

*The Irish student movement as an agent of social change:
a case study analysis of the role students played in the
liberalisation of sex and sexuality in public policy.*

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctorate of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Acronyms and organisations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (<i>usually written Aids</i>)
ANC	African National Congress
BPAS	British Pregnancy Advisory Service
CAFA	Contraception Access For All
CAP	Contraception Action Programme
CCL	Citizens for Civil Liberty
CHLR	Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform
CO	Constituent Organisation
COSEC	Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students
CRM	Civil Rights Movement
CYM	Connolly Youth Movement
DAG	Divorce Action Group
DCU	Dublin City University
DES	Dept. of Education and Science or Dept. of Education and Skills
DPP	Department of Public Prosecutions
DSM	Defensive Social Movements
DUA	Democratic Unionist Association
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FLAC	Free Leal Advice Centre
FPS	Family Planning Service
GCN	Gay Community News

GLEN	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAAM	Irish Anti-apartheid Movement
ICCL	Irish Council for Civil Liberties
IFPA	Irish Family Planning Association
IGRM	Irish Gay Rights Movement
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISA	Irish Students Association
ISC	International Student Conference
ISEC	Irish Student Exchange Club
ISETA	Irish Student Educational and Travel Association
IUS	International Union of Students
LGB	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LIL	Liberation for Irish Lesbians
MP	Member of Parliament (UK lower house)
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
NGF	National Gay Federation
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NIHE	National Institute for Higher Education
NIGRA	Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
NIWRM	Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement

NSM	New Social Movement
NUI	National University of Ireland
NUS	National Union of Students
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
PD	People's Democracy
PLAC	Pro-Life Amendment Campaign
PLUS	Pro-Life Union of Students
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
QUBSU	Queen's University Belfast Students' Union
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
RMT	Resource Mobilisation Theory
RTC	Regional Technical College
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SDA	Students for Democratic Action
SDF	Student Defence Fund
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SIPTU	Services Industrial Professional Technical Union
SLM	Sexual Liberation Movement
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
SPLM	Student Pro-Life Movement
SPOD	Sexuality of People with Disabilities
SPUC	Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child
SRC	Student Representative Council

SU	Students' Union
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TCDSU	Trinity College Dublin Students' Union
TD	Teachta Dála – <i>member of Irish lower parliamentary house</i>
UCC	University College Cork
UCCSU	University College Cork Students' Union
UCD	University College Dublin
UCDSUS	University College Dublin Students' Union
UCG	University College Galway
UCGSU	University College Galway Students' Union
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
USIT	Union of Students in Ireland Travel
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee
WRAC	Women's Rights Action Committee

Abstract

The Irish student movement as an agent of social change: a case study analysis of the role students played in the liberalisation of sex and sexuality in public policy.

- Steve Conlon

Student movements have played an important role in the liberalising of social policy across the world. The objective of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the Irish student movement through the lens of existing international research and to examine the role that the student movement played in the liberalisation of social policy in three major areas in the latter half of twentieth-century Ireland: the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the availability of contraceptives, and access to information on reproductive health and abortion services abroad.

This research utilises movement records, archive material, interviews, and digital newspaper archives to map and analyse the activities of student leaders and activists in these campaigns. It examines the role of students in the public sphere and the movement's influence on public discourse on these contentious and emotive issues.

The research shows that students played a profoundly important role in opening up debate on sexuality and reproductive rights. It provides strong evidence that the student movement (Union of Students of Ireland) were among the first to place the decriminalisation of homosexuality on the media agenda and engage young people in debate around sexuality and identity. The student movement was also a strong advocate for sexual health education within the gay community and was both an agitator and advocate on these issues.

This research also argues that students played a pivotal role in forcing the contraceptive debate beyond the confines of the private home by making contraceptives openly available and demanding sex education in schools and colleges. The research further contends that the role the student movement played, as ally and partner to numerous civil society groups on the issue of family planning, was an important one and did much to advance the liberalisation agenda.

In the area of bodily autonomy and the right to information on abortion services, this research presents compelling evidence that the student movement led the way in the provision of services, as agitators for reform, and was a compelling advocate for the rights of women to control their own bodies.

The work concludes with an analysis of the case studies through the lens of the literature review and argues that the Irish student movement is an example of a fifth type of student movement, a pragmatic movement, presenting characteristics of both a reform and identity radicalism movement due to its structures, history, and the unique cultural and political sphere in which it found itself.

The role of the Irish student movement has been a positive one in the three social policy areas identified above and it has been an injustice to the movement that it has remained untold for so long.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Student movements are synonymous with revolution, unrest and the defence of civil rights. Many of the international student movements, which have received the most attention by academics, are in developing countries or in countries where significant civil disorder or revolution has occurred. However, in historical comparison to their counterparts in China, France, or Germany, Irish students have a timid reputation. This reputation may have led to a lack of interest amongst academics in exploring the role and impact of the student movement in the Irish modernisation story. This thesis seeks to address the neglect of the Irish student movement as an actor influencing social change, and demonstrate, through three case studies, that it has played, and can continue to play, an important role in social change.

As Altbach (2007) points out, student movements that have long histories are often part of the living memory of contemporary organisations or agents of the state such as the judiciary, education or political leaders. This thesis contends that student movements have a 'temporal duality of influence' in the public sphere that allows it to have an impact in the present, through its campaigns, and in the future as the student population graduates and they become voting citizens, moulding social policy through the ballot box. This can also occur directly, where activists become political leaders or public servants.

In line with the literature, this thesis argues that the very nature of third level campuses allows for debate to thrive, unmolested by traditional dogmatic interpretations. Once exposed to new discourses and concepts, students develop their own interpretations of areas of social concerns and affect their influence on social policy through various political repertoires.

Existing studies on collective student or youth action in Ireland tend to focus on very small elements of the broader student movement. Academic works on youth movements like the Student Christian Movement and several youth organisations such as the Daughters of Ireland by Ward (1983) or Condon (2000) focus on the exploitation of young people for political gain, rather than the utilisation of the political process by young people for social liberalisation. Works on other youth groups such as Fianna

Éireann explore their role in the promotion of culture and sport (Lyons, 1973). Other historical works focus on the role of female students fighting for the widening of access to higher education for women (Macdona, 2001; Parkes, 2004).

The concept of a politically active student sub-culture in modern Ireland has received little academic attention. Powell et al. (2012) concentrated on the role played by the state and other institutions in 'remoralising' young people and constructing imperial youth groups through uniformed movements. They point out that the opinion of young people was neither actively sought, nor welcomed, by the state. Pašeta (1999) offers insight and legitimacy to the role that the early student movement played in the cultural revival and in the university question but this research primarily confines itself with activities within the walls of University College Dublin (UCD). It is the role that students played outside their campuses, the influences they had, and the platform they held in the public sphere, that this work examines.

It is inarguable that the context of young people's lives changed dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s. The emergence of the interventionist state, the switch from economic protectionism to free trade, the development of a national broadcasting (television) service bound in law to be objective in news and current affairs, more females entering the workforce, the rise of a consumer society, the rise of feminism, the introduction of free second-level education, and the subsequent expansion of the third level sector all heralded a new era for Ireland and ensured that students were exposed to new cultures, ideas, and ways of thinking (Power, 2000).

The Irish student movement is an unusual type of student movement and, as such, this may explain the reasons why academics have avoided any comprehensive examination of its role in social change. The movement does not easily fit into the category of 'social movement' as, unlike the movements in Germany and France, it is not traditionally one of direct action. Similarly, it is less likely to deviate or dilute its message when it engages in cause-orientated campaigns such as reproductive rights and lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) rights. The Irish student movement may hold demonstrations and pickets while engaged in a campaign, but direct action is usually confined to fringe groups or, in the

case of the national students' union – the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), a product of planned press management rather than any real attempt to show affinity with radical political action.

Another explanation for the lack of work in this area is that academics may believe that it is difficult to identify when a student is acting as a member of the student movement or when the student is acting as part of another movement or collective. Students campaign on a number of issues at any given time (grants, academic quality, abortion, LGB rights), and it can be difficult to ascertain which movement the student or students are campaigning on behalf of. This cross-pollination of social movements is intrinsic to traditional forms of collective actions taken by students and, in a small country like Ireland, unavoidable. Rucht (1991) points out that the quest for political participation is often the key desire of a social movement and social movements are often collectives of individuals and other groups, mobilising around a diversity of issues. Cross-pollination of social movements, therefore, is inherent to these forms of collective action.

Another possibility is that academics may see the role of the Irish student movement as confined within the walls of their respective campuses and institutions. Given that tuition fees meant that only those from middle-class families could access higher education, the traditional assumption that only oppressed or minority groups populate a social movement may have played a role in the overlooking of the Irish case. Rucht (in Connolly & Hourigan, 2006, p. 12) argues that the new generation of activists that form social movements should no longer be conceptualised as 'disparate and alienated masses at the margins of society and politics – on the contrary, the new generation of activists are drawn largely from the educated and middle-class sections of society'.

The short lifecycle of the 'student condition', averaging three years for an undergraduate, may also deter academics from examining the student movement in an Irish context. With the exception of those who take a sabbatical year for a full-time elected position in a students' union, most students leave the education system after their undergraduate degree.

The objective of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the Irish student movement through the lens of existing international research and address the neglect in the existing literature of the student movement's contribution to social change. In particular, it seeks to determine the characteristics of the student movement as a social movement and to analyse the role the student movement played in the liberalisation of social policy in three major areas in the latter half of twentieth century Ireland: the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the availability of contraceptives, and access to information on reproductive health and abortion services abroad.

It defines students collectively as an actor in the public sphere and posits that they hold a privileged position, giving them a unique long term influence over social policy that few other social movements have the lifespan for. While the student movement may go through periods of high and low activity, it is safe to assume that a higher education system populated by predominately young students will contain a vocal minority that will protest and become activists. This thesis does not define the student movement solely as a social movement and makes no claim that the student movement single-handedly achieved social change, but rather, through its various political repertoires, greatly encouraged and aided that change.

Until now, there has existed very little in terms of sources to evidence and measure the activities of students as independent political actors in the public sphere. This thesis is informed and enriched by a wealth of archive sources, previously not known to have existed, from the national students' union, spanning over fifty years. It utilises movement records, archive material, interviews with former prominent student activists, and digital newspaper archives to map and analyse the activities of the student movement in these campaigns.

The 'student condition' is a key element of the ability of the student movement to encourage social change and, as such, is explored in-depth. Student activists, in general, have certain attributes categorised as the 'student condition' by a number of academics. These characteristics have developed as more studies have been carried out on the nature and motivations of activists. This thesis, in part, seeks to trace the evolution of

these characteristics from an Irish perspective. It traces the shifting demographics of the student population from the 1960s onwards as secondary and higher education became more accessible. It then examines the impact this had on the nascent student movement, and argues that it injected a new impetus for change on social issues. It demonstrates that these shifting demographics changed the agenda of the student movement, from a focus on education, the national question and international solidarity to social issues that directly or indirectly affected its membership. Issues such as grants, abortion, contraceptives, health services, medical cards, and housing became headline issues for the student movement.

One of the key social changes in the latter half of the twentieth century in Ireland has been our understanding of sexuality. According to Inglis (1997, p. 5), sexuality discourse in Ireland was 'driven into the dark recesses of Irish society' and those who did not conform to traditional conceptions of sexuality, 'the unmarried mother, the homosexual, the lesbian, the fornicating bachelor farmer, were excluded from society and put into convent, homes and asylums'. However, Ferriter (2012) contends that this process was more complex than simply a state enforced, Catholic Church sanctioned regime of strict sexual oppression. In his work, Ferriter observes that the Catholic Church was often approached by government ministers who considered themselves Catholics first and legislatures second. He also points out that

those with a determination to oppose or impose change were frequently lay groups who brought the Church on board ... [whereby] ... powerful but unrepresentative lay organisations sought to highlight the supposed danger to Catholic morals if certain proposals were either not adopted or accepted (Ferriter, 2012, p. 7).

Either way, the sexual morality debates in the latter half of the twentieth century were a conflict between opposing social forces (the lay church groups versus advocacy groups), with very different characteristics and motivations. The involvement and influence of the student movement in these debates provides an opportunity to examine the impact of the student movement on social change. To this end, this thesis explores, through the use of case studies, three key areas of the sexual morality debate covering the period

1968 to 1993 – the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the legalisation and liberalisation of contraceptives, and reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. In doing so, the thesis charts the evolution of engagement with cause-orientated political repertoires by the organised student movement.

The case studies utilise primary source material from the USI archive, which includes student publications, union correspondence, minutes of meetings and speeches. These are supported by evidence from newspaper reports and enriched by interviews with former student activists. Each case study opens with a historic contextualisation of prevalent attitudes at the time. This is followed by an analysis of the activities of the student movement in the national debate. Finally, each case study offers a conclusion as to the effectiveness and influence of the student movement's contribution to the campaign.

The use of case studies allows for a focus on a number of incidents of student engagement with politically divisive issues, with a 'view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences [and] processes' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 35) that occurred, leading to social change in the areas of the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the liberalisation of contraceptive laws and, finally, the role of the student movement in the Irish abortion question.

The case studies selected for examination are those that have been the most contentious and divisive in terms of USI's campaigns. They also represent major shifts in public attitudes and public policy, bringing Ireland into line with many of its European neighbours. For many decades, the Catholic Church was a major influencer of public policy in these areas and while the Church agreed with the decriminalisation of homosexuality it was vehemently opposed to the liberalisation of contraceptive or abortion laws. The case studies allow information to be drawn from participants' experiences and practices in the natural environment in which they occurred. Married with primary source material, this allows for analysis from a multiplicity of angles.

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of the literature surrounding student movements and their role as a social movement in the public sphere. It identifies the characteristics of the '*student condition*' and examines how the status of students, as a marginal elite allows them to interact within the public sphere. It charts the development of students as an actor that can attract significant media and political attention. It also explores literature concerning the complex relationships between student, lecturer and the university and the profound influences these can have on students.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed in this thesis. It provides a rationale for the research approach and examines issues such as bias, objectivity and the ethical implications of the research. It also outlines the approach adopted in the utilisation of case studies and key considerations surrounding the use of semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 4 explores the origins and the first decades of USI. It provides an overview of early debates in the union, its struggle for acceptance by government and colleges, and the early campaigns in which it involved itself – including the anti-apartheid movement, the creation of a student travel company, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign, UCD's move from the city centre to Belfield, and the Carysfort dispute, the first serious campaign that saw students clash with the Catholic Church hierarchy.

Chapter 5 provides contextual information relevant to the case studies and provides a brief overview of the case for the Irish student movement to be considered 'a pragmatic student movement'.

Chapter 6 is the first of a series of case studies that explore the role of the Irish student movement in the advancement of key sexual morality issues in the latter half of the twentieth century. This chapter focuses on the decriminalisation of homosexuality and provides evidence that the student movement was among the first to place to put the

decriminalisation of homosexuality on the policy agenda and to campaign for change in this area.

Chapter 7 argues that students played a pivotal role in forcing the contraceptive debate beyond the confines of the private home by making contraceptives openly available and demanding sex education in schools and colleges. It further contends that the role the student movement played as ally and partner to numerous civil society groups on the issue of family planning was an important one and did much to advance the liberalisation agenda.

Chapter 8 argues that, in the areas of bodily autonomy and the right to information on abortion services, the student movement was a leader in the provision of services, in agitating for reform and was an advocate for the rights of women to control their own bodies. It outlines the positions of the key actors – the Catholic Church, political parties, women's groups and their allies, and provides an analysis of the role the student movement played in debates surrounding contraceptives and abortion.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with an analysis of the case studies through the lens of the literature review and argues that the Irish student movement is an example of a fifth type of student movement, a pragmatic movement, presenting characteristics of both a reform and identity radicalism movement, due to its structures, history, and the unique cultural and political sphere in which it found itself. The thesis also underscores the necessity for historians to give consideration to the short and long-term impact the student movement has had on Irish modernisation. Finally, the need for additional research into the motivations of students will be stressed, from an Irish perspective.

Author's note on motivation

I am a former student leader and activist who held several positions in IT Sligo Students' Union from 2000 to 2003 and the office of LGBT Rights Officer and Equality Officer in the Union of Students in Ireland. I returned to college in 2008 as a mature student after resigning my position in USI. DCU was selected as it was a non-affiliate college of the national union and I wanted to make a break from student politics. I soon became quite

disillusioned with the lack of student activism and awareness and engagement with social issues on the campus. I believed this had much to do with the fact DCUSU was not a member of USI.

During my time in USI I was conscious of the role of students in various social liberation campaigns through the former officers of the union who still kept in contact, however there were no historic sources to learn more about this. When I returned to college I found that there was little by means of academic work on the Irish student movement either. I had engaged with the students' union in DCU about its role in national affairs and it was important for me to understand the 'why' of student activism as well as the historical actions of students – evidence that not alone that students can make a difference at a national level but that such action was indeed vital for the continued liberalisation and development of Irish society. It is this that has motivated this work over the last five years and will continue to motivate additional work in the years to come.

Chapter 2

Student movements, student activism and the public sphere

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the main themes in the literature dealing with student movements and the interaction of social movements within the public sphere. It begins by outlining the key arguments and scholarly work that investigate the 'student condition', the nature of student life, and the complex interactions between students and university. It then looks at the development of student governance and the categories of student that exist in these organisations, with a focus on the characteristics of student activists.

Much of the literature concerns itself with the concept and role of the marginal elite in society. This chapter thus explores what constitutes a marginal elite and asks whether or not students of the time period under examination can be so classified. It also explores the role that students play within the public sphere – both as marginal elites and as advocates for the demographic that is their constituency. It also explores the theoretical nature of collective action by students, identifying which of the characteristics of social movement theory may be applied to the Irish student movement. Finally, it discusses the categorisation of student movements that exists in Ireland and concludes with a short definition of each for use later in this work.

2.2 The 'student condition'

The 'student condition' is a set of qualities that distinguish third level students from other groups (Rootes, 1982). These qualities are demographical in nature and can change over time. It is possible, with data extrapolated from Dáil debates, university and Higher Education Authority (HEA) records, to build a picture of the effect that the widening of access to higher education had on the student demographic from the early twentieth century to the late 1980s. These effects can explain, in part, the reason the student movement shifted from one concerned with education policy and the national question to those of social concern, such as the decriminalisation of homosexuality and reproductive rights. The dominance of the Catholic Church in education matters, and the debates surrounding this are also important factors to be considered when examining the 'student condition'.

Traditionally, higher education was the preserve of the elite of Irish society, usually the Protestant middle and upper classes. As access gradually widened over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth, and into the early twentieth century, the middle classes expanded and created a stratum of 'sub-elites' who competed with the more established elites. This, in turn, led to the sub-elites holding the established elites to account for their decisions and actions (Skelcher and Torfing, 2010). By their very status as '*students*', students are a fledgling sub-elite which, through collective action, can begin to engage within the public sphere, often with far more enthusiasm than their more seasoned counterparts in the new middle-classes, that is those who became middle-class as Irish society restructured after independence.

The type of education system students enter often dictates the behaviour of the student population. Trow (2007, in Brannelly et al., 2011) identifies three different systems of higher education.

Elite:	A system which focuses on 0-15% of the population, which shapes the thinking and character of a ruling class and prepares students for elite leadership roles in the public or private sectors.
Mass	A system focusing on 15-50% of the population, which prepares a broader group of students for a range of technical and economic elite roles by transmitting skills and knowledge.
Universal	A system focusing on more than 50% of the population, which equips all the population to adapt in response to rapid social and technological change.

Trow (1974, pp. 61-62) also provides us with a comparative account of elite and mass education systems:

Mass higher education differs from elite higher education not only quantitatively but qualitatively. They differ obviously in the proportions of the age group that they enrol, but also in the ways in which students and teachers view attendance in university or college; in the function of the system for society; in the curriculum;

in the typical student's career; in the degree of student homogeneity; in the character of academic standards; in the size of institutions; in the form of instruction; in the relationships between students and faculty; in the nature of institutional boundaries; in the patterns of institutional administration and governance; and in the principles and procedures for selecting both students and staff.

In charting the evolution of higher education in Europe, Göztepe and Zimmer (2003) argue that the move from church-led higher education to a secular driven sector created a system to train individuals for civil service positions, therefore educating elites. Trow (2007) argues that, while continental universities were concerned with the training of a small minority to become elite leaders, British universities were concerned with, not only the preparation of a new generation of elite, but in training academic staff for work in universities, schools, and the churches. In all this, the preservation of morality was key, and any change to the education system was seen as an attack on the status-quo of morality or the 'pious and static rural society' that both the Catholic Church and the Irish political classes wished to preserve (Garvin, 2004, p. 158).

It would be remiss not to examine the shifting demographics of the Irish higher education system prior to the time period under examination in the case studies of this thesis. Such an examination gives a greater understanding as to why students became so well positioned to advocate on behalf of minority groups and for the liberalisation of various social policies.

2.3 The Free State and the education system

The policies enacted by the British government and the Irish state from the early to mid-twentieth century led to a widening of access to all levels of education. However, according to Ó Buachalla (1988), a lack of continuity delayed much of this access widening until the 1960s. During British rule, the tasks of educating and attending to the health of the nation was passed to the Catholic Church, which allowed it to control much of the civic life of Irish society (ibid, p. 3). Even the underground Dáil of 1919 had no ministry of education as 'such a ministry ... was seen as superfluous or even impertinent [towards the church]' (ibid, p. 167).

Garvin (2004) argues that major expansions of the education system were seen by the Catholic Church as a significant threat to its authority, as it added to a growing middle-class which supported strong secularisation. Education was also seen as a ticket out of the farming society and into the larger towns and cities. Even some political elites were concerned with the growth in demand for higher education. Patrick McGilligan, as minister of industry and commerce (1924-1932), argued in favour of retaining a largely agrarian economy, and declared that higher education outside the control of the Church would create troublemakers and political fanatics. Garvin contends that McGilligan and others blamed, in part, the Irish revolution and subsequent civil war on the increased access to higher education. Such concerns, Garvin (2004, p. 169) asserts, led to extreme censorship so as to not intrude upon the 'rural tranquillity and "modest intellectual aspirations"' of the ruling classes of the Irish nation. University students were to be kept under tight surveillance with their living arrangements, socialising and even reading material under significant scrutiny.

The early twentieth century was dominated by an elite system of higher education. Access to higher education often depended on completion of secondary education which required the payment of tuition fees, therefore excluding those too poor to progress beyond the primary system. Developments in the latter half of the century quickly led to the creation of a mass system (Clancy, 1989). Increased access to primary and secondary education resulted in a massive expansion of the system, as the state increased places in vocational training. In 1929, only 38 per cent of 14-16 year olds were enrolled in full-time education. By 1962, this had increased to 51 per cent. (Dept. of Finance, 1965). The significant increase in participation rates was, in part, due to increasing number of females attending beyond the compulsory requirements. In 1922, the female participation rate to leaving certificate level was approximately 30 per cent. By the 1950s, participation rates had reached parity with boys (Dept. of Education, 1965, 1981). Secondary school enrolment increased 3,000 per year from the 1950s – three times the annual increase of the previous decade – with 62 per cent of those secondary school students attending academic (rather than technical or vocational) secondary schools by the early 1960s (Raftery & Hout, 1993).

However, it was not until 1966 that a real change took place, when the, then, minister for education, Donogh O'Malley, made a sudden announcement that secondary school tuition fees were to be abolished. O'Malley, a former student activist during his days in University College Galway, had been frustrated with the slow pace of reform in the education system. To a room full of journalists, he claimed that 17,000 children a year were dropping out of primary school because their families could not afford to pay tuition fees. O'Malley also introduced a school transport system that allowed children in rural areas access to amalgamated larger schools. His policy of free secondary education broke a number of taboos and completely bypassed bishops, clergy and even department officials. It was the type of radical activism he had advocated for in public policy in his student days, being particularly animated against those who used religious laity connections for personal advancement (Garvin, 2004).

In 1972, the minimum school leaving age was raised to 15, which resulted in 50 per cent of all 17 year olds remaining in full-time education. A growing population, obtaining ever-greater levels of education created a desire for parents to see their children go further in their own studies. Rafferty & Hout (1993) refer to this phenomenon as the maximally maintained inequality in education¹. While lower social classes found it more difficult to progress on to the next level of education, middle-classes were able to take greater advantage of the widening of access.

2.4 The widening of access to higher education

The embracing of vocational and higher education by the state, coupled with the widening of access to secondary education, increased the ability of people to obtain a higher education. The era of protectionism came to an end in the late 1950s and it was quickly realised Ireland needed to build a strong workforce with skills in both industry

¹ The maximally maintained inequality hypothesis argues that education expansion causes the decline in quantitative inequalities in enrolment rates once the enrolment rate for the most advantaged socioeconomic group approaches the saturation point. It argues that a decrease of family background effect on educational attainment will occur after the saturation point for the high socioeconomic groups has been reached. (Orkodashvili, M. 2013, p. 459).

and the management of large organisations. It also needed to create a pool of critical thinkers to participate in the advancement of industry and research in Ireland.

State policy alone cannot account for this embracing of higher education. As previously stated, parental desire to see their children do better and the influences of international radio, television, foreign travel and a higher standard of living brought about by reliable industrial wages led to ‘a transformation that was foreseen with nervousness, anger and foreboding by some of the older generation of leaders and ... traditionalists’ (Garvin, 2004, p. 203). It was this transformation that gave political and social impetus to furthering the reform agenda in education.

Enrolment figures, as compiled by Clancy (*ibid*, p. 101), and collated into five year periods, show a steady increase in intake by higher education institutions, supporting his assertion that a mass system of higher education evolved in Ireland over a relatively short period of time:

	1950-55	1955-60	1960-65	1965-70	1970-75	1975-80
Increase	8.0	33.9	38.2	26.7	26.4	26.5
%:						

Table 1: Increase in Higher Education Enrolment over five-year period in Ireland, 1950-80.

Source: Clancy, P (1989, p. 101).

While Clancy’s data shows that the increase in higher education enrolment grew by on average by 30% in five year periods over the 1955 – 1980 period, the actual numbers participating in higher education rose from 7,900 in 1950 to 25,000 in 1970 and to 112,200 in 1998. (Source = Adrian Redmond (ed.), *That Was Then, This is Now: Change in Ireland 1949–99* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 45–51.)

The widening of access to higher education also triggered many heated debates surrounding morality. The opening of university education to women in the early part of the twentieth century was dominated by arguments over the compromising of the morality of male students and the possibility of undesirable or unhappy marriages that

might be brought about if women were to attend university (Farrar, 2010). Between 1938 and 1960, female students only accounted for a maximum of 30 per cent of the student population (Commission on Higher Education, 1967). [See table 5 for more information]. It was not until the 1980s that the ratio became equitable (see Table 6).

In Hout's (2004) revisiting of his 1993 work with Raftery, which explored the theory of maximally maintained inequality in the Irish education system, he concluded that Ireland's low post-secondary enrolment, prior to 1958, had led to a significant demand from the middle classes for higher education. As each previous generation slowly achieved a new foot on the educational ladder, parents felt it important for their children to achieve a higher level of education than they did in order for them to succeed later in life. As the economy improved, jobs became more technical or demanding, academically, and obtaining a higher education gave young people a competitive advantage. Raftery & Hout (1993) also discovered that class bias in the advancement to higher education was not really present.

The key to higher educational achievement was down to progression and retention within the education system, that is, the longer children stayed within the system, the more likely they were to complete their studies, as 'the few working-class survivors left at the point of transition to third-level education had already surmounted the class barriers that felled most of their contemporaries', (1993, p. 53). During the 1960s, the state began to invest heavily in vocational and higher education. Higher education was no longer seen as simply a service to the elite, but a positive contributor to the material welfare of the community and nation (Garvin, 2004).

