's movement. A key issue is whether more structure could be imposed without "shattering this sector's fragile cohesion" (Randall, 1991: 256-257).

The dichotomy between grass roots and professional activism in the 1990s, raises questions about the relative merits and liabilities of being outside the mainstream. According to Randall (1991), the loose organisational pattern evident in autonomous women's community groups *has* the ability to incorporate diverse membership. However, it is also argued that this kind of organisation has serious limitations. Freeman suggests it is most effective when the group in question is relatively small and homogeneous in its ideological and social composition, and when it focuses upon a narrow, specific task, requiring a high level of communication and a low degree of skills specialisation. A tremendous amount of energy is spent on group processes rather than on group ends.

Empirically, all social movements are, by definition, outside the system (Dahlerup, 1986: 13). They are counter to the dominant ideology and routine politics. The degree to which an SMO remains autonomous varies greatly and is related to the availability of resources and the receptivity of the political opportunity structure. The fear that increased integration into the political system would lead to de-radicalisation is a constant in feminist activism. The prevailing argument that a grass roots structure does in fact hinder *political* influence also prevails. Following Bouchier (in Randall, 1991) *both* an autonomous and formal branch are necessary to a movement's survival. An autonomous movement sector is necessary to develop a collective consciousness and recruits activists that would not participate in more hierarchical organisations (which have

tended to be led by middle class and articulate women in the 1990s). Dahlerup (1986: 14) suggests that the grass roots structure of the 1970s was not a barrier, but was a necessary means to provide the intersection between personal and social change - the essence of the 'personal is political.' It represented a new and alternative way of doing politics. However, a significant number of women simultaneously chose to work within the already established political institution and have succeeded, to some extent, in reconstituting political discourse so that it is more inclusive of women and women's concerns. It is a sign of success for a social movement if it leaves an impact on the established institutions and ideologies. In that process, however, the movement itself will change.

The loose, small group based structure was dramatically successful in untying energy and developing new radical perspectives. However, it did in fact result in a large turnover of activists and a range of unsuccessful initiatives. The more formal, hierarchical aspect of the Irish women's movement has been more persistent and long-lasting in organisational terms. Ryan suggests that:

"Much of the literature on the contemporary movement adopted a description of movement sectors developed in the early description which analytically divided activists by group and ideology into alternative feminist perspectives. Distinctions were drawn between a "women's rights" and "women's liberation" sector, with further ideological classifications identified as socialist, radical, and liberal feminism. Because contemporary theoretical analyses of feminist ideology were originally formulated within either a Marxist or radical feminist perspective, liberal feminism was generally viewed negatively in terms of both ideology and activist method. Yet, it is this segment of the movement which constitutes the majority of participants in the United States, and it is largely liberal feminists who can be found in rape crisis centres, abortion clinics, monthly strategy meetings, pickets, marches, state legislative sessions, and congressional hearings. Liberals, it appears, are short on theory but long on activism." (Ryan, 1992: 2)

A concerted balance between pragmatic formalisation and radicalism is, however, central to the future potential and continuity of the women's movement:

"To unravel the complex structure on which gender inequality rests requires, from a radical feminist perspective, a fundamental transformation of all institutions in society and the existing relations among them. To meet this challenge, radical feminists have formulated influential critiques of the family, marriage, love, motherhood, heterosexuality, rape, battering, and other forms of sexual violence, capitalism, the medicalization of childbirth, reproductive policies, the media, science, language and culture, the beauty industry, politics and the law, and technology and its impact on the environment. Thus, radical feminism is a transformational politics engaged in a fight against female disadvantage and the masculinization of culture. Its ultimate vision is revolutionary in scope: a fundamentally new social order that eliminates the sex-class system and replaces it with new ways of defining and structuring experience." (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 536-7)

Remaining inside or outside the system had both advantages and disadvantages. In the women's movement in Ireland, inter/intra-group dynamics between sectors secured achievements. Both types of activism are necessary to movement maintenance. The implications of hegemonic formalisation and the perceived decline of radical feminist grass roots mobilising, in this current stage, was reflected upon by a number of interviewees. They express concern about the long-term impact of mainstreaming, the co-optation of activists by political parties and established institutions and the demobilising effect of issues such as positive discrimination and 'political correctness':

"It reflects an instinctive reaction that these [political] parties will only ever deliver in a limited way and I think that there are choices made out there, either consciously or unconsciously, that the independent organisation of women in campaigns, community groups in a way is where women prefer to be and be just as effective if not more effective. That's what I mean by the power of a social movement..." (Member IWU, Woman's Right to Choose, Trade Union activist)

"That whole rush of movement splintered into other groups. But where I would see the difficulty with the lack of that radical tradition now...is the backlash... and the word political correctness...to tar a certain kind of radical feminist. It is a cover up for huge areas of feminism. In the absence of a radical feminist movement we have had no chance to discuss those issues broadly." (Member IWU, Long-standing Radical activist)

"The aspirations are there...as long as women have things denied to them they will be there generation after generation. I think that the impact of unemployment and poverty has to some extent restricted our ability to talk about the visions and the future. We are in some ways a bit bogged down with the here and now. It's unfortunate that the discussion about the dreams and the visions is confined in university circles. That's a weakness I think. At the same time I think that we are right to mainstream and to challenge to institutions of power - reform them or take them over!...A lot of women have got very serious about politics." (Member IWU, Rape Crisis activist)

Participation in autonomous feminist SMOs raised women's consciousness about radical feminism and contributed to their politicisation as they came to see the connections between these issues and the larger system of gender inequality. Through their personal experiences and the diffusion of radical feminist ideas an increasing number of women have become aware of the political rather than the personal nature of their problems. While an autonomous movement sector is necessary to radicalisation, these ideas were not confined to autonomous SMOs. Organisations such as the National Women's Council, which have been pursuing equality within the legislature since the early 1970s, have progressively adopted explanations for women's oppression in a number of areas that are more consistent with radical theorising - including the right to travel, the causes of rape, the complexity of reproductive choice and lesbian rights. Feminism has, in practice, become a comprehensive ideology that addresses all social and political questions, from human rights to nationalism

to environmentalism, and informs activists both within and outside the mainstream in a dynamic fashion.

Following Ryan (1992: 89), there are three central contributing factors to current orientations in feminist practice and activism:

1. There are more similarities than differences in philosophy among feminists today;
2. This overlap or blending in ideology has occurred because of the maturation of the movement; however, the ideologies have never been as distinct as they were perceived or written about;
3. There is a new way of understanding feminism. For instance, long-term activists describe feminism as a process, not a thing or a category.

CONCLUSION

During the 1990s the women's movement professionalised and mainstreamed. While it may have less visibility, its political power as a professional lobbying organisation is increasingly recognised. It is evident that, in terms of the continued recruitment of activists and emerging SMOs, the persistent ability to organise organically when the need arises (for example, following the X case), and the re-emergence of mobilising issues in the 1990s (such as nationalist groups in response to the Peace Process, for instance, Clár na mBan),¹² the women's movement is still a vibrant force. It is linked to and influenced by previous stages of activism, and is in a constant state of organic transformation over time and place. One interviewee concluded:

"I still think it's a powerful force. It's capable of continuing that role. It's between those who want to deal with the immediacy of the here and now and those who take a broader view. When we have to, the different strands are capable of coming together on a common front and that will continue to be the case. The women's movement in all its different forms is still a powerful force. I have no doubt about that." (Member IWU, Women's Right to Choose)

The women's movement in Ireland has in fact existed as a social movement on a continuous basis since at least the 1870s and continues to do so. Mainstream Irish sociology has not acknowledged the fact that women's collective activity has experienced periods of advance and decline, but has *not* in fact disappeared at any stage. During periods of low levels of activity, the women's movement developed new structural forms in order to survive a non-receptive environment. Following a period of high energy and consolidation in the 1970s, and demoralisation in the 1980s, the 1990s is a period of new developments in the wider social movement sector, particularly in working-class communities. The formal links between the women's movement and these new developments are still in a process of consolidation. While the established women's movement is now predominantly institutional in character, it continues to transform from within in an organic fashion and new autonomous centres are capable of emerging.

Since 1970 two coalescing styles of activism - equal rights and radicalism - have been characterised by ideological, tactical, and organisational diversity *with common themes, concepts and goals*. Rosalind Delmar is correct in asserting that it now makes more sense to speak of a *plurality of feminisms* than of one (Delmar, 1994) The pivotal assertion in this analysis is that in practice the women's movement is consistently redefining itself in a plurality of ways and there is no overwhelming reason to assume an underlying feminist unity. It is this

diversity which is presently at the *core* of the evolving women's movement in Ireland.

By the 1990s, the myriad of paths the women's movement has taken since its inception became more apparent. Having traced this transformation in depth in this study, we can now look back and analyse its impact.

Notes Chapter Seven:

- 1 In relation to the types of activity participants currently engage in, Ryan (1992) distinguishes between different types of activism - political activism and discursive activism. These are called primary orientations to stress the interaction between both types of practice. For discursive activism, the primary motivation is to promote feminist principles (Ryan, 1992: 92-93). For political activist practice, the primary motivation is to be effective. Networking is the primary means of mobilisation and communication between those individuals and organisations comprising the women's movement. There is, however, differences in the degree of networking undertaken by particular sectors of the movement. The number of affiliated groups to the CSW, for instance, has increased since it was established in 1973 to 128 today.
- 2 For example, many feminist activists in political parties did not support their own party candidate in this election.
- 3 Attic Press are important feminist publishers and have published crucial texts by Irish women. The life history of Attic is indicative of the legacy of women's organising. It grew out of the Women's Community Press which was implemented by Irish Feminist Information (the Women in Community Publishing training course for unemployed women was funded by an Anco scheme - the Industrial Training Authority - and European Social Funding in 1984), which included a previous member of the IWLM, and subsequently expanded into a professionalised organisation.
- 4 The stated aims and objectives of the WSC include (Byrne, 1996: 84): to provide students with an understanding of women's studies and as an academic discipline; to introduce students to feminist theory as a conceptual and analytical framework; to introduce students to alternative teaching methods; to demonstrate the importance of personal experience in learning and problem-solving; to introduce students to a wide range of study and learning skills; to provide students with a thorough understanding of the position of women in diverse cultures and periods in history; to gain insights into the construction of inequality and the oppression of women; to explore the representation of women in literature, in art and the media from Ireland and abroad.
- 5 Much of this is akin to the debate about the black feminist movement in Britain and the US. The majority of black feminists are working outside mainstream feminist organisations (Klein, 1987: 27). Many working-class women have been caught between religious and cultural values that result in expectations of marriage and motherhood as a woman's primary role. The American counterpart of the community groups movement was the National Congress of Neighbourhood Women, formed in Brooklyn in 1975 to provide a voice for women living in poor areas. This organisation is now a national coalition of loosely related locally autonomous community groups. It is involved in a range of education schemes, job training, leadership skills, legal advice, and refuge for battered women (Klein, 1987: 29).
- 6 See the Attic diary 1997 for an extensive list of groups/networks.
- 7 Wilford points out that four-fifths of the women's coalition in Northern Ireland forum elections emerged from the adult/community development sector.
- 8 See Mulvey's (1992) more extensive analysis of the focus of these groups.
- 9 This was very evident in the abeyance period.
- 10 The IHA's leaders were clearly feminist, for example, but not all its members were.
- 11 This was the subject of a controversial speech made by Finola Bruton to welcome Hillary Clinton to Ireland in 1995.
- 12 The Hepatitis C campaign was mobilised in 1995 by a group of women only recently made aware that they were infected with contaminated blood during childbirth at different stages in the 1970s. Clár na mBan held a Republican Feminist Conference in Belfast, in March 1994. The conference was organised by a group of women with a history of activism at political and community level who came together in 1992. A number of criticisms of the 'peace process' were proposed (Connolly, 1995: 119), and nationalist assumptions about historical and contemporary Ireland were explored. The group have since held a second conference, published the proceedings and have made a submission to the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation.

Chapter 8

Whither the Women's Movement?: Findings and Conclusions

1. STUDY FINDINGS: A SUMMARY

Collective action through established means was a feature of the contemporary Irish women's movement from the outset, but with considerably restricted routine access to political opportunities. Limited institutionalised channels of influence and opportunities have been strategically utilised by feminist organisations from the 1940s. The political opportunity structure was more receptive to the 'old' women's movement before independence, with women's organisations directly involved in the social conflicts shaping the dominant cleavages of the Irish State, while correspondingly shaping the first wave of the autonomous women's movement. The distinct suffrage branch of the women's movement was the primary source and promoter of first wave feminism in Irish society.