Table 2 shows the increase in student numbers catered for by Irish universities over a forty-year period, with enrolments reaching almost three times that of 1928/29 in 1965/66.

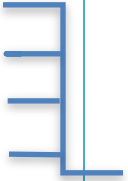
College	1928/29		1938/39		1948/49		1958/59		1965/66	
	FT	TOT	FT	TOT	FT	TOT	FT	TOT	FT	TOT
UCD		3,532	2,161	2,271	2,962	3,225	4,218	4,629	6,909	9,227
UCC			853	942	936	1,115	1,275	1,605	2,281	2,957
UCG			584	669	762	798	915	1,012	1,958	2,044
TCD			1,543	1,594	2,236	2,539	2,268	2,567	2,999	3,295
RCSI			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	601	601	611	611
TOTAL		3,532*	5,141	5,476	6,896	7,677	9,277	10,414	14,758	18,134

Table 2: Full-time and total enrolments in higher education by institution for selected years 1928-1965

*No data available per institution

Source: Dáil Debates, 239, 1554. Compiled by Ó Buachalla (1988).

Social Group	Dublin Entrants 1978/79	All residents of Co. Dublin 1971 Census (a)	All FT University Undergrad 1977/78 (b)	1971 National Census Distribution (c)	Nevin's 1965/66 National Sample Survey of University Students (d)
	%	%	%	%	%
Farmers etc.	1.2	0.8	18.2	20.4	16.9
Other Agri. Occupations	0.4	1.1	0.7	4.3	0.4
Higher professional	21.2	4.8	16.0	3.0	13.2
Lower professional	7.2	4.4	6.8	3.7	11.3
Employers and managers	29.7	8.1	17.4	5.1	18.3
Salaried Employees	1.9	3.4	9.5	2.0	7.8
Intermediate non-manual workers	10.5	17.4	13.0	12.1	20.6
Other non-manual workers	3.5	14.3	3.1	10.2	2.6
Skilled manual workers	6.7	20.8	8.0	16.5	5.9
Semi-skilled workers	0.8	8.3	1.8	5.8	0.8
Unskilled workers	0.6	8.9	1.4	8.7	0.4
Other unknown	4.4	7.8	4.3	8.2	1.8
TOTAL N	2,682 (e)	852,219	17,108	2,978,248	1,891
%	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Table 3: Socio-economic status of students in third-level education: Dublin and National Comparisons.

(a) Census of population of Ireland, 1971. Vol. IV, Table 8

(b) Based on unpublished data provided to the HEA by UCD, TCD, UCC, UCG, Maynooth and NIHEL

(c) Census of population of Ireland, 1971, Vol. IV, Table iii, P. xi.

(d) Nevin, M op. cit.

(e) Because socio-economic data was not available for students from Dun Laoghaire School of Art, this total is 20 less than the overall number of students surveyed.

There was also an increase in the number of students attending higher education. Table 3 (above) shows the social group origin of entrants to higher education from 1965 to 1977. There is a small increase in entrants from unskilled, semi-skilled, and manual social groups. A 1978 study of the socio-economic backgrounds of entrants to higher education found that there was no real change in the distribution of entrants to higher education. Of those entrants from Dublin, '72 per cent came from the highest social groups, even though these groups constituted less than 21 per cent of the population of the country' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 148, cited in Ferriter, 2012, p. 637).

While it has been noted by Ferriter and Coolahan that the lower social groups' percentage of the student population relative to their percentage of the general population was not equal, it should be acknowledged that their growth over the ten year period was quite significant. The five lowest social groups made up 49.4 per cent of the general population in 1971, with 18.6 per cent of students from those groups attending university. In Nevin's 1966 study (see Clancy, P. & Benson, C. (1979)), students from the five groups accounted for 11.5 per cent of the population. While this increase over an 11-year period is not seismic, it does indicate an improvement in representation. The introduction of the maintenance grant in 1968 may account for some of this increase.

The table indicates that the widening of access to higher education was fully taken advantage of by middle-class groups. The cost of college remained an issue for those outside that demographic: in February 1979 the, then, minister for education, John Wilson, announced that tuition fees were to increase by 25 per cent, following cuts to the higher education budget. It was generally felt by the government that no real benefit to society was being felt from university education and that 'most of the benefits from third-level education would appear to accrue to the students themselves rather than to society as a whole ... and many Irish graduates emigrate' (NAI, DT, 2008). However, the maintenance grant was also increased to assist those from lower social groups in continuing their education.

Raftery & Hout (1993) argue that the relatively low unemployment rates in the 1960s encouraged young people to forgo the short-term economic benefits of obtaining employment for the long-term benefits of higher wages as a consequence of holding a degree. While unemployment in the 1970s did rise, the lure of affluence drove young people to improve career perspectives by obtaining a higher education.

In Table 4, we can see the effects the establishment of vocational and technical colleges had both on the university sector and the overall higher education sector. The emphasis on vocational and technical training by the state in order to attract foreign direct investment led to a steady increase in vocational and technical admissions (White, 2001). Such vocational and technical training was particularly attractive to those from rural backgrounds.

Sector		1965/66	1975/76	1980/81	1981/82
University	N	15,049	21,963	23,949	24,662
	%	85.9	66.5	57.7	55.9
College of Education	N	1,435	2,584	3,278	3,269
	%	8.2	7.8	7.9	7.4
Technological	N	1,031	8,438	14,289	16,164
	%	5.9	25.7	34.4	36.7
TOTAL	N	17,515	33,003	41,516	44,095
	%	100	100	100	100

Table 4: Full-time student enrolment in higher education by sector for selected years 1965-1982

Source: Commission on Higher Education, 1967, HEA, 1975, 1980, 1981.

HEI Type	Women		Women as %		Men		Men as %	
	1978/9	1995/6	1978/9	1995/6	1978/9	1995/6	1978/9	1995/6
Third level	15,718	52,104	42.3	50.8	21,438	50,558	57.7	49.2
HEA designated	12,732	31,249	46.4	55.4	14,729	24,194	53.6	44.6

Table 5: Gender differences in participation rates in third level education, 1978/9 and 1995/6.

Source: Dept. of Education, Statistical Report, 1978/9, Tables 1 & 3 and Dept. of Education, Statistical Report, 1995/6, Table 1.1 as compiled by Lynch, K. (1999), p. 141.

Institution	1968/69	1978/79		1988/89	
	Students*	M	F	M	F
UCD					
Dublin	3,694	2,612	1,960	2,627	2,525
Rest of the Republic	3,323	2,209	1,442	2,200	2,085
Six Counties	314	170	107	68	48
TCD					
Dublin	1,325	1,601	1,050	1,837	1,625
Rest of the Republic	639	786	885	1,161	1,623
Six Counties	1,037	201	184	129	116
UCC					
Cork	1,929	1,607	11,83	2,031	2,022
Rest of the Republic	907	771	657	812	1,100
Six Counties	8	4	0	5	5
UCG					
Galway	1,101	839	698	789	744
Rest of the Republic	1,254	1,012	984	1,099	1,356
Six Counties	9	13	3	14	2

Table 6: Breakdown of home regions of students in chosen universities for chosen years, 1968/69, 1978/79 and 1988/89.

*No gender breakdown was available for this year.

Source: Higher Education Authority, First Report (1969), Report, Accounts & Student Statistics (1978/79, 1988/89).

Table 6, above, shows the home regions of students attending universities in the chosen years 1968/69, 1978/79, and 1988/89. Most notably, the Dublin colleges had the largest increases of non-Dublin students. A number of factors influenced this, including prestige of institutions, the maintenance grant and travel discounts for students, as the student culture became an economically attractive one to service in the era of mass higher education.

The changing landscape of higher education in Ireland, with the introduction of Regional Technical Colleges, the establishment of two National Institutes of Higher Education, and the growth of art and commerce schools, significantly shifted the make-up of higher education, from a university focused one, to a more diverse one. As Table 3 shows, in

less than twenty years university intake of the total higher education population fell from 85.9 per cent to 55.9 per cent. By 1986, only 37 per cent of new entrants were in universities (Clancy, 1988). Third level student numbers in the regional technical colleges had significant growth, with 194 students attending in 1970/71, compared to 1,600 attending in 1973/74; this increase was largely due to the completion of building works (Dept. of Education, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974). By 1978, full-time students in all nine of the Regional Technical Colleges had reached 4,848, with 10,026 part-time students (Dáil debates, 1979).

The steady utilitarian approach to higher education policy meant that vocational training was in receipt of the vast majority of state higher education funding. From 1969, government policy believed education was to serve economic and not social concerns, and the establishment of the regional technical colleges was to serve just that:

We believe that the main long-term function of the colleges will be to educate for trade and industry over a broad spectrum of occupations ranging from craft to professional level, notably in engineering and science, but also in commercial, linguistic and other specialities.

(Steering Committee on Technical Education, 1967)

The 1980 White Paper on educational development and the Programme for Action in Education 1984 – 1987 both emphasised the intent to prioritise economic growth over social progress:

Priority of financial support will be given to those academic developments ... which are geared to developments in modern society ... As a corollary, it is to be expected that some courses could be phased out.

(Dept. of Education, 1983, p. 27)

In the ten years between 1970 and 1980, a total of twelve new higher education institutions had been established, with the full-time student body increasing by 145 per cent (White, 2001). Entrant figures to the technological sector and colleges of education were now higher than that of the university sector, with '5,513 new full-time entrants to

universities, 1,175 to colleges of education and 6,672 to the technological sector' in 1980 (White, 2001, p. 165).

By the early 1990s, a marked reduction in inequality levels amongst the socio-economic groups had occurred. The participation rates of the four highest groups declined from 2.56 per cent in 1980 to 2.14 per cent in 1986 and 1.84 in 1992. The five lower socio-economic groups saw increases from 0.39 in 1980 to 0.43 in 1986 and .63 in 1992. University participation rates, overall, were still heavily dominated by the higher socio-economic classes, while inequality levels in the institutes of technology were much lower (White, 2001). Clancy (1996) also acknowledges that inequality still existed amongst the socio-economic groups within higher education from his own studies of the period 1980 to 1992, but highlights that the reduction of inequality was significant at 36 per cent (using the odds ratio).

While the widening of access to higher education did not, on balance, create a greater equity of entrants from all the social groups, it did allow for a persistent increase of entrance by the lower social groups. State aids such as maintenance grants gave these students the freedom to study and immerse themselves in the academic culture and student life without the constant financial burdens that haunt many when attempting to break the class-barriers of higher education. The move from an elite to mass system of education had a profound impact on the role and relationship between academic staff, students, and society.

Economic success brought with it some level of financial independence for young people. Debates in the public sphere about the cultural shift within Irish society, from one of pious simplification to one that was 'more brash, strident, garish and vulgar' ignited discussions around what it meant to be Irish (O'Mahony, 1976, p. 241). This debate about identity, coupled with the relaxing of censorship of literature in the universities, exposed young people to new ideas and allowed them to mould their own discourse within the universities. Prior to this, some books relating to certain ideologies were placed on restricted loan, requiring lecturer permission before they could be viewed (McCarthy, 1999). This more democratised education setting, coupled with the

lowering of the voting age in 1972, gave young people a political relevance like never before.

2.5 Irish youth culture

Youth is a socially and culturally constructed category that has changed considerably in the last 100 years. By the 1950s, 'young people tended to be detained in childhood or rushed into adulthood. There was little conception that they should be allowed to occupy, much less enjoy, an intervening period in which freedoms could be tested and aspects of the adult world tasted' (Sweeney & Dunne, 2003, p. 5). Those lucky enough to be able to attend higher education were able to enjoy a freer existence, though, as argued by Ferriter (2010), the social revolution that was promised, incorporating rights and a voice to young people, was abandoned by the state after independence.

By the 1960s, like many other European countries, Ireland experienced a fundamental shift in cultural normalcies and young people were once again the focus of much discussion and debate. Television was viewed as 'a steady conduit for a predominantly urban and cosmopolitan set of images, not as individually powerful as its detractors feared, but as insidious in their cumulative effect' (Tobin, 1984). Irish youth culture had been particularly affected by the moral panics that new technologies and cultural imports had triggered within the Catholic hierarchy. The Censorship of Films Act 1923, the Censorship of Publications Act 1929, the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1935 (which banned the importation and sale of contraceptives), and the Public Dance Halls Act 1935 (which placed dancehalls under the effective control of the Church) were all instruments of control brought in at the behest of the Church in order to socially repress young people from diverging from the traditional cultural norm (Whyte, 1980). Dancehalls, often frequented by young people, were seen as degenerate and dance styles other than traditional Irish dances had 'become a grave danger to the morals of ... young people, not only in the city but in the country parts of the diocese' (Breathnach, 1983, p. 43).

By the 1960s, mass media had introduced the youth of Ireland to a cultural revolution with 'youngsters [listening] to Radio Luxembourg under the bedcovers and tuned into Rock-and-Roll' (Power, 2000, p. 13). Power described the 1960s as a 'remarkable period in Irish history...[where] young people aspired to things that their parents could never have imagined' (Power, 2000, p. 17) and where class was less of an issue as the dancehalls attracted those from all walks of life within rural communities.

With the power of the Catholic Church gradually declining, thanks to the introduction of vocational training, free secondary education, a secular drive taking hold in universities and Ireland's membership of the European Economic Community, a new spirit of hope grew in young people and a distinct youth culture emerged with several youth organisations being established such as the state supported National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). Many of these, mostly voluntary, organisations were established as much to represent young people as to steer them from a path of disaffection that was growing with the public sphere.

Young people also set up their own groups, such as the Connolly Youth Movement (CYM) founded in 1963 (Hanley and Millar, 2009) to give a platform to their disaffection. Describing itself as an 'organisation firmly based on the working class and small farmers, projecting a programme for the "men of no property"', the CYM held its first national congress in Belfast in April 1970 (Connolly Youth Movement, 1970, p. 6). At this national congress, it declared its primary objectives for young people to be:

- Democratic structures within the schools and universities.
- Integration of all pupils at school, regardless of religion, class or sex.
- A spreading of Irish culture and games and the reviving of Gaelic as a viable national language.
- Full adult rights at 18 years, and an end to all discrimination against young people.

(ibid, p. 8)

The CYM was affiliated to, but independent of, the Communist Party of Ireland and opposed national wage agreements, viewing them as attempts to undermine the right of

trade unions to enter into free negotiations on behalf of their members (Connolly Youth Movement, 1972). In addition, there was a move towards student activism with the establishment of the Irish Students Association (ISA) – the forerunner to the Union of Students in Ireland (see chapter 4).

2.6 What is student activism?

Before we can begin to explore the characteristics of student activists, it is important to define what student activism is. Opinion is diverse on the definition of the activism concept and is often influenced by the era or time period the activism takes place in. While the function of activism is invariably to achieve a goal, it can take many different forms, depending on the political repertoires available to the activist. Developments in the public sphere, most notably technology and media, can greatly assist activists in disseminating and reinforcing their messages.

As discussed later in this chapter, it can also be difficult to ascertain what or how many social movements or protest groups that students are acting on behalf of when in engaging in protest. Rhoads (1997) believes the use of case studies is best employed in order to sufficiently explore incidents of student activism, as is the case with this work.

A broad definition for activism has been developed by Corning & Myers (2002, p 704):

Activist orientation is defined as an individual's developed, relatively stable, yet changeable orientation to engage in various collective, socio-political, problem-solving behaviours spanning a range from low-risk, passive and institutionalised acts to high-risk, active, and unconventional behaviours.

Kezar (2010), in summary of Altbach's 1989 work, defines student activism as:

Students' efforts to create change on or off campus related to a broad range of social, political and economic issues often using techniques outside institutional channels such as protests, demonstrations and rallies.

It is Kezar's definition that allows us to frame an analysis of the student movement as a progressive influencer in the public sphere, thus, it will be used in this work.

2.6.1 Characteristics of student activists

Altbach (1991) identified three 'rings' of activist participation in the student movement, as demonstrated in Figure 1. The inner ring represents the 'core leadership' of students who are often the most ideologically driven. 'Active followers' are those who are educated on the main issues and are willing to participate in demonstrations and various forms of protest. Finally, there are 'sympathisers' – those who agree with the broad goals of the movement, but who are vague on the detail of the objectives and issues and participate in demonstrations sporadically. External to this structure, is the group of 'uninvolved students', who are generally apathetic to the goals of the movement or disagree fundamentally with them.

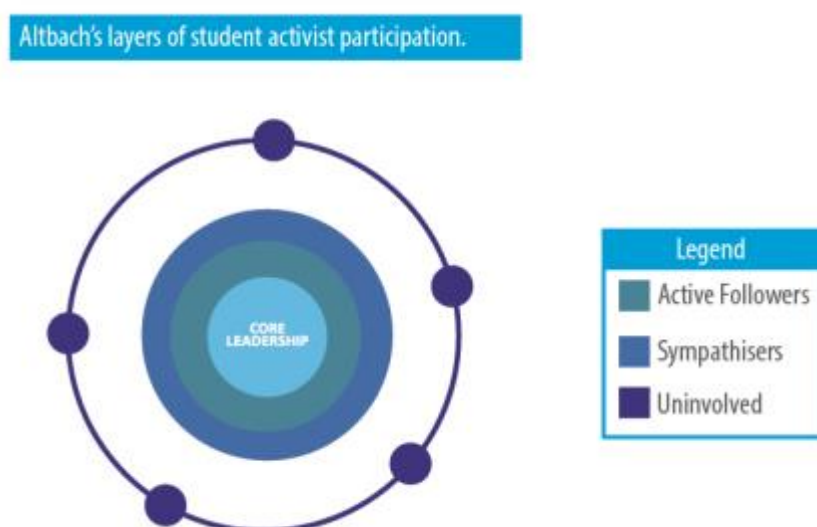


Figure 1 Altbach's layers of Student participation

This thesis concerns itself with the core leadership and active followers in the student movement, herein after referred to as 'student activists'. Flacks (1970a) found that student activists were generally raised in a family where parents held a strong commitment to intellectuality, political liberalism and sceptical attitudes towards traditional middle-class values and religious orientations. In addition to Flack's work, Klinberg et al. (1979) believe that an 'intergenerational solidarity' exists between the

student activists and their parents. These findings contradict the belief held by Feuer (1971) that an Oedipus complex was responsible for the development of a student movement, where 'existing institutions occupied by the older generation are substitutes for students' fathers, and student protestors seek unconsciously to revolt against their fathers by challenging, for example, the government or university administrations' (Gill & deFronzo, 2009, p. 205).

It should be noted that the literature is reflective of the significant gender bias within the higher education sector. Female participation in higher education was much lower than that of males. Class-bias is also an important factor at play here. Participation by working class young people in higher education was significantly low and in many communities non-existent. Those who attended university or college were predominately of middle to upper class backgrounds and these students invariably brought with them their own class and social outlooks to university with them.

Altbach (2007) identified four characteristics of the 'student condition' from the literature relevant to the time period being examined:

1. Students of Humanities and social sciences

It has been observed that the majority of student activists are from the social sciences. These programmes and content lends themselves to an element of critical appraisal of social issues and,

encourage collaboration and provide opportunities for students to test and develop their leadership skills; they also encourage historical examination of leadership styles and exploration of ideas beyond students' individual perspectives, as well as consideration of broader social issues

(Brannelly et al., 2011a, p. 1)

Within such programmes, the academic and intellectual atmosphere is more aligned to an activist temperament (Ladd & Lipset, 1975). Parkin (1967) suggests that students whose education primarily concerns the development of critical skills, the exploration of the social order, with the conceptualisation of ideas and values and with the

manipulation of people and systems of power are more likely to engage in radical politics.

2. Politically active

Student activists are politically active and show a tendency to be more concerned with ideological issues (Altbach, 2007). Pinner (1968) suggests that, while the reasons that compel moral resistance or the participation in demonstrations on ideological issues varies from country to country, some common variables exist in the cultural traditions and political antecedents of nations where student activism has been prominent on social issues. He also argues that the socialised role the student plays in society and the university comes second to the fight against an injustice, a finding later supported by Keniston (1971), who found that students were more predisposed to engaging in protests where moral principles were at stake than over student issues such as grants or tuition fees. Protests by students on non-student issues are based on a post-conventional morality, that is, a morality based upon the evaluation of rights, values or principles that are (or could be) universalisable. The interpretation of these principles is separable from the authorities or persons who hold them, and is, therefore, open for debate and generally acceptable to those who seek to live in a fair and just society (Haan et al., 1968). Membership of a political party or other such political organisation or community is usually prevalent amongst student activists and, in times of quiet within the student movement, activists will engage in external political activities (Altbach, 1991).

3. Tradition of higher education and social class

The parents of student activists usually have attended higher education and have an above-average income level and therefore many ideologically left activists come from elite backgrounds or upper-middle-class families (Lyons, 1965; Flacks, 1967; Paulus, 1969; Kahn, 1968; Altbach, 2007). However, Braungart (1971) has contested the level of influence the social class of the family has on the probability of a student becoming an activist. In his multivariate analysis, Braungart found that, while social class was a factor, it was overemphasised in previous studies and that family political and religious views, and the promotion of argumentation in the family setting were far more influential

factors than social class. Tygart & Holt (1971) conducted a study of 1,050 random students. Their findings matched Braungart's position, but only relative to those students who identified as liberal or left in political orientation. Their research did not include student activists that were right wing or conservative.

4. Parents positively influenced ideological outlook

There is relatively little conflict between the student and the family (Keniston, 1968, 1971). Student activists reflect the political ideologies of their parents (Braungart, 1971). Braungart also suggests that free religious debate at home may play a role. Such a family environment allows for democratic socialisation that ensures that a young person feels no apprehension in questioning religious interpretations of issues outside the home. During the international student protests of the late 1960s, some theorists postulated that a 'generational conflict' existed between the activists and their families (Feuer, 1969). However, a more detailed analysis by a number of academics has shown this not to be the case (Flacks, 1967; Keniston, 1968, 1971) and Solomon and Fishman (1964, pp. 54-73) even suggest that some civil rights demonstrators in the United States were *ipso facto* 'acting out' the values taught to them by their parents. According to Lipset (1968a) and Braungart (1971), the family serves as a 'mediating institution' between two socialisation processes – general socialisation of the young person and the political socialisation process within the student movement and other youth cultures. The 'family', as the mediating institution, is anchored by key identifiers such as social class, ethnic, religious and political affiliation.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) argue that students are temporarily relieved from their obligations in the linear patterns of social life by reason of their student status. This allows them to neither feel obligated nor be expected to adhere to society's interpretation of social issues and to take positions on issues other actors are avoiding:

Students certainly live and mean to live in a special time and space. Their studenthood momentarily frees them from family life and working life...Aside from the constraints imposed by the academic calendar, there are neither dates nor schedules. The student

situation enables the temporal frameworks of social life to be broken (1979, p. 29)

It should be noted that the research in this area has been almost exclusively conducted in the United States and there is still little corroborative evidence from an appropriate comparative perspective. There are also some merits to aspects of the generational approach, in that it allows us to frame broader questions around the engagement of the student movement in political and social discourse by provoking an analysis of the nature of the advanced industrial society and the processes of social change within it. In a 1974 revisiting of a multivariate analysis of student activism, Aron suggested that social background did not play as an important role in student activism as was initially believed. Social background, according to Aron,

for the most part influences the degree of political activism in students only indirectly, through influencing the development of political ideologies. There does not appear to be any single rule of correspondence between social backgrounds and political activism, as previous findings suggest (Aron, 1974, p. 412).

Aron does, however, acknowledge that between social background and political activism there is much, both social and psychological, that intervenes. Gergen & Ullman (1977) support this belief, arguing that socialisation can also play a role in the type of activism engaged in from minimal forms such as petitions, letter writing to more extreme forms that involve illegal occupations or violence.

The genesis of a movement such as the student movement is not merely a product of sharp political disagreement as Altbach and Laufer (1971) point out. It is 'caused by basic differences in perceptions of society, which result in the formation of antithetical and culturally distinct groups', such as the student movement. This is dealt later in the chapter.

There may also be a number of developmental environmental factors that influence identity development and whether an individual is more likely to become a student activist. Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development allows us to

account for a number of other factors that may contribute to the above conditions. Many students fine-tune their identity during the college years and such a framework which encompasses the micro, meso, exo, and macro-systems, in which a student develops in, may allow us to better understand the nature of why students become activists and are compelled to engage in the public sphere. There are a number of similarities between the ecological framework and the characteristics of student activists that will be explored later in the chapter.

2.7 Student activists, intellectualism and the role of the university

A population that is informed and enlightened is necessary for democracy to reach its fullest potential (Boyer, 1987; Dewey, 1916). Education serves many different purposes for the individual; it increases technical knowledge, resulting in greater employability and self-worth, but it also has a benefit to society by enriching the democratic process and discourse as democratic structures and the public sphere become ever more complex to engage with (Astin, 1977, 1991; Lambert et al., 2006). The university environment is one that is particularly favourable for the development of organisations and movements such as the student movement (Altbach, 2007). The diversification and increased access to higher education of those from different backgrounds and social classes also, Lambert et al. contend, exposes students to new ideas and lifestyles, creating a more open mind and demystification of these alternative lifestyles or beliefs.

With an increased appreciation for different lifestyles and beliefs comes sympathy for an injustice against a minority group that peers may inhabit. Farnworth et al. (1998, p. 40) observes that 'college is expected, not only to inform students but also to cause changes in their views'.

Campuses easily lend themselves to facilitating protest and demonstrations or political activities such as petitions or pamphleteering, as students are often captive audiences, who have relatively open minds and flexible schedules (McCarthy, Martin & McPhail, 2007).

During the time period being explored, almost all the higher education institutions in Ireland were public institutions. Internationally, Levy (1989) has observed that student movements are more likely to develop in public institutions, rather than private colleges or universities. Examination and assessment structures and timetables allow for significant periods of 'free time' where students can engage in extra-curricular activities. Such free time allows students with similar outlooks or ideologies to form clubs and societies, to engage in debate and the formation of ideas and opinions on issues such as social justice. The exposure to lecturers who engage and participate in these debates, the presentations and speeches of external guests to these societies provide students with engaging and provoking material beyond that reaped within the lecture hall. From these societies influential sub-movements within the greater social movement are born allowing the development of ideological praxis, with these students taking leadership roles in disseminating and defending such ideas within the university social life. Such societies are the main platforms for the movement intellectuals to refine their ideas and agendas, creating agency and eventually support to be employed within the organised student movement.

Exposure to new ideologies and texts, the encouragement of critical thinking and the abandoning of rote learning, promotes students to be more intellectual in their analysis of society and justice.

Universities in essence are 'age graded' cultures, where a majority of students are of a similar age and at the point where they seek a sense of community (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962). Lipset (1968b), in a review of literature on student politics also noted that students that commuted to campus are less likely to participate in activist politics than those who live away from home. Pinner (1969) further suggests that many students are particularly drawn to student organisations that have a sense of commitment, purpose and high intimacy – a replacement for the collectivity of their family or local community sporting and social groups. Whilst the literature of the era may make presumptions about the desires of students to seek a new community or fill a void due to the absence of family, it is equally possible that engagement with ideas, ideologies and social justice campaigning was prompted by exposure to the academic texts and

arguments through their lectures. The establishment of student-led clubs and societies and engaging with one another may instead of created organisations that had deep bonds of community, not as a replacement of family but as source of ideological and intellectual nourishment.