In practice, since the middle of the nineteenth century the women's movement in Ireland has always been sustained by a core cadre of highly motivated *feminist* activists, rationally devising strategies appropriate to the socio-political environment. To re-iterate Ryan's point, the women's movement consists of more than those stating their goal as that of women's liberation. The present study shows that the actions of radical activists (the definition of radical depends on the particular social/political climate at a given stage of the movement development) indicate the capacity of the women's movement to mobilise, whatever the stage of transformation.

Chapter Two demonstrated historically how the women's movement has endured as a social movement since at least the 1870s in Ireland. An inclusive social movement's analysis of the three broad cycles of the women's movement since 1870 - first wave, middle years and second wave - remains to be done. This can be achieved by conducting extensive feminist qualitative research, analysis of movement archives (which are in a process

of consolidation) and theoretical analysis. In addition, research of this nature would redress many of the speculative assumptions in mainstream academic work regarding women's position in Irish society, including the omission/speculative portrayal of feminism and the women's movement in socio-historical analysis of Irish society, a lack of acknowledgement of the continuity of the women's movement in the post-independence period, and a reluctance by Irish sociologists to theorise the women's movement as an integral agent of social change and 'modernisation.' These factors can be attributed to the lack of a comprehensive debate around the pivotal role of a range of new social movements in Irish society. A theoretically accurate sociological analysis of the women's movement is one which *links* women's experiences inclusively to interpretations of social change, as opposed to dealing exclusively with peak periods of feminist activism in isolation. The development of an abeyance model, in the present study, addressed these problems.¹

This study focused on key social movement dynamics and mobilising issues in the growth, decline and maintenance of the women's movement up to and after 1970. The movement was significantly constrained and in a state of abeyance in the post-independence period. Reformist SMOs devised strategies which maintained continuity between the first and second waves of the Irish women's movement. It is clear that key resources in the 1970s facilitated the rapid advancement and expansion of the women's movement. The movement diversified in the wake of conflict and factionalism among radical Irish feminists, primarily over contrasting ideological orientations, political standpoints and preferred strategies. Fragmentation of the direct action style of the movement occurred in the 1980s, The underground activities of a core marginalised group of radical feminists, however, conscientised by the 1983 abortion referendum ensured the recruitment of new activists in autonomous SMOs.¹ This fostered the

development of a conscience constituency around key radical mobilising issues already consolidated in the Anglo-American women's movement (in particular, pro-choice action and the growth of women's studies). By the late 1980s, diverse groups of feminist activists concentrated their movement commitments on engaging within the institutions of the State, in education and local communities. Increasingly, diverse SMOs submerged ideological conflict and fragmentation by working together for similar goals, while ignoring their underlying differences in outlook (Ryan, 1992: 37). However, the autonomy of the women's movement was diluted. Emerging working-class women's community groups pose an immense potential challenge from within the established women's movement to reverse the current trends towards institutionalisation and professionalisation.

Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) suggest that improved education for women accompanies industrialisation and urbanisation and consequently expands public roles. This creates role and status conflicts for middle-class women who then develop the discontent and consciousness necessary for a women's movement (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 533). If social movements in general have their roots in education and ideas, in this sense the roots of the contemporary women's movement lie in the expansion of formal education as an element of the project of modernisation. However, these types of explanations do not take into account the role of abeyance organisations. The implementation of key strategies and mobilisation of resources maintained the women's movement after 1922, which was a necessary pre-requisite to current activism. Application of resource mobilisation theory reveals that political opportunities and an indigenous organisational base were major factors in the rise and decline of the historical Irish women's movement.

The role of social movements in the larger political process is of long-standing concern in the field. Resource mobilisation focuses on movements

as *legitimate* political means of bringing about social change (Gamson, 1975; Tilly, 1978). A number of points of divergence have emerged regarding the status of movement actors vis-a-vis the established political system (Staggenborg, 1991: 5). The extent to which movements originate from and operate independently of elites and established organisations is a central issue in the present study. Zald (1980: 61) contends that social movements originate within the established power structure with the aid of institutionalised actors, such as government authorities or interest groups. In contrast, Gamson (1975) and Tilly (1978) contend that protest is created by challenging groups outside the established political system (see Staggenborg, 1991: 5). These two distinct theoretical models within resource mobilisation (see Chapter Two) produce different expectations as to the kinds of resources needed to launch social movements, and place a different emphasis on the grievances of grass roots constituents as a source of collective action. The role of the CSW and its affiliates in the political system is a core issue in the present study. Tilly (1978) uses the term 'polity' to refer to the actions of the government and those 'member' groups in the population that enjoy routine access to government resources. Zald and McCarthy (1979; 1987) link this trend to an increase in government and private funding to support movement careers - as elite support becomes available, professional organisers act as "entrepreneurs" in creating social movements.

The movement actors characterised by resource mobilisation theorists hardly resemble the anomic, irrational and deviant behaviour which traditional psychological conceptions described. Resurging new social movements, such as the women's movement, experienced widespread political and academic support, and the dynamic of these movements could not be explained by deprivations alone. Resource mobilisation symbolised a critical rethinking in the field of the rational social actor. The constancy

of grievances are presumed in the present study, and it is emphasised how unique mobilisation strategies directed the flow of resources in pivotal SMOs. Resource mobilisation theorists reject the pluralist model (see Gamson) which reconstructs political action as an open market place of groups and ideas without admitting structural rigidities, and tries to determine the specific conditions in which grievances are translated into collective action. The facilitators of communication, the organisation of collective action, and external networks of supporters, sympathisers or movement adversaries are identified in the present study. The mobilisation of the women's movement was framed by the political opportunity structure, the flow of resources, internal and external constraints, the strength of opposition, tactical choices, conflicting strategies, organisational structures and group membership.

In terms of movement outcomes, the study demonstrates how the women's movement in Ireland directly impacted on public policy in a number of areas (see appendices 1-12) including employment, contraception, legal rights and family law. A number of gains were made in the political-legal arena, especially in the period of advancement. The provision of a Deserted Wives Allowance, Unmarried Mothers Allowance and Prisoners Wives Allowance was implemented in 1974, for instance. Many important changes were secured through the courts. The McGee case in 1973 allowed for the importation of contraceptives for private use. In 1974 Máirín de Burca and Mary Andersen successfully challenged the 1927 Juries Act. In addition, the women's movement established a number of service organisations which were analysed in the study, including, AIM, Women's Aid, the Well Woman Centre, Adapt and the Rape Crisis Centre. In essence, the movement transformed at a number of different levels between 1970 and the present. Concrete gains were made by activism within the institutions of the State, while autonomous radical feminism

engendered a constituency of activists who tended to concentrate their social movement commitments in decentralised, non-hierarchical, direct action groups. In practice autonomous groups (such as IWU) were obstructed by ideological disagreements, and a high turnover of activists occurred in the 1970s. While these groups were relatively short-lived, their exposure through the mass media created tangible movement outcomes which diffused radical feminism throughout Irish society.

Theoretical analysis in the present study followed a two pronged method: a synthesis of resource mobilisation theory, combined with a qualitative analysis of rich data. The findings of the study emphasise the importance of SMOs as the conduits of social movements. The mobilisation of particular SMOs, facilitated by resources from elite sources (for example, the mass media or legal profession), were pivotal to the movement's broader success at all stages. The political process model of resource mobilisation weighed heavily in the analysis, and it was demonstrated how key sectors of the mobilising women's movement constantly engaged the polity, which produced a different set of outcomes than autonomous radical activism. Grass roots autonomous activism outside established politics was equally crucial and potent in the three main stages of contemporary activism delineated. This supports Gamson's contention that informal mobilisation is central to a movement's long-term capacity for social change. Analysis of the role of consciousness raising and ideological dynamics in radical SMOs de-emphasises Zald and McCarthy's utilitarian contention that movement entrepreneurs are the primary social actors in resurging movements.

Resource Mobilisation: The Adapted Model

The contemporary women's movement in Ireland remains an active social movement, which has a prolific history as a social movement since the 1870s. The resource mobilisation framework is particularly useful for

understanding the political conditions and resources that gave rise to the movement's resurgence in the early 1970s. Movement's act in contingent opportunity structures that facilitate or dampen their efforts to mobilise, pattern their strategies, and influence their potential success. Movement participants typically respond rationally to contingent opportunities. However, as demonstrated in the present study, social movements are not necessarily subject to a rigid internal logic of development and the women's movement evolved in a decentralised and organic pattern. Social movements neither follow a prescribed natural history of rise and decline nor do they involve iron laws of co-optation and institutionalisation in the existing social order. The way and the extent to which movement organisations acquire resources from their constituencies shapes their activities.

Resource mobilisation theory formed the basis of the analytical framework in the study, but was not conclusive. The empirical data pointed to the development of the model in other directions which resulted in an adaptation of resource mobilisation. The preceding analysis draws on a combination of key resource mobilisation processes and additional conceptual tools that explain the mobilisation of the women's movement from 1970 onwards. The model incorporates the following concepts:

1. A *pre-existing network and indigenous organisational base* generated the initial expansion of the contemporary women's movement and consolidated a collective identity, by devising strategies appropriate to the significant increase in opportunities and resources in the social movement sector from the late-1960s onwards;
2. The *political opportunity structure* was adopted as a dynamic concept. The structure of political opportunities is cyclical and shaped the development of the Irish women's movement at all stages. Political

opportunities increased in the first stage of advancement, but declined from the early 1980s onwards. The study demonstrated in detail how specific SMOs transformed from within in the face of an increase or decline of political opportunities.

3. The central role of the *State* in the political opportunity structure was incorporated into the resource mobilisation process in each of the three stages identified. In the 1970s, the agencies of the State were more receptive to the demands of SMOs which strategically mobilised political 'insider' tactics. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the State distributed resources which complemented and enhanced the formalisation of key SMOs which originated in both autonomous and mainstream movement centres;
4. *Sympathetic elites* were crucial to concerted mobilisation, particularly in stages of decreased activism and decline. The media facilitated the consolidation of radical feminism in Ireland in its early stages. Throughout the 1980s, for example, external alliances sustained the right to information campaign and generated resources.
5. A *plurality of interacting SMOs* in both mainstream and autonomous centres were central to the mobilisation of the women's movement at all stages. Diverse types of activism included formal/informal, centralised/decentralised, hierarchical/participatory, and direct action/political lobbying.
6. Intense ideological debate occurred within radical SMOs and resulted in subsequent proliferation and organic growth. *Ideology* is a key movement resource and generates a collective identity across a given movement. In addition, the extent to which ideology acted as a central resource was cyclical. By the 1980s, mobilisation on the basis of ideological concerns and debate declined significantly and there was less emphasis on ideological differences among activists;

7. *Formal alliances and networks* between key SMOs ensured the long-term survival of the women's movement. The study elucidates this process by illuminating the development of the CSW/National Women's Council. It was demonstrated how the women's movement generically formalised from the outset;
8. An extensive *repertoire of collective action strategies and resources* were persistently mobilised by diverse SMOs and resulted in mass mobilisation, including: confrontational direct action, consciousness raising, action through the courts, mass meetings, marches, protests, research documents, workshops, letter writing campaigns and political 'insider' tactics.

The major contribution of this model to the field is that it allows us to conceptualise instances of collective action as part of the same historical antecedent. For instance, the model shows how community activism in the 1990s is linked to previous phases of movement mobilisation. By focusing on the 'how' of a particular social movement, I have developed a model that can be applied to other movements in Irish society. Resource mobilisation takes on the crucial task of theorising movement *processes* at the meso level and addresses the substantial inaccuracies in sociological analysis regarding the collective action of Irish feminist activists and their role in the development of contemporary Irish society.

2. RE-ASSESSMENT OF THE FIELD OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Drawing on resource mobilisation to theorise and articulate the *actual* mobilisation of the women's movement in contemporary Irish society, demonstrates the importance of the movement as an active agent of social change, was illuminating and empirically rich. This study, thus, makes

a significant contribution to the underdeveloped field of social movements in Irish sociology. The final theoretical issue to be addressed in the study is to re-assess the field of social movements in light of the analytical findings and draw pertinent conclusions.