With modernisation and the growing importance of universities, and other third level institutions in the planning of industrial development and research, a fundamental shift took place in the role and position of the university in the public sphere. Aptheker (1972) contends, and Touraine (1971) broadly agrees, that the role of the university, in purely the training of intellectual and political leaders, became secondary to the role of moulding the social relations between worker, employer and the space and labour they operate or control. Both university academics and student apprentices (who have no investment in industrial capital) were now, in effect, alienated and, in effect, an integral part of the working class; 'The student movement of the 1960s represented, according to Aptheker, the first political manifestation of this changed relationship of intellectuals in the productive process' (Brym, 1980, p. 10). In contrast to others who believe the role of the intellectual within the student movement was becoming more significant, Touraine (1971, p. 221) contends that:

The students movement today is no longer [composed of] an intelligentsia but [of] a category of workers which is losing its former privileges and traditional models of formation and, at the same time, is conquering an increasingly massive place in the organisation of the economy and, consequently, the social conflicts.

In their 1991 work, Eyerman and Jamison see students as 'movement intellectuals', producing new knowledge that forms the foundation of their social movement. They define movement intellectuals as,

Those intellectuals who gain the status and self-perception of being “intellectuals” in the context of their participation in political movements rather than through the institutions of the established culture.

Eyerman & Jamison (1991, p. 15).

Within a social movement such intellectuals would produce their own media to explore ideas and concepts in the early stages of the development of the social movement to ‘theoretically reflect on their experience’ (Cresswell & Spandler, 2013, p. 13).

Given that the introduction of free secondary education in Ireland did not take place until 1967 its changes to the demographics of the student movement would not become apparent for another ten to fifteen years. Key university academics were used by government and industry to plan and advise. Chomsky (1969) refers to these intellectuals as ‘new mandarins’ – often used to theoretically and practically defuse dissent by ‘proving’ government and industry policy agendas. Irish organisations like Tuairim² – made up of university graduates and independent academics – countered this and Brym (1980) suggests that the growth of secular, leftward drift of university students and academic intellectuals was faster than those of ‘new mandarins’. Brym cites a number of studies that provide evidence for such an assertion as universities began to cater for ‘leftist-orientated’ sectors of the education system such as consumer law, labour law, poverty and social work. In turn, these courses produced intellectuals that were employed in new specialities within universities (as the fields developed), legal aid centres (advancing citizen-led litigation), trade unions, anti-poverty programmes and civil rights groups. All of these groups, according to Zald and McCarthy (1975), Alder (1976) and Heraud and Perrucci (in Halmos, 1973), had a reformist agenda and actively encouraged this agenda through the next generation. Studies collated by Ladd, Lipset and Seymour (1971), of the political attitudes of students from the 1920s to the 1970s, indicate that ‘each subsequent college generation is, on the whole, ‘further to the “left”

² Tuairim (the Irish word for “opinion”) was an intellectual movement that challenged traditional orthodoxy and put forward new ideas and fresh solutions. From the late 1950s, Tuairim’s members, who included the late Garret Fitzgerald, future Supreme Court Judge Donal Barrington, Miriam Hederman O’Brien, Jim Doolan and David Thornley, sought to influence debate and public policy in an attempt to re-invent the country.

than its predecessors, and to the “right” of its successors’ (in Brym, 1980, p.11). These studies were examination of political leanings of US students.

The political and social position of the university also affects the development of student politics and students movements on campus (Lipset, 1969). Altbach (1969) identified two different roles academic institutions play – that of a ‘centre of innovation’ in which scholars are expected to challenge norms and social truths, and ‘schools’ (with faculties of teachers) which play an important role in the socialisation and agency process of students. A university ethos that stresses intellectual values and ideals will, by definition, be one that calls into question established social and political norms (Altbach, 2007). Parkin (1970, p.151) also suggests that the presentation of knowledge in universities is deliberately ‘shrouded in doubts and uncertainties, and the very notion of truth and objectivity are themselves open to question. Clearly, adolescents exposed to this type of intellectual regime could not be said to be undergoing straightforward indoctrination into political and social conformity’. He continues to suggest that ideals of western democracy, such as equality, freedom and democracy, become strongly internalised by the students due to the constant exposure to them in their classes. Any breach of these ideals may render students highly suggestible to political appeals for solidarity.

Within this, we can apply Merton’s two categorisations of the social roles played by academic staff – ‘cosmopolitans’ and ‘locals’, both of which can exert considerable influence, be it intentionally or not, on the development of student activism on a campus (Merton, 1957). He defines ‘cosmopolitans’ as those who look externally for inspiration and for improvement and ‘locals’ as those who are concerned with events and issues within the community that one resides in. Such academics will expose their students to ideologies and new forms of social justice and encourage both debate in the lecture hall and in wider society. Exposure to such ideas will often spawn the growth of movement intellectuals within the student movement. Academic intellectuals would be considered ‘cosmopolitans’. Those lecturers who are unhappy with their society and wish to affect change can create ‘apprentice intellectuals’, from their students, who, unrestricted by worldly concerns such as career security or family commitments, may become rebellious and question authority. Students may perceive this dissent to be

legitimised by the teaching and research of the academics (Altbach, 2007). Such academics usually lie left of broader society in relation to their attitudes towards politics and culture (Basu, 1981). However, Lipset (1969) also notes that students are also more likely to rebel where the faculty are incompetent in their teaching and are authoritarian in their management.

Significant empirical evidence also suggests that the sympathising effects of higher education last beyond the completion of a student's studies. Hyman and Wright (1979) contend that higher education positively impacted the attitudes and values of the individual and increased tolerance for people, ideas and customs that were different (Nunn et al., 1978). Astin (1977) and Selke (1980) were able to observe that students undergo changes in their attitudes and values as they progress through their undergraduate studies. Spaeth & Greeley (1970) maintain that these changes continue after graduation.

2.8 Marginal elites

In an attempt to construct a political theory behind the manifestation of student activism in the 1960s, Pinner (1971) examined the various correlations between traditional marginal elites in society and the student movement. Shimbori (1969) observed that there are five traditional questions that student movements concern themselves with,

1. the unity or independence of their country,
2. equality and inequality within the nation and among nations,
3. the legitimacy of authority,
4. the intramural and intermural issues surrounding resources and,
5. the curriculum in their respective higher education institutions.

Pinner suggests that the intramural and intermural issues often only become issues for the student movement when they are a tipping point for action in relation to a more latent 'malaise' with the macro-issues such as legitimacy of the state, equality, justice or the sovereignty of the nation.

Pinner's work to formulate a political theory to explain the rise of student activism led him to compare student movements to traditional marginal elites such as the military or clergy. He suggests that marginal elites tend to be motivated by the dual impulses of social distinctiveness and populism. Students use a social distinctiveness to identify themselves as different. Outward projections of this include dressing in distinct clothing indicative of a youth sub-culture, listening to music that is seen as rebellious, and the holding of ad-hoc events such as concerts which had little or no adult supervision. There is some merit to Pinner's observation that students may occupy a quazi-marginal elite status. Students share a number of similar characteristics, even from purely a semiotic and aesthetic sense and the desire to develop a distinctive youth culture gives merit to accidental correlations, even on a purely psychological level.

To many student activists, being a student is an important part of their identity and, as such, they are perceived to only have allegiance to their sub-community. Yet, students will concern themselves with larger more important social and political issues, 'such as the nation, the church, or race' (Pinner, 1971, p. 132). Students are producers of social intelligence, in the broadest meaning of the word, and have injected intellectual discourse into debates surrounding social justice.

Pinner also suggests that the role of students, as a marginal elite, as a champion of disadvantaged and marginal groups in the public sphere, and as a group concerned with their own future roles in society, can be in conflict. Activists are compelled to protect their distinctiveness and privilege on the one hand, but are also compelled to document their concern for the community or polity as a whole. As a consequence of this student activist, activity is often higher when their own position or the integrity of society appears to be threatened. Pinner also suggests that student activists see conditions that threatened their own privilege (the increase of tuition fees for example), or the control

of a minority group by an external power as a weakness of the ruling classes, which must be challenged or highlighted through protest.

2.8.1 Some characteristics of students as marginal elites

While challenging the state and public on matters of social justice, students are in effect able to do so because of the state's creation of the university; their institutions are supported by the state and taxpayers (students are tax payers too; as they contribute significantly to the local economy and often have part-time jobs contributing to the exchequer). Like more traditional marginal elites, students are, in an intellectual and political engagement sense, the producers of collective goods, which takes place between the political ruling classes and those who are key actors in the public sphere.

Students obtain their 'elite' status through the process of recruitment and formal admission. During the time period under consideration in this thesis, both second level and third level education was not free at the point of entry and, as such, only the predominately upper middle class were able to afford and qualify for entry into higher education. Students are also subject to an additional legal code, that is university regulations and by-laws and they are physically segregated from the public in university campuses, which, to the ordinary member of the public in general, are locations that they would never envisage themselves entering or participating in.

Pinner highlights the significant differences between traditional forms of marginal elites and students but the broader similarities give credence to further study. In modern times, clergy and members of the military are integrated into the general population. While engaged in their profession, the clergy, military or other marginal elites are segregated into locations that ordinary citizens are not permitted to attend and participate, such as monasteries or military barracks. According to Pinner, their isolation in this manner may result in the development of a narrow perception or institutionalised ideation of concepts such as 'the nation' and 'the people'. Students, like other marginal elites, can create links between ideological inferences between the spirit of a people and the spirit of the nation.

Marginal elites have a culture of collective action or collective identity and promote an ideology of unity. The student trade union movement, (the organised, often hierarchical democratic structures present in most colleges and universities that claim the ability to speak on behalf of its membership) is based on solidarity with other students at home and abroad and a greater solidarity with minority groups.

As students are often poorly organised, they have a tendency to seek alliances with other major power groups, such as the trade union movement or cosmopolitan academics. In addition, marginal elites have a tendency to reject party political systems or political party alliances. Where student activists are aligned to or are members of certain political parties, they are often marginalised within the party and in opposition to the leadership.

When students become the catalyst of a movement, they invariably require alliances with stronger political or social actors. When these alliances are formed, it often provokes a powerful and swift response from the political establishment (DeGroot, 1998).

2.9 The 'student movement' as an actor in the public sphere

The student movement fulfils a number of the criteria to be identified as a social movement. Student protests tend to be generally short lived and the movement is reacts to brief moments in time. However, on some issues, such as those that will be dealt with in later chapters as case studies, students can become major agents of social change. There are numerous structural and psychological reasons for this. Students operate in an environment that affords a good deal of free time. This allows students to develop societies, as previously discussed and engage one another intellectually. Political societies, debating societies, LGBT groups, women's liberation groups, anti-apartheid and education funding groups are all founded when students share ideas, discuss what they learn through academic texts and lectures and develop both agency and a desire to seek change in society, all resulting in the cultivation of student activism.

The student population is also a transient one. The student experience normally lasts three years and as this can lead to a lack of continuity of action within a movement within an institution. However, Ireland, like the United Kingdom, has enjoyed major stability in student governmental institutions, especially nationally. This has allowed campaigns to flourish as individual student leaders and activists leave the movement.

The student movement often makes alliances with more powerful groups in order to quicken the pace of the desired reform. Martinelli and Cavalli point out that 'the temporary nature of the student status ... makes for high instability of movements based exclusively on students' (1972, p.32). This often requires students to align themselves with other social actors to ensure the survival of a campaign or a movement that students begin.

There is a natural affinity between the trade union movement and students' union organisations. Pinner (1968) points out that students' union organisations, while modelled on these professional or occupational trade unions, cannot hold the same significance for their active members as trade unions do, as 'the worker normally expects to spend his life in a particular occupation or trade, and [such] unions aims to make that life as rewarding as possible'. Pinner continues by highlighting that this presents students with a dichotomy, should a student body be there to assist in the socialisation process, to create graduates who are conventional citizens or should it be committed to a restructuring of society and the creation of new roles and opportunities for its members. Pinner categorises the two organisational types as 'socialising' organisations that educate their members, so they will be prepared for their future role or 'transgressive' ones that aim for social and political change.

Some 'socialising' student organisations existed in Ireland during the time period under consideration, such as accounting societies and law societies (termed as traditional socialising organisations by Pinner), but the funding model of these societies was, in this period, controlled by the students' union or an aspect thereof which was predominately

a 'transgressive' organisation. Pinner also points out that such groups tend to occur when two conditions are satisfied:

1. When members of a movement perceive the future – their own or that of another group – as particularly bleak (such as mental health issues surrounding the decriminalisation of homosexuality) or ironically quite promising (such as the expectation of early twentieth century student leaders who believed they were to inherit a Home Rule government that they would lead),
2. When there is the expectation of an expanding social universe, such as the end of a war, in the case of German and French students.

It may be argued that Ireland's entry into the European Economic Community and the benefits this brought to Irish young people also had an impact. The concern for future, status-related roles that students will occupy can be a powerful factor to advance social change (Pinner, 1964).

As noted in chapter 3, such 'socialising' societies did, however, engage in topics of a transgressive nature such as debates on political ideology. In his analysis of Students for Democratic Action (SDA) in UCD, Petit (1969) outlined the manifesto of the SDA, highlighting the desire that the university and students play a more engaging role in wider society. This 'transgressive' group saw the university as a fluid organisation that should accurately reflect the social make-up of society and should advocate for the end of the elitist system of education. Interestingly the Union Nationale des Étudiants de France (UNEF) had a similar desire for the students of France, but went one step further in declaring a student as 'a young intellectual worker' in the Charter of Grenoble in 1946.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Irish students began to organise in the first decade of the twentieth century and by 1959 established the Union of Students in Ireland, which still exists today and enjoys the recognition of the state, educational institutions and the general public as the *de facto* student representative organisation. As Lipset (1968) points out, conflict or a lack of homogeneity – there were significant internal political disputes all around ideology - existed in other national student movements that

prevented a sense of community amongst the student population. Religious divisions, regional, linguistic, caste, racial and tribal, and these differences often restricted the ability of the national student movements to grow or engage in any meaningful societal objectives. This meant that students were not key players in the modernity project in countries such as Bangladesh and Malaysia.

The Irish nation is relatively young and thanks to a series of ideally timed events – most notably the establishment of the National University of Ireland, the Gaelic cultural revival and the 1916 Rising – students moved from their intellectual role in the community to active participants. Student movements enjoy a longstanding romance with the idea of nationalism and, while Irish student leaders were not the main leaders of the anti-colonial nationalist movement, they were active and influential. Thanks to the actions of those early student leaders, students as a collective group obtained a legitimate status within the community that gave them the confidence to continue to organise on non-student issues. In countries where the national and regional student organisation had a strong historic link with nationalism, those organisations, or a more developed version, still exist and engage in both social and education issues (Altbach, 1970).

Despite the historic legacy of stable organisation within the Irish student movement, a transitory element still exists and the impatient reactions of activists – most often associated with French or American students – are also to be found through the history of the Irish student movement – most notably in the post-1960s period when, amid a rapidly changing society, the public sphere was increasingly opened up to university intellectuals and students.

2.10 Students and the public sphere

Giddens (2008) states that, when societies are geared towards custom and tradition, people often follow the established methods of doing things in an unreflective manner. This is known as social reflexivity. With the removal of the recognition of the special

position of the Catholic Church in the Irish constitution in 1972, such reflexivity was able to take place in the Irish public sphere.

When society is modernised, traditional forms of trust in government dissolve. Movements such as the student movement can play an important role in the democratic process as agents that challenge the status quo or understanding of a given issue. For example, students challenged the accepted belief that homosexuality was a deviancy that needed to be criminalised. Students exercised agency, consciously informing themselves of the issues surrounding sexuality and the law, formulated an intellectual argument for the decriminalisation of homosexuality, engaged their peers and the public in debate and actively pursued a campaign in the public sphere by means of collaboration with homosexual liberation groups and others to affect public policy change. In time, through these campaigns the public's position and understanding of sexuality became less divergent from that of the students.

The public sphere 'is an arena of public debate in which issues of general concern can be discussed and opinions formed' (Giddens, 2008, p. 601). These opinions will often form the opinion of the citizenry in an area. However, the public sphere and the government sphere are not the same, as both Habermas and Sandhu point out. The Habermas model of the public sphere takes into account the fact that in pluralistic societies the moral, legal and functional spheres are distinct and that:

the diversity of values, forms of life and attitudes that compose them is an established fact of modern societies. Indeed, this diversity is seen as valuable in itself...The public sphere plays an important role in pluralistic societies as an arena for expressing and constituting diversity

(Glimmer, 2001, p. 24).

Sandhu (2007) points out that access to the public sphere can be restricted and not open to all strata of society. For those who are deemed to lack the necessary qualifications and the competence of language, the public sphere is often a place of exclusion.

Students during the time period under consideration enjoyed a marginal elite status thanks to family social status or the perceived elitism of the student class in society, and were acceptable actors within the public sphere. Through socialisation, a process of 'learning the language, values, rules and knowledge of the culture into which we are born' (McDonald, 2009, p.12), students learn the rules of behaviour that are common in the society they operate in which makes them, arguably, effective advocates in the public sphere.

Sandhu also points out that the championing of diversity and change within the public sphere could be restricted, as those who lack economic independence are ignored. Given the ideological drive of many student activists, it can be argued that students are an appropriate or likely actor to progress social change within the public sphere – they occupy the space of organic intellectuals who engage in activities that are socio-political, related primarily to articulation of the economic, social, and political dilemmas and interests of a particular class (Entwistle, 1979, p.72) and, as previously stated, fall into the category of working-class organic intellectuals – given the role that the university and those identified with same occupy in the modern public sphere – engaging in discourse surrounding the defence of rights and equality. Brannelly et al. (2011b, p. vi) argue that universities are highly influential 'in the development of civil society, social cohesion and democratic reforms' and that the 'norms, values and attitudes fostered within higher education' influence students, which can impact and motivates student activists.

Gill & DeFronzo (2009) note that students are often afforded much more freedom of expression than is normally given to other groups and highlights a number of cases cited by Lipset (1967) and others as examples; revolutionary groups in tsarist Russia, and the Córdoba movement spearheaded by Argentinian students. Offe (1985) believed that the special position students' hold, peripheral in relation to the labour market, gives them a strong propensity to challenge the boundaries of the political system and therefore partake in the public sphere.

Irish students, as a collective group, have been cited in various newspapers and pamphlets as engaging in the public sphere and contributing to discourse in several key areas from the late nineteenth century onwards. Their social status embedded the concept of students as legitimate actors and, while this status has since been diluted, students and their collective opinions and actions have always been given consideration within the public sphere. The case studies examined later will reference newspaper articles and radio and television reports that give weight to this.

It should be noted that the case studies are of students advocating for sections of society – homosexual men and women and more general women's rights issues surrounding reproductive rights - where these communities had their own highly organised and publically visible campaigns, advocates and collective actors. Both Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) demonstrate in their examination of diversity within the public sphere that the sphere is usually devoid of the very groups that are being advocated on behalf of. It is the role that students played in supporting and participating in these groups that is of merit within the public sphere.

2.11 The student movement – a social movement?

While early theorists observing the student movement were comfortable categorising the movement as a new social movement, more recently, questions have been raised as to the validity of such a categorisation. Virtually all theorists agree that the student movement is most certainly an agent of social change, the extent of which differs from country to country and from issue to issue.

The importance of new social movements in Ireland cannot be underestimated. From women's rights to gay rights, and the surge in the Irish language movement, these groups have been successful in countering hegemonic control and influencing change. The power of these movements is succinctly summarised by Diani (in Connolly & Hourigan, 2006, p. vii):

At least until the recent dramatic economic transformations, factors such as the dominant presence of the Catholic church, the

persistence of rural society, the ailing economy, and the weakness of the new middle class should all have conjured to make new politics and new social movements a largely inconspicuous phenomenon. And yet ... [various research] point[s] to a significant role of new social movements in Irish society.

Weber argued that the development of charismatic movements would 'in a revolutionary and sovereign manner ... [transform] all values and [break] all traditional and rational norms' (Weber, 1968, p. 1115). Weber believed that such movements would evolve outside more traditional organisations and groups and were largely unstable and emotional.

To date, there is no universal agreement of what constitutes a social movement. Theories of social movements draw from a number of disciplines and it is impossible to build a model to accurately show how a social movement will form. Dahlerup (1986, p. 2) defines a social movement as:

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 also identified some characteristics of social movements that include:

- involvement in conflictual (*sic*) relations with clearly defined opponents;
- linked by dense informal networks;
- share a distinct collective identity.

Modern social movements, known as New Social Movements (always referred to as social movements in this work) are often considered the 'archetypical form of postmodern politics – grass roots, protest from below, solidarity, collective identity, affective processes – all in the struggle against the established order outside the 'normal' channels' (Scott, 1990; Tarrow, 1989 in Handler, 1992, p. 719).

Most social movements also share common threads in their objectives; 'a demand for more political participation, 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' (Connolly & Hourigan, 2006, p. 5) while appealing to 'value- and issue-based cleavages instead of group-based or interest group issues' (Handler, 1992, p. 719).

These modern social movements represent democratic niches in a society where participants can contribute to the democratic process and create new identities for themselves (Klandermans, 1989). The new social movement phenomenon is driven, not by the classical power struggles between the controllers of the means of production and the working class, but rather by agents within the constantly shifting boundaries between what we identify as public, private, and social spheres (Connolly & Hourigan, 2006).

An analysis of the various scholarly works to date by Gill & DeFronzo (2009) in relation to social movements highlights the failure to recognise the difference between the public and government sphere, as previously discussed. McAdam (1982, p. 37) offers a Marxist approach to social movements by defining them as 'rational attempts by excluded groups to mobilise sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through non-institutionalised means'. This definition limits social movement activity to those 'excluded groups', however, students, through their family status, were often anything but excluded from the public sphere.

Diani (cited in Rochon, 1998, p. 32) sees social movements as 'networks of individuals and groups, based on shared collective identities, engaged in political or social conflicts'. Diani asserts that social movements should be analysed as networks and not simply as organisations, recognising the diversity of the groups involved in such movements from those that may be highly organised to those that are grassroots led. Networks allow us to explore the highly dynamic interpersonal relationships that occur in new social movements and recognise the importance that these relationships play. This broader definition does not restrict the membership of the social movement but presupposes

that culture is the only element of society that social movements may find conflict with, and implies that social movements only engage with state policies rather than the very nature of representative democracy, or lack thereof. Crucially Diani (1992) also sees the collective identity of the new social movement as not one as an oppositional consciousness, as Kladermans does, but rather one of shared ideas, ideologies and beliefs, with a strong sense of solidarity.

Some of the literature highlights either the non-class or inter-class character of new social movements. Habermas strongly influences these theories, based around the concept of the 'civil society' and new social movements where, as Offe (1985, p. 833) argues, the results of the actions of new social movements 'is the politics of a class but not on behalf of a class...[whose demands are]...highly class-specific, dispersed and either universalistic in nature or highly concentrated in particular groups'.

Social movements that seek the development of civil society oppose the inner-colonisation of the life-world (Crossley, 2002), that is the 'storehouse of unquestioned cultural givens' (Habermas, 1990) that we individually and collectively draw from. Such social movements attempt to reshape the public sphere so that it is no longer dependent on control and intervention by just the state (Offe, 1985).

A broad definition is offered by Goodwin and Jasper (2003, p. 3) who define it as '... a collective, organised, sustained and non-institutional challenge to authorities, powerholders, or cultural beliefs and practices'.

Diani (1992, p. 112) also touches on the concept of collective identity in his analyses and uses it as a defining factor for new social movements:

Collective identity is the major criterion for differentiating a social movement from other actors who share at least part of the movement's belief system...Social identity consists of two components, self-definition and external definition (Melucci, 1982). In order to be considered part of a given movement, actors need to be perceived as such by other members, as well as by external actors.

Diani (2008, p. 3) later broadens this definition to highlight that social movements can be cross-pollinated by other social movements:

Social movements ... are best conceived ... as the regular if informal patterns of relations between multiple actors, through which resources and symbols are circulated, solidarities and identities are reinforced, and different protest actions and organisations come to be perceived as part of the same collective project.

After their analysis of the area of new social movements, Gill & DeFronzo (2009, p. 208) offer a very broad definition of the student movement:

A relatively organised effort on the part of a large number of students to either bring about or prevent change in any one of the following: policies, institutional personnel social structure (institutions), or cultural aspects of society involving either institutionalised or non-institutionalised collective actions or both simultaneously.

They identify two prior contextual conditions that may provoke student collective action: *nature* and *source*. The nature of the condition can be either structural; democratic system, economic system, and the non-structural; an issue of government policy, the social environment etc. Alternatively, the condition precipitating action may be cultural, where a government policy or an existing social institution,

might result in consequences which conflict widely shared cultural norms or values...[alternatively the antecedent of this may be] ... a culturally rooted systematic pattern of discrimination against a group...on the basis of factors such as race, gender, nationality, religion, or some other physical or cultural characteristic (2009, p. 209).

The antecedent cultural condition is most likely the influencing factor for the Irish student movement in its various campaigns on sexual morality in Ireland. The source in this case is both an internal and external one, namely, the Catholic Church.

As Rootes (1980, p. 473) suggests, 'student movements are creatures of the societies in which they occur and as such they evince, in variable measure, all the excellences and deformities of their circumstances'. The Catholic Church, which sought to control every moment of free time of young people, is both an Irish institution and a foreign influence on national issues.

2.12 A temporal duality of influence in the public sphere

When referring to the student movement as a social movement, it should be noted that its impact in the present could often be outweighed by its future, more profound effect on the public sphere and as such makes the student movement a particularly interesting social movement.

There is a strong correlation between educational attainment and civic engagement. Such individuals will hold more diverse perspectives on issues, are more aware of public discourse, hold a greater level of respect and understanding for others, be critical and analytical thinkers, and be more likely to engage in positive social behaviours such as voting and volunteering. The works of Campbell (2009), Kirlin (2002), Kuh (1995) and White (1997), as cited in Brannelly et al. (2011) substantiate such a claim.

Participation in the student movement has an impact on the individual, which creates a respect for the democratic processes, the responsibilities of citizenship and leadership, and further motivates equips graduates to take on a strong active-citizen role in later life (Astin, 1975; Hamrick, 1998; Julius & Gumpert, 2003; Rhoads, 1998).

Higher education attainment also serves to position individuals, with particular ideological motivations, to seek and obtain influential leadership positions, relative to their social networks (Campbell, 2009). This temporal duality of influence has been noted by Kirlin (2002) and Brannelly et al. (2011a). These academics contend that students movements play a historically critical role 'bringing about institutional, economic and political reforms ... [and that] ... those who are actively engaged in civil

activity during adolescence are more likely to remain engaged during adulthood' (Brannelly et al., 2011a, p. 2).

Stolle and Hooghe's (2004) research, which analyses the Youth-Parent Socialisation Panel Study 1965-1982, supports Brannelly and Kirlin's belief that student activism can impact the understanding of social capital in adult life. Social capital refers to 'the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other' (Putnam, 2000). It is upon this that Gill and Defronzo (2009) begin to build their typologies of student movements.

2.13 Towards a typology of the Irish Student Movement

As previously stated, the Irish student movement has enjoyed a relatively high level of organisation, compared to its international counterparts. USI provides a federalised system of student governance to the state, though each constituent students' union is independent from the national body. This independence has allowed constituent students' unions to follow their own agenda or participate in the national students' union as they see fit.

Whether or not a collective identity on a political or ideological level exists between students is highly debatable. However, it is not beyond the realm of possibility to suggest that one existed amongst student activists on key campaigns such as gay rights and reproductive rights.

Social theorists take the view that social movements are 'non-institutionalised social change efforts' (Morris & Herring, 1984, p. 5). Turner & Killian (1972, p. 246, as cited in Morris & Herring, 1984, p. 5) define a social movement as:

collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part. As a collectivity a movement is a group with indefinite and shifting membership and with leadership whose position is determined more by the informal response of the members than by formal procedures for legitimising authority.