Melucci originally contended that, while European scholars have focused on the "why" of (new) social movements, American theorists have emphasised "how" social movements mobilise (Melucci, 1984: 821). Kriesi et al's (1995) prolific research is particularly useful in light of the present study. European students of social movements have made limited efforts to test their ambitious theories in concrete empirical research, and have generally seen the link between transformations of the social structure and mobilisation as direct and self-evident:

"Given this near absence of empirical testing and the sometimes strongly normative character of European theorizing, one might, somewhat maliciously, say the European approach has in fact been more pre-occupied with the "ought to" than with the "why" of new social movements." (Kriesi et al. 1995: 239)

The present study shows that the resource mobilisation tradition is characterised by a strong emphasis on the practical aspects of mobilisation processes that lend themselves to rigorous empirical tests. While this has prevented the kind of teleological theorising that characterises much European literature, Kriesi argues it has also tended to restrict resource mobilisation to those aspects of social movements that can most easily be observed: large, professionalised SMOs, rather than more diffuse activities, networks or subcultures:

"Thus, in the eyes of many European scholars, the American approach's greater methodological and empirical rigor has demanded a high price in theoretical scope and relevance." (Kriesi et al., 1995: 239)

These assumptions have been challenged in the present study. The analysis reveals the dynamics within the plethora of grassroots SMOs which were dominant in the 1970s, and the transformation of autonomous SMOs over time and space. Furthermore, this study charts the emergence of new types of organisations throughout the 1980s and the 1990s.

According to Mayer:

"The fact that the American situation has produced a permanent coexistence of social movements side by side with established institutions of the political system has led analysts to consider that the existence of mobilisation potentials has been continuous as well. They appear as self-evident, i.e. their relationship to causes lying deeper in the contradictions of capital or the forces of history need not to be explored." (Mayer, 1991: 54)

From the mid-1980s, however, this schematic and polarised account of the state of the art in social movements studies was no longer tenable. Methodologically a degree of convergence between European and American theorists is taking place. While European studies have become increasingly empirical and a body of thought has developed around the POS (Political Opportunity Structure), resource mobilisation is elaborating on the original formulation of individual motivations and SMOs. Analysis at the meso level in the present study poses the possibility of striking a balance between the American empirical orientation and the European view of new social movements as interconnected wholes. That new social movements form a separate category to 'old' movements (such as the labour movement) is assumed in the present study. Irish NSMs (such as the environmental and animal rights movement) have followed similar trajectories over time - including opposition to a singular interpretation of 'progress.' This study emphasises that, while the contemporary women's movement is 'new' in form, it is characterised by continuity with a previous cycle of activism which took the form of an 'old' social movement.

Theoretically, European theorists (Brand, 1985; Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi, 1991) have recently found common ground with American scholars in utilising the concept of 'political opportunity structure' (Eisinger, 1973; McAdam, 1982). The political process concept complements resource mobilisation's analysis of the effects of external support on the development of SMOs (Gamson, 1975; McAdam, 1982) and provides a mechanism to link broad social-structural changes in the European tradition to concrete mobilisation processes. The meso level of political process thus allows for an integration of the empirical orientation and macro structural perspectives. The present study reveals the form and mobilisation processes of a specific 'new' social movement. In light of the analysis, the study concludes with a proposal to proceed along an integrationist line in the field and address the issues raised by NSMs theories in the Irish context.

Following Kriesi et al. (1995), the preceding empirical analysis of the contemporary Irish women's movement raises the following theoretical issues. The distinction between 'new' and 'old' social movements is crucial to understanding modern social movements in Western industrialised societies. The European idea that NSMs form a distinct 'social movement family' (Kriesi et al, 1995: 240) that follow similar trajectories is valid. However, there are similarities between the two, and direct continuity in the present case.

The present study challenges the idea of many European scholars that NSMs are relatively distinct and independent from 'established' politics. The 'new social movement' in the present study has been strongly influenced by the political context in which it had to (though perhaps not always chose to) operate, and that over the course of time the repertoire of action, organisational structures and ideologies within the contemporary Irish women's movement were adapted to the exigencies of the political

environment which transformed the movement from within (particularly in the 1980s).

Macro processes of social change affect the cleavage patterns that, at a very general level, delineate the 'political space' available to new challengers (Kriesi et al., 1995: 241). Clearly, delineating what is new about a NSM, such as the women's movement, is not straightforward. It is nonetheless clear that the salience of old cleavages in Irish politics represents an enormous obstacle to the entrance of new issues on the political agenda. This constraining effect tends to be particularly strong where traditional political/class cleavages are most pronounced. In addition, the politically articulated cleavage structures that are relevant to the mobilisation capacities of social movements have a degree of autonomy from the processes of social change stressed within the NSMs literature.

The NSMs perspective does introduce a statist element absent from resource mobilisation. Lack of attention to this dimension in resource mobilisation literature may be due to the less prominent role of the state in American society as compared to the European welfare states, as well as the scarcity of cross-national studies which has allowed American scholars to treat formal state structures and prevailing strategies as constants. However, American studies have focused attention on alliances and external support as central aspects of the political opportunity structure. In the case of the Irish women's movement, party politics, and particularly the dominant position of social democratic parties, inevitably impacted on the course of the movement. The NSMs' emphasis on the State is clearly related to the greater weight of political parties in European politics and of the different compositions of the European and American party systems. The impact of the Irish political system, such as the party system, the electoral system and the separation of powers, on the wider social movement sector/new social movements is an area for future research. The European

conceptualisation of the political opportunity structure, currently developing in the integrationist field, tends to have a more structural and statist character. This creates a danger, however, of directly deriving movement characteristics from structural determinants (Kriesi et al., 1995: 242) which obscures the symbolic and cultural dimensions within social movements. The women's movement equally mobilised creative and alternative models of collective political action.

Political opportunity structures not only vary across countries but also across movements.² Resource mobilisation insights allow for analysis of movement-specific aspects of the political opportunity structure which shifts the structural determinism of the European versions (Kitschelt, 1986). The present study utilises the political opportunity structure concept to emphasise the relative autonomy of movement development by analysing the dynamics of interactions among different currents of the women's movement, their allies and adversaries, and their *dynamic* relationship to the State:

"We thus arrive at a theory that interprets the development of protest waves as the outcome of the interplay between facilitation, repression, and success chances, which define a set of external constraints on the one hand, and movement activists' choices among three basic strategic options available to them - aiming at novelty, size and militancy, respectively - on the other." (Kriesi et al., 1995: 244)

An Agenda for future Research?

Resource mobilisation clearly facilitates the task of analysing the course of a specific social movement, in a particular cycle, and provides a context for understanding the nature of new social movements. Expanding the general field of social movements in Irish sociology rests on a number of issues. In particular, it will be necessary to conduct comparative studies of 'old' (such as the labour and nationalist movements) and 'new' social

movements (such as current anti-drugs, new right and environmental movements); to measure the extent and temporality of social protest across Irish society; to empirically assess the challenges posed by constructionist perspectives; and to estimate the impact of specific social movements. Kriesi et al's (1995) analysis of anti-nuclear attitudes and movements revealed little autonomous explanatory power for Snow and Benford's frame-alignment model. However, by stressing construction and perception, these authors point at important mediating mechanisms that can shed light on the translation of political opportunity structures into movement action.

Measurement problems have hindered research on movement success. This task is highly relevant for evaluating the functioning and responsiveness of Western democratic systems. The present study relies on qualitative information to elucidate the key variables in the movement model. The lack of more precise data on aspects of the political opportunity structures to some extent limits the possibility of comparability with other movements. This is to a large extent inevitable, given the complex, multifaceted nature of political opportunity structures. On the level of concrete opportunities, however, the possibilities for quantification are more feasible. Newspapers (a form of data gathering on social movements employed by American scholars such as, Tilly, Tilly and Tilly, 1975; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1989), while reflecting only a selective part of reality coloured by the subjective interpretations of reporters and editors, may be useful not just to quantify protest events, but also to develop more precise measures of facilitation, repression, success and reform/threat. Kriesi (1995) suggests that one should not just code protest events, but many more events (statements by politicians and other relevant actors, court decisions, parliamentary reports etc.) related to the themes addressed by the

movement or movements one is studying. Data of this kind may facilitate more generalisable accounts of the success of social movements.

Since the mid-1980s, the activity level of NSMs has declined in a number of countries (Kriesi et al., 1995: 250). An exception to this trend is the significant growth of a limited number of professional SMOs representing these movements (such as the National Women's Council). Thus, the NSMs seem not so much to have disappeared as to have become part of established interest-group politics and thus to have followed a trajectory similar to that followed earlier in this century by the labour movement, for example. At the same time, a world-wide revival of nationalist, ethnic and religious movements are evident - that is, a re-mobilisation of some of the 'old' cleavages. The present study indicates that, notwithstanding these trends, the 'new cleavage' has not been entirely pacified. The themes advanced by the NSMs still fuel new rounds of conflict (within the contemporary women's movement in Ireland and within other movements; for example, the anti-interpretive centres wave of protest in the environmental movement in recent years).

A possible focus for a new round of NSM protest is constituted by the dramatic rise of nationalist, fundamentalist and xenophobic movements. To a large extent, the values propagated by the original NSMs are the exact opposite of those advanced by the new extreme right. The latter is therefore likely to provoke counter mobilisation by NSMs, as has already been the case in the second half of the 1980s in France, for instance, and more recently in Germany, where millions of people demonstrated against violent attacks on foreigners. Thus, in line with the present study's findings, the tendencies towards de-mobilisation and institutionalisation may well be temporary, and mobilisation within specific movements is cyclical. Despite the seriousness of the issues at stake and pre-existing organisational strengths, the conditions in which a new wave of social movement protest

may occur tends to lie in the opportunities presented by the political systems in which movements operate. Kriesi et al. conclude (1995: 251):

"About the when, where, and how of such a new wave of protest, we choose, however, to remain silent; for if there is one thing recent history has taught us, it must be that the politics of social movements will continue to surprise us."

CONCLUSION: WHITHER THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT?

The women's movement is rooted in two inclusive clusters of SMOs - hypothesised as a women's rights and women's liberation sector in this study. These core sectors consistently proliferated, diversified and converged throughout the study period. While radical feminism percolated throughout Irish society and diluted in impact, this is a sign of movement success. However, the future potential of the movement depends on the constant reproduction of new radical ideas in autonomous SMOs which engage in mobilisation at a consciousness level. This develops feminism beyond the limitations imposed by established institutions on mainstream SMOs.

Autonomous and mainstream conceptual boundaries are not rigid and do not directly apply to organisational boundaries within the movement over time. They do, however, continue to describe two distinctive *styles* of activism which were combined in specific SMOs to varying degrees as the movement converged. Cross-movement alliances, the mainstreaming of women from both original sectors into mainstream institutions, the formalisation of a range of interacting services/institutions for women in a multitude of arenas, and the use of similar tactics across the movement, indicate convergence between the two movement sectors.

The remaining deficit in gender equality in a number of areas (for instance, rising levels of violence against women, equal pay, barriers to

mothers working outside the home, regulation of sexuality, the vast under-representation of women in the media, in politics, in academe, in business, and so on) accentuates the need for a radical constituency (whether small or extensive) to ensure the movement's survival, continuity and capacity to address this agenda. Irish women have not achieved full equality. This study acknowledges that women have made significant gains in the past. However, it also points to the fact that in previous periods women's rights have been reversed over very short periods of time (for example, in post-independence Ireland) and that a 'backlash' or period of counter mobilisation can erode the viability of the women's movement at specific points in time. Paradoxically, even in phases of acute hostility to women's rights, the women's movement maintained a core cadre of committed activists which is an integral resource to mobilisation in later peak stages.

The women's movement is capable of surviving over time, even in particularly repressive eras; is still necessary in view of the equality deficit in Irish society; is not a static phenomenon; and is capable of transforming itself from within over time and place. It is important that sociologists continue to record and theorise the events and the experiences of the feminist activists who are/were involved at all stages from the 1870s into the 1990s, in order to challenging existing interpretations and offer alternative explanations of the development of Irish society.

Radical activists in the early 1970s displayed a lack of accurate knowledge of the activities of women's organisations in the middle years of this century. Feminist women have persistently been dislocated from continuity with the past, not only in history in general, but within their own social movement. This study seeks to render visible the key role played by the women's movement in the advancement of the cause of Irish women. In the process, the movement has been placed in its appropriate sociological and historical contexts. While the past and present have been illuminated,

knowledge of the ongoing processes of continuity and change in women's collective action are integral to 'imagining' Ireland in the twenty-first century.