How groups form a collective identity within a social movement has received much scholarly interest and the construction of social identity 'is critical to a range of social movements [as] actors 'produce' collective action because they are able to define themselves and their relationships with the environment' (Scully & Creed, 2005, p. 312). Collective identity can be both an individual subscription or group collective ethos. Like Émile Durkheim's conscience collective, collective identity 'is the repository of movement values and norms that define movement behaviour from some epistemological point beyond the individual participant' (Laraña et al., 1994 p. 16). The criteria for social facts in conscience collectives would also indicate that actors in social movement organisations, subscribing to a certain collective identity, would 'obey' the normative proscriptions of such an identity.

Reicher's research into crowd behaviour would seem to support this hypothesis, suggesting that, the more readily an individual identifies with a group, the more likely their behaviour will be constrained by the group (Reicher, 1987).

The term collective identity refers to 'the outcome of work conducted by movement actors to produce shared understandings on the issues at stake, the terms under which different actors...work together and the actions required to effect change' (Chesters & Welsh, 2011 p. 50).

Key to the construction of collective identity, is the ability of the individuals within the social movement to define the field of action that they engage in, as well as their collective interest, goals and the means in achieving these (*ibid*). It should also be noted that the construction of a collective identity might, in fact, be the goal of a social movement, but Melucci contested this notion. Cohen (1985) suggests that the attempt to create a collective identity is most prevalent in social movement organisations engaged in identity politics, such as early deaf groups and LGB groups. 'Identity politics' is a term used to describe 'the actions of social actors for who the distinction between political engagement and identity has been attenuated to the extent that the prioritised identity stakes become the political' (Chesters & Welsh, 2011 p. 101). Identity politics

also played an important role in the early international student movement (Chesters & Welsh, 2011).

The prevalence of identity politics in social movement organisations can sometimes attract significant criticism, as it encourages essentialism, that is, the view that categories of people, such as women and men, or heterosexuals and homosexuals, or members of ethnic groups, have intrinsically different and characteristic natures or dispositions (Appiah, 1992; Butler, 1990). Melucci (1996) argues that collective identity and identity politics should be separated for analytical purposes. Identity politics, he believes, is essentially a form of political practice within a social movement rather than the movement's sole goal.

Schlesinger also argues that any collective identity that emerges or forms due to the collective action of a social movement is fluid and can redefine itself during the process of mobilisation. Schlesinger viewed collective identity as 'a continuous process of recomposition, rather than a given' (Schlesinger, 1987, p. 237). Melucci also agreed with this hypothesis, believing that a process of 'identisation' (Melucci, 1996, p. 77) occurs where 'identity is neither static nor fixed, but remains continuously in motion, requiring active identity-work even where it crystallises into semi-permanent institutional forms' (Chesters & Welsh, 2011, p. 50). Melucci stresses in his identisation process that solidarity is paramount within social movement organisations. The actors within the social movement organisations are able to recognise that their identity must evolve and adapt to the 'field of opportunities and constraints in which they are situated' (*ibid*).

Confrontation and the recognition of adversaries also play a key role in collective identity formation, but this alone is not sufficient to sustain a social movement organisation. Actors within a social movement are required to engage in a high degree of reflexive work in order to ensure that collective identity remains fresh and that a motivational factor is behind the success of any social movement organisation. Chesters & Welsh (2011, p. 51) identify a tripartite process in which actors explore:

- themselves – including their own ability and capacity to act, what common ground do they share with other actors in the social movement organisation and what structure of opportunity can they facilitate for action; this process of solidarity as discussed earlier;
- their adversaries – not always easy to identify, as they may be constantly shifting as new alliances are built and common ground platforms shared. In different points of action, adversaries will also change as the goals of the organisation shift. Adversaries may include the state, media, technological elites or other social movement organisations;
- the system of structure and power – recognising the system of power and a recognition of how power can ‘traverse, produce and construct collective action’ is key (ibid).

While actors engage in what is perceived as organised actions, Tilly (1984, p. 310) argues that ‘seen from the bottom up, they are usually much more fragmented and heterogeneous: shifting factions, temporary alliances, diverse interests, a continuous flux of members and hangers on’ may weaken the social movement organisation in the long term. This Weberian concept of who is in and out of a social movement organisation means that it can be difficult to categorise any one social class as a member of particular ideology or a social movement, but, nonetheless, adversaries perceive these groups as organised and, therefore, as posing a threat to the status quo. Adversaries of social movements must be cognisant, however, not to treat any social movement organisations as a ‘unitary empirical datum’ (Melucci, 1994) or ‘single actor’ (Tilly, 1986).

Without the process of ‘activating’, as identified by McAdam et al. (1988), the collective identity of a social movement organisation would become stagnant and quickly irrelevant to the actors within it. It is, therefore, imperative for such an organisation to reform ‘its ideological profile in order to encompass the aspirations of its potential supporters’ (Foweraker, 1995, p. 12).

In this collective identity formation, it is necessary for these organisations to frame their 'story' in such a way so as to allow their supporters to play a part in their own story. The stories then advance through struggle rather than any contemplative or academic activity (ibid). It is this process that led Laclau and Mouffe (1985) to conclude that social movements construct the interests that they represent. Foweraker argues that this means 'no social struggle is more 'real' or 'central' than any other, and no appeal to structural or 'objective' interests can predict the outcome of such struggles' (Foweraker, 1995, p. 13).

Taking into consideration all these variables, Gill & DeFronzo (2009) have attempted to construct a typographical model of the student movement. They have identified four key types of student movements. Previous scholars argued that developing a typology for the student movement was difficult, as not all students are activists and, ergo, not all student movements are activist based (Block et al., 1969; Smith et al., 1970; Klineberg et al., 1979).

The four models are identified by measuring the degree of structural and cultural radicalism of the activities of a student movement. Social radicalism refers to the goal of replacing existing political systems with a new one. Cultural radicalism refers to the goal of changing the meaning or dominant culture by the reformation of a group's identity in the public sphere. Both of these are tempered with moderate approaches; where structural moderateness refers to the aim of changing government or policy and cultural moderateness refers to the development of a new emphasis or interpretation of values of the dominant culture.

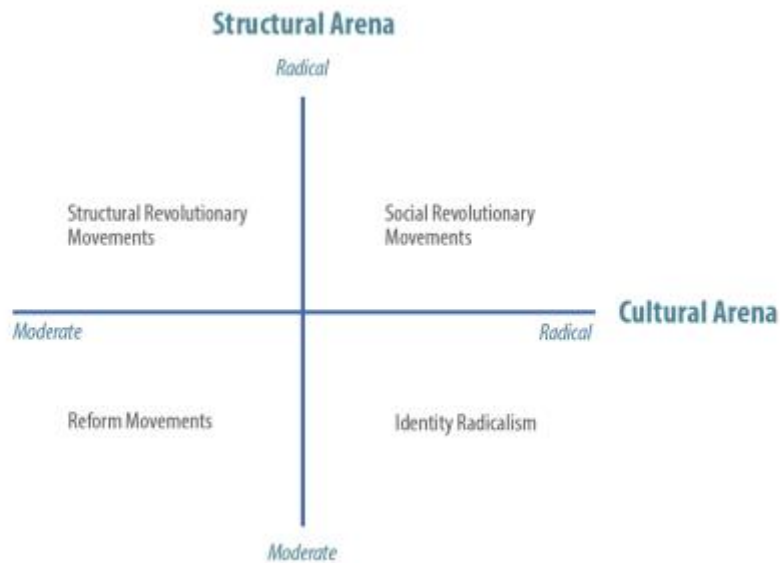


Figure 2: Structural Arena

Gill & DeFronzo (2009, pp. 211-213) identify four key types of student movement. These are:

Structural Revolutionary Movements

This type of student movement is one that aims to replace both major social institutions and also much of the culture of the society.

Social Revolutionary Movements

These movements focus on primarily changing one or more major social institutions such as the political system or economic system, rather than just changing institutional policies or replacing leaders.

Reform Movements

Where participants are orientated toward influencing institutional policies or replacing personnel and/or advocating new emphases on or interpretations of existing cultural values, but not radically changing institutions or aspects of culture.

Identity Radicalism

These type of student movement focus primarily on reimagining given identities, ways of thinking, values and discursive practices, which are regarded by the members of the movement as the means and products of group subordination.

The concluding chapter draws on the case studies and applies the various elements of this chapter to determine the type of new social movement the student movement was, if any. It will also apply the model and typographical profiles constructed by Gill & DeFronzo to the Irish student movement.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter traces the evolution of the Irish higher education sector from one of an elite system to that of a mass education system, preparing a broader group of students for a range of technical and economic elite roles. The disparity in attendance by females in the sector is reflected both in the theoretical approach at the time – for instance the belief that an Oedipus complex would explain the genesis of a student movement (Klinberg et al., 1979). There is a significant gap in the literature reflecting the participation of women in the student movement. Given the role of the Irish student movement in areas of women's liberation, as will be discussed later in this work, no doubt an injustice to both female participants and to our greater understanding of how women engage with a social movement such as the student movement has occurred.

A class-based bias within the literature would also seem to exist. Whilst Braungart may argue that class influence was low it should be highlighted that within higher education the attendance rate of those from working class or lower backgrounds was significantly lower and such a deficit in class representation would invariably have an impact on the quality of discourse by students, where it would be devoid of real-world examples of the impact of various issues on the lower classes. Whilst it is correct to state that the middle-classes and above were able to attend higher education there is no reflection on the impact of the lack of class-diversity had on the movement, or those from working-class backgrounds who managed to attend higher education.

This work employs a triangulated approach within the literature review, drawing on both sociological and psychological literature to explore the evolution of the Irish student movement and to examine what drives an individual to participate. There are interesting similarities between the characteristics of student activists as identified by Altbach and Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development. It identifies and defines what the characteristics of student activists are and engages both disciplines in an attempt to identify the evolution roadmap of the student activist.

It explores the area of intellectualism within the movement and the role it plays in both the development of the activist and the wider movement. The case studies presented later in this work will show evidence of the growth of student activists and leaders as movement intellectuals and how they used their various means of communication to develop their praxis and agency to seek social change. The case studies will also show what actions students took in the wider public sphere as a social movement and later evidence will explore the concept of a temporal duality of influence.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research objective

The objective of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the Irish student movement through the lens of existing international research and to address the neglect in the existing Irish literature of the student movement's contribution to social change. In particular, it seeks to determine the characteristics of the student movement as a social movement and to analyse the role the student movement played in the liberalisation of social policy in three major areas in the latter half of twentieth century Ireland.

The first case study examines the role the student movement played in the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland. It provides an analysis of the activities of USI and its various member students' unions while campaigning for the decriminalisation of homosexual acts. It explores the interconnectivity and relationships between the various gay liberation organisations and the student movement. It is informed by interviews, written and recorded, with past student leaders and gay liberation activists, an examination of press records and the inspection of documentation contained in the National Archives, the USI archive (at DCU), and the Irish Queer Archive (held at the National Library of Ireland).

The second case study examines the role of the student movement in public discourse on the liberalisation of contraceptive laws. It analyses the debates and activities of students on the availability of condoms and education on sexual health. It also investigates the relationships that student groups built with civic society and advocacy groups, contraceptive clinics, and the lobbying engaged in to liberalise the law. It explores the conflict between student groups and lay organisations opposed to liberalised contraceptive and abortion laws. It is informed by interviews, written and recorded, with past student movement leaders and activists, an examination of press records and an inspection of documentation contained in the National Archives and the USI archive (DCU).

The final case study examines the role of the student movement in the debate around reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. It details the various campaigns student activists engaged in, their direct clashes with the law, and the impact that this had on public discourse. This case study is informed by interviews with past student movement

leaders and activists, an examination of press records and an inspection of documentation contained in the National Archives and the USI archive (DCU). These case studies lay the foundations for future research into the role the student movement has played in other areas of social policy and, more broadly, how its travel activities introduced young people to new concepts of democracy, industry, and cultures.

3.2 Sources

The foundation of this research is the archive of the Irish student movement (the Union of Students in Ireland) which was donated by USI to Dublin City University. This is the primary source of information for this work. Other sources consulted include files in the National Archive, the Irish Queer Archive held at the National Library of Ireland, digital newspapers archives, and interviewees.

The archive is a significantly important resource that until this work was not known in academic circles to have existed. It contains tens of thousands of documents; correspondence, reports, publications, photos, audio and video files, campaign paraphernalia such as posters, t-shirts, flyers and badges. Of particular importance are the meticulous records of correspondence which often included responses from ministers, politicians, political organisations and other cause-orientated organisations within the gay rights and women's liberation movement.

Custody of the archive was taken in the second year of the research and a year was taken to fully assess the material contained in the archive. All material was sorted and split into the major activity areas of the union, education, welfare, international issues, national issues, USIT, administration and finance, publications, and miscellaneous. It was clear that a significant proportion of the material in the welfare section related to the debates on decriminalisation of homosexuality, the contraceptives debate and the area of reproductive rights. This material was segregated along with material used in chapter 4. The material was then sorted into chronological order and a timeline created from the evidence of the archive.

Newspaper archives, such as the *Irish Times* archive and the National Newspaper Archive were also used to verify and expand upon the events and activities highlighted in the documents from the archive. The archive also contained newspaper clippings from local and regional newspapers and these were also used where relevant.

3.3 Scope of the research

The scope of the research is any activity engaged in by the Irish student movement in relation to the issues examined in the case studies. The Irish student movement engaged (and continues to engage) in numerous high-profile campaigns and it is impossible within a work of this scale to examine all such campaigns. Accordingly, this work focuses solely on campaigns dealing with issues sexual – campaigns that were controversial and divisive and which, ultimately, represent major shifts in public attitudes and public policy.

3.4 Limitations of research

It has been considerably difficult to obtain interviews with those former student leaders who campaigned as students against the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the liberalisation of contraceptive laws, or the availability information on abortion services. While several individuals were identified and contacted during the course of the research, few responded and those that did respond declined to be interviewed. The reasons given included current employment restrictions, evolving views since their student days, or no reason given. Such input into the research would have provided more context and richer case studies and would have confirmed, as assumed, that a proportion of the student population was against what their representatives were doing, despite their mandates. It also should be noted that, while two of the three major case studies were on what could be considered issues of extreme importance to women, there is a clear male bias. As one female interviewee observed, this can be seen as a reflection of the time period where the student movement was largely male dominated at a leadership level. Another issue that can be encountered in research based on

interviews is the possibility of interviewees either purposefully or accidentally recalling their experiences contrary to other evidence. Jeff Dudgeon, who took a case to the European Courts of Human Rights in correspondence for this work, denied that students played any role in the decriminalisation campaign. However, in correspondence from Dudgeon to USI he clearly indicated that they played an important role and thanked them on behalf of the NIGRA. This is important, as it demonstrates the benefits of using multiple sources of information to construct the case studies. Finally, unfortunately, much correspondence from student leaders to government departments and ministers is still withheld from public access. Nonetheless, the case studies are an honest representation of the material available within the various archives and the interviews conducted for this research.

3.5 Bias, objectivity and ethical implications

In conducting the research for this work, it was imperative that the author be cognisant of his own personal bias. The author is a former officer of Sligo Institute of Technology Students' Union and USI. In 2008, he wrote an article in *The Irish Times* entitled 'The students aren't revolting: how the good times killed the spirit', in which he criticised the emergence of the 'career student leader' and the perceived lack of interest amongst students in global and social issues. All researchers carry their own biases within themselves, often derived from personal upbringing and culture (Agar, 1980). The author's own experience in the student movement should not be seen negatively. It has given a greater appreciation of the passions and motivations behind the movement and ability to frame the positions held by the student movement, from both an academic and activist perspective.

The author recognises that there is an ethical imperative that must be satisfied in all research, however. Denscombe (2002, p. 175) identifies the role of ethics in research as dealing with:

what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. The word 'ought' recurs time and again when ethics comes into considerations and, for researchers; this calls for some change in their approach to the process of research. The problem is no longer one of what it is possible or logical to do, crucial to the rest

of the research methodology, but one of what ought to be done taking into consideration the rules of conduct that indicate what it is right and proper to do. It calls for a moral perspective on things, rather than a practical perspective.

Shamoo and Resnik (2009) outlined a number of ethical principles that should be followed while engaging in research. The author has adopted these research principles for this work. Throughout all phases of this work, the author has strived to remain impartial and has ensured that all analysis was carried out with an awareness of the following:

3.5.1 Honesty and objectivity

All research should be portrayed in this work impartially and should be represented in context. Where context is not readily obvious to the reader, supplementary information should be provided. Where data is not available, this should be stated and, where only a partial account of events can be provided, it should be made clear that this is the case. The positions held by the author should also be disclosed at the start of the work.

3.5.2 Integrity and confidentiality

Where interviewees have expressed a certain point of view or have supplied information or documentation on the understanding that certain information will be portrayed that information, as long as it is truthful and without bias and is relevant to the objects of the work, should be included. Where information or documentation is provided 'off the record' that information should only be used to inform the research but should not be attributed or directly quoted.

The interpretation of archive material in a non-biased way is also important. It is key to contextualise all material, framing it in both a temporal and thematic context.

3.5.3 Responsible publication and social responsibility

The work should inform debate in the area of research and serve only to enrich this discourse. The research also used social media to attract interviewees, the donation of material to the USI archive and the identification and contextualisation of material. Where submissions were received to aid in this understanding, all submissions had to be scrutinised to ensure accuracy.

3.5.4 Respect for colleagues, individuals and participants

The work must be conducted with respect for the needs and confidentiality of all those referenced in the work or those who participate. Not all archive material was suitable for publication, particularly as some correspondence were marked as confidential to the recipient. A number of correspondences relating to abortion and reproductive rights fall into this category.

3.5.5 Legality and defamation

Research material should be obtained legally and the work should not seek to defame any individual. In the case of the USI archive, all material donated was not paid for and a written contract was drafted between the author and the donor.

While the author strived to be conscious of ensuring independence in reviewing historical documents, their interpretation and in framing and questioning of interviewees the research time period falls well outside his personal involvements in the student movement (2000 – 2007). Meyer (2002, p. 5) has noted that many ‘scholars often start by looking at a movement that they have some personal stake in’, but equally warns about generalisation. The fact that the topics and the time period under consideration are reflective of a widely different culture within Irish society and within the student movement than that in which the author participated ensures the bias can be adequately avoided.

3.6.6 Author's note on bias and objectivity

My former roles as a student activist was a strong motivational factor in the choice of subject matter for this work. As the former national LGBT Rights Officer for USI it was important to understand the origins of the campaign I had led and participated in for a number of years. It was the LGBT campaign that motivated me to get involved in student politics at a national level.

Throughout this work I have been conscious of my own personal bias and to ensure that the work is objective. As previously stated, newspaper reports were used to verify any activities of the movement and persons were sought who actively campaigned within the student movement against decriminalisation of homosexuality. My supervisor was aware of my previous activism from the start of the research also.

I was extremely conscious that the role of students should not be over-emphasised as other academics would rightfully seek evidence for any overzealous claims. I believe that my awareness of such importance greatly assisted me in ensuring that this work is unbiased and objective.

3.6 Case studies

Case studies are a popular method of analysis in political and social sciences. Their purpose is to identify 'what in the event or group of interest is common to the group and what is specific to the case under study' (McNabb, 2004, p. 357). In order to achieve this, a case study must examine the event or group in depth, in its natural setting and take into consideration its complexity within its own context (Punch, 2006).

According to Stake (1995), the classification of a case study is based upon the intended requirement of the researcher:

1. *The intrinsic case study* – undertaken to better understand a particular case.
2. *The instrumental case study* – a particular case study is undertaken to give insight into an issue or refine the theory.

3. *The collective case study* – an extension of the instrumental case study covering multiple cases, in an attempt to learn more about a phenomenon, demographic or condition.

This work conducts a collective case study.

The case studies examine the role of the student movement in the decriminalisation of homosexual acts and the liberalisation of the laws and social attitudes towards contraceptives and abortion. They use a number of sources, including documentation within the USI archive, interviews, student publications, state archives, political party archives and newspaper archives to give a comprehensive account of the role of the student movement in these major social changes. The guidelines outlined by Punch (2006) were used in preparing the case studies. These include:

Guideline	1 - Decriminalisation	2 – Contraception & Abortion
Clear identification of case study and boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of students in the campaign to decriminalise homosexual acts • Confined dates • Confined to those students who advocated, campaigned or participated in the decriminalisation campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of students in the campaign to liberalise laws around contraceptives • Confined dates • Confined to those students who advocated, campaigned or participated in the liberalisation campaign
Clear on the need for the case study and its purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing historical accounts of the campaign make little reference to the role of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing historical accounts of the liberalisation of this policy make vague references to the role of students
Translate the purpose into specific research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role did students play in the campaign to decriminalise homosexual acts in Ireland? • Was this role confined to when students were in education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role did students play in the campaign to liberalise social policies and laws on contraceptives and abortion • Were these roles confined to when students were in

Guideline	1 - Decriminalisation	2 – Contraception & Abortion
		education?
Identify the strategy of the case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify roles played by students in campaigning for the decriminalisation, within the gay liberation campaign and in the public sphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify roles played by students in campaigning for the change within their respective students' unions and in the public sphere
Show how data will be collected, from whom, and how it will be analysed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper archives Gay liberation historical literatures Interviews with student participants and gay liberation activists Frame this data within the context of students as agents of social change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper archives National archives USI archive material Interviews with student participants and others Frame this data within the context of students as agents of social changes

Table 7: Application of guidelines for preparing a case study (Punch, 2006)

Documentary and archival analysis requires a researcher to be conscious of the social production of any document. MacDonald and Tipton (1996) note that one must be aware of the social, historical and administrative conditions or structures of the creation and production of documents. Each institution has its own social setting in the production of documents and it is important that researchers consider this. They also stress that archives also have social contextualisation, whereby not all material available may be complete or the storage of certain documents and the destruction of others may have been carried out to portray a certain ideology if a documentary analysis was conducted.

In state archives, not all material may be released, as legislative embargos may be placed for state security reasons or, in the case of the documents used from the United States of America State Department, redacted for diplomatic reasons.

3.6.1 Interviews

As this work constitutes qualitative research, the use of interviews to explore the motivations and experiences of student activists and leaders was key. A total of 21 interviews were conducted for this work. Those interviewed were chosen because of the time period they were involved in the student movement and because of the leadership roles they held.

Participants were sourced through a number of means. With thanks to the Irish Times a number of adverts were placed in the newspaper advising the public that the research was being undertaken and inviting those who had material they wished to donate to the archive to visit a website created for the research – studentmovement.ie – the site also contained information on the material currently in existence in the archive and a copy of a donation agreement, the informed consent document and the clear language statement for interviewees. Participants were also sourced through word-of-mouth, a Facebook and Twitter account set up for the research, a radio interview on *Coleman at Large*, a weekly political talk show with a national radio station *NewsTalk*. No participants had been declined for interview if they volunteered to do so.

Of those approached two declined to participate and four initially engaged but subsequently ceased to respond to emails.

Interviews in academic works allow us to ‘understand other persons’ constructions of reality’ (Jones, 1985) while exploring their own personal perceptions and definitions of their situations. Interviews played a complimentary role to the archival and documentary research conducted for the case studies

Former-student interviewees were first categorised into roles based on Altbach’s (1991) layers of student activist participation (see Figure 1). Three key role types were identified:

1. *Student Leader* – an individual that regularly engages with various levels of protest with the student movement.
2. *Student Followers* – educated on main issues and participates in protest.

3. *Student Sympathisers* – agree with broad goals, sporadically participates in protest.

Other interviewees include leaders and activists in the gay liberation movement in Ireland.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and by written correspondence. Interviewees were asked standardised questions depending on the category of student they belonged to and then interviews moved into an unstructured phase, where interviewees were invited to give an account of their participation in key events, their perceptions of meanings, situations and reality as they saw it during the event under discussion. Interviewees were then invited to reflect on their participation in these events and asked what, if any, impact this had on their later life and whether they believed, on reflection, their actions had any impact in achieving their desired outcome. This gives greater depth to the interviews allowing for 'emotional' and 'human' understanding on their perceptions of the meanings and reality as they reflect (Weiss, 1994, p. 7).

Examples of standardised questions for former student leaders include:

What were the attitudes and perceptions of the general public towards college students at the time?

How did you first get involved in student political life? Was there a particular event or issue?

Did you consider yourself as part of a movement? What role did you see students playing in society at this time?

What was it about those involved in student political life that separated them from those who didn't engage? Or is it possible to define this at all?

Reflecting now on your time in university, your perceptions of politics and government, and other social and religious institutions, what role, if any, did these institutions play in terms of antagonising politicalised students?

Did your political or ideological beliefs change as your college life progressed? If so, can you

elaborate on this? Were your initial beliefs similar or dissimilar from those held by your parents?

Do you remember any particular event that exercised the student body more than any other?

Table 8: Standardised questions to student leaders in interviews

The standardised questions aid in gaining a clear understanding of student perception of the political and social climate in terms of sexual liberation in Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s. They also allow the interviewee to reflect on their role and the motivations behind it so that this can be compared with the literature findings on the characteristics of the student condition (Altbach, 2007). The questions are designed to draw a rational reflective response from the interviewees (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Qualitative interviews facilitate a greater 'open-ended inquiry' (Spradley, 1980, p. 34), providing more detailed reflections from interviewees.

After the initial standardised questions, interviews became unstructured and more in-depth. To allow for seamless transition between the two forms of interview, participants were given the option of completing the standardised interview in writing. These were sent by email with most interviewees choosing to meet face-to-face for the interviews. This allowed the interviewee to select a location most comfortable to them to avoid any issue of cultural or social unease.

Some interviewees were unable to meet for a face-to-face interview and in such cases responses were recorded in writing. Some interviews were informal or ad hoc and were conducted at events relating to the student movement – these were more informal conversations and utterances that gave insight to the time periods under examination and were not quoted in this final work (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Face-to-face interviews were recorded on a Marantz PMD 660 solid-state digital recorder, with the backup of a Zoom H4N solid-state digital recorder. Interviewees who wished to also record interviews were welcome to do so. These devices can facilitate directional microphones to minimise interference from external noise sources and are non-intrusive.

A conscious effort was made by the author to obtain a strong gender balance in the interviewees. The fact that two of the three case studies were women's liberation specific and that given the historic role of women in Irish society the impact of homosexuality on a woman is quite significant the author was strongly motivated to ensure a good gender balance.

Despite the movement at the time being heavily dominated by men one third of interviews successfully completed were with women. Of those declined or ceased communication three were women.

3.7 Evolution of the research

Initially this work was to be a historical account of the activities of the Irish student movement. Over a number of months a significant body of work was created examining the genesis of student collective action in Ireland, from the protests by students about the creation of a national university of Ireland, the demands by students to be seen as a collective group that had a role to play in both the Home Rule debates and later in the independence movement, the 1916 Rising, War of Independence and Civil War. This work gave the author a greater sense of the history of students and the role they played in the very foundation of the Irish state.

It was decided, in consultation with the research supervisor, that given the political climate of Ireland with the scheduled marriage referendum and the reignited debate on reproductive rights and the fact that archive contained significant material in these areas that a more sociological-driven thesis would be better. The author quickly recognised such an approach would be more beneficial to his own professional development goals and a stronger contribution to knowledge.

3.8 Conclusion

This methodological approach to this work was an exhaustive one utilising a significant amount of sources from the USI archive, newspaper archive, US state department

archives, national library archives, State papers and interviews with former student activists and leaders. A full academic year was spent sorting and cataloguing the USI archive and identifying key activities of the student movement for analysing.