Notes Chapter Eight:

- 1 Following Taylor, a core theoretical issue pertinent to this analysis suggests: "If this is the case, our task as sociologists shifts from refining theories of movement emergence to accounting for fluctuations in the nature and scope of omnipresent challenges" (Taylor, 1989: 772).
- 2 Adoption of Tilly's (1978) model reverts analysis to concrete opportunities in the present study: repression, facilitation, success chances and threats. These concepts had more direct meaning in terms of mobilisation for movement participants and organisers than grand narratives such as, "state strength." These intermediary concepts are also more easily applicable to a wider variety of political contexts. Analysis which pays too much attention to central features of Western political systems does not have the same universal meanings as factors such as, repression or success chances, which can also be applied to the study of social movements in authoritarian regimes or non-Western societies. The relevance of NSMs' hypotheses of the State should extend far beyond specific cases in the field with regard to the political opportunity structure.

Appendices

Appendix 1
The First Wave
1850-1921

- 1898 Local Government vote granted to women.
- 1900 1st October, first meeting of Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Éireann)
- 1908 5th May, Irish Women's Franchise League founded.
- 1909 National University of Ireland established and open to women.
- 1910 Society of the United Irishwomen founded, which became the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) in 1935.
- 1911 September 5th, Irish Women Workers Union established.
- 1912 November, 71 members of the Irish Parliamentary Party vote against the Women's Suffrage Bill and Women's Suffrage amendments to the Home Rule Bill.
- 1914 April 5th, Cumann na mBan founded (the women's branch of the Irish Volunteers). Became involved in the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence.
- 1918 Franchise granted to Irishwomen over 30.
Countess Markievicz elected the first woman to Dáil Éireann.
- 1991 1st April Countess Markievicz appointed Minister for Labour of the first Irish Republican government.
- 1921 6 women elected to the second Dáil.

Appendix 2

The Middle Years 1922-1969

- 1922 Suffrage for all adults over 21 introduced under the Free State Constitution.
2 women elected to the 3rd Dáil, 4 women elected to the Senate.
- 1923 5 women elected to the 4th Dáil.
- 1925 4 women elected to the Seanad.
- 1927 The Juries Act declared that juries in criminal and civil cases would be drawn from ratepayers, almost a total exclusion of women from jury service.
4 women elected to the 5th Dáil.
1 woman elected to the 6th Dáil.
- 1928 5 women elected to the Seanad.
- 1929 Censorship of Publications Act provided for a mandatory ban on books or periodicals advocating "the unnatural prevention of conception."
- 1930 Women's Social and Progressive League founded. Later it pointed out the negative implications for women in the 1937 Constitution.
- 1931 31st July, Louie Bennett became the first woman President of the Irish Trade Union Congress.
- 1932 2 women elected to the 7th Dáil.
- 1933 3 women elected to the 8th Dáil.
- 1935 The Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers founded to campaign on important issues affecting women.
The Criminal Law (Amendment Act) prohibited the sale, advertising or importation of contraceptives.
- 1937 The 1937 Constitution introduced and defined a particular role for women.
Article 41.3.2 introduced a prohibition on divorce law for the first time.
2 women elected to the 9th Dáil.

- 1938 Dublin Club of the Soroptimists founded to improve social conditions.
- 1942 The Irish Housewives Association founded and later set up the Consumers Association.
- 1943 3 women elected to the 11th Dáil, 3 women elected Senators.
- 1944 4 women elected to the 12th Dáil, 3 women elected Senators.
- 1948 4 women elected to the 13th Dáil, 4 women elected Senators.
- 1951 5 women elected to the 14th Dáil, 3 women elected Senators.
- "Mother and Child Scheme" Bill introduced by Dr. Noel Browne, Minister for Health but, withdrawn after pressure from the Catholic hierarchy.
- 1953 Health Act provided free medical, surgical, midwifery and hospital maternity services.
- 1954 6 women elected to the 15th Dáil, 4 women elected to the Senate.
- 1957 5 women elected to the 16th Dáil, 4 women elected to the Senate.
- Married Women's Status Act, giving married women control of their own property.
- 1958 Garda Síochanna Act, provided for the employment of ban gardaí (women police).
- 1959 ICTU Women's Advisory Committee established.
- 1961 4 women elected to the 17th Dáil, 3 women elected to the Senate.
- 1964 Guardianship of Infants Act, giving women guardianship rights equal to those of men.
- 1965 The Succession Act passed. It abolished distinctions between the rights of inheritance of males and females. The rights of widows to a just share of their husbands' estate were increased and clarified.
- Irish Federation of Women's Clubs founded.
- 5 women elected to the 18th Dáil, 4 women elected to the Senate.
- 1967 National Association of Widows founded following a public meeting held in the CIE Hall.

- 1968 An Ad Hoc Committee representative of women's groups presented a memorandum to the Taoiseach calling for the establishment of a National Commission on the Status of Women.
- 1969 3 women elected to the 19th Dáil, 5 women elected to the Senate.

Appendix 3

The IHA (Irish Housewives Association) 1941-1992

- 1941 The Housewives' Petition is presented to the Government signed by fifty-one housewives. Over 600 signatures collected later that year.
- 1942 The IHA is formed; campaigns for fair distribution of essential commodities at a fair price for producer and consumer.
- 1943 IHA investigates milk supply and starts a campaign for safer, cleaner, cheaper milk; examines the marketing of fruit and vegetables; joins the Emergency Conference of Women's Societies; organises street march to focus on needs of children, especially in area of school meals.
- 1944 IHA secures price control for cooking fats. Survey of cleanliness of food shops makes headlines in the press.
- 1945 Three achievements: potato prices reduced by ten pence per stone; price of oranges evidence presented to government; government appoints Tribunal of Inquiry into Dublin milk supply and IHA presents evidence.
- 1946 Investigations into fruit and vegetable price anomalies. IHA supports ICA idea of producer/consumer markets. Campaigns for cleaner handling of food. Recommendation sent to Minister on proposed Public Health Bill. First publication of *The Irish Housewife*.
- 1947 The Lower Prices Council formed, with IHA playing an active role. Milk Tribunal Report is published, embodying IHA evidence and suggestions. First local branch of IHA founded in Dun Laoghaire.
- 1948 Branches of IHA formed at New Ross, Mount Merrion, Skerries and Bray.
Irish Women Citizens Association incorporated with the IHA, brought affiliation to the International Alliance of Women.
Three memoranda presented to government: The High Cost of Living; Necessary Improvements in Public Health Services; Reasons for Emigration from Ireland.
- 1949 Dublin Producer/Consumer Market opens. IHA represented on Advisory Board to Corporation Marketing Committee through the Lower Prices council. Four IHA members attend Fifteenth Triennial Congress of the IAW in Amsterdam. IHA studies school premises and County Council housing schemes. IHA campaigns for school meals. IHA represented on the "Buy Irish" Committee.
- 1950 IHA opposes removal of price controls. Discussion with Department on food prices. Memorandum on Food Hygiene sent to Minister. Investigations into handling of food, disposal of street refuse, conditions in slaughter houses.
IHA chairperson, Jean Coote, stands as Independent candidate for Dublin Corporation; narrowly defeated.
- 1951 Government sets up Prices Advisory Body (PAB). IHA opposes prices increases on number of goods. Food Hygiene regulations

- become law. IHA memorandum on Function and Curriculum of Primary Schools sent to Minister.
- 1952 PAB: IHA opposes price increases for milk, coal and groceries. Applies for reduction in cost of prams and wins case. IHA meet Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Agriculture on Sea Fisheries Bill. Three IHA delegates attend IAW Congress in Naples.
- 1953 PAB: IHA presents evidence on prices of fish, eggs and gas. IHA deputations to government on Restrictive Trades Practices Bills and White Paper on 1952 Health Bill.
- 1954 Further evidence presented to PAB. Questionnaire sent to Dáil candidates on price control, education, child welfare and clean foods legislation. IHA urges extension of free milk schemes. Restrictive Trades Practices regarding Chemists' goods are investigated. Two IHA delegates attend IAW Summer School in Denmark on social services.
- 1955 IHA opposes increase in price of food/goods.
- 1956 IHA continues to oppose increases in price of electricity, bread, flour, laundry prices and protests against increase in bus fares. IHA gives evidence on sale of patent medicines and baby foods. IHA urges precautions against spread of polio.
- 1957 IHA suggestions include Report into Supply and Distribution of Grocery Provisions. IHA attends inquiry into supply of goods to co-operative wholesale societies. IHA urges Minister to act on recommendation of Commission on patent medicines and baby foods.
IHA sponsors three Independent women candidates for Dáil. Visit of IAW president, Ester Graff. IHA chairwoman attends Consumer Protection conference held in Paris by the European Productivity Agency.
- 1958 IHA representative appointed to Prices Advisory Committee and the advisory committee of the Institute of Industrial Research and Standards. IHA urges registration and inspection of nursing homes and conducts anti-litter campaign. IHA delegate attends IAW Congress in Athens.
- 1959 IHA protests against duty on imported medical drugs. Sends memorandum on juvenile delinquency to Minister and asks for women to serve on juries on the same terms as men.
- 1960 IHA deputation meets Government to discuss profits on school uniforms - action leads to drop in prices. Delegate attends OEEC Conference in Paris.
- 1961 IHA asks Minister to reduce prices of butter. IHA approaches the Federation of Irish Industries, on informative labelling and comparative testing of goods.
Asks women to use votes and when suitable to vote for women in the general election.
Appeal again for women jurors on the same terms as men.
Advises girls seeking jobs outside Ireland to investigate conditions thoroughly.
Requires Gardaí to enforce law prohibiting children from flag-selling on the streets.

- Delegate attends women's committee of the French European Movement in Paris to discuss women's part in the European Movement.
- The IHA hosts the IAW congress in Dublin, attended by 350 women from abroad.
- 1962 IHA campaign for informative labelling on packaged goods and textiles. Delegate attends Conference of International Organisation of Consumers Unions in Brussels. IHA asks for cost of Health and Social Services to be borne by the central fund.
- IHA supports protest of Irish Nurses Association against use of title 'nurse' by unqualified persons. IHA holds public meeting to discuss fluoridation of water.
- IHA memorandum sent to Minister suggesting change in laws affecting women and children - inheritance, guardianship, marriage age, age of adoption and jury service. After renewed protest against child collectors for charities, Minister fixes minimum age at fourteen. Minister asked to prohibit importation and sale of air guns. Garda Síochanna asked to act against sale of illegally imported fireworks.
- 1963 IHA celebrate twenty-first anniversary. IHA deputation to Department to discuss informative labelling and comparative testing of goods. Drogheda branch protests against rise in prices of coal, and protest against unjustified overcharging prior to introduction of turnover tax, and sent price increases to Minister who appointed regional price investigators.
- IHA urges Commission on Court Procedure to introduce jury service for women on the same terms as men. IHA writes to Minister on the rises in hospital charges and urges registration of all nursing homes. IHA writes about treatment of children in institutions. IHA writes to Lord Mayor asking that no further bingo saloons be licensed in O'Connell Street; request is passed by Corporation.
- 1964 IHA encourages consumers to make on-the-spot complaints when not satisfied with goods or services. Urge the public to see that meat prices are displayed in butchers' shops as legally required.
- IHA delegate attends Conference of Consumers Unions in Oslo. IHA memorandum on Adoption Bill presses for the age of adoption to be raised to twenty-one years.
- IHA asks that men found soliciting on the streets should be liable to prosecution on the same terms as women.
- 1965 IHA delegate invited to become member of government Prices Consultative Committee. Women's Advisory Committee to Institute for Industrial Research and Standards investigates the quality and durability of schoolbags, Irish-made shoes, pram harness, aluminium hollowware, the safety of toys and flammability of children's clothing.
- IHA writes to Minister expressing dismay at leniency of sentences passed on offenders in cases of indecent assault on young girls, and protests against the sale of alcohol to teenagers. IHA asks for women to be represented on Government delegations to International Labour Organisation.

- 1966 Chairwoman attends Conference of International Organisation of Consumer Unions in Israel.
On 28 October the Consumers Association of Ireland formed. IHA writes to Government on proposed legislation for pre-packed goods. IHA reports bad conditions of public conveniences and lack of amenities for women to Dublin Corporation, County Councils and Bórd Failte.
IHA writes to Dublin Health Authority on conditions in homes for the aged. IHA sends memorandum to Department on health services and gains representation on the Food Hygiene Advisory Committee. Formation of Limerick and Cavan branches of the IHA. IHA represented on the Food Hygiene Advisory Committee by the Minister for Health.
- 1967 IHA continues work with Women's Advisory Committee of the Institute of Industrial Research and Standards. Consumer affairs continued. Supports principle of remission of rates and free travel for old age pensioners.
IHA delegation attends IAW congress in London; affiliates asked to examine the status of women in their country. Carmel Gleeson, sponsored by the IHA, elected as an Independent to the County Council.
- 1968 IHA with the Association of Business and Professional Women calls a meeting to discuss the Status of Women in Ireland. Ad hoc Committee formed to examine need for a National Commission on the Status of Women.
IHA organise Symposium on Human Rights. Cork, Limerick and Dun Laoghaire branches protest against quality of goods and water.
- 1969 Memoranda sent to Government on control of air pollution and Merchandise Marks Bill. IHA demands that agriculture be supported by exchequer grants instead of consumer levies.
- 1970 IHA branches organises National Food Hygiene Week under patronage of Minister for Health. Government sets up National Commission on the Status of Women. IHA delegation attends IAW Congress in Konigstein. IHA organises seminar on Education. IHA branch formed in Wexford.
- 1971 *Housewives Voice* published. IHA delegate appointed to National Prices Commission. Interim Report of National Commission on Equal Pay.
- 1972 IHA Chairwoman attends International Committee of IAW in Finland. IHA hosts visit of a member of Deutscher Frauenrign to arrange exchange. IHA organises 'Women's Parliament.' Report of the National Commission published. CSW formed to implement the Beere Report. IHA branches formed at Naas, Carlow, Dundalk and Athlone. IHA sends submission to EEC Committee on Economic Affairs and development on drawing up the European Consumer Protection Charter.
- 1973 IHA representative on National Prices Committee attends EEC Round Table Conference on Consumer Affairs. IHA protests about advertisement for vacancy with pay discrimination on sex basis. IHA delegation attends IAW Congress in New Delhi. IHA forms new branch in Ennis.

- 1974 IHA organises protest march against rising prices. Central Committee of IHA received by the President of Ireland. Members of Deutscher Frauenring from Kronberg visit IHA.
- 1975 UN International Women's Year. IHA member on Irish delegation to UN Conference in Mexico nominated by the Women's Representative Committee. Two IHA delegates attend Les Journees Internationales de Paris and IAW meeting in Paris. IHA members support Dublin peace march; Ennis branch organises local peace march. Sixteen IHA members visit Deutscher Frauenring in Kronberg.
- 1976 IHA delegation goes to IAW Congress in New York. IHA calls for support for home-produced fruit and vegetables and Irish goods generally.
- 1977 IHA hosts IAW board meeting at Trinity Hall, Dublin. IHA holds press conference asking all political parties to examine reasons for low representation of women in the Dáil and Seanad. IHA writes to Government asking for women on Irish delegation to UN Disarmament Conference. Government sets up Employment Equality Agency. IHA delegate goes to International Symposium on Consumer Affairs in Brussels.
- 1978 IHA organises public meeting on Women's Contribution to World Peace. IHA member attends IAW Board meeting in Tehran.
- 1979 IHA chairwoman attends European Symposium on the Year of the Child and the European Community. 75th anniversary of IAW. Two IHA delegates attend IAW Conference in Monrovia.
- 1980 IHA member attends UN Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen as observer on government delegation nominated by CSW. IHA arranges two public meetings with aid from EEC on Habitat and Energy Options in the 1980s.
- 1981 IHA deputation received by Department to discuss supermarket legislation. IHA member attends IAW board meeting in Cairo.
- 1982 IHA sends two delegates to IAW Congress in Helsinki preceded by workshop on Employment Patterns in the Eighties. CSW accepted as affiliate of the IAW. IHA member attends UN Conference on Disarmament in New York as observer for IAW.
- 1983 IHA asks Government to apply for place on the UN Commission on the Status of Women. IHA hosts twelve members of the Deutscher Frauenring from Kronberg. IHA member presents paper to IAW workshop in Cyprus on The Impact of Technology on Women in Employment. Two members attend IAW board meeting in London.
- 1984 IHA asks Government to sign UN Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women. IHA member accompanies IAW president and vice-president to China at invitation of the All China Women's Federation.
- 1985 UN Conference for End of Women's Decade in Nairobi attended by IHA member as observer for IAW. Seven IHA members visit Deutscher Frauenring in Kronberg. IHA delegate attends IAW workshop in Berlin on Sexism, Language and Education.
- 1986 National Prices Commission disbanded by Minister. IHA organises public meeting on Use and Abuse of Hormones and Antibiotics in Meat. IHA delegate attends IAW Congress in

- Mauritius. IAW holds Peace Workshop for European Region in Navan with the IHA and CSW. IHA makes submission to the Advertising Standards Authority on the section of code applying to children.
- 1987 IHA monitors advertising practices. Approaches National Association for Community Broadcasting with a view to broadcasting subjects of interest to women. Third Interdisciplinary Congress on Women held in Trinity, College. IHA member attends board meeting in London.
- 1988 IHA holds two public meetings on Irradiation of Food and Violence in Society. IHA represented on Consumer Standards consultative committee. IHA joins in Active Age Week. IHA protests against information on bank visa cards. IHA against abortion but believes information should be available. IHA group visits European Parliament in Strasbourg.
- 1989 Visit of IAW president, Olive Bloomer. IHA delegate attends IAW Congress in Melbourne.
- 1990 IHA holds public meeting on the Consumer in the EC in 1992. IHA member supports elimination of CFCs and other pollutants. IHA writes to the Taoiseach on his failure to appoint women to represent the Government on the Economic and Social Commission.
- 1992 IHA makes submission to Second Commission on the Status of women on education for life, women in the home, unemployment and its effect on families, social welfare and responsibilities of deserting husbands and fathers.
- 1992 IHA celebrates Golden Jubilee. IHA calls for a new anti-litter campaign, involving teaching of civics and care of the environment in all schools. Represented at IAW congress in Athens.

(Source: Tweedy, 1992: 121-130)

Appendix 4

List of Interviewees:

Mary Maher:

Journalist, Founder member IWLM, Left Wing Campaigns, Trade Unionist.

Anne Speed:

Member IWU, Trade Union Official, Member Sinn Féin, Women's Right to Choose, participated in several radical campaigns.

Liz O'Donnell:

Member Women's Political Association, former Solicitor, Elected TD for Progressive Democrats in 1992.

Liz MacManus:

Left activist, writer/journalist, radical campaigner, founded Women's Aid refuge Bray, Elected TD for Democratic Left in 1992 and appointed as Minister of State for Housing.

Nuala Fennell:

Member IWLM, CSW, founder member of AIM and Women's Aid, elected TD for Fine Gael and appointed Minister of State for Women's Affairs in 1986.

Francis Fitzgerald:

Chairperson CSW in 1992, social worker, elected TD for Fine Gael in 1992.

Joan Burton:

Feminist Activist, elected TD for Labour Party in 1992, appointed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Monica Barnes:

Member of CSW in the 1970s, Women's Political Association, elected TD for Fine Gael in the 1980s and was a candidate in several elections.

Máirín DeBurca:

Founder member IWLM, left activist, participated in several radical campaigns.

Olive Braiden:

Current director Rape Crisis Centre, Fianna Fáil candidate in European Parliament elections.

Rita Burtenshaw:

Member Women's Right to Choose group, Director Dublin Well Woman Centre, Women's Studies Forum UCD.

Ruth Riddick:

Member Woman's Right to Choose group, Open Door/Line Counselling, Officer with the IFPA.

Anne O'Donnell:
Member IWU, Founder/First Director of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre,
radical campaigner, Director Marino Books.

Anne Connolly:
Former Director Well Woman Centre, Member Woman's Right to Choose,
Director of Pro Divorce Campaign 1995, radical campaigner.

Eileen Proctor:
Member ad hoc committee, CSW, founder National Association of
Widows.

Hilda Tweedy:
Founder IHA, ad hoc committee, member IAW, first chairwoman of the
CSW.

Anne O'Connor:
Chairperson AIM.

Cris Mulvey:
Member of Aontas, feminist researcher and activist in women's community
groups.

Dr. Anne Ryan:
Adult Educator, engaged in women's community groups activism and
community development.

Group Interview:
Some eleven Members of Ballymun Women's Community Group.

Kathleen Maher:
Long-standing left activist and feminist, member Ballymun Women's
Group.

Breda Murphy:
Co-ordinator of the Waterford Women's Network.

Mary E. O'Donnell:
Poet, writer.

Bríd Connolly:
Member IWLM, Lecturer Adult and Community Education, Women's
Studies lecturer.

Carol Coulter:
Irish Times Journalist, left activist, author, feminist activist.

Mary Cullen:
Feminist Historian, feminist activist, radical campaigner.

Sheelagh Drudy:
Feminist Sociologist.

Ronit Lentin:
Feminist activist, sociologist, writer, Women's Studies practitioner.

Ailbhe Smyth:
Director of WERRC, Writer, feminist campaigner.

Brigid Reynolds:
Religious sister, co-director of CORI (Council of Religious in Ireland).

Dr. Eimear Philbin Bowman:
Clinical Psychologist, Member IWLM.

Susan Denham:
Member of the Supreme Court.

May O'Brien:
Long standing trade unionist and feminist activist.

Dorothy Heyden:
Member IWLM, Government Official Department Foreign Affairs.

Doris Molloy -
Chairperson Association of Business and Professional Women.

Dr. Mary Henry:
Doctor, Chairperson Cherish, Senator, political campaigner.

Evelyn Conlon -
Writer, Member IWU, Woman's Right to Choose, Rape Crisis Centre, radical campaigner.

Mary E. O'Donnell:
Writer.

Anne Le Marquand Hartigan:
Women's Studies Forum UCD, writer.

Elizabeth O'Shea:
Feminist activist, Ms. Chief Magazine.

Róisín Conroy:
IWU, Repeal the Social Welfare Code campaign, founder IFI/Attic Press, radical campaigner, campaign for a Women's Centre, trade unionist.

Appendix 5

Organisational Archives Consulted¹

Internal Documents:

IWLM -

Photographs, Poster (Mansion House Meeting)
Internal Conflict discussion document
Budget Submission from IWLM, March 10th 1971.

IWU -

Report from Editorial committee on Banshee, May 1976.

*Women's Conference TCD, 9th June 1979, Women's Caucus
People's Democracy, Press Release.*

*Irish Women United Contraception Workshop Report, May 9th-
10th, 1976.*

*Irish Women United Teach-In: Dual Membership, Position Paper,
8-9 May, 1976.*

Feminism and Socialism, IWU Discussion Paper 1976.

*Discussion Paper for Teach-in of Irishwomen United: How to
Build a Women's Movement, A collective effort presented by V.
Purcell, Linda Hall, Anne Speed, Máire Case, Ann O'Brien, Betty
Purcell, Jackie Morrissey.*

Irish Women United Charter, the manifesto of IWU.

Poster, Liberty Hall Meeting, 1976.

IFI (Irish Feminist Information) Documents

Attic Press Documents

Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement

Women's Charter for Northern Ireland.

¹ Note: The entire collection of documents consulted and read was significantly more extensive than presented here. The archives were not catalogued according to a library system and were stored in random boxes. In addition, a significant number of newspaper articles from 1970 to the present were consulted (these are sourced specifically in the bibliography).

Information Literature Distributed/Advertised by SMOs:

Rape Crisis Centre, Information Documents.
First Report of the Rape Crisis Centre, January 1979.

Well Woman, Information.

Association of Business and Professional Women, Literature.

AIM, Documents.

WPA, Annual Reports and Documents.

National Association of Widows, Literature.

Women's Studies Centre UCG, Course Information.

Demonstration/Movement Events Documents/Material:

Women Against Violence Against Women, 1978 -
Flyer and Banner

Contraception Train -
Photographs, IWLM Press Release, Guidelines distributed to
Demonstrators, Media Reports/footage.

CAP -
Campaign Literature and Information Documents.

Marie McMahon Case -
Press Releases, Original Letters, Newspaper Reports.

Invasion of the Forty Foot -
Press Release, Newspaper Reports.

Women Against Violence Against Women, Demonstration flyer, October
13th, 1978.

Legal Cases Documentation:

Repeal the Social Welfare Code
Letter to The Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, from Promotion for
Equal Pay, Ad hoc Committee, 9 February 1976.
Campaign Literature.

Campaign Documents:

Campaign for Women's Centre -

Leaflets/flyers, financial reports.