Twenty-one interviews were conducted for the work and as outlined in the chapter these participants were sourced through a number of means. Material for the archive was donated by USI and the author sought additional individual donations.

Interviews were digitally recorded and the evidence from the interviews was verified with existing written material in the case studies. Where new information was presented by a participant this information was first verified by means of a search through the archive material or newspapers and where it could be substantiated it was inserted into the body of a case study with citation.

Such a triangulated approach allows for a verification of information provided in interviews and to ensure that where documents are missing from the archive newspaper reports can also be used to substantiate claims by interview participants.

The author was extremely conscious of his own personal bias and as such deliberately chose this methodological approach for this work. The author hopes that this approach adequately protected the work is free from bias.

Chapter 4

The origins of the Irish student movement and some early campaigns

4.1 Introduction

This work will focus on the activities of the national students' union the Union of Students in Ireland (USI). However, it is important to recognise that before USI another national organisation, the Irish Student Association (ISA) was the voice of the Irish student body.

Student protest in the first half of the twentieth century did exist and students collectively regularly engaged with the public sphere. In the turn of the century student debating societies such as the Hist of Trinity College were chambers of controversy where topics such as nationalism and democracy were debated, engaging not just the student body but academics, members of the public and the establishment.

Students protested for the establishment of a national university for Ireland with then students Cruise O'Brien, Eugene Sheehy, John Kennedy, Thomas Madden and Patrick Little making no apologies for their actions in disrupting college proceedings to ensure the British establishment were aware of their disquiet.

Nationalist and republican leaders recognised the importance of the student body to their respective causes early on and they made regular appearances at student debates and sought to actively engage the student body.

Women's liberation was a major campaign within the universities with campaigns led by women graduates to be able to obtain higher degrees, learn alongside their male counterparts, participate in politics, in the military, judiciary and indeed vote.

Large numbers of students signed up for the Irish Volunteers and subsequently served in the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War.

The first national student body was founded in 1931 and was named the Irish Student Association. It was founded in order

to create among Irish students a consciousness of their corporate existence...to voice [student] opinion and speak in their collective name, and enable them to take their proper part at international gathering.

(*Comhthrom Féinne*, 1931; May 1, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 16)

It was a loosely organised national body, which predominately mirrored that of the early twentieth century UK student movement – one of congresses and conferences that met infrequently. The ISA, established by the major universities' student councils, went through a number of reincarnations but had little effect on government policy, with grassroots student groups tending to be more influential. It went through a number of revivals over the next fifteen years but was largely ineffective.

By the 1950s, student protest was becoming more organised, more ideological and reflective of a small but distinct counter-culture. Many of these protests were driven by an anti-imperialist ideology. In November 1956, the annual Kevin Barry procession by UCD students struck a different note than previously: that year's banners and speakers addressed the issue of 'British aggression in Egypt and Cyprus'. The procession marched on the British Embassy, where a letter of protest was submitted (*Irish Independent*, 1956, November 2). International events had clearly begun to have an effect on students. Similarly, international travel had opened up. The ISA had built strong links with the UK national students' union and, by 1955, had begun offering charter flights to London, Paris, Rome and other European capitals (*Irish Times*, 1955, August 12). Access to affordable continental flights gave students insight to the challenges facing students across Europe – and a taste of a growing international student movement. It also exposed students to new philosophies and new ways of thinking.

Solidarity with other student movements quickly developed. In 1952, the ISA passed a resolution of support when students were deported from Hungary by the Communist regime (*The Irish Press*, 1952, January 7). And, when Russia suppressed the Hungarian student revolution in 1956, large solidarity protests took place in Dublin. One march from St Stephen's Green to Parnell Square, and thereafter to the US Embassy, was heavily reported in the press. Students presented a petition to the US Embassy demanding that the US use decisive measures, and force if necessary, 'to bring about the salvation of Hungary'. The protest returned to the city centre where it became violent (*Irish Times*, 1956, November 9). Similarly, over 500 students protested in Galway in support of the Hungarian students (*Irish Independent*, 1956, November 17). Irish students also held collections for the Red Cross at their protest marches throughout the month of November (*Irish Independent*, 1956, November 8). The largest ISA protest

attracted over 3,000 students under the banner 'Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Communist' (*Irish Press*, 1956, November 17).

In May 1958, Garda Special Branch detectives and uniformed officers monitored a large march of South African, East African, and Ceylon students from the RCSI, UCD and TCD who were protesting against French military action in Algeria, where revolutionaries (which included student, trade union and women's liberation groups) were attempting to gain independence for the country. The march was also supported by a large contingent of Irish students. Students carried banners proclaiming 'Vive le FLN' (the Algerian National Liberation Front, 'Remember Dien Bien Phu' (a battle in Vietnam which resulted in severe damage to France's control and authority in its colonies) and 'France Quit Algeria' (*Trinity News*, 1958, May 22). The students marched to the French Embassy where the ambassador agreed to meet with one of the students, P. T. Davern of UCD (*Irish Press*, 1958, May 17). The ambassador defended the continued French control of Algeria by warning the students that, if France were to leave Algeria, it would fall to communist control (*Trinity News*, 1958, May 22).

Such protests were indicative of the emerging counter-culture and the public displays of outrage by students towards injustice. It was the lack of a regular platform for students to debate such issues that led to the eventual demise of the ISA and the founding of USI.

In March 1959, a number of students met to discuss the future of the Irish student movement. They believed that the ISA was guilty of 'inefficiency, mishandling of debate, inequitable distribution of vacation jobs, non-existent provision of grants and welfare, [engaging in] personal feuds, a weak and at times non-existent constitution, and questionable admission of certain colleges, whose students had not attained university entrance standard or were not full-time students' (Coulter & Lynch, 1983 p. 5).

The student leaders decided to establish USI, a 'pirate body' that would take control of the ISA and force it to disband (*Irish Times*, 1959, September 1). USI's inaugural meeting took place in the Graduates' Memorial Building in TCD on 19 June, 1959. Delegates from Trinity, UCD, UCG, as well as representatives from QUB, UCC, the UK NUS, the Scottish Union of Students and the Dublin branch of the European Youth Campaign were present. The College of Technology Bolton Street, the Veterinary College, Dublin and the

Stranmillis Training College Belfast sent observers. The meeting was presided over by W. P. Morris, president of the Dublin University Students' Council (*Irish Times*, 1959, June 20). Membership of USI was proportionally based – each institution would be entitled to one representative for every 750 students. Under the ISA structures, each college and university had two representatives, which was seen as grossly unfair. John Hamilton Russell of QUB was elected USI's first president (*Trinity News*, 1959, May 21), while Noel Iggoe of TCD became its first vice-president (*Irish Times*, September 22, 1959).

USI was initially accommodated in UCD's Newman House but subsequently took offices at Trinity College. In July 1959, Hamilton Russell wrote to the minister for external affairs, Frank Aiken (Fianna Fáil), seeking government recognition of USI which claimed to speak for over 90 per cent of students on the island, a figure of approximately 15,000 (*Irish Times*, 1960, January 23). This recognition was not forthcoming and was a battle that USI would fight for another decade (Hamilton Russell, 1959). The first winter conference of USI was held at TCD in January 1960 and was opened by the vice-provost of the university Professor T. S. Broderick. The president of the German national students' union, Wilhelm Leitchbach, and Robert Huston, president of the NUS UK, also attended the conference. Unlike its counterpart in the UK, USI did not shy away from political discussion and, in fact, passed motions on various political issues, including apartheid.

In its early days, USI maintained kept close but informal links with the International Union of Students (IUS). Other international student organisations also existed and fringe elements of the Irish movement had strong affiliations with them. These include, but are not limited to, the World Student Christian Federation, Pax Romana, the International Union of Socialist Youth, and the International Union of Young Christian Democrats (Fraser, 1988).

USI's informal links with IUS attracted attention from university and government officials who were nervous of any potential communist threat to the student body. UCD authorities were so concerned that they banned the USI's summer conference from taking place in Newman House. The meeting, attended by delegations from Denmark, Germany and the ISC, had to be held in Belfast instead (*Irish Times*, 1960, June 17).

Concerns were raised at the meeting that UCD would force their SRC to withdraw from USI. At the conference, Noel Igoe was elected the new president of the USI. He would resign as president in December 1963 after losing a vote of confidence (Coulter & Lynch, 1983). Concerns over communist influences in USI were heightened in 1964 when USI decided it would send, for the first time, a delegation to an IUS conference in Sofia.

In 1962, USI faced its first major disaffiliation attempt. UCD had expressed serious concerns over the way the national union was operating – and its international activities. Pressure from university authorities was growing on UCD's Student Representative Council. UCD's president, Michael Tierney, even wrote to the Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, describing USI as 'a terribly dangerous organisation' (USI, 2009 p 9). The disaffiliation of UCD was later ruled unconstitutional and UCD remained in the union. USI continued to have issues with the university authorities into 1963 when its publications were banned from the campus (*Irish Times*, 1963, November 15).

USI and Tierney again clashed in July 1964 when, as president of UCD and vice chancellor of the NUI, he endorsed the continuation of the prohibition of Catholics entering TCD. In a statement distributed to all member colleges, USI expressed its dismay that:

the spirit of reconciliation between Christians so strong in Rome has not reached to the top people in Ireland's largest university college. Not only that, but Dr. Tierney has chosen to insult one of the oldest and most respected institutes in the world, as well as the universally revered national hero Theobald Wolfe Tone. This union, which strives to bring students together cannot but be dismayed by Dr. Tierney's statement

(*Irish Times*, 1964, July 11).

USI's position was backed by Comhchaidreamh, the body representing Irish-speaking university students, which observed that Tierney's statement 'belittled Wolfe Tone's

ideal that Irishmen of all religions should work in unity for the common good of the nation' (*Irish Times*, 1964, August 20).

By 1963, USI was still fighting for government recognition and by this stage was threatening protest marches. USI attended meetings with government officials but were twice refused official recognition (Dept. of An Taoiseach, 1963). As USI was evolving, so too were its structures. At the union's winter conference in January 1966, sweeping changes were made to the organisation's structures, which allowed it to style itself more as a trade union. These changes also meant that seminaries could become members and that month St Patrick's College, Maynooth SRC affiliated with USI (*Irish Times*, 1966, January 15). As recalled by his biographer, Dublin's Archbishop, John Charles McQuaid, was furious that Maynooth students had visited TCD and would be engaged in future activities with it (Cooney, 1999).

As the national union took shape, it engaged in a number of campaigns that gained it attention within the public and political spheres. The 'student movement' became a phrase that was not just notional but tangible. Pat Rabbitte, then a student at UCG (and later president of UCGSU and USI), recalled the atmosphere in colleges at the time:

The activism was beginning to assert itself. For the first time young people were getting a voice, there were campaigns and equality of opportunity in education was the dominant one but there were others campaigns too ... the fire that took off in Berkley in 1968 eventually did reach Galway and it had become a hive of activity. We were involved in various protests and the college resisted.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

As USI found its feet – and its voice – it became engaged in a number of campaigns and initiatives that helped it define itself. Among the most prominent activities in its early years was its involvement in the anti-apartheid movement, the development of student travel, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights campaign, the relocation of UCD from the city centre to Belfield, and the struggle for recognition within universities and colleges.

Other campaigns from this period – including the campaign to save Georgian Dublin – involved one individual students’ union, in the latter case by UCD students’ union, and as such do not fall under the scope of this research.

One campaign from this period that was remarkably successful – in that it was readily accepted by the government – was that of the institution of a student maintenance grant. In 1966, USI organised a conference on the status of education that concluded that ‘a system of grants, awarded on the basis of a means test and financed by a re-allocation of existing financial resources ... would be a more equitable, and more feasible solution’ than the introduction of a student loan system (*Irish Times*, 1966, March 22).

In June 1967, the minister for education, Donogh O’Malley, confirmed that his department was in the process of establishing a higher education grants scheme that would ‘a very wide extension of the opportunities for free university education’ (*Irish Times*, 1967, June 23). This statement may indicate that whilst the campaign was student led the department may have been open to the idea of student grants and may have been actively exploring the idea before students engaged with it.

The maintenance grant was launched in 1968 by O’Malley successor, Brian Lenihan. The maximum grant was paid to families with an income of less than £1,200 per annum, while no grant was paid to those families earning over £2,600 per annum. The maximum payable grant was £300 per annum, with the minimum payment set at £25.

4.2 The early Anti-Apartheid campaign

The campaign against apartheid was one of the big causes of our generation. The Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, led by the late Kader Asmal had a big influence in Ireland. It was an international campaign, in which students all over the world played a major part.

(Gilmore, 2015)

The election of the South Africa National Party – a hard-line Afrikaner-first party – to power in 1948 and the implementation of racial segregation and oppressive legislation

that curtailed the rights of travel, marriage and education of black citizens provoked little reaction with the heads of the Irish Republic. However, USI, through its international connections with other national student bodies, very quickly took a stand. The very first USI congress passed motions on the boycott of South African goods (*Irish Times*, 1960, January 23). A South African student, who requested anonymity for fear of 'repercussions from the South African government', spoke of his government's 'policies of racial domination on some 11,000,000 people who had no political representation whatsoever at any level of government' (*Irish Times*, 1960, January 25). The motion passed unanimously and thus began the union's campaign against all South African products.

In February 1960, the Afro-Asian Society of TCD handed out leaflets to students at Trinity's front gate, calling on students to boycott South African goods. The next day a group of approximately 300 students marched through the city carrying placards and banners calling on shoppers to boycott South African products (*Trinity News*, February 18, 1960). Some of the banners read 'Reject South African goods and help reject apartheid' and the leaflets urged housewives not to purchase 'racialism ... and look for the label – Product of South Africa, and refuse to buy' (*Irish Press*, February 11, 1960). The march was supported by USI which launched its own boycott campaign that day. In a meeting in the Mansion House, student leaders met with Dr Noel Browne TD, Hilda Larkin (daughter of Jim Larkin), and Tennyson Makiwane, a defendant in the South African treason trials of 1956, which saw Nelson Mandela, Makiwane and 154 others being accused of plotting a foreign invasion of South Africa. It is noteworthy that these events took place one month before the infamous Sharpeville massacre (in which 69 demonstrators were shot dead by police in the township of Sharpeville, near Johannesburg) – an event that sparked the establishment of anti-apartheid movements worldwide.

In February 1965, USI urged its membership to boycott all South African team games (*Irish Times*, 1965, February 16). Many student societies were quite vocal within their universities and colleges in relation to participation in games with South Africa. In 1969, the Trinity College United Nations Students' Association, the Dublin University Central Athletic Committee and the Irish Anti-Apartheid movement, chaired by TCD lecturer,

Kadar Asmal, campaigned to refuse access to sporting facilities on campus to members of the South African rugby team, the Springboks, during their match in Dublin. The students also sought celebrity endorsement of the campaign and successfully managed to restrict ticket sales by the university's Rugby Club to members only (*Trinity News*, October 30, 1969). Recalling the reasons why students protested, Eugene Murray, then a student at TCD and later president of its students' union, recalled:

It was the sense of injustice, you are young and you discover something for the first time, that people can't even get on a rugby team because of their colour, and that sparks an interest ... I went on to Limerick to protest and [the Springboks] stayed in the Shannon Shamrock Hotel and there was actually a pitched battle between a group who saw the anti-Springbok protestors, who were all students as being communists and a groups of people marched out from Limerick carrying the Irish flag as their banner to basically get rid of us ... and there were clashes.

(Murray, 2015).

In November that year, Denis Brutus, a South African poet and academic, who had been banned from participating in meetings of more than two people and from teaching in South Africa, spoke about racism in sport at a TCD Philosophical Society public meeting (*Trinity News*, November 6, 1969).

In 1966, USI protested against the actions taken by the South African minister for justice against the president of the South African students' union, NUSAS. The president, Ian Robertson, had been banned from participating in NUSAS events and from teaching. In response, USI sent messages of solidarity from the students of Ireland (*Irish Times*, 1966, May 23). It also condemned the deportation order issued against John Sprack, president-elect of NUSAS in October 1967 (*Irish Times*, 1967, October 12).

In 1968, student protest in Dublin against the South African regime made national headlines when Professor Christian Barnard, who performed the first human to human heart transplant, spoke at Dublin's Royal College of Surgeons. Barnard was greeted by a 'vociferous' mob of students and campaigners. Protestors held signs that condemned racialism in medical schools and highlighted black infancy death rates in South African hospitals. Barnard would later claim that 'not even in Berkeley University in California,

renowned for its demonstrations, have I seen anything like this'. One student, Peter Carey, a natural science student of TCD, who was protesting, carried a more welcoming sign that read, 'Welcome Dr Barnard to Ireland. Tolerance breeds tolerance. Fight apartheid with love not hate'. However, Carey had his placard torn from his hands by 'two bearded types' and thrown to the ground (*Irish Independent*, 1968, November 12).

In 1969, bowing to intense pressure from students, Trinity College's board sold its shares in a South African tobacco company – acquired in 1966 for £6,000 – for £22,000 (*Irish Examiner*, 1969, November 26). Four years later, in 1973, the university's SRC president, David Giles, presented the board with a document that outlined how several universities in the UK had already sold their shares in South African companies and which provided evidence between the companies TCD had shares in and their discriminatory practices against black people. Giles' document recommended the immediate sales of the shares – a proposal that a majority of the board agreed to (*Irish Times*, 1973, April 27). It also recommended the adoption of a socially conscious investment policy, a ban on facilitating any sporting events that contravened the Olympic principle of non-discrimination in sport and the lobbying of the Department of External Affairs and Education to secure scholarships for black students from South Africa wishing to pursue courses in Ireland (Giles, 1973).

That same year, USI formalised its links with the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement by becoming an affiliated body, which resulted in large-scale national campaigns (IAAM, 1973). USI also made links directly with the African National Congress office in London (ANC, 1973). Across all universities, student representative councils invited the IAAM to participate in debates, with Kadar Asmal speaking regularly. David Giles, now vice-president of USI, began organising solidarity tours across the country and in 1974 invited Abdul Bham of the African National Congress in London to address meetings in Cork, Galway, and Limerick on the question of armed struggle in South Africa (*Irish Times*, March 4, 1974). UCDSU also began to investigate university investments in South Africa. It also succeeded in having Roberts Construction, a major South African firm, banned from holding recruitment interviews on campus (IAAM, 1974).

In May 1974, USI president, Pat Brady, drafted a submission to the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid. The committee had been established as a way of encouraging and coordinating international sanctions against South Africa. Brady outlined the activities of USI over the course of the previous decade, with a particular focus on the disinvestment campaign (USI, 1974, May 20).

By 1975, all four universities (UCC, UCG, UCD, and TCD) had functioning branches of the IAAM, as did Bolton Street College (IAAM, 1975). In 1976, USI decided to step up its national campaign. USI, led by its president, Eamon Gilmore, and the IAAM launched a joint campaign to educate students and members of the public on apartheid in South Africa. Events organised included exhibitions, talks and film screenings in UCD, NIHE Limerick, UCC, and Belfast. It also coordinated student recruitment drives in the campuses for the IAAM. The campaign had a number of core objectives:

1. To pressure universities, colleges and local authorities to disinvest in South African companies and to cease any commercial dealings.
2. Monitor student and traditional newspapers for any job advertisements seeking workers to relocate to South Africa and to seek a guarantee from career services that they would not promote vacancies.
3. Continuation of the boycott South African goods information campaign (USI supplied a list of products and brands that contained or were products of South African origin).
4. Continuation of the academic and sport boycott campaigns.
5. Political prisoner campaign and John (Sean) Hosey campaign. (Students' unions were encouraged to focus on a political prisoner and lobby for that prisoner's release and write to the relatives of the prisoner assuring them that international pressure was focusing on their loved one. Sean Hosey was an Irish born prisoner and member of the UK Communist Party. He was arrested in 1972 in South Africa. He was found guilty of distributing anti-government literature. Upon his release, Hosey returned to the UK and spoke regularly at student events).
6. Fundraising events, local town and city distribution of leaflets (USI, 1976, Briefing Document: Southern Africa)

So grateful was the IAAM to USI for its campaign efforts that in 1976 it wrote to Gilmore seeking a formal nomination to the IAAM committee by USI (IAAM, 1976). USI also held a concert to raise money for the IAAM. Gilmore later recalled his pride in the overall campaign – and embarrassment with parts of it:

I was proud of the campaign in general. There was one instance where I was, however, somewhat embarrassed. The great Irish actor, Niall Toibin agree to do a one man show as part of the USI campaign. But the turn-out was miserably small. Toibin, the ultimate professional, played as if the house was full. But I felt embarrassed that we failed to fill the hall for him.

(Gilmore, 2015).

In November 1976, Saths Moodley, a black South African was elected to the position of deputy president to the students' union of Dublin's College of Technology, Kevin Street. Moodley quickly became acting president when the sitting president resigned. He assisted USI in its anti-apartheid campaign and in an interview in student newspaper, *Contact*, Moodley expressed his admiration for the campaign, stating that 'such solidarity actions ... are very important in hastening the day of change in my country' (*Contact*, 1976, November, p. 12). He later served as vice-president for international affairs for USI. When he returned to South Africa, he was appointed as special advisor to the minister for housing.

When the UN declared 1978 as International Anti-Apartheid Year, USI played a significant role in the IAAM events, with USI deputy president, John Gallagher, serving on the executive board of the IAAM. USI encouraged the establishment of anti-apartheid societies in the regional colleges and, in December 1978, USI hosted a public meeting in TCD with Rafique Mottiar, Sean MacBride, Mary Robinson, with John Gallagher of USI addressing the meeting (IAAM, 1979). In his recollection of that meeting, Tom Costello, USI president in 1979, noted that:

We were seen as a key player in the campaign and this would have been reflective of the role of students internationally in the anti-apartheid movement. The perception would have been of USI, that it was a serious outfit and it could deliver, they could mobilise and they could be trusted.

(Costello, 2015).

At the 1979 USI congress in Killarney, Kadar Asmal praised the role that students were playing in the anti-apartheid movement. He criticised those within and external to the student movement who believed that students should not concern themselves with world affairs. 'It was better', he declared, to have been 'idealistic for six months than succumb to the "graveyard of the mind" that was middle age' (*Irish Times*, 1979, January 15). USI subsequently began to encourage individual students' unions to affiliate to the IAAM and continued to campaign on the injustices of apartheid until the system was abolished in 1994.

4.3 Student travel programme

USIT provided low cost travel (through charters); arranged student exchanges and facilitated summer work abroad for hundreds of thousands of Irish students. That holiday work helped to pay the cost of college for many and it also opened the horizons of students to the wider world.

(Gilmore, 2015).

Since its foundation, USI has been heavily involved in the student travel industry. At the inaugural meeting held in TCD in 1959, its newly elected vice-president, Noel Iggoe, was instructed to make contact with the relevant authorities to explore charter flights and licensing arrangements for a student travel bureau. In its first year in operation, USI arranged 1,000 jobs abroad for Irish students, including jobs as temporary air hostesses and guides in holiday parks (*Irish Times*, 1959, September 1).

USI quickly attained a name for excellence in student travel and made regular witness statements on behalf of carriers to the Air Transport Licensing Board in London to secure routes in and out of Ireland that students could avail of. In 1964, USI assisted in securing 26 additional return flights into Dublin airport (*Irish Times*, 1964, May 6). In 1962, it was estimated that USI had facilitated almost 2,000 students travelling to Britain and the continent for summer work (*Irish Times*, 1962, June 13).

However, USI received harsh criticism from student media and from various SRCs around the country for its level of focus in student travel (Coulter & Lynch, 1983) with the editor of *Awake*, a UCD publication, caustically referring to 'the departments of vacation and travel ... virtually the only functioning branches of [the] sorry organisation' (Boland, 1964, p.3).

USI also began to produce booklets for Irish students visiting foreign cities. Some of these publications included information on hostel and restaurants, attractions and methods of obtaining work. By May 1966, the J-Visa programme had been established thanks to an intensive lobbying campaign of US and Irish authorities by USI travel officers (*Irish Press*, 1966, May 5). The programme was established by Gordon Colleary and Chris Harbour of Bunac (USI, 2009). It was the first time that a commercial body worked directly with the US Embassy to secure a temporary visa programme for Irish students.

In 1966, USI Travel, or USIT was established. Gordon Colleary, then president of USI, went on to become the chief executive of USIT. The company had no capital and was initially funded by a buy-out of the USIT lease of a property on Dame Street, the current site of the Central Bank. Prior to the site's development, Colleary had heard rumours that the site was to be developed for the Central Bank. Colleary thus signed a 21 year lease with the owner for rent of £1,500 per annum (in fact unofficially USIT only paid £300 per annum). The developers subsequently bought out the lease for a sum of £19,500, which was used to provide the capital for USIT (*Irish Times*, 1982, April 3).

By the end of 1966, USIT had introduced six charter flights to North America, accommodating over 900 students. It was also operating flights to London, Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid, Barcelona, Athens, and Tel-Aviv, with 6,000 students using the

service (*Irish Times*, 1967, January 11). The lucrative nature of the business inevitably spawned competition. A second student travel company, the Irish Student Educational and Travel Service (ISETA) was established in 1969 by student, Patrick Duignan, to compete with USIT. Duignan announced in April that he had obtained 1,500 work visas for Irish students. He also claimed that he had secured job placements for the vast majority of these (*Irish Press*, April 15, 1969). However, it later transpired that most of the placements were non-existent. USI commissioned a report, which found that the ISETA 'employers' that did exist had never heard of, let alone made arrangements with ISETA (*Irish Press*, 1969, July 30). In 1971, the Minister for Transport and Power, Brian Lenihan, withdrew ISETA's approval for charter flights when it could not prove that it had in place a sponsorship system to allow students to obtain work visas. Lenihan had appealed to both organisations (USI and ISETA) to collaborate for the 'benefit of the student body as a whole' but agreement could not be reached (*Irish Press*, 1971, May 19). Duignan was later found dead in the river Thames in London with his hands tied behind his back. He had, the *Irish Times* (2000, July 7) reported, run up significant debt 'and those he owed had finally run out of patience'.

In September 1972, Allied Irish Banks purchased a 51 per cent stake in USIT. Gordon Colleary retained a 24 per cent stake, while USI held the remaining 25 per cent stake (*Irish Independent*, September 22, 1972). The agreement, brokered in part by then USI president Pat Rabbitte, was subsequently criticised at the 1973 USI congress for the manner in which the deal had been agreed. Members of the congress lamented the fact that a 'capitalist institution like a bank should be involved in student travel companies' (*Connacht Sentinel*, 1973, January 23).

By 1973, USIT had effective control of the Irish student travel market. Its rivals, Irish Student Exchange Club (ISEC) and ISETA, battled with US and Irish authorities every year to secure visa quotas. Over 1,000 students had purchased flights with ISEC but it had again been refused permission to operate charters by the minister for transport and power, Peter Barry (*Irish Independent*, 1973, May 17).

On a number of occasions during the early seventies, the US government attempted to significantly limit the number of students travelling to the US on J-1 visas and in 1975

had almost cancelled the programme altogether. USIT contacted employers with whom they had placed students and received strong recommendations for the continuation of the programme (*Irish Independent*, November 27). USI developed new programmes and pitched them to the US authorities in the hope that they would see the benefits of continuing the student visa programme. As recalled by then USI president (1976-78), Eamon Gilmore:

The US authorities had effectively closed down the J1 programme in the mid-70s. My travel to the US was to get student travel to the United States re-opened. We developed some imaginative exchange programmes, such as the Bi-centenary Programme in 1976. The end result was that we got the United States to re-open holiday work to Irish students.

(Gilmore, 2015).