Campaign for a Women's Centre, Information Leaflet, 1978.

Draft Proposal for a Women's Centre, Steering Collective, 22 July 1978.

Repeal the 8th Amendment -

Press releases, strategy documents.

WIN -

Organisational booklet/Abortion Information.

Basic, *Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church: Women - Called to be Priests*, discussion document/campaign literature.

Divorce Action Group, Statement of Aims and Principles.

Promotion for Equal Pay Ad hoc Committee 1976, 29 Herbert Avenue, Dublin 4 -

Internal Documents.

Magazines/Journals:

Banshee: Journal of Irishwomen United, entire collection from 1975-1976.

The Attic Book of Contacts and Diary, 1993-1997 diaries.

The Women's Movement V Women, Report compiled by June Considine and Nuala Fennell, *Women's Aim Magazine*, April-June, 1981.

Family Violence: Women's Aid, Women's Aid, 1980.

Irish Anarchist/Anarcha Feminist Paper, No. 1, February 1978.

Cherish.

Bread and Roses, Issues 1-5, Journal of Women's Liberation Group, UCD.

WPA Newsletter, Chairwoman's Comment, Maeve Breen, June 1976.

WPA Newsletter, Memoranda on General Election, Nuala Fennell, 1977.

The Aim Group, Newsletter, No. 1-17, PO Box 738, Dublin, 1974 -1981.

Wicca: Wise Woman Irish Feminist Magazine, No. 1-13.

IHA, *The Irish Housewife*.

Succubus, Occasional paper of the Sutton Branch of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Women's News

Ms. Chief

Conference/Seminar Documents:

Council for the Status of Women, *Seminar on Women and the Church*, Saturday 24th January 1976, Official Programme.

Women's Status Conference
Status Conference, Guidelines for Facilitators, Strategies for Change, 1980.

Papers from the Feminism and Ireland Workshop, 26 June, 1977, Women and Ireland Group, London.

Women's Conference, TCD, 9th June, 1979.

Women Worldwide An Open Forum, 8 July 1992, the Global Forum of Women and Council for the Status of Women.

Women's Aid Seminar, 27-28th May, 1978.

TCD Women's Week, Feb 25-2 Mar, 1985.

IWLM Conference, 5-6th February 1972, Programme.

IWLM conference 29th-30th January 1972, Programme.

1987 Women's World Festival, Interdisciplinary Congress, Dublin, 6-10 July 1987.

UN Forum, Nairobi, 1985

UN Conference, Copenhagen, 14-30 July, 1980.

UN Conference, Beijing, 1995.

Trinity Women's Week, 1985.

Appendix 6
The Contemporary Women's Movement 1970-1979

- 1970 Government set up First Commission on the Status of Women, Chaired by Thekla Beere.

 First meeting of the IWLM.
- 1971 Chains or Change published.
 Late Late Show appearance.
 IWLM protest at Pro-Cathedral. Picket placed at Archbishop's residence.
 Women's Progressive Association formed by Margaret Waugh (later re-named the Women's Political Association).

 Commission on the Status of Women publish Interim Report on Equal Pay.
- 1972 AIM established.

 McGee Case.

 Cherish established.

 Report of the Commission on the Status of Women published.
- 1973 CSW established.

 Civil Service (Employment and Married Women) Act 1973: Removal of the Marriage Ban in the Civil Service, Local Authorities and Health Boards.

 Social Welfare Act provides for Deserted Wives and Unmarried Mothers Allowance.

 ADAPT founded.

 Mary Robinson introduces Private Members Bill to amend the 1945 Criminal Law (Amendment) Act and the Censorship of Publication Acts 1929 and 1945.
- 1974 Women's Representative Committee set up by Minister for Labour to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women.

 Supreme Court ruling in favour of Mary McGee, finds the ban on the importation of contraceptives for private use unconstitutional. Supreme court recognises the existence of a constitutional right to marital privacy.

Máirín de Burca and Mary Andersen take a case to the Supreme Court, claiming the 1927 Juries Act unconstitutional.

Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act passed.

Social Welfare Act grants payment of Children's Allowance to mothers.

Provision for payment of an allowance to single women over 58 years and to the wives of prisoners.

Maintenance Orders Act provided for a reciprocal enforcement of maintenance orders between Ireland and the UK.

Women's Aid opens its first refuge.

1975 International Women's Year.

IWU holds its first meeting at Liberty Hall.
Adopts ICTU Working Women's Charter.

UN Decade for Women inaugurated at Mexico.

1976 CAP (Contraceptive Action Programme) launched by IWU.

European Commission rejects Irish Government's application for derogation from Commission's Directive on Equal Pay.

Juries Act passed following DeBurca/Andersen case, which deemed conditional exclusion of women from jury lists to be unconstitutional.

IWU invade the 'male only' forty-foot bathing area at Sandycove.

Family Law (Maintenance of Spouses and Children) Act passed.

Family Home Protection Act passed, to prevent family home being sold unknown to family's consent or without the prior consent of the other spouse.

1977 First Rape Crisis Centre opened in Dublin.

6 women elected to the Dáil - First preference votes for women increase from 42,268 to 81,967.

6 women elected to the Senate.

Employment Equality Act, resulted in establishment of the Employment Equality Agency.

Unfair Dismissals Act passed,

1978 'Women against violence against women' march to protest against rape and sexual assault.

1979 2 women elected to the European Parliament.

Máire Geoghan Quinn appointed to the Cabinet, the first woman since Constance Markievicz in 1919.

Health (Family Planning) Act passed restricting sale of contraceptives to 'bona fida' couples only.

Women's Right to Choose Group formed.

Campaign for an Irish Women's Centre launched.

Appendix 7 Service Organisations Established in the 1970s

- 1970 Women's Progressive Association -
Became the Women's Political Association in 1973, to encourage the participation of women in public and political life. First President was Mary Robinson.
- 1971 Ally -
Primarily a family placement service for pregnant single women or single mothers. The work carried out by Fergal O'Connor O.P. culminated in the founding of Ally.
- 1972 Family Planning Services (became the Irish Family Planning Association) -
A company set up to provide non-medical and non-pharmaceutical contraceptive devices.
- 1972 Cherish -
Founded by Maura O'Dea and four other single mothers to give advice and support to single parents. First President was Mary Robinson. Now subsidised by the Eastern Health Board. Campaigned vigorously for the Status of Children Act (1986), providing legal status for non-marital children (previously regarded as 'filius nullius' - the child of nobody - in the law). Council for the Status of Women was established.
- 1972 The Cork Federation of Women's Organisations -
representing seventeen local associations, was responsible for opening the first Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 1972 AIM (Action, Information, Motivation) -
a pressure group concerned mainly with family, maintenance, and justice, founded by Nuala Fennell following her resignation from IWLM. Its primary function was to provide information and legal advice for women. It became one of the most successful and effective women's organisations, campaigning for the rights of wives and children to protection and maintenance and lobbying for a revision of the law regarding marriage and the family.
- 1973 Adapt -
The Association for Deserted and Alone Parents (Adapt) was primarily a support group.
- 1974 Women's Aid -
Provides refuge and support for victims of domestic violence. It was responsible for highlighting the scale of this problem in Irish society.

1977 Rape Crisis Centre -
Emerged from Irishwomen United. They have succeeded in creating awareness of rape as a crime of violence and provide a comprehensive counselling service for victims and have campaigned successfully for anti-rape legislation. In a recent article in the Guardian (June, 1994) it was stated that the Irish Rape Crisis Centre organisation is one of the most radical in Europe. The Sexual Assault Unit, Rotunda Hospital, was established in 1985 (its Director is Dr. Máire Woods, originally part of the IWLM group).

Employment Equality Agency was established by the government.

1980 Irish Pregnancy Counselling Service established.

Appendix 8 List of Activists in the IWLM

Source: R. Conroy's Archive

LIST OF ACTIVISTS IN THE IRISHWOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The first meeting of the women's Liberation Study Group took place at 41, Strandville Ave, Fairview in October 1970.

Present were; Mary Maher, (Her House) Mary Kenny, Mairin De Burca, Moira Woods, Evan Boland, Nell McCafferty, Mary McCutchen, Margaret Gaj, Mary Cummins, Maureen Johnston.

MANSION HOUSE MEETING.

Chairperson Nell McCafferty, Speakers - Mary Maher, Moira Woods, Mairin De Burca, Margaret Gaj, Ivan Kelly, (Solicitor)

GROUPS.

Peggy Cross (14)
Betty Drilly (14)
Alicia Carrigy (14)
Joan Doyle (14)
Pona Harris (14)
Colette O'Neill (14)
Maureen Killeavy (4)
Ce-shi Killeavy (4)
Joan Forsdyke (4)
Ann Fitzgibbon (4)
Mary Flynn (4)
Derry McDermot (7)
Margaret Kelly (7)
Mary Lenehan (7)
Hilary Orphen (Sutton)
Betsy O'Sullivan (Sutton)
Kav Fitzsimons (Sutton)
Helen Heahy (Sutton)
Sue Dipper (Sutton)
Lunia Ryan (Virginia)
Joan DeFreyme (Bray)
Mary Earls. (14)
Ann Speed (7)

FOUNDERS.

Mary Kenny.
Mary Maher
Nuala Fennell.
Nell McCafferty,
June evine.
Mary Anderson.
Mary McCutchen,
Margaret Gaj
Mairin De Burca.
Mary Robinson.
Marie McMahon
Nuala Monaghan.

Appendix 9 Job Advertisement in the 1970s

Source: R. Conroy's Archive

examining cargoes and taking account for bonded goods liable to duty, supervising distilleries, breweries etc., purpose of assessing dutiable goods manufactured or supervising bonded warehouses etc.

utive Officer: £1,260 (at 18 or under) rising to £2,431 (unmarried man or woman) or to £2,849 (married man).

er Tax Officer: £1,320 (at 18 or under) rising to £2,584 (unmarried man or woman) or to £3,044 (married man).

er Officer of Customs and Excise: £1,353 (at 18 or under) rising to £3,025 (unmarried man) or to £3,574 (married man).

its: For posts 1 and 2 you must have been born between 1st April, 1953 and 1st January 1958. For post 3 you must have been born between 2nd January 1953 and 1st January 1957. It is confined to men.

ll have a good chance of one of these posts if you do well

the relevant subjects in the Leaving Certificate

and the two General papers at the examination to be held by the Civil Service Commission on 8th May, 1974.

and the subsequent interview.

CLOSING DATE: 27th MARCH, 1974

MECHANICAL ENGINEER, GRADE III

in the Office of Public Works

Applicants must have a University Degree in (Mechanical or Mechanical and Electrical) Engineering or an equivalent qualification

OR
be recognised by the Institution of Engineers of Ireland as qualified for corporate membership (by examinations in Mechanical Engineering)

OR
be recognised by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers as qualified for corporate membership (by examination)

OR
hold a certificate of competency as a First Class Engineer valid for service in the Irish Mercantile Marine.

Salary: £1,637—£2,849 (man); £1,637—£2,425 (woman).
Up to £2,370 (man) and £2,134 (woman) possible.
Contributory pension scheme and Widows and Orphans pension scheme.
Age limit: 35 years.

CLOSING DATE: 21st MARCH, 1974

ARCHITECT

Dublin County Council

Salary: £3,773—£4,339.

Age Limits: 25-45 years with extensions in certain circumstances.

Essential: A degree in Architecture or equivalent qualification and at least 4 years Architectural experience.

CLOSING DATE: 18th APRIL, 1974

PLANNING ASSISTANT†*

Clare County Council

Salary: £2,691—£3,773.

Essential: A recognised qualification in Town Planning.

or
a degree in Architecture or Engineering, or in which Economics, Geography or Sociology was taken as a major subject, or corporate membership, by examination, of RICS and 2 years' relevant experience.

CLOSING DATE: 25th APRIL, 1974

† Higher initial salary in certain circumstances.

* Further vacancies, if they arise, may be filled from this competition.

X

ARCHITECT

in the Office of Public Works

The work includes the design of large and small new buildings, research and development and the care of National Monuments. The work is done by small teams and there is individual job responsibility. As far as possible preferences for type of work will be met.

Salary: £1,885—£3,574 (man); £1,885—£3,025 (woman).

Depending on qualifications and experience, starting salary could be up to £3,031 (man) or £2,717 (woman).

Posts are permanent. Non-contributory pension scheme, widows and orphans pension scheme. Promotion prospects.

Age limit: 50 years.

CLOSING DATE: 28th MARCH, 1974

For application forms and more details send a postcard (naming the position(s) that interest you) to:—

AN RUNAI, 45 SRAID UI CHONAILL UACHT., BAILE ATHA CLIATH 1

Tá fáilte roimh chách eile.

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Appendix 10 CAP Documentation

Source: R. Con

CONTRACEPTION ACTION PROGRAMME

Public Meeting: TCD R.1408 Monday 29th January 1978
FREE, LEGAL CONTRACEPTION NOW
EVERY CHILD A WANTED CHILD.

Ten years since the first Family Planning Clinic was set up in the State & successive Governments have failed to introduce it. Instead, we have a situation where only certain sector clinics, and Haughey's proposals will legitimise, when set against a large number of people, particularly in the rural areas, the proposed Bill becomes law, it will have disastrous consequences on services and militate against the development of any new services. Only some of the implications:

- (1) It removes from family planning clinics the power to provide supplies as they have been doing, clinics will have to go to a chemist for contraceptive supplies.
- (2) It will make contraception very expensive since doctor prescribing charges will be added to the full retail price. The poorer sections of the population hardest hit.
- (3) The 13,000 women getting contraceptives under the State will no longer be able to do so. Haughey has said no artificial contraceptives supplied.
- (4) Grants for research and exemptions from licences will be provided for information/service on "Natural" family planning.
- (5) It is an infringement of personal privacy since a person's private affairs with the doctor even if no medical advice is given, the prescription must state it is a family planning prescription, revealing the person's private affairs to the chemist (of marital privacy now?)
- (6) It gives the Minister many arbitrary powers since he can set the terms and conditions of licences at any time. Why are the

If this Bill is passed it will be a reversal of the trend since the Church and State as the power of the Catholic Church is a Bill's emphasis on "natural" methods. It will mean the end of a state funded service to private enterprise (which will be a blow against the fight for women's democratic right to choose how to control their

Students, Tradeunionists, housewives, Feminists, concerned citizens, likely that it will be passed, we in C.A.P. believe that the restrictions and continue to provide their services. We need in this and can draw on support from their clients.

Trade Unions, Political organisations and parties, the women's movement, to defend and extend the right to choose.

SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING MEETING OF 1 SAT. FEBRUARY 17th in TCD. 2 - 6pm Sponsors:

Appendix 11 Succubus Publication

Source: R. Conroy's Archive

MAY
1971

SUCCUBUS

This is the first edition of the Sutton "Succubus" - what we hope will be an occasional paper with the purpose of establishing communication between ourselves and other groups in the Women's Liberation Movement, and informing the public at large of our activities. We hope this newsletter will encourage other groups to publish their own periodical in order to promote an exchange of ideas as well as keeping in touch with each other's activities, etc.

OBJECTIVE

The Sutton Branch of the Women's Liberation Movement, founded earlier this year, has as its objectives:-

- (1) "To concentrate in an initial campaign to implement the Constitution of this State with regard to women."
- (2) "To encourage women to take action on specific issues affecting them by whatever means seen appropriate at the time, and to support such action."
- (3) "To see as a long term objective a function of making all women aware of their exploitation in all areas of life, including those not covered in the Constitution. (Commercial exploitation through manipulation, civil rights not recognised in this State - such as divorce, etc.)"

STRUCTURE

We in Sutton hold weekly meetings in various ~~homes~~ homes. There is no elected man but the minutes are taken by a member in whose house the meeting is being held. Minutes are kept in a communal file at one address accessible to all. A collection is made at each meeting to defray

Our meetings are open to members of the movement as well as to observers. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

ACTIVITIES

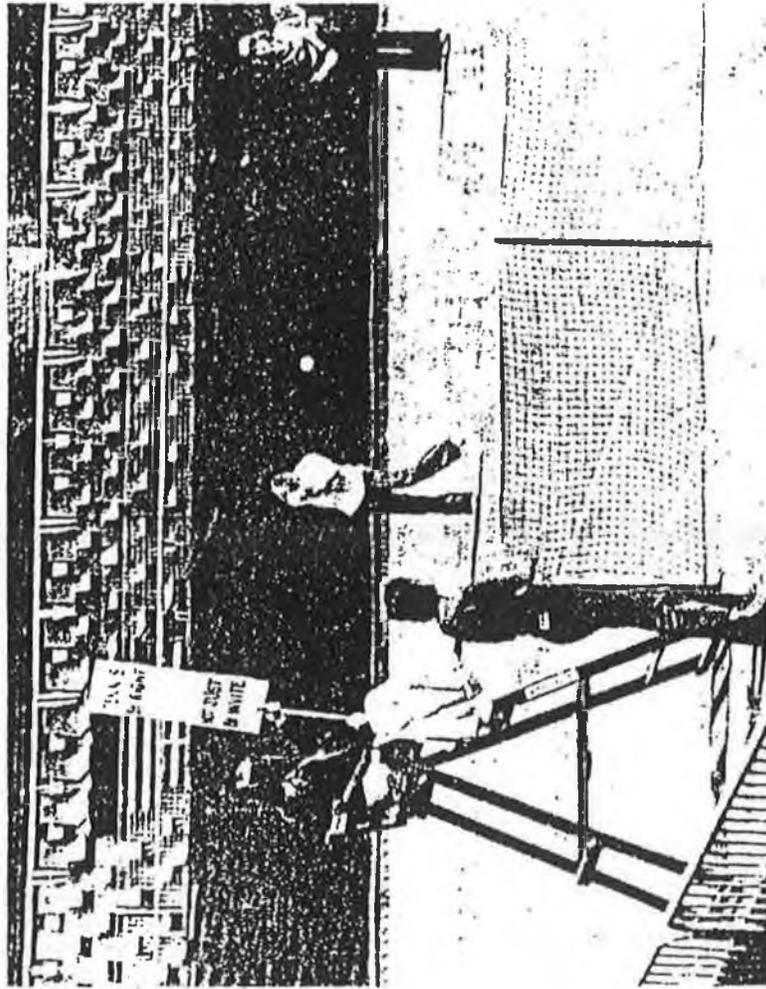
1. The first activity in which we were involved was a lobby outside Leinster House (re: Sen. Mary Contraception Bill). Coverage of the event resulted in one member of the government being asked to appear on women's liberation being the subject of a question to the government to be answered. The answer was an evasive one.
2. Survival Song Contest - We took part in the picketing Survival Song Contest where leaflets were distributed to various public personalities. The leaflets pointed to the fact that contraception is illegal in Ireland. The illegality of contraception is especially repugnant in view of the fact that Ireland as a member of the United Nations is not bound by the organisation's universal declaration of human rights (Article 14).

Appendix 12 IWLM Photographs

Source: R. Conroy's Archive

THE IRISH PRESS, SATURDAY, JULY 5, 1975

C



Members of the Women's Lib Movement on number one court at Dublin's Fitzwilliam Tennis Club yesterday during a protest by 20 members of the group against a club rule which bars women members. Women are only allowed into the club on the invitation of members.

Appendix 13

Major Movement Events Since 1980

- 1980 First Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre established.
Status Conference and magazine launched.
Opening of Dublin Women's Centre.
- 1981 Beginning of Pro Life Amendment Campaign.
- 1983 Open Door Counselling established in Dublin following Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre's financial collapse.
Abortion referendum results in Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution of the Irish Republic, guaranteeing the "right to life of the unborn."
Irish Feminist Information (IFI) established.
KLEAR established.
- 1984 Anti Reagan demonstration by Woman against Disarmament.
Attic Press Established.
UCD Women's Studies Forum established.
- 1985 UN Global Women's Conference at Copenhagen.
Róisín Conroy's High Court Case and Repeal the Social Welfare Code Campaign.
- 1986 Nuala Fennell appointed Minister of State for Women's affairs.
Divorce Referendum.
- 1987 Interdisciplinary Congress held in Dublin.
Hamilton ruling on Abortion information.
- 1988 Supreme Court ruling on abortion information.
- 1990 Mary Robinson elected President of Ireland.
WERRC established at UCD.
- 1992 X Case.
Abortion Information and Right to Travel referenda passed.
20 women elected to Dáil Éireann.
- 1993 Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women published.
- 1995 Divorce referendum passed.

Appendix 14

Abortion Law and Practice

1861 Offences Against the Person Act outlaws abortion:

Every woman being with child, who with intent to procure her own miscarriage shall unlawfully administer to herself any poison or other noxious thing...and whomsoever, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman whether she be or be not with child shall unlawfully administer to her or cause to be taken by her any poison or other noxious thing...with the like intent shall be guilty of felon, and being convicted thereof shall be liable...to be kept in penal servitude for life; and

[W]homsoever shall unlawfully supply or procure any poison or other noxious think...knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used or employed with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman whether she be or not be with child, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable to be kept in penal servitude for the term of three years.

1935 Criminal Law Amendment outlaws contraception in the Irish Free State.

1937 Constitution

Article 41.2.1

"In particular the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."

Article 41.2.2

"The State shall therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home."

1967 Abortion Act adopted in Britain (but not Northern Ireland).

1967 British Abortion Act:

1. the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated;
2. the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnancy woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated;
3. the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the existing child(ren) of the family of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated; or finally

4. there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

- 1979 Health (Family Planning) Act partially legalises contraceptives in Irish Republic.

Article 10 Family Planning (Health) Act 1979:

"Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorising

- a. the procuring of abortion*
- b. the doing of any other thing, the doing of which is prohibited by Sections 58 or 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1860; or*
- c. the sale, importation into the State, manufacture advertising or display of abortifacients."*

- 1980 Pioneering Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre (IPCC) established in Dublin by the women's movement.

- 1983 Open Door Counselling established in Dublin following IPCC's financial collapse.

Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution of the Irish Republic adopted, guaranteeing the "right to life of the unborn":

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

- 1986 19 December 1986 the President of the High Court (the Hamilton judgement) declared:

"The right to life of the foetus, the unborn, is afforded statutory protection from the date of its conception...The qualified right to privacy, the rights of association and freedom of expression and the right to disseminate information cannot be invoked to interfere with such a fundamental right."

- 1988 Order of the Irish Supreme Court (Open Door Counselling) confirms the ban on dissemination of abortion information but opened the way for a Human Rights appeal:

"The Court doth declare that the activities of the Defendants, their servants or agents in assisting pregnant women within the jurisdiction to travel abroad to obtain abortions by referral to a clinic; by the making of their travel arrangements, or by informing them of the identity of and location of and method of communication with a specified clinic or clinics are unlawful,

having regard to the provisions of Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution.

And it is ordered that the Defendants and each of them and each of their servants or agents be perpetually restrained from assisting pregnant women within the jurisdiction to travel abroad to obtain abortions by referral to a clinic, by the making for them of travel arrangements, or by informing them of the identity and location of and the method of communication with a specified clinic or clinics or otherwise." (Supreme Court Record No. 185/7)

- 1991 European Court of Justice Ruling on Travel (Grogan).
Irish Republic annual abortion figures reach to record 4,154.

European Conventions information rights clause, Article 10:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and without frontiers."

- 1992 X case permits abortion to safeguard "the equal right to life of the mother".
Re-establishment of non-directive Pregnancy Counselling by the Irish Family Planning Association .

European Court of Human Rights Ruling on Information (Open Door Counselling) establishes right to abortion information, stating that:

"...the restraints imposed on the applicants from receiving or imparting information was disproportionate to the aims pursued by the Government of Ireland."

25th November 1992, the electorate voted to add to Article 40.3.3 the freedom to obtain information and the right to travel:

to allow for "no limit to freedom to obtain and make available subject to conditions laid down by law, information on services lawfully available in another member (EC) state" and that "there shall be no limit to freedom to travel to another state."

Rejected a third amendment to the constitution:

"It shall be unlawful to terminate the life of the unborn unless such termination is necessary to save the life, as distinct from the health, of the mother where there is an illness or disorder of the mother giving rise to a real or substantive risk to her life, not being the risk of self destruction."

- 1995 Government legislation on abortion information and the right to travel implemented.