At its high point, almost 3,000 students were travelling to the US to work during the summer (US archives, 1976, Ref: O 151330Z MAR 76). The US authorities' concern was purely domestic: the US government did not want to be seen to be giving US jobs to foreign nationals (US archives, 1975, STATE 45265) and the US State Department had previously advised the US Embassy in Dublin that unemployment amongst US students was running at 15 to 20 per cent (US Archives, 1974 . Ref: R 121529Z). It took the intervention of, then, minister for foreign affairs, Garrett FitzGerald, in a meeting with US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, for the J-1 programme to be reinstated to a maximum of 300 places (US Archives, 1976, Ref: O 151330Z MAR 76). As recalled by Gilmore, the intervention by FitzGerald was critical:

I remember that help we got from the late Dr Garrett FitzGerald, who was then Ireland's minister for foreign affairs, and I still recall the help we got from the officials in DFA, in Iveagh House and in Washington. They helped to open doors for USI and for Irish students with the US politicians who in turn supported our cause.

(Gilmore, 2015).

By 1976, USIT were seeking permission to increase the number of J-1 visas. While the US authorities had no great objection to this, the US Embassy requested that USIT ensure that American Airline carriers be chartered to bring some of the Irish students to and from America. USIT agreed and advised the US Embassy that 60% of flights carrying students would be on US carriers for the next year (US archives, 1976 Ref: 071208Z). The J-1 programme received significant support from the US Embassy which believed that the programme 'had a positive effect on US-Irish relations and from [their] point of view is a valuable element in [their] overall educational and cultural programs (sic)' US Archives, 1976, Ref: O 151330Z MAR 76). By 1978, the number of visas had risen to 800, with a further 100 issued to students who were able to sponsor an American student coming to Ireland (*Irish Press*, 1978, June 21). One such programme was 'Encounter Ireland', whereby USIT acted as a sponsor for American students to spend their summer in Ireland (*Connacht Sentinel*, 1978, August 29).

USIT also arranged work programmes abroad in countries such as Britain, Sweden, France, Spain, Denmark, and Czechoslovakia. The benefits of student travel and work programme were numerous. The placements provided much needed revenue for students but also provided an opportunity to broaden minds. Students often used the programme to fund tuition fees and expenses during college term. Looking back on his participation in the programme, former student activist and journalist, Patsy McGarry, recalled how important it was for him:

It was a wonderful opportunity ... I spent two summers in London and two in the States on a J1 programme. I worked there, it's how I got through college. I used to borrow and go work for the summer, pay back what I owed the previous year, borrow for the subsequent [college] year and that's how the likes of me survived. I didn't do a lot of travelling; I needed the money for college.

(McGarry, 2015).

The exposure to other cultures was also something McGarry believes impacted on him and other students:

It was huge, my first two summers were in London and I have never felt the same affection for that city since those years but being a young Irish guy in London at those times was not a happy place to be. You could feel people freeze around you because of the accent, and I don't blame them, they were thinking, probably, that you were a potential terrorist, a bit like Muslims today, and that's why I have a lot of sympathy for Muslims today.

(McGarry, 2015).

Similarly, Eugene Murray, former president of TCD SRD (1971), noted how participation in the work-travel programme was beneficial in terms of exposure to new cultures:

Travel is hugely liberating and enlightening. Lots of people mostly went to America ... I actually didn't go to the States as a student, I went to Scandinavia and worked for two summers in Sweden ... Ireland was very closed in the late sixties and early seventies, it still really hadn't opened up to ideas so there was a financial side but there was a huge educational and cultural side.

(Murray, 2015).

4.4 Northern Ireland and civil rights

While the Republic of Ireland was enjoying relative stability, Northern Ireland was a hotbed of conflict and sectarianism, with the 'fault lines' of hatred running deep in the emotions and minds of the people of the six counties (McKittrick & McVea, 2001). Catholics in Northern Ireland were treated like second-class citizens, with many living in poverty, unable to get work and or access to benefits. The various unionist factions controlled the north's administration by means of a system of gerrymandering and it was impossible for Catholics to gain any real foothold into political power.

Much of the Northern Ireland higher and further education colleges were not active in the student movement in the 1960s, with the exception of Queen's University Belfast (QUB), St Joseph's, the Belfast Art College, the Physical Education College, the Catering College, and St Mary's. By virtue of its size, QUB dominated much of the student political debate and was an active member of USI and the NUS (the UK's National Union of Students), with QUB students' union officers having held the presidency of both national unions. Political affiliation to either national union was not based on provincial politics or the traditional dividing lines of nationalism and unionism. Instead, colleges choose their membership according to the benefits attained with access to the resale rights of the student travel card (ISIC) and access to student travel schemes (USIT) being major attractions for affiliation to USI.

In January 1962, the UK government commissioned a review of the higher education sector in Northern Ireland. Chaired by Sir John Lockwood, the committee was not asked to recommend any site for any recommended new university but, nonetheless, it did. With its large Catholic population, most observers expected any second university to be located in the city of Derry. However, in 1965, Lockwood recommended that any new university be located in Coleraine, a town with a large Protestant population, located some thirty miles east of Derry. The decision to locate the new university in Coleraine was greeted with outrage amongst Derry's population, with protests – including a protest drive from Derry to Belfast – taking place throughout early 1965. John Hume, later an MP for the SDLP, would later remark that the decision 'electrified the nationalist side ... and was the spark that ignited the civil rights movement' (Curran, 1986, pp. 42-43). In April 1967, a new non-violent organisation – the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) – was established to campaign for reform in areas such as housing and voting right.

NICRA held its first march in August 1968 – from Coalisland to Dungannon (Co. Tyrone) – a march attended by many students. As later recalled by student activist and later MP, Bernadette Devlin, it was attended by 'politically minded young people [who] turned up with the banners of their associations – the Young Liberals, the Young Socialists, and so on' (Devlin, 1969, p. 97). As the march was non-political and non-sectarian, the banners

could not be displayed and, despite not being allowed to enter the town of Dungannon, the march ended relatively peacefully.

The following October NICRA's second march – this time in Derry – was forcibly broken up by the police – sparking protests back on the campus of QUB (Fraser, 1983). Devlin, then a student of psychology at QUB, was present at the march and later recalled 'the evil delight the police were showing as they hit people down' (Devlin, 1969, pp. 87-98). Another witness to the police brutality at NICRA marches was Christine Donaghy, then a 14-year-old girl, but later welfare officer with USI:

I was 14 years old the night the civil rights march reached my hometown of Antrim. I remember the night vividly as word reached me and my friends that a crowd of Protestants including most of the respected owners of the main businesses in Antrim where at the top of the town with shovels and hammers etc. from their shops to attack the students and stop the march. After another protest march when the students were being driven back to Belfast in buses, I remember watching one of the buses being driven in to the local police station in Antrim for protection while gangs of fellas I knew threw bricks at the bus. So I saw students as being incredibly brave standing up for the rights of Catholics like me. The student leaders weren't only Catholics so it was the first time I'd seen a non-sectarian group stand up to injustice.

(Donaghy, 2015).

The brutality showed by the police at the Derry march in October 1968 prompted a meeting of students at QUB, out of which emerged People's Democracy which sought to amplify the demands of NICRA (*Irish Times*, 1968, October 10). Led by a committee of ten students (including Bernadette Devlin), the group's first march, in Belfast, was attended by several members of QUB's academic staff but was refused entry to a loyalist area by counter-protesters intent on stopping 'a papist invasion inspired by the IRA' (Devlin, 1969, p. 100). A second march (on October 16), this time from QUB campus to Belfast City Hall, was attended by over two thousand marchers (*Irish Times*, 1968,

October 17). As Devlin (1969, p. 103) recalled, the speeches were confined to core issues:

We spoke about ordinary, simple issues, like jobs, houses, and involvement in the system, because we were talking to people to whom these were the issues that mattered.

Nightly public meetings continued on QUB's campus until October 24, when 70 students conducted a sit-down protest at Stormont. The protest, carried out by students without any mandate from People's Democracy, lasted eight hours (*Irish Times*, 1968, October 25). It was peaceful and generally tolerated by politicians and parliamentary staff. This, according to Fraser (1983), was the first time in the West that a parliamentary building was occupied by students en-mass. In late November, the UK's national students' union (NUS) entered the debate by condemning the Special Powers Act, which it believed was being 'used to circumscribe students' legitimate activities in an intolerable way' (*Irish Times*, 1968, November 25).

But it was the People's Democracy's new year's march from Belfast to Derry that was to be a defining moment. The march, originally numbering about 40 students but growing as the march crossed the province, was set upon by a large group of loyalists, including off-duty special constables (B Specials), at Burntullet Bridge (Fraser, 1983). When the distraught marchers reached Derry, the nationalist 'Bogside' area of the city was raided by the RUC. Following a night of disturbances, the area's residents erected barricades and declared 'Free Derry', a situation that was defused a week later. Both the Irish and British student movements reacted to the events at Burntullet and Derry. While USI passed motions of support for Peoples' Democracy that condemned the Northern Ireland authorities for their interference in students' democratic right to protest (*Irish Times*, 1969, January 11), the National Union of Students (NUS) repealed its 'no politics' position at its 1969 conference (Day, 2012).

Later that year, Bernadette Devlin was elected as MP for Mid-Ulster in a by-election (Fraser, 1983). Students in the south also began protesting with students occupying the

British Passport Office in Dublin (*Irish Times*, 1969, April 22). On August 13, USI issued a statement calling for 'an Irish solution [to the Northern question that would] include guarantees for the liberty and cultural integrity of people in the Orange tradition' (*Irish Times*, 1969, August 14). Later, as that year's loyalist marching season turned violent, it advised its membership to avoid trouble-areas in the province (*Irish Times*, 1969, August 19).

As the Troubles worsened, individual student unions debated issues such as internment, which was introduced in August 1971. As former president of Coleraine University's students' union (and former USI president), Peter Davies, recalled, most students were opposed to internment:

The first meeting of the student council I went to ... passed a resolution opposing internment without trial ... it was not [contentious], at that stage the student council's politics was a pretty broad mix, not too many dyed-in-the-wool unionists ... there was a Republican Club, a couple of Labour Club people, quite a lot of an Alliance Party presence at that time ... in fact the officers of the students' union at that time were all Alliance Party people.

(Davies, 2015).

In an attempt to prevent individual students' unions joining either USI or NUS to denote political allegiances both nation unions agreed, in July 1972, a protocol on joint membership for Northern Ireland students. An office, jointly financed by both national unions, was established and from then on Northern Ireland students no longer had an option as to which of the two national unions they were to be affiliated to. The following November, the first NUS–USI regional conference took place. As recalled by Eamon Gilmore, the 'bilateral agreement' was an important stepping stone in defusing tension and stressing commonalities shared by all students:

By the time I became involved in students' unions (1973/74), violence had taken hold in Northern Ireland. Students' Unions in Northern Ireland and USI worked to minimise sectarianism in the colleges ... By the mid-70s there was a danger that in students' unions where the majority of students were from nationalist backgrounds would affiliate only to USI and those from unionist backgrounds would affiliate only to the NUSUK. Discussion took place between USI and NUSUK which resulted in a students' union structure for NI, whereby students' unions were affiliated to both national unions and the two national unions organised jointly in NI. The two unions organised a campaign against sectarianism, entitled 'Peace, Jobs, Progress', and cooperated with the Northern Ireland Committees of the ICTU who had a similar 'Better Life for All' campaign. I worked closely with the officers of NUSUK on these campaigns. Among those with whom I worked was Charles Clarke, the president of NUSUK, later Home Secretary in Tony Blair's government.

(Gilmore, 2015).

As recalled by Pat Rabbitte, the 'bilateral agreement' was important in keeping students on all sides of the divide united as students:

There was turmoil going on ... the background thinking was that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions were attempting to use their influence and their structures to stop the [trade union] movement dividing in Northern Ireland as threatened by various events and the inequality at the time with some employments being exclusively being non-nationalist, so we imitated that. Without a doubt it had a remarkable impact on those who left college. I don't think we could have foreseen or known as students or fully appreciated how significant it was because in considerably later years Sinn Féin began to infiltrate the student movement and there were some very nasty incidents, like one involving David Trimble's friend who was shot dead on campus. It became very ropey but it was held together.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

The bilateral agreement was historically significant. It was the first agreement between national bodies in the UK and Ireland. The agreement showed that the divisions within

the province could be overcome in the interests of the common good. Such a practical example of cooperation between all the traditions and communities in the province no doubt had an impact on successive generations of students.

But despite attempts to de-politicise union membership, the security situation remained tense, with students partaking in a multitude of protests. In January 1972, the events of Bloody Sunday (when the British Army Parachute Regiment killed 13 civil rights marchers in Derry) resulted in the firebombing of the British embassy in Dublin. As recalled by former TCD student union president, Eugene Murray, the college, given its heritage, feared it too would be attacked:

My brother ... was on the march where 13 people were killed ... there was a huge outcry ... I remember going to the protest where the British Embassy was burnt down ... going up Dawson Street with a friend of mine who wouldn't touch a flea and his pockets were filled with petrol bombs, he threw a petrol bomb at some British-owned furniture store in Dawson Street ... there was a fear in Trinity that they would attack Trinity because it had this British institution view on it still and Val Roche, who was a very active member of the United Nations Student Association, went to the provost and said, 'do you realise that there is a potential that people might attack Trinity?' ... 'I want permission to do something that I think would be in both of our interests'. She got a white sheet and she got a can of paint and she sprayed the number 13 and she hung it from the windows from Trinity and that was Trinity saying it was in sympathy with the people who were killed.

(Murray, 2015).

Just as southern students protested about events in the north, so too did northern students protest about events in the south. In December 1972, 100 students from the civil rights association branches of QUB and Coleraine marched from Dublin's Liberty Hall to Dail Eireann to protest against the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act (which according to the protestors 'makes the Special Powers Act in the North, look like some kind of liberal democracy'), the Forcible Entry and Occupation Act, and the bans on contraceptives and divorce. The march took place on December 13, starting at

Liberty Hall and ended at Leinster House. The marchers were addressed by Des O'Hagan of the NICRA executive, Kadar Asmal of Citizens for Civil Liberty (CCL) and Nell McCafferty of the Women's Liberation Movement. Then president of USI, Pat Rabbitte, declared that USI fully endorsed the protest's 'timely reminder' and called for the creation of a '32-county democratic socialist republic where civil rights and liberties can be enjoyed by all our people' (USI, 1972, December 11).

Southern students also protested against the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act, a provision of which outlawed protests near Garda stations. As recalled by, then, UCG student activist, Patsy McGarry:

We took this very seriously ... there was a major protest march outside Eglington Street Garda Station [Galway] ... and the Gardai leathered into us, it was vicious ... I think the local super lost the cool ... they arrested five ... we lost it completely and we sat on the street and refused to move and when the word reached the college hundreds more came. We occupied Eglington Street and we refused to move until they released the five people that they had arrested, and they did. That was the evening the bombs went off at Liberty Hall and Liam Cosgrave rolled in behind Lynch and the Bill was passed.

(McGarry, 2015).

In their continued efforts to ensure that colleges remained non-sectarian, the two national unions (USI and NUS) launched a joint policy initiative entitled 'Peace Jobs Progress' in 1976. Its objectives were to put an end to all sectarian and military violence, secure a bill of rights to guarantee civil liberties, and the creation of a programme of social reconstruction by the British government to provide jobs, housing, social welfare services and education.

The unions believed that the adoption of such a policy would lead to the deconstruction of sectarian divisions in the community and create a positive a constructive political and social life in the region. In Dublin, USI appealed for support from all political parties. The

former president of USI (1979-80) recalled that the initiative was ‘in a sense a successor to the involvement of students in the civil rights campaign’:

After all the civil rights events there was a huge amount of division and a lot of polarisation so in a sense ‘Peace, Jobs, Progress’ was something that could unite students. On one hand you had the Troops Out movement on the far left, particularly in Britain which NUS marking that space and helped them define their policy, and in our case there was everything from the young provisional view of the world, communist party, right back up to Fianna Fáil ... it was a campaign that allowed students, north, south, east, west to have a discussion and debate that was not divisive.

(Costello, 2015).

As the Troubles continued, those students who had, as recalled by former USI welfare officer Christine Donaghy, ‘led the civil rights movement a few years earlier were still regarded as extremely important’ (Donaghy, 2015). People like Bernadette Devlin, Eamon McCann (civil rights campaigner and journalist), and Michael Farrell (former chair of Irish Council for Civil Rights and former member of the Irish Human Rights Commission), all of whom played prominent roles in People’s Democracy, continued to campaign on political issues long after they had graduated from the student movement.

4.5 The gentle revolution and the Carysfort dispute

While students in almost all colleges were engaged in some level of dispute with university or college authorities over recognition of representation, facilities, academic standards or tuition fees two key disputes during the sixties and seventies had a profound impact on students and the public perception of students. These were the 1968 gentle revolution in UCD and the Carysfort dispute 1973-74.

4.5.1 The 'Gentle Revolution'

By the late 1960s, the size of UCD's campus had become an issue. Earlsfort Terrace had originally been designed to cope with 1,000 students; by the 1960s, student numbers had reached 10,000. The university's relocation to the suburb of Belfield brought to the fore a number of problems with the decision-making structures of UCD and its ability to communicate with staff and students. The move itself was marred in controversy, with civic society groups such as Tuairim (an intellectual group that sought to influence public policy) opposing the move and little consideration was given to how students would get to the new location or where they would live, as accommodation in the area was predominately family-orientated.

Science students were the first to move to the new campus in 1964 and their dissatisfaction with management and facilities quickly grew. Two years later, food prices were increased by 20 per cent, while the existing canteen was unable to accommodate the student population. Other issues – such as increases in tuition fees, a threatened loss of international accreditation of the architectural degree, and non-investment in the buildings at Earlsfort Terrace – also came to the fore. While the minister for education, Donogh O'Malley, met with student representatives over the move of arts students to Belfield and the construction of a student centre, the issue of student grants remained an issue, with over 5,000 students marching to the Dáil in February 1968 (*Irish Independent*, 1968, February 14). By June 1968, things finally came to a head. That month, medical students held a protest in the Medical Library and also occupied the Arts Library to demand that the library remain open during the summer. Later that year, chemistry students rearranged seats in one of their labs to frustrate the roll call. The students claimed that the administrative methods in the university were 'more suited to a primary school than to a university' (*Irish Times*, 1968, October 30). In November 1968, the first direct action took place, when 2,500 students occupied Earlsfort Terrace's Great Hall for over two hours after university authorities had refused to allow a teach-in to take place.

The second direct action took place three weeks later when over 100 architecture students held a sit-in for almost two days in order to highlight what they saw as falling

standards in the university. Students were increasingly ‘frustrated at the narrow intellectual dimension of both the politics courses and the teaching of economics’ (Quinn, 2005, p. 61). Dissatisfied with the work of the UCD SRC, a group of students decided to set up their own organisation. In January, the UCD Labour Party branch organised a public meeting – entitled ‘Student Power’ – in the Kevin Barry Room in Earlsfort Terrace (Quinn, 2005, p. 61). Guest speakers included Howard Kinlay, president of USI; Denis Reen, president of the UCD SRC, and Sister Benvenuta, a history lecturer. From the discussion at that meeting emerged ‘Students for Democratic Action’ (SDA). As recalled by, then, student activist and leader of the new group, Ruairi Quinn:

The whole student movement from Berkeley through to the riots and rumblings in France and other parts [showed] students were awakening world-side. It was very fashionable in many senses but also it was very visual as we were seeing it on our televisions, we weren’t reading about it anymore it was like the famous civil rights march in Derry, this was now in your face, it was in your screen, it was in your living room. Una Claffrey was secretary of the Labour Party branch ... we decided, along with others, that we would have a motion on student power and we had Dennis Ring of USI, we asked Kadar Asmal to come ... Kadar couldn’t come and at the last moment Justin Keating made himself available ... afterwards Justin and I went for a pint ... he gave me a lift home and he said you really have to get into the pockets of students, you have to talk to them about things that concern them ... and that’s what we did. We decided to form something that could relate to students and not to the adult world of politics so we formed the SDA.

(Quinn, 2015).

Quinn, chairperson of the Labour Party Branch Committee, approached fellow students, Kevin Myers, Basil Millar, Dave Grafton, and John Feeney. One of the aims of the SDA was to ensure that a socialist alternative was presented to students, no matter what they were studying. As recalled by Quinn:

I formed the view that UCD was not a university, it was a Catholic academy and there was one orthodox point of view. So sociology was made from the point of view of what is Catholic

practise and how valid or invalid are all the others. Likewise economics and philosophy were the same. There was no room for any Marxist analysis within an economic framework. We wanted to turn it into a university as we perceived it, in all of our enthusiasm and naivety at the time.

(Quinn, 2015).

Students became more restless as delays to key amenities were announced. A mass meeting was organised by the SDA on February 26, 1969. At this meeting, motions were passed declaring that the student body would not move to Belfield until key facilities were completed, the university governing body was abolished and a new body, with a 50/50 ratio of students and staff, be constituted. As soon as the meeting ended, students occupied the administration building, barricading the doors and refusing to leave. As the *Irish Independent* described it, ‘the black flag of anarchy flew over UCD (1969, February 27). The occupation ended the next day and a statement was issued outlining the key demands. The university’s governing body reacted by advising students that it had ‘a legal obligation which can only be altered by Act of the Oireachtas, to carry out all the affairs of the college ... and will not yield to intimidation’ (Pettit, 1969). Academic staff also sought to undermine the protests – as recalled by Quinn:

Professor [Thomas] Murphy, who was the registrar at the time, and a medic by background encouraged both the commerce students and the medics if they weren’t in favour of what was going on to make their voice heard because it was very easy to have a mass demonstration in Earlsfort Terrace.

(Quinn, 2015).

The protests in UCD sparked similar protests at TCD. That same week, the minister for education, Brian Lenihan, who was to speak at a student society meeting, was forced to leave a building through a window to escape what the media described as ‘dissident’ students. The minister rebuked the students for their behaviour, which, he declared, offended ‘the ordinary code of human behaviour’ (*Irish Independent*, 1969, February 27)

and requested that college authorities discipline the students. Trinity's provost, Albert McConnell, issued a statement after the incident, lamenting the fact that some students were attempting to deny the right of freedom of speech, one that they sought for themselves.

In early March, another mass meeting of UCD students took place and it resolved to suspend student participation in 'normal student activities in college on (Thursday, March 6) for the purposes of discussing a) the institutional structures of UCD and the values and attitudes which give rise to them, and b) the function of the university in the context of the needs and interest of the Irish people' (Pettit, 1969).

A subsequent meeting of 250 members of university staff registered its goodwill towards the students. The teach-ins, which discussed university management and the role of the university in society, continued at Belfield, with over 2,000 students in attendance. Meetings between the SDA and the university's Academic Staff Association produced a report that advocated key changes in the areas of department representation, faculty representation, university council (academic and administrative). In March 1969, the university authorities conceded on the union representation issue. The university agreed to the establishment of an autonomous student union, with an annual budget of £75,000 (*Irish Times*, March 20, 1969).

4.5.2 The Carysfort Dispute

Union recognition was also an issue at Dublin's Carysfort College. Established by the Sisters of Mercy, the college was a training college for female students who wished to enter the teaching profession. For many students, going to college, even to an institution run by a religious order, represented liberation. As recalled by former Carysfort College's students' union president, Catherine Byrne:

The liberation for women was unbelievable at one level. For the first time in our lives we were away from either boarding schools which were completely controlled or from very restricted narrow-family life. There was a great sense of

freedom and exposure to new ideas and thinking ... there were great debates and discussions about student politics, about Paris and just being really curious and open ... we had a smoking room in Carysfort, we were allowed to smoke!

(Byrne, 2015).

But, in many ways, the sense of liberation was an illusion, as individualism was frowned upon and strict dress codes were imposed. As recalled by Byrne:

I remember such a level of anger seeing a young woman crying because a nun had stopped her and told her to change her skirt, brought her to look at a mirror to show her how awful her knees and legs above her knees were ... There were rules where you couldn't wear a pair of trousers unless you wore something over them that went down over your bottom to having to wear identical outfits to go to PE ... I recall forty or fifty of us walking across a field ... there were a lot of young men on the building sites ... we were all mortified and embarrassed at the idea of us walking along in these red uniforms as if we were in an army camp ... feeling that there was one part of us being liberated to think and another part of us being controlled in a way that was completely unacceptable.

(Byrne, 2015).

Throughout 1972 (the year before Byrne was elected president of the college's students' union), the 650 strong student body held protests against the curfew imposed at the college's residences. It was these protests that inspired Byrne to run for office. But having returned to Carysford after the summer holiday, Byrne ran into difficulty with getting the college authorities to recognise and negotiate with the union:

I came back thinking I was going to be running an ordinary year, there was no sense of anything building up but no sooner were we back than a group of students approached us with a problem. They had chosen subjects that they thought they had to do through English but had to do them through Irish and it just didn't make any sense. There was a new president

appointed to the college. We thought this would be simple, go and meet her.

(Byrne, 2015).

At the meeting between Byrne and the new college president, Sr. Cabrini, Sr. Cabrini refused to recognise the legitimacy of the students' union to represent student grievances. Its role, according to Sr. Cabrini, was to provide feedback when requested to do so by college authorities. Byrne convened a meeting of the student body which agreed to boycott lectures and hold-teach-ins instead (Byrne, Carysfort Dispute Diary Papers, 1973). The teach-ins addressed issues such as 'the role of the teacher in the community' and reform of teacher education. The teach-ins were addressed by USI deputy president, Pat Brady, Peter Bradley, of TCD, and Senator John Horgan (*Irish Independent*, 1973, November 29).

The students' union also organised a petition – signed by 550 students – that called for the union to be recognised as a representative body and send copies of the petition to Sr. Cabrini and Dublin's Archbishop, Dermot Ryan. As media attention in the dispute grew, the students' union wrote an open letter, signed by Byrne and USI president, Pat Rabbitte, to parents to inform them of the situation. The letter claimed that the college president, Sr. Cabrini, had addressed second year students in an attempt to undermine the protest. According to the letter, Sr. Cabrini had declared that 'if psychological tests were performed on these irresponsible students it would show that they are either lacking in intelligence or emotionally disturbed' (Byrne & Rabbitte, 1973).

However, as recalled by Byrne, the students' union received secret support from some faculty members and some administration staff and was privately encouraged to continue its campaign:

There was a divide within the college, a couple of lecturers started passing messages to me through other lecturers, people like Prof. John Coolahan and the registrar of Carysfort, who later went on to become the registrar in UCD. They gave me encouragement.

(Byrne, 2015).

As president of USI, Rabbitte, issued a statement to the press which described the college as being 'run as if it were a convent boarding school' and as being engulfed in an atmosphere of 'fear and victimisation' (*Irish Independent*, 1973, November 29). Recalling this atmosphere, Byrne observed that it was the notion of young people organising that disturbed the college authorities:

What was really scary for them is that people were standing up to them. It was shock, horror, disbelief. I am not sure they realised the consequences of membership of USI straight away but that came later. It was the fact that suddenly there was a group of people who had the ear of all of the students, who could call a meeting and 600 people would turn up in a room. That really scared them.

(Byrne, 2015).

In December, as recalled by Byrne, the students escalated the protest by refusing to carry out teaching practice:

We threatened and told them we would boycott [teaching practice], they never believed we would. The buses turned up in the morning but the night before we stayed up all night and we made placards saying 'official union boycott on here'. In the meantime we became members of USI ... we had Pat Rabbitte out and the student body endorsed the decision to become members.

(Byrne, 2015).