1996 No concerted campaign for Irish Republic legislation for legal abortion on demand.

Source: Riddick, 1993

Appendix 15

1983 Abortion Referendum Campaign

1981 -

- April 27th: The Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) is launched in Dublin. PLAC says it will collect signatures for a constitutional referendum.
- April 30th: Fine Gael announces support for the proposal to amend the Constitution to prevent abortion.
- May 14th: The Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey, promises to hold a referendum to amend the Constitution. This is immediately welcomed by the Labour Leader, Frank Cluskey.
- May 22nd: The Presbyterian Church calls a press conference in Belfast to say that many Protestants would be "dubious" about the proposed amendment.
- May 30th: The Irish Association of Lawyers for the Defence of the Unborn is formed under chairman Mr Dermot Kinlen, SC.
- June 11th: The outgoing president of the Methodist Church, the Rev Sydney Callaghan, says the proposed amendment would mean the denial of a civil right.

1982 -

- January 26th: Taoiseach Dr. Garret Fitzgerald in the Dáil repeats his pledge on a pro-life amendment. The Opposition leader, Charles Haughey, says he will not make the amendment a party political issue and the Government will receive full co-operation from his party.
- March 21st: A campaign to fight against the proposed amendment is launched following a conference of the Dublin-based Women's Right to Choose Group.
- March 23rd: The Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey, tells the Dáil that the Government intends to hold a referendum aimed at introducing an anti-abortion amendment into the Constitution.
- April 1st: The Dublin Methodist Synod opposes the amendment.
- May 18th: The Irish Council of Churches opposes the amendment.
- June 2nd: The Anti-Amendment Campaign is launched in Dublin.
- June 4th: The chairman of the Labour party, Mr. Michael D. Higgins declares his opposition to the amendment.
- June 8th: A group of Northern Protestants announce their support of the Anti-Amendment Campaign.

- June 11th: The Presbyterian Church opposes the proposed referendum at its annual General assembly in Belfast.
- June 22nd: The Irish Council for Civil Liberties announces its support of the Anti-Amendment Campaign. The Church of Ireland says it has grave doubts about the wisdom of using constitutional prohibitions to prevent abortion.
- June 23rd: In the Dáil the Minister for Finance, Mr. McSharry, estimates the cost of the referendum at £700,000.
- July 26th: The Labour Leader, Mr Michael O'Leary, says he will oppose any constitutional amendment of a denominational character.
- August 10th: The president of the Workers' Party, Mr. Tomás MacGiolla, says his party is opposed to the amendment.
- September 19th: An IMS poll shows 43 per cent of the population were in favour of the referendum: 41 per cent against it; 47 per cent said they would vote for an anti-abortion amendment; 36 per cent said they would vote against it.
- November 2nd: Fianna Fáil issues its wording for the proposed amendment: "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect and as far as practicable by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."
- November 3rd: The Fianna Fáil wording is supported by the Bishop's Conference of the Catholic Church. The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. McAdoo, says the wording seemed just and adequate but would need further study by the General Synod. The Fine Gael leader, Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, says his party would be able to give the wording total support and if they were in Government they would hold the referendum by March 1983.
- November 13th: About 2,000 people participate in an anti-amendment march in Dublin.

1983 -

- January 17th: The Minister for Justice, Mr Noonan, says the Government intended to hold the referendum in the next ten weeks.
- January 25th: A total of 120 doctors sign a statement opposing the amendment.
- January 30th: The Church of Ireland joins the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in reiterating its opposition to the amendment.
- February 8th: A group of 98 barristers come out against the amendment.

- February 9th: The Minister for Justice, Mr Noonan, introduces the Second Stage of the Eight Amendment to the Constitution Bill 1982.
- February 12th: Mr John Taylor MEP, and Official Unionist, warns that the proposed amendment would further alienate Northern Protestants.
- February 13th: Fianna Fáil indicates that it will oppose any attempt to change the wording of the proposed amendment. The conference of Young Fine Gael says the referendum should be dropped.
- February 14th: Mr Cluskey, Minister for Trade, Commerce and Tourism, opposes the amendment, irrespective of the wording.
- February 15th: The Attorney General, Peter Sutherland, advises the Government that the wording of the proposed amendment is ambiguous and unsatisfactory, and might, in fact, legalise abortion.
- February 16th: The Government says that the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Eamonn Barnes, has indicated that the proposed wording will introduce profound uncertainties.
- February 17th: Results of an Irish Times MRBI poll shows 47 per cent in favour of the referendum being held: 37 per cent against; and 16 per cent with no opinion. On voting intentions: 53 per cent they would vote in favour: 16 per cent against; 19 per cent undecided and 12 per cent said they would not vote.
- February 20th: The Minister for State and the Department of the Environment, Ruadhri Quinn, becomes the fourth Labour Minister to publicly oppose the proposed amendment.
- March 16th: The Catholic bishops say they would favour the proposed amendment if it genuinely safeguarded the unborn but add that they will not make a formal statement until after the revised wording has been announced.
- March 24th: The Government announces the new wording: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be invoked to invalidate any provision of the law on the grounds that it prohibits abortion." PLAC and SPUC reject the new wording, as do the Anti-Amendment Campaign which repeats its fundamental opposition to a referendum. The Presbyterian Church welcomes the new wording but says it is still against amending the Constitution.
- March 29th: The Catholic Bishops come out against the revised wording.
- April 3rd: The Church of Ireland Primate, Dr Armstrong, says the Catholic Church did not appear to trust the Oireachtas on the subject of abortion and that both wordings seemed to embody the theological position of the Catholic Church.
- April 7th: Mary Harney TD breaks Fianna Fáil ranks by casting doubts on the need for constitutional change.
- April 10th: The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Dermot Ryan, and Bishop Kevin MacNamara of Kerry defend the amendment, saying it is non-sectarian.

- April 12th: PLAC calls for a return to the original wording.
- April 27th: The Government is defeated in the Dáil on its wording for the amendment by 87 votes to 13 and the Bill is passed by 85 votes to 11. The Taoiseach, Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, says if the Amendment Bill is enacted he will encourage people to vote against it.
- May 8th: The Irish Baptist Church opposes the referendum.
- May 11th: The Senate passes the second stage of the Constitutional Amendment Bill by 18 votes to 15. Mrs Katherine Bulbulia is the only Fine Gael senator to vote against it, the other 24 abstain.
- May 19th: The Committee Stage of the Amendment Bill is passed by 19 votes to seven in the Senate. Senator Shane Ross's proposal to replace the Fianna Fáil wording with the Fine Gael wording is defeated by 20 votes to 5.
- June 1st: A pro-life and anti-amendment group of doctors are formed.
- June 3rd: Result of an IMS poll show 47% against holding the referendum: 33% in favour and 20% undecided.
- June 2nd: The Tanaiste, Mr Spring, confirms that the referendum could be delayed by the attempt of solicitor Mr Eugene P. Finn to get a court order preventing the holding of the referendum.
- June 13th: Results of an Irish Times/MRBI poll shows that 53% oppose the holding of the referendum; 32% are in favour and 15% had not opinion. On voting intentions, 34% would vote in favour; 28% against; 20% were undecided and 18% said they would not vote.
- June 17th: The High Court refuses to grant Dublin man, Mr Gerard Roche, an injunction restraining Mr Spring from proceeding with the referendum.
- June 23rd: A total of 137 Cork solicitors oppose the amendment.
- July 13th: The Irish Medical Association (IMA) says it is neither supporting nor opposing the amendment and express concern that a PLAC leaflet seems to identify the IMA as supporting the campaign.
- July 20th: It is learned that Fianna Fáil had urged its members to participate in the campaign for the referendum to amend the Constitution, as it would not be taking part as a party. The Co. Cork solicitor, Mr Eugene Finn, fails in his High Court attempt to get a ban on the referendum.
- July 26th: The Supreme Court dismisses an appeal by solicitor, Mr Eugene Finn.
- August 4th: Results of an IMS poll show that 31% intend to vote against the amendment; 44% in favour and 25% did not know.
- August 15th: The three week constitutional referendum campaign begins.

Appendix 16

The Women's Movement in Northern Ireland: Framework for a Social Movements Analysis

Northern Irish society is rigidly patriarchal, dominated by the influence of Protestant and Catholic religions.² This is reinforced by a particularly 'macho' style of politics and entrenched electorate. The women's movement mobilised much later in Northern Ireland. Between 1970 and 1975 there were few women's groups in the wake of the political crises in the late 60s and early 70s. Three core groups emerged - the Lower Ormeau Women's Group which was formed in 1972 and existed for less than a year, Queen's University Women's Liberation Group which met between 1973 and 1975, and the Coleraine Women's Group which was started in 1974 and comprised mainly of university students and academic staff. The Coleraine group was initially a consciousness raising group. It expanded its membership to other staff and women from a nearby housing estate and increasingly became involved in a number of specific campaigns (including, a campaign for the extension of sex discrimination legislation in 1975, which was already implemented in Britain; the absence of abortion legislation in Northern Ireland; domestic violence; rape and rights for divorced or separated women). In 1977, the group proliferated and became Coleraine Women's Aid. This occurred partly because of many women's concern to specialise on this issue and through networks forged with Women's Aid groups in Belfast and Derry. The group also proliferated into the newly formed Women's Law and Research Group, which focused on the divorce campaign.

From 1975 the capacity of the movement grew substantially until the early 1980s. The Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement (NIWRM) was established in 1975, following a women's film weekend in Queens University Belfast, and became a focal, umbrella social movement organisation. It fostered close links with the trade unions and support from a wide range of organisations. A Women's Charter for Northern Ireland was drawn up by the NIWRM and included the following demands: equal opportunities in education, training and work, equal pay, family planning services, maternity leave and child care facilities. Conflict arose over the tactical advantage of explicitly demanding a women's right to choose abortion. A provision was finally included in these demands calling for a parity of rights with women in England according to the 1967 act. Two groups with a more radical focus were offshoots from the NIWRM - the radical feminist Women's Aid groups who argued for the abandonment of hierarchical organising and structures; and the Socialist Women's Group who diverged from the concerns of radical feminists to demand an acceptance of socialism as a precondition for women's liberation. In addition, they were concerned with an appropriate response to the Peace People (originally the Peace Women's Movement) which the NIWRM initially supported. Tensions emerged within and between groups in the Northern Irish women's movement over feminist ideology and more specific issues (including, support for the Armagh women from 1979 on). This resulted in the formation of new groups such as, the Belfast Women's Collective which attempted to mobilise on a broader front than

2 See Evason (1991) for a more detailed analysis.

the Socialist Women's Group did. The Women Against Imperialism group (1978) and the Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign (which held its first conference in 1980) were offshoots from this organisation. In 1980 a Women's Centre was opened in Belfast by the NIWRM which continued to actively campaign on a number of issues throughout the 1980s.

Throughout the 1980s many of the groups formed in the previous decade persisted and grew, including the Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation, the Women's Law and Research Group and Lesbian groups. Other organisations, such as, Women Against Imperialism, Women in Media, the Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign and the Belfast Women's Collective were short-lived and had proliferated by the mid-1980s. However, the women who were involved did not 'disappear' and many became involved in new campaigns and specific areas into the 90s. The first Rape Crisis Centre and the Northern Ireland Women in Education group were set up in 1982. The first edition of *Women's News* appeared in 1984 and is still published. In addition, there has been a flowering of women's activity and enthusiasm in Derry in recent years at a number of levels. In the 1990s women have been increasingly active at community level in Northern Ireland. There are now, for instance, a number of community women's centres in Belfast and in Coleraine and Derry. The Falls Women's Centre, the Shankill Women's Group, Ballybeen Women's Centre and the lower Ormeau Women's Information/Drop-in Centre all have strong identities.

The women's movement in Northern Ireland took a distinct course of its own. There were some links with women in the Republic however (for example, in the formation of the first Rape Crisis Centre). The issue of extending the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland was particularly contentious. Pro-life platforms are one of the few issues on which the mainstream political parties agree across the board. The Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign was established in 1980 in response to the death of a young woman from a backstreet abortion but declined by 1984. The subsequent Northern Ireland Association for Law Reform on Abortion has continued, but the campaign but, the prospects for change remain remote in view of the level of opposition.

Evason (1991) concludes that while some groups within the women's movement have been absorbed with wider political events in Northern Ireland at all stages since the 1970s, many others focused on feminist issues to which they gave priority. The analysis here is merely cursory and does not justify the complexity of women's lives in Northern Ireland over time and place. The emergence of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition is a most exciting new development. 54% of the population of Northern Ireland are women and traditionally have been alienated from politics. This campaign is operating on a cross-community basis and aims to have women included 'around the table' (it gained two seats on the Forum). Whether the Women's Coalition achieves electoral success or not, we know from the history of the women's movement that it has a radical potential for change. It is this type of collective action by women from many different vantage points which precipitated the advancement of the women's movement globally in the late 1960s.

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