Now representing the students' union, USI called for an inquiry into how the college was run and again requested that Archbishop Ryan intervene. A meeting between the students' union, USI and college representatives in early December 1973 resulted in no

agreement being reached. In response, USI president, Pat Rabbitte, declared that USI was not prepared 'to leave our members defenceless in a college which has shown scant regards for students' rights' (*Irish Independent*, 1973, December 4, p. 3). For its part, the college wrote to students' parents to advise them that, if the dispute did not end, the students may not qualify as teachers (Cabrini, 1973, December 6). USI and the students' union continued to explore other avenues, including meetings with the Department of Education and opposition spokespersons on education (Byrne, Carsfort Dispute Diary Papers, 1973).

Following a mass protest of 1,000 students, which marched on Archbishop Ryan's official residence in Drumcondra, a meeting to resolve the dispute was scheduled to take place at the residence (*Irish Press*, 1973, December 8). However, when USI representatives arrived at the residence, they were refused admittance. Inside the residence, Byrne and her fellow students employed their own tactics:

We decided that one of the ways we would protest is that we wouldn't kiss his ring, all nine of us (including two nuns). We decided that we would have one spokesperson, which was me. He immediately tried to bypass me but the others said no. There was extraordinary unity and trust behind every action we took.

(Byrne, 2015).

When the archbishop approached the other students, asking what they wanted, each referred back to Byrne as the chief spokesperson, with the exception of one who asked the archbishop to 'send Sr. Cabrini on the mission' (Byrne, 2015).

That weekend, the *Sunday Independent* praised the actions of the students. Its editorial declared that, if the students were believed to be 'mature enough to teach the nation's children next year or the year after, surely they are mature enough to draw up a constitution to suit their students' union'. It also noted that their actions made 'one hopeful of the type of teachers they may turn out to be' (*Sunday Independent*, 1973,

December 9). As the dispute continued, Byrne and the students' union began to organise support concerts on campus:

At one concert the nuns switched off the electricity at the venue, the whole place went into darkness, and I got up on stage and said ... we would not be beaten by this type of tactic ... the president of the college then got up and said that if this continued they would stop providing food and close the restaurant and I remember Pat Brady [USI officer] shouting back at her, 'man does not live on bread alone!'.

(Byrne, 2015).

As recalled by, then, USI president, Pat Rabbitte, USI began to organise unofficial lectures on the campus, a move that provoked an angry response from college authorities:

We put in unofficial lecturers, that was the thing that really frightened the establishment, we had lecturers from UCD and TCD and they lectured the women on education and education philosophy, Denys Turner, Padraig Hogan etc ... we ran an alternate education and we had the occasional entertainment associated with it and the nun, Sr Cabrini, said she would send us a bill for the electricity that we had used for [the] concert. So Pat Brady wrote a song, adapting a television advert about 'Martini' to 'Sr Cabrini'.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

On one occasion, the college authorities called in the Garda Siochana to remove a band that was playing at one such event (Byrne, Carsfort Dispute Diary Papers, 1973). The college president also made good on her threat and closed the restaurant – only those students not on strike were fed. Eventually, the college hired a private security firm – referred to as 'bouncers from Irish Industrial Securities Ltd' by one student newspaper (*Contact*, 1974, January) – to prevent such events from happening on campus. As

recalled by Catherine Byrne, the arrival of the security firm forced the students' union to resort to unusual tactics to ensure that USI representatives were able to address the students:

We just came in one Monday morning and there were guys on the door with hurling sticks, once a week we would have Pat Rabbitte out to talk and give us an update and to rally the crowd. They obviously had a couple of moles, a few people telling them what was going on, and Rabbitte was due to arrive that day. I got in touch with him and told him he was not going to be able to come out but then I remembered the huge windows ... so we told him come in the window ... you have to understand the sexual politics of it all, we had all this sexual energy of 600 women and no men around. Rabbitte and [Pat] Brady were handsome and young and articulate and there was that social side of it ... so in the back window and up the hall to great acclaim.

(Byrne, 2015).

In early 1974, Archbishop Ryan held an unofficial meeting with Byrne at which he requested a two-week suspension of the boycott in order to work on a resolution with the college president. Byrne refused his request (Byrne, Carsfort Dispute Diary Papers, 1973).

As far as the Catholic Church was concerned, USI was a communist front that had to be resisted. In early January 1974, Pat Rabbitte was denounced from pulpits as a 'Dublin communist'. In response, Rabbitte declared that there had been 'a methodical campaign of vilification and slander being carried out by individual members of the religious in various parts of the country against the USI' (*Irish Independent*, 1974, January 11). Shortly afterwards, Sean Brosnahan, the general secretary of the INTO, contacted Byrne and offered her members student membership of the INTO if the students' union withdrew from USI membership. Byrne refused the offer.

The dispute ended in late January 1974 when agreement was reached between the students' union and college management (*Irish Press*, January 23, 1974). The students' union was given four seats on the college board – de facto recognition of its right to

represent the students. The students had, concluded the *Irish Independent*, won a major overhaul of the 'out-dated and undemocratic structures in Carysfort' (1974, January 24).

4.6 Conclusion

Since the foundation of the USI, the student movement has been able to create a stable and organised platform for students to participate in the public sphere. Recognition for USI and individual students' unions, coupled with media coverage of student campaigns and protests legitimised the union in the public eye. As recalled by TCD student activist, Carol Coulter, USI was established with the aim of being more politically engaged than its predecessor:

There was a sense around USI, by the time I became aware of it, that it was more socially engaged than its predecessor had been, that it was more open to radical thinking than the predecessor. There was a sense that the people who were involved previously were more inclined to be looking towards careers in the established parties than the next generation who came along.

(Coulter, 2015).

Oireachtas records indicate that politicians recognised the contribution that an nationally organised representative organisation for third-level students would bring to policy debates. In a debate on the Higher Education Authority Bill, 1970, Fine Gael's Garret FitzGerald declared:

... that the contribution that has been made by the Union of Students in Ireland to the evolution of policy in the past couple of years should command respect ... that the USI in the research work they have been doing, and the data they have been producing, have been doing an extraordinarily useful job. It is rather paradoxical that because there are so many more students, and therefore they have the finance, they have a full-time staff who are able to do this kind of work and do it

extremely well, whereas the university teachers being smaller in number have not got a full-time staff for this purpose.

(Dáil Éireann Debate 1971. Higher Education Authority Bill, 1970, February 10).

FitzGerald's assessment was shared by those students who were engaged within the movement. Tom Costello, a student of St Patrick's College Drumcondra, and later USI president, recalled the positive perception of the union that students had:

There was a sense throughout that period ... of there being a bunch of very competent guys in charge of the student movement, a combination of discipline, good organisational ability and also pretty good way of dealing with government and at the same time mobilising.

(Costello, 2015).

USI had successfully achieved what its founders had set out to do – to give students a voice. In December 1972, a referendum was held to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18. USI was one of the major campaigners for a yes vote. The referendum passed and students, not only wielded a significant voice in the public sphere, but were now a constituency that self-defined itself with issues somewhat distinct from those of their parents. As recalled by Pat Rabbitte, the successful campaign yielded political dividends:

We ran a hell of a campaign and we mustered all our tools of protest and argumentation. We emerged as 'the' youth body on the yes side. We held meetings, leaflets and canvassing. It was part of the growing youth culture of finding a voice ... it enhanced the substance of USI and political parties began to take more seriously of young people becoming engaged and some of them were quite nervous in terms of where it would lead.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

USI was now a growing presence on the political stage. Following increases to tuition fees in 1972, the minister for education, Pádraig Faulkner, was jeered and subjected to a walkout by delegates at the 1972 USI congress. The increase in tuition fees became a major rallying cry for protest. Former UCG student activist, Patsy McGarry, recalled one such protest in Galway:

In 1974 USI decided to mount this major campaign on fees, Dick Burke was minister for education at the time and between his style, pomposity and his narrowness he wasn't the most popular minister. We took it very seriously in Galway ... fees were hugely significant in terms of accessibility where we came from ... we occupied offices all over the city, we were the bane of the Gardai, we occupied the council offices, we spent the night there and the Gardai came and lifted us out and we went off and found more offices, we spent a week occupying offices all over the city of Galway, causing major disruption ... We would start college every day and then march and we would deliberately tell anybody as we didn't want the word to get out and have the Gardai there before us. We'd walk in a different direction and make a mad dash for whatever public office it was and get in there and the Gardai could do nothing about it. Towards the end of the week the Gardai were getting sick of it. Michael D. [Higgins] used to have to be called in to intervene. The last offices we occupied was on the Friday in Bord Fáilte ... Michael D. came down and mediated and got us out of the building.

(McGarry, 2015).

By the mid-1970s, the various campaigns outlined in this chapter demonstrated that a stable national student movement had developed and emerged as a significant social movement that could engage within the public sphere and affect change.

The evidence from the activities of the student movement show that students were conscious agitators seeking social change as a collective group.

The campaigning by students on issues such as apartheid was seen as legitimate by the media. The action of students on apartheid predates the foundation of the Irish Anti-Apartheid movement which may indicate that their role as intellectuals on the subject

may have created a positive environment whereby knowledge of the injustices of the South African regime reached tipping point within the public sphere. The students were both members of the Anti-apartheid movement and created significant networks and alliances with secondary groups such as the ICCL to campaign and influence public and government policy in the area.

The student travel programme and the establishment of USIT provided students not just with summer jobs but exposure to new cultures, innovations in business and industry. Students brought home with them new ideologies, ways of viewing societal problems, concepts of justice and may have established societies and groups to further explore the application of these to Irish society. The success of the J1 program and desire of students to take part in this tradition or Rite of Passage clearly impacted the thousands who participated.

The role of students in the Northern Ireland civil rights campaign is a perfect example of movement intellectualism and social justice activism. Student groups actively wrote and campaigned against discrimination of Catholics in the province. They resisted the introduction of draconian legislation that sought to jail individuals without trial in both jurisdictions. They built alliances with numerous groups and recognised much earlier than the political classes that cooperation and respect for each tradition could only come about by parity of esteem.

The gentle revolution is another classic example of movement intellectuals within the student movement. Here leaders were not afraid to challenge university management and seek changes to the education system and the role of the university within society. They developed a concept of the university not simply as an academy that served the middle class but an institution that served the public good.

The Carysfort dispute provides clear evidence that a student collective identity exists within Ireland and the solidarity shown by other students' unions towards the students of Carysfort highlights the fraternal ties that exist also. The students themselves were woman and nuns who were not afraid to challenge the Church both publically and privately and the direct action taken by the students was motivated to protect not only their right to collective bargaining and organisation but also to resist regulations of their

lives – rules which sought to strip them of their individualism. The female students were highly radical for the time period challenging not just the nuns who ran the college but the most senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.

The next three chapters explore the role of the student movement in three major issues in the sexual morality debate of the latter half of the twentieth century in Ireland.

Chapter 5

Introduction to and context of the case studies

5.1 Introduction

The 1970s was a decade of change in Ireland. In effect, it marked the emergence into young adulthood of the first generation to have grown-up in post-protectionist Ireland. This generation was also the first to have grown-up with television, free second-level education, and an expanding third-level sector. It was also a generation that would very soon have the right to vote. It was, as Sweeney (2010, p. 2) put it, ‘a time when cherished notions about the republican tradition, the place of women in society, the power wielded by the Catholic Church, sexual morality and the viability of the state itself were challenged’. The expansion of the higher education sector meant a rapid increase in an independent-thinking young population, but it also provided platforms all across the country for debates on social issues. The sheer size of the youth population and its increasing level of education meant a constant questioning of the status-quo, definitions and accepted traditions. The third level maintenance grant scheme – introduced in 1968 – meant that young people from low-income backgrounds could obtain a university education. Patsy McGarry, auditor of the UCG’s Literary & Debating Society between 1974 and 1975, recalled the impact of free second level education:

It (Galway) was a very radical campus in those years, and I have often wondered why. I think it had to do with the fact we were among the first generations to benefit from free education. We came from backgrounds that it was not expected we would ever have the opportunity to go to third-level, we were all from the western seaboard of Ireland, the most socially deprived part of Ireland, hardest hit by emigration and I remember the feeling of relish going into UCG, coming from the sense of what was going on worldwide in the 1960s, France in particular, the United States and the civil rights movement, Northern Ireland, the role students’ union played there I could see what they could do and I was very socially aware.

(McGarry, 2015).

In the early 1970s, almost half of the Irish population was under twenty-five but a significant proportion of this group was disenfranchised, as they were unable to vote in elections or referenda. In 1972, a referendum was held, successfully amending the constitution, decreasing the voting age from 21 to 18. However, young people were unable to vote in the February 1973 general election, as the register of electors was only updated in April of each year. Then USI president, Pat Rabbitte, condemned the lack of foresight and asked the electorate to remember 'the hypocrisy of the Fianna Fáil government in preventing 140,000 young people voting' (*Irish Times*, 1973, February 23). Veteran republican, Seán MacBride, represented a twenty-year-old student, David Reynolds, in the High Court in an attempt to have the election deferred. He was unsuccessful, but was awarded costs due to the 'considerable public importance' of his case (Ferriter, 2012, p. 95). Several other students' unions made damaging statements about the conduct of the government in disenfranchising the youth vote. The entire episode is accepted as having dealt a blow to Fianna Fáil's success in the general election (ibid). Young people's political power had begun to grow. It was amid this dissatisfaction with society and government that debates on women's rights, contraception, divorce and gay rights would spill out from the universities and colleges into the streets, parishes and parliament (Sweeney, 2010). As John Waters (1994, p. 103) put it 'the seventies generation, in a sense, had to conduct not one but two rebellions: against the orthodoxy of the Ireland into which they were born, and against the orthodoxies of those who could see only one direction in which it could go'. It was all this change that would herald what Girvin (2008, p. 1) referred to as 'the Irish cultural wars of the 1970s and 1980s'.

5.2 The case studies and an Irish student movement typology

The case studies explore the role of the student movement in three major policy areas in Ireland, the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the legalisation of contraceptives, and the campaign around bodily autonomy and reproductive rights. In these policy areas, two important social movements led the charge for change, the women's movement and the gay rights movement. Both of these movements could be classified as action-

reaction model movements. They were dramatic and sought to generate support from third parties in taking up their cause (Andrews, 2001).

As previously discussed in the literature review, four models of student movements have been identified by Gill & DeFronzo (2009). The activities of the Irish student movement, as outlined in the previous chapter, rule out two of the four classifications, structural revolutionary and social revolutionary movements. Instead, the Irish student movement falls between a reform and identity radicalism movement. The key characteristics, as outlined by Gill & DeFronzo are:

Reform Movements

- Influence policies
- Replacing personnel
- Advocating new emphases or interpretations of existing cultural values
- Not radically changing institutions or aspects of culture

Identity Radicalism

- Focus on reconstructing identities or ways of thinking
- Reconstructing values and discursive practices regarded as group subordination controls

For the purposes of the case studies, the Irish student movement will be classified as a fusion of the above two models, and will be termed a *pragmatic student movement*.

A *pragmatic student movement* works with existing social movements, such as the women's or gay rights movements as a marginal elite advocate, or as Lipsky (1968) calls them, 'third party or 'bystander publics' or 'conscience constituents'. As to why a pragmatic social movement involves itself in the advocacy of other groups is evident from the various statements and accounts of the activities of the student movement contained in the case studies to follow.

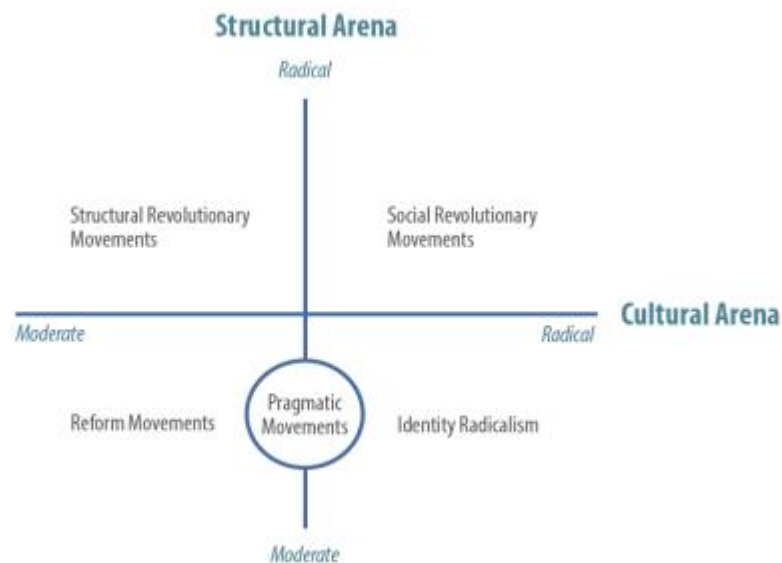


Figure 3: Gill & DeFronzo student movement typology with Pragmatic student movement positioning

A reform movement seeks to debate and change traditional interpretation of existing cultural values such as sexuality or reproductive rights. It does not seek to radically amend institutions or culture. An identify radicalism movement focuses on deconstructing traditional cultural values. However, the Irish student movement tends to not settle in either of these categories and moves to engage in activities of both when campaigning on behalf of a minority group. Its actions are often a mix of both activities in its attempt to achieve its goal. While students collectively are not the primary target of the discrimination which they campaign against, they are often provoked to solidarity-inspired action because of the relationships students cultivate with members of the groups that are impacted by the discrimination. Very often, advocacy by the student movement for groups subject to discrimination are instigated or championed by members of the student body who are themselves members of the oppressed or discriminated group, such as homosexual or female students. The collective body therefore finds itself in ideological opposition to these forms of discrimination and therefore spurred into action.

Comparing both reform and identity radicalism student movements, the following characteristics have been identified for a pragmatic student movement:

Characteristics of a Pragmatic Student Movement
Highly organised movement with established recognition
Open lines of communication with a wide variety of institutional, governmental and non-governmental groups
Defined set of democratically endorsed principles and objectives
Will seek structural and institutional change where necessary
Proactive on issues of importance to students and others – able to construct solutions to social problems facing society
Strong ethical and moral beliefs informed by philosophies and teachings other than the predominant discourse of society
Perceived to be a legitimate political actor
Diverse membership
Diverse repertoire of contention and willingness to share such resources

Table 9: Characteristics of a Pragmatic Student Movement

The student movement often employs a diverse repertoire of contention, a set of protests tactics adapted for the campaign to be waged at a given time (Tilly, 1978). These tactics are often well practiced and flexible, therefore, student activists ‘in disparate locations with minimal organisation and without direct linkages are able to unite in national social movements’ (Soule, 1997, p. 859). Tilly (1978, pp. 519-520) points out that such flexible repertoires

permits continuous, gradual change in the group’s means. The change may occur through imitation of other groups or through innovation. The imitation of other groups is most likely when the members of one contender observe that another contender is using a new means successfully, or newly using an old means successfully.

Such imitation by the student movement and cooperation with external non-student actors is a characteristic of the ‘conscience constituent’ nature of the student movement on social issues.

Within the literature on new social movements and collective action, a number of scholars have attempted to rationalise this behaviour of conscience constituents. Gamson (1975) concludes that groups that advocate on behalf of non-constituents are universalistic. Olson (1965) argues that it is not irrational for a group of conscience

constituents, such as the student movement, to seek change on behalf of another group.

Touraine observes that:

The new social movements seem as specific and as interested in consciousness-raising as the others were violent and interested in the control of power. The old social movements were associated with the idea of revolution; the new ones are associated with the idea of democracy.

(Touraine, 1995, p. 143).

However, the impetus for advocating on behalf of a social movement, such as the gay rights movement or women's movement, comes from those who identify and align themselves with these movements or who have a personal interest in their success. Through ideological discourse, USI agreed to campaign for the liberalisation of contraceptives, the woman's right to choose and the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

The case studies trace the activities of the student movement as a social movement in its own right within the gay and women's rights campaigns. USI actively participated and supported these campaigns but also ran education and political campaigns within the student movement to mobilise support. It should be noted, however, that, while there existed a very small minority of active student dissenters to these campaigns, these dissenters did not gain any traction within the national movement.

Chapter 6

Case Study 1

The campaign for the decriminalisation of homosexuality

6.1 Introduction

The Stonewall riots in the United States in 1969 were the catalyst for the growth of a worldwide gay rights movement that attracted allies within international student movements, liberal churches, and the women's movement. In the Republic of Ireland, homosexual acts between men were criminalised by the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 and carried the sanction of penal servitude for life. There was little appetite amongst politicians to discuss repealing the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The only real attempt by legislators to discuss the laws regarding homosexuality occurred in 1930 when a committee was established to consider amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Acts of 1880 and 1885. The language of the Carrigan Committee's report robustly supported the continuation of the criminal status of homosexual acts, citing those acts as 'a form of depravity that is spreading with malign vigour' (Ferriter, 2009).

But, in later decades, attitudes had altered. MacGréil's survey on prejudice and tolerance in Ireland (carried out between 1972 and 1973) gives a fascinating glimpse into what Ireland thought about the major social issues that students were engaged in. Attitudes towards student protest were negative, with a quarter of respondents in favour of outlawing student protest. Coupled with the desire for very strict control of the state broadcaster RTÉ (at 28.8 per cent), this indicated that a significant portion of the population were of a very conservative disposition. MacGréil's survey also shows the large variance in attitudes between young people and their parents, with 40 per cent of the survey population agreeing with the criminalisation of homosexuality. This contrasts sharply with young people, with only 22 per cent of university respondents supporting criminalisation. Overall, young respondents (aged 21–25) were much more inclined to support the decriminalisation of homosexuality (29 per cent). Other findings from MacGréil's work include the perception by respondents that people saw sex education as a human right and that education negatively impacted the growth of prejudice (over 89 per cent agreeing, with only 7.5 disagreeing).

In his second iteration of the survey in 1988–89, MacGréil (1996) recognised the power of the student movement as students develop a critical awareness of society. He also highlighted the increased tolerance of student protest by society, with those who believed it should be outlawed dropping to 11.7 per cent of the Dublin sample (ibid, p. 397). Once more, MacGréil's findings highlight the fact that younger and educated young people were more tolerant towards homosexuality and the decriminalisation of same. In general, MacGréil's findings indicated a significant drop in support for the continued criminalisation of homosexuality, from 40 per cent to 28 per cent (ibid, p. 400).

6.2 The student movement and the early gay rights movement

The gay-rights movement in Ireland started in earnest in Trinity in 1973 after the students' union welfare officer attended a conference in the New University of Ulster at Coleraine about sexuality and sexual health.

(Norris, 2012, p. 83).

David Norris's assessment of the catalyst for organisation amongst the gay and lesbian community is a strong endorsement of the role that third level students played in the establishment of the gay rights movement in Ireland. This conference, attended by Peter Bradley, of Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU), along with 60 other students from the island of Ireland, included members of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the Quakers, the National Union of Students of the UK and Scotland and other interested parties. It was the first conference of its kind on the island. At this time, the British student movement was only just entering the gay and lesbian rights arena. In April 1973, the NUS passed motions in support of ending discrimination against homosexuals (*Irish Times*, April 5, 1973). There had, however, been a committee of gay students in Queen's University Belfast since 1971; this committee led to the creation of the island's first Gay Liberation Society (McKenzie Livingstone, 2003). The Coleraine conference concluded with a resolution to seek reform of the laws on homosexuality in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic:

We resolve to work in the future for the establishment of human rights for Gays (homosexuals) in society, noting that problems exist in all areas of civil liberties, these liberties being continually ignored and rejected by the authorities at present controlling our society.

(Irish Times, 1973, November 5).

Later that month, Bradley, Norris, Edmund Lynch (an RTÉ producer) and Gerry McNamara (who later founded Gays Against Oppression), along with six others, met in Trinity College Junior Common Room in House 5 and established the Sexual Liberation Movement (SLM). The SLM operated on a number of Dublin campuses and distributed literature on gay and lesbian issues (Boyd et al., 1986) and, according to its constitution, was to be informed by gay and women's activism (Union of Sexual Freedom in Ireland, 1974). It attracted over 100 members 'not all of whom were are students, as quite a number of non-students joined the movement, there being no other organisation for homosexuals in the county' (*Irish Times*, 1974, February 16). The establishment of the SLM was, by any measure, a bold one. As recalled by Mary Dorcey, poet and academic, who attended its first meeting:

One dark wet November night my girlfriend and I were walking past Trinity College and we saw a poster which amazed and excited us: 'The Sexual Liberation Movement Meets Tonight at Eight O'Clock' ... We went upstairs to the meeting in Trinity (a place that intimidated us both and we would never have entered if it weren't for the hope of meeting gay people). We sat round in a circle and introduced ourselves. There were five gay men, two bisexual women and one lesbian. My girlfriend and I, for reasons of solidarity, decided to define ourselves as lesbian. So now there were three lesbians in Ireland!

(O'Carroll & Collins, 1995, p. 35).

Other SLMs were subsequently established by students in Derry, Coleraine, and Belfast (Norris, 1980).

At USI's congress in January 1974, Peter Bradley presented a discussion document on 'Sexual Freedom'. In the document, Bradley urged USI to take up the case of homosexual rights, citing the conservative estimate that one-in-twenty people were gay

or lesbian. The membership of USI at this time stood at 47,000, meaning that, at a minimum, 2,500 USI members were homosexual. Bradley made a number of recommendations to the Congress:

1. USI national council to make a public statement of support for the homosexual community
2. USI should liaise with the Coleraine conference committee to promote its work for homosexual liberation
3. A member of the Executive of USI be elected to formulate and implement policy on homosexuality
4. Encourage the establishment of gaysocs or sexual reform movements in each college and university, and second level institutions [*A 'bi-sexual society did exist in UCD (established in October 1973), but did not 'concern itself exclusively with homosexuality and gives the broader concept of 'sexual liberation' as its aim' (Irish Times, February 16, 1974)]*
5. Initiate a programme of research into harassment etc. of homosexuals and a programme of education.

Concluding his speech to the congress, Bradley remarked

It may be thought that with problems in Ireland and abroad the Union of Students in Ireland has more important things to do than worry about homosexuals. But, as Terry Bruton implies, where one is oppressed all are affected. Let us add sexual oppression to the list of things we will work and fight to abolish.

(Bradley, 1974, p.15).

Congress subsequently passed its first gay liberation policy, urging all students' unions to liaise with the Irish gay movement steering committee in the furtherance of gay rights within their union and its immediate vicinity. Congress also mandated the national affairs vice president and the welfare vice president to hold regular meetings with the steering committee and other gay interest groups and to regularly report to national

council (USI Policy Manual, 1976). However, the motion did not pass without any opposition, as USI's Civil Liberties Working Group had opposed it on the grounds that gay liberation and women's liberation were an integral part of its campaign. Impassionate speeches followed, with one delegate, Fred Broughton, arguing that there 'were major differences in the law and in the position of the Church, between Ireland and Great Britain and a different approach was needed'. Broughton called on delegates to 'seriously consider the problem and to realise that there were homosexuals in every college who were lonely and frightened because of the existing heterosexual environment' (USI Steering Committee, 1974).

Debate and discussions soon began to take place in the colleges and universities. In February 1974, the College of Surgeons Biology Society held a meeting on homosexuality, where a professor of psychiatry, a clergyman, and a lesbian spoke (*Irish Times*, February 16, 1974), while later that month the QUBSU facilitated an address by Brendan Clifford, leader of the British and Irish Communist Organisation, on the dangers of chauvinism in the homosexual movement (*Irish Times*, February 21, 1974). These events attracted media attention, with Christina Murphy, then *Irish Times* education editor, observing that 'much of the discussions [surrounding homosexuality] has been in student circles' (*Irish Times*, February 16, 1974).

In February 1974, the Trinity College Sexual Liberation Movement's held a symposium to decide whether or not 'a national organisation for homosexuals' was feasible (*Irish Times*, February 16, 1974). The meeting, attended by 'a pretty widely assorted group, comprising young students, clerics, middle-aged respectable-looking men, very attractive-looking girls, country, posh and working class accents, and a contingent from Northern Ireland', gave rise to a new grouping, the Union for Sexual Freedoms. At the meeting, Noel Browne (then a Senator) noted that, in his estimation, 'there could be up to a quarter of a million people who were homosexual in this country'. He also observed that 'some homosexuals accept life in a mental institution rather than face the ridicule of society, and there is evidence to suggest that there are less psychiatric problems in countries with more liberal laws on homosexuality' (*Irish Times*, 1974, February 18).

That night, Rose Robertson, a former British spy during World War II, and the founder of the first gay helplines, appeared on the *Late Late Show* (a highly influential and at times controversial late night talk show in Ireland). This was the first time homosexuality was openly discussed on Irish television and, as Ken Gray, then *Irish Times* television critic observed, 'it might be fair to call the initial lack of reaction a stunned silence'. Robertson's plea for understanding and compassion prompted the audience to turn 'hopefully to a priest who happened to be there'. This, Gray concluded, was par for the course in Irish society: 'if sex comes into it prudence demands seeking first the opinion of the Church' (*Irish Times*, 1974, February 25).

Not long after the symposium, the SLM ceased to exist but the students of TCD continued with a gay student society, known as Gaysoc. The Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform (CHLR) was founded a year later in TCD by David Norris and others. Its first legal advisor (1975–79) was TCD's Reid Professor of Law, Mary Robinson. During her student days, Robinson had held the position of auditor of TCD's Law Society and in her inaugural address in 1967 she spoke about law and morality in Ireland. In the address, she had advocated a change of the law on homosexuality, an examination of the prohibition on divorce, and the lifting of the ban of the importation and sale of contraceptives (Freedman, 1995).

North of the border, the student movement continued to offer support to gay and lesbian groups. The Gay Liberation Society had been established since 1971 in Queen's University Belfast and was consistently attracting significant city and 'gown' (student) membership (Dudgeon, 2004). In April 1974, the Society, with the assistance of QUBSU, established 'Cara', a letter support service that operated out of the students' union building. The union later supported the service's move to its own building in 1976 (*Irish Times*, April 30, 1974, Dudgeon, 2004). However, the decriminalisation campaign attracted the attention of the police which established 'a squad of four RUC officers ... to target gay men and over a six-month period it arrested twenty-two men, including every male committee member of NIGRA [Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association]' (Ferriter, 2012, p. 477). Two of these men were members of QUBSU (USI, Welfare Policy, March 1981).

The Irish wing of the international Student Christian Movement also began to debate the theology of gay liberation. Lay students in UCD and Maynooth College took part in discussions on the compatibility of homosexuality and religion. In 1975, *Movement, the journal of radical Christian ideas and action*, published a pamphlet – *Towards a theology of gay liberation* – that challenged homophobia within the churches and asked why Christians treated their fellow man or woman differently when they ‘come out’.

By 1976, USI was regularly sending information leaflets from the gay rights movement in its ‘main mail’ fortnightly circular to campuses. On foot of the information provided to students’ unions, they began to host debates on the continued criminalisation of homosexuality. College and university administrators began to censor debates and, as yet, no gay student society in the Republic of Ireland had received official recognition. In April, the UCC Sociological Society decided to hold a debate on homosexuality. However, the dean of student affairs, Professor John Teegan, ruled that the word ‘homosexuality’ be removed from the event’s posters and that the posters should instead ‘describe it vaguely as having something to do with minority interests’. He also insisted that someone should be found to counter the argument of David Norris, the representative from the Irish Gay Rights Movement. The students obeyed but try as they did, nobody in Cork could be found to counter Norris. The university authorities also interfered with another event. When the newly founded Women’s Club proposed a seminar on contraception, abortion, lesbianism, and homosexuality, Teegan attempted to refuse monies for the event, as the club did not have a staff representative. When the students’ union general secretary, Colm Kirwan, assured the dean that one would be co-opted, Teegan admitted that ‘he was personally opposed to young girls listening to talk about homosexuality and abortion’ but approved the monies (*Irish Times*, 1976 April 3).

That year, 1976, also saw a direct line of communication being established between USI and Edmund Lynch of the newly established Irish Gay Rights Movement [IGRM]. At this time, USI’s main advocacy actions in relation to gay rights revolved around encouraging the establishment of gaysocs on campus and keeping students’ unions up-to-date about the work of the IGRM (Daly, 1976). The 1976 USI congress passed a motion affirming

that 'gay rights cannot be achieved by gays alone', setting its policy as an ally to the gay rights movement (USI, 1976)

In November 1976, USI's commitment to civil liberties campaigning was strengthened when it joined the Irish Council of Civil Liberties, a non-party and non-denominational organisation, dedicated to working for the protection of civil liberties, both in Ireland and abroad (USI-ICCL, 1976). That year also, students in UCD, motivated by the moves of TCD students, established a gaysoc, but it was not recognised by university authorities (Dillon, 1989).

Edmund Lynch of the IGRM was keen to engage USI on campaigning for gay rights in Ireland and in January 1977 he addressed USI's congress (*Irish Times*, 1977, January 17), following a proposal by TCDSU and the Jesuit run college, Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy. The congress passed a unanimous motion 'deploring legal and social discrimination against homosexuals, male and female' and mandated the USI executive to campaign for reform in this area. However, delegates refused to readjust the congress's schedule to facilitate RTÉ in filming the debate, with then USI president, Eamon Gilmore, arguing that, if RTÉ was not interested in the other issues being debated, USI was not interested in amending its schedule to accommodate RTÉ's broadcasting slots (*Irish Times*, January 17, 1977). This decision drew some criticism in the letters pages of various papers, as it prevented the public from viewing an informed debate on the issue. But, despite this setback, USI began to build a political campaign. In February 1977, Peter McEvoy, then deputy president of USI, wrote to Senator Noel Browne seeking his advice on how to campaign effectively on the issue (McEvoy, 1977).

Shortly afterwards, TCDSU organised a symposium to discuss the theology of homosexuality. The symposium was organised 'in the context of the policy of the students' union, which is to call for the ending of all legal and social discrimination or bias against homosexuals' (TCDSU, Press release, May, 1977). Speakers included David Norris and Fr Giles Hibbert, a lecturer in Moral Theology from Blackfriar Priory, Oxford. Hibbert later contributed a chapter to the influential book, *Towards a Theology of Gay*

Liberation, edited by Malcolm Macourt, and published by the Student Christian Movement.

In July 1977, the British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, announced that he would introduce changes to the laws regarding homosexuality. These were welcomed by the USI president, Eamon Gilmore, and in a statement he called for similar changes in the Republic:

The time has surely come for an ending of the repressive and antediluvian laws which effectively mean that a personal relationship between two consenting human beings is criminal. The Government of the Republic of Ireland should now show its commitment to the liberalisation of social attitudes by bringing forward legislation to decriminalise homosexual relationships between consenting adults, and to repeal the existing 100 year old laws.

(USI press release, July 21, 1977).

Reflecting on the decriminalisation campaign, Peter Davies, former Coleraine students' union president and a USI officer of the period, argued that students were to the fore on the issue:

It was one of those incidents where students were leading the way and were perhaps to be a stalking horse for more mainstream politicians. Students' unions can do things, and organisations like USI can do things that political parties won't ... it was reasonably reflective of [student opinion] ... it was a time of huge change and liberalisation of views and attitudes.

(Davies, 2015).

USI's statement also called on the minister for justice to instruct the Gardaí to cease activities against gay organisations. Gilmore later reaffirmed his statement expressing the union's full support for the call by the Irish Gay Rights Movement (IGRM) and the Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform (CHLR) for the government to set up a commission of inquiry to review the laws relating to homosexuality (USI press release, July 22, 1977). Slowly, the letters pages of the national newspapers began to debate the

issue of homosexuality, often promoted by letters from USI and members of the Irish Student Christian Movement (SCM). These students were regularly accused of campaigning on an issue 'without a mandate from the people' and the SCM regularly faced accusations of blasphemy (*Irish Times*, August 10, August 17, 1977). Some called for a referendum, others evoked republicanism and anti-British sentiment to distort the debate on the issue of decriminalisation by arguing that decriminalisation was a British solution to homosexuality and neither a Catholic nor republican one.

In August 1977, the CHLR invited USI to sit on its advisory panel on education and trade union affairs (Davies, August 16, 1977) and USI began to organise a conference on human sexuality in QUB. However, the work that the student movement had been doing on gay rights had attracted the attention of right-wing fundamentalist groups such as the Democratic Unionist Association (DUA) which was supporting a 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign. In October, the QUBSU ordered the removal of DUA stalls from its building on the grounds that the DUA's campaign went against the union's policy of supporting the gay rights movement. The DUA threatened high court action over what it described as 'the blatant, deliberate, unconstitutional abrogation of [their] right to mobilise support against vile, immoral legislation which is being high-handedly imposed' upon them (*Irish Times*, October 29, 1977). The DUA was eventually allowed to continue its campaign.

The human sexuality conference, organised by USI and held at QUB in November 1977 explored current attitudes towards human sexuality and specific activities such as the establishment of gay societies in colleges and the development of the gay rights movement (Davies, September 20, 1977). The conference also included members of the Women's Rights Movement of Northern Ireland, where parallels were drawn between the women's movement and the gay rights movement. Both Edmund Lynch and Noel Browne spoke at the conference. In this contribution, Lynch commended USI and the students' unions of UCG, UCD, and TCD for holding public meetings. It showed, Lynch concluded, that the student movement was 'seriously committed to gay rights as an integral part of the broad platform of civil rights as well as the other serious problems' that confront Irish students, (Lynch, 1977, p. 2)

The alliance between the various gay rights groups and USI continued with David Norris addressing USI's twentieth congress in January 1978. Norris called for the continued 'moral and practical support of USI' (CHLR press release, January 14, 1978). However, Norris's address was not universally welcomed – as recalled by then USI president, Eamon Gilmore:

... not all students were receptive. I received some threats of disaffiliation, when I invited David Norris to address the USI Congress.

However, Gilmore did not revoke the invitation:

For a start, a large number of students were gay. Homosexuality was criminalized in those days. Gay people were hiding their sexuality and suffered discrimination. It was a human right issue then, just as it is today ... Students were among the first to accept gay people as part of society – and of the third level institutions in particular – in many ways ... Students Unions and USI were leaders in moving Irish society to an acceptance of gay rights.

(Gilmore, 2015).

The congress mandated USI to step up its campaign on gay rights. As several students' union officers around the country did not and could not prioritise gay rights in their workload, USI began to encourage the establishment of student gaysocs and the organisation of gay and lesbian students or allies willing to take up the mantle for gay rights on campuses. Peter Davies, then USI deputy president, wrote to the various gay rights groups, seeking their advice on how they would like to see a grassroots university and college campaign to form (Davies, February 3, 1978). A briefing document on gay rights was subsequently drafted by USI, the CHLR, and the IGRM and circulated to all colleges and universities for dissemination to those students who wanted to assist the gay rights movement or establish a gaysoc (USI, 1978, Briefing Document on Gay Rights). Such public debate was beginning to have a positive effect on political parties. At Fine Gael's 1978 conference, the party voted in support of the decriminalisation of

homosexuality (Keating, 1981). The motion was put forward by Roy Dooney, president of Young Fine Gael and a TCD economics and politics student (Ferriter, 2012). Dooney later went on to become special advisor to Taoiseach John Bruton.

That year also, the IGRM was replaced by the National Gay Federation (NGF). USI continued to work with the CHLR and in May 1979 held a daylong conference in partnership with the CHLR at TCD. Speakers included Mary McAleese, David Norris, Edmund Lynch (representing the International Gay Association), and speakers from various other groups. It explored the role of family within the gay rights movement and representatives from the Samaritans and student counsellors also spoke (Gallagher, April 17, May 10, 1979). The conference pledged to hold more seminars on the issue of homosexuality and agreed a draft framework to roll these out in the various universities and colleges in partnership with the gay organisations. (Keogh, August 28, 1979). The conference also made a public statement, calling for the establishment of gaysocs on campuses – a move that was being opposed by various college and university authorities (USI, May 12, 1979). The previous month, UCCSU held a referendum on the decriminalisation of homosexuality, with 72 per cent voting in favour (*Contact*, May, 1979) and in May 1979 USI resolved to carry more articles on gay rights in their publication *USI News* to increase awareness of the key issues for gay students and their friends (USI, May 5, 1979).

By this time, the issue of gay rights had entered the public sphere and, in June 1979, Dublin witnessed its first pride march, with a handful of people marching in the city centre. Marchers handed out leaflets to bemused passers-by and a pink carnation demonstration also took place by members of the NGF who engaged members of the public on the streets. A political forum was also held to assess support for decriminalisation, at which Ruairi Quinn, now of the Labour Party, along with Noel Browne and Michael Keating (Fine Gael) attended (*Irish Press*, June 25, 1979). Later that year, in November, David Norris began proceedings in the High Court on the grounds that the laws on male homosexual acts were repugnant to the Irish constitution.

In Cork, UCCSU, led by an openly gay student, Cathal Kerrigan, blazed a trail. The president of UCCSU, Kerrigan, published a welfare guide that included, amongst other controversial topics, a section on homosexuality, which described homosexual sex as ‘a lot of fun’ (Kerrigan, 2015). As recalled by Kerrigan, the, then, president of UCC, Tadhg O Ciaraigh, confronted him about the publication:

He actually said to my face, ‘listen, I’m not going to allow you to bring this perverted, disgusting, illegal activity on to this campus’, they despised me, they detested everything I stood for.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

In November 1980, the Philosophical Society of UCC held a debate on whether the society supported the establishment of a gaysoc by the students’ union. The motion was passed unanimously. Denis Staunton (a member of the RTÉ Players who attended many events at UCC) volunteered to speak against the motion. As Kerrigan recalled, at the end of the debate a group of students came together and formed the society:

Twenty, twenty five stayed, half of them were straight, arts people, sociologists etc., not knowing what they were getting into, and we founded the society. ‘Named Person’, a third year med student, came out at the debate, in a huge emotional moment, it was very powerful, he became the chair, subsequently dropped medicine and became a ballet dancer, which is what he really wanted to do.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

In January 1981, the society applied for university recognition but this was refused. The union then requested that USI make representations to the university (Kerrigan, 1981, February). At a meeting of the university’s governing authority Kerrigan proposed that the university recognise the society – a motion seconded by the professor of philosophy, Fr Brendan O’Mahoney. However, the eventual vote was against recognition. The society, composed of students and locals, continued to meet and played a part in the formation of the wider Cork Gay Collective which adopted a manifesto that encouraged

gay people 'to have a positive view of their sexuality, to live fully and to challenge society's control by coming out in the family, work church and social life' (Rose, 1994, p. 16). Along with the Cork Gay Collective, the NGF, the student society organised a conference that included workshops on gay identity, sexuality and religion, sexuality and the law and gay activism (National Gay Conference Report, 1981). The conference 'made a significant contribution to the development of an indigenous theory and practice of lesbian and gay politics in Ireland' (Rose, 1994). Other gaysocs were equally unsuccessful in attaining recognition from university officials. Between 1983 and 1989, the gaysoc society at UCD, with over 100 members, unsuccessfully sought official university recognition. In April 1984, the society established 'student gayline' to provide a service to those 'who wish to contact the society anonymously, without feeling that they will be recognised or categorised by attending one of the society's meetings or coffee afternoons' (UCD Gay Society, 1984, April 9).

Student publications all around the country continued to publish information on gay rights, support services and entertainment venues so as to 'contribute to a more acceptable attitude to homosexuals, both male and female in these islands' (*Irish Press*, April 2, 1980). USI also continued its political work and gave its public support to the NGF and Norris's constitutional case (*Irish Times*, October 10, 1980). But, in October 1980, the High Court found against Norris on the grounds that since that stage asserted that sexual relations outside marriage (although not illegal) were morally wrong the state had a duty to protect marriage by outlawing homosexuality (*Irish Times*, 1980, October 11). Norris quickly indicated his intention to appeal the decision and USI published feature articles in its newspaper, *USI News*, calling for financial donations to the NGF to support Norris and the campaign to decriminalise homosexuality (*USI News*, November 1980).

Gratitude for the work USI was doing was evident within the wider gay movement. In a letter inviting USI representatives to its first AGM, Bernard Keogh, general secretary of the NGF, expressed the appreciation of the gay community 'for the support and encouragement USI had given in the gay rights struggle' (Keogh, May 16, 1980). Keogh

later followed up his thanks with a more detailed appreciation in a letter to Liam Whitelaw, then USI deputy president:

Over the years, USI had been instrumental in promoting discussion and debate on the subject of human rights for gay people both in the colleges of higher education and in the media; the result of this is, I am sure, a far greater awareness on the part of students of the issues involved, leading to a more constructive environment for those students who are themselves gay.

(Keogh, October 17, 1980).

Two weeks after the Norris judgment, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the UK government in a case taken by Jeff Dudgeon of the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (NIGRA) challenging anti-gay legislation in the province. Students in QUB began to organise province-wide meetings in the various universities and colleges in attempt to highlight the province's law disparity with the rest of the UK (Jackson, November 1980). USI, through its member unions in Northern Ireland and directly, had worked with Dudgeon and NIGRA to have the laws changed in the province. Dudgeon and NIGRA would later privately and publically thank USI for all its support and help during the campaign (Dudgeon, November 1981). USI used the successful Dudgeon case to pressurise the Irish government to recognise its obligations under EU law.

As the 1980s unfolded, links between USI and the NGF grew stronger. When the NGF turned to USI for advice in relation to the provision of welfare services and the appointment of a welfare officer for the gay community, USI provided the NGF with its guidelines for the appointment of welfare officers within students' unions and the best practices that it (USI) followed (Keogh, November 18, 1980).

The cooperation continued into 1981, with Liam Whitelaw of USI running for a position on the administrative council of the NGF (USI Welfare Committee, minutes, June 1981). Whitelaw was later co-opted in October 1981 (Keogh, October 5, 1981). USI continued to focus on supporting the establishment of 'gay socs' in the various campuses. On the

foot of the win by Dudgeon and NIGRA, Ulster Polytech students' union passed policy to establish a gaysoc, while the 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign being waged in QUB had lost all but minority support (USI Welfare Committee, minutes, November 1981). Whitelaw used his position within the NGF to acclimatise regional officers to concept of gay rights and to meet the main players of the national campaign:

During my two years in Dublin I had taken many student officers (both gay and non-gay) around to have lunch the Hirschfield Centre ... this helped the student officers from all across the country to see what facilities were available at the centre; to have a cheap lunch (and help the centre financially) and establish links between the NGF and colleges.

(Whitelaw, 2015).

6.3 The student movement and homophobia

On January 21, 1982, Charles Self, a gay man and set designer for RTÉ, was stabbed to death in his home. Thus began an insensitive investigation by the Garda Síochána, an investigation that led to national media reports of intimidation and harassment against members of the gay community (*Sunday Independent*, 2011, July 3). In various letters to the national press, USI criticised media coverage of the murder and the Garda intimidation (USI Welfare Committee, minutes, March 1982). Complaints were also received by USI about the Gardaí forcing men to sign witness statements that included confessions of homosexual encounters. Statements from over 200 people had been signed by February 1982 (USI Welfare Committee, minutes, February 1982).

The following September, Declan Flynn, a 31-year-old Aer Rianta worker was killed in Fairview Park while walking home. He was the second gay man to be violently murdered that year. Media and public reaction was of horror and disgust and the various gay rights groups and their supporters began to mobilise. The Gardaí arrested and charged five youths with the murder. Horror turned to anger when they were given suspended sentences in early 1983 and they left the courthouse singing 'we are the champions'. The Dublin Gay Collective, which was given office space and other resources by USI began to organise a protest and a media campaign. The Collective released a statement

condemning the suspended sentences, stating that the judge 'despite his denials did accept the 'excuse' that the gang were in the park to clear it of homosexuals ... it seems that gays can now be beaten or killed almost with impunity' (*Irish Times*, 1983, March 14). The following week, over 800 hundred people marched in a rally against violence and the judgment, which was seen as condoning the attacks (Boyd et al., 1986). The march was organised by the Dublin Gay Collective and USI (*Irish Times*, March 21, 1983) and its message was simple, 'stop violence against gays and women' (Rose, 1994, p. 21). Tonie Walsh, a gay rights activist who had dropped out of college at UCD at the age of 21, observed that, for him, the march was the first time he became truly conscious of the support of the student movement:

I only really became cognisant of how supportive the student body was with the march because they came out in big, visible numbers. I imagine that it was the first time that they formalised a visible public relationship with their counterparts in the LGB movement.

(Walsh, 2015).

The rally was a watershed moment for the LGB community, whereby large cross-sections of Irish society were outraged over the treatment of gays and lesbians and actively and publicly showed their support. The march would later be seen to be as a 'classic of radical leadership at a moment of crisis and a pivotal event in the evolution of the lesbian and gay movement in Ireland' (Rose, 1994, p. 20). Looking back at the events over thirty years later, Toni Walsh concluded that the surge in violence against gay people was a backlash to the growing visibility of gay and lesbian people within Irish society:

I have a sense that there were pockets of some fairly dreadful anti-gay brutality in the eighties and I think some of it was in direct proportion and in direct response to this outpouring of angry, liberated lesbians and gay men making noise.

(Walsh, 2015).

The negative year continued when, in April 1983, the Supreme Court delivered its verdict on David Norris's attempt to have the laws against homosexuality declared repugnant to the constitution. In a three-to-two majority decision the court held that with regard to 'the Christian nature of the state and the potential damage to marriage' the criminalisation of certain homosexual acts was consistent with the social, religious and moral ethos of the Irish constitution. Norris and his legal team thus decided to take their case to Europe, claiming that the Irish laws criminalising homosexuality were in breach of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (*Irish Times*, 1983, April 8). Norris would win this case in October 1988, paving the way for the eventual decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993.

The following year, UCDSU and a number of other students' unions published welfare guides with information for gay and lesbian students, including information on the laws surrounding homosexuality, information on 'coming out', and adverts from the NGF. Also that year, the union's welfare officer, Josephine Kirwan, condemned UCD's refusal to recognise the student gaysoc. According to Kirwan, this policy served to 'perpetuate the isolation felt by many gay students, and help to uphold ignorance and prejudice – hardly a fitting position for a university to take' (UCDSU, Welfare Guide, 1984, p. 57). While UCDSU organised a campaign to lobby the university authorities, with USI, the ICCL and the NGF participating, it would take several more years before recognition was given. Students in NUI Galway were also continuing to struggle to obtain recognition for their gaysoc. In the absence of recognition, the students' union established a telephone support line for gay and lesbians for one hour a week (Walsh, November 1984).

By the mid-1980s, the advent of HIV provided a greater sense of urgency to the campaigns against homophobia and criminalisation. In 1985, the first case of HIV was diagnosed in Ireland (Seery, 1999) and gay rights groups, local health boards and the student movement began to disseminate safe-sex practices leaflets in order to counteract the disease. As recalled by Tonie Walsh, the student movement was ahead of the general population in response to the disease:

Belfield and Trinity were proactive in their response to HIV and aids ... there was a realisation amongst the student body that here you had a captive audience so it behoved you to roll out a safe sex message and get to grips with education people, especially at a time when we had so much difficulty accessing condoms.

(Walsh, 2015).

In January 1985, the Gay Health Action project was established by the LGB community and USI provided a meeting space and resources for the group during its first few months, until it moved to the NLGF offices (Kerrigan, 2015). It produced the first safe sex information leaflets, which were partly funded by the Department of Health (which two years later launched a mass media information campaign). In 1986, Student Aids Action was established to promote safe-sex between students, regardless of gender or sexuality. It produced leaflets and held workshops across the country and all material was produced in consultation with St James's Hospital (Student Aids Action, 1987, April). However, the ever-increasing visibility of safe-sex campaigns was not universally received. In November 1987, TCDSU held an Aids Awareness Week. One newspaper - *The Star* – published an editorial that condemned an Aids information pamphlet issued by TCDSU as a document characterised by 'utter filth and open encouragement to sexual permissiveness and promiscuity [that would] do more to cause Aids than to prevent it' (*The Star*, unknown date, USI archive).

6.4 Towards decriminalisation and recognition of gaysocs

By the late 1980s, USI's role in the gay rights campaign had shifted to one of general support, as its attention turned to pressing education matters. As Stephen Grogan, USI president 1989-90, recalled:

During my time in USI the approach had been to support the wider campaign and demonstrate practical solidarity rather than play a leading role in the campaign. It was one of a number of Rights based campaigns and issues that were being supported at that time. It was an active on-going campaign. Gay / Lesbian students who were active in students' unions grew from a

handful of identifiable activists to a more significant grouping during the late 1980s but they were still a minority and while the movement was supported, USI and Students' Unions were far from being free of homophobic attitudes and behaviour.

(Grogan, 2015).

In February 1988, USI held a Sexuality Conference at TCD that was addressed by speakers from the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA), Sexuality of People with Disabilities (SPOD), the Rape Crisis Centre, Lesbian Health Action, the UCD Chaplain, Fr Kevin Doran, and David Norris. The conference, attended by students and members of the public, looked at the socialisation of sexuality, sexual abuse suffered by lesbians and the links to pornography, policy on contraception, the Catholic Church's pastoral role in relation to gay people and their relationships in the wake of Vatican II and coming out to parents and friends (USI Sexuality Conference Report, May 1988).

At USI's congress the following April, a number of delegates complained that the union was passing 'paper policy', holding conferences, and not standing up, via direct action, for students who were being discriminated against by college and university authorities (*Evening Press*, April 9, 1988). In response, USI established a Lesbian and Gay Student Network, the aims of which included:

- To provide support for gay students throughout the country by establishing a network of college contacts/groups
- To promote the establishment of gay groups in colleges throughout the country
- To provide a forum for discussion
- To publish a newsletter to provide national information of interest to gay students
- To establish an annual conference
- To break down myths and barriers surrounding homosexuality and bisexuality through a programme of education
- To work towards a sense of national gay identity

(Joyce, 1988, November 2)

A second conference was held at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra in March 1989, with a focus on reconciling religion and sexuality, discrimination based on sexuality and sexuality and society (Joyce, 1989, January). This network eventually led to the autonomous policy generating LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) campaign within USI which saw a standing conference of LGBT students, not USI congress, set policy for USI's LGBT campaign. The priority of this network was to fight for the recognition of student gaysoc societies.

The first NUI university to recognise a student gaysoc society was UCC. In April 1989, following a strong lobbying campaign by student clubs and societies and supportive staff members, the university's governing authority, which included three bishops, voted thirteen votes to seven to recognise the society (*Irish Times*, 1989, April 26). As recalled by former UCCSU president, Cathal Kerrigan:

They [UCC] were the first NUI college society to win it – before UCD – to recognise a gaysocs on campus. John A. Murphy played a key role ... there was a heated governing authority meeting, looked like it could either way when an impassionate speech by John A. Murphy swung it in favour.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

At UCD, things were quite different. An application for recognition supported by a 1,500 strong petition, as well as letters of support from USI and the ICCL, resulted in a narrowly-lost (23 votes to 20) decision by the university's academic council not to recognise the student gaysoc society in February 1989. This resulted in the ICCL declaring that 'naked prejudice and stereotypical thinking' had no place in a modern university and calling on the university to 'finish once and for all its own ugly variation on the once obscene pink triangle' (*Irish Times*, 1989, February 18, April 26).

The following year, the issue was again to be voted on. In a letter circulated to academic council members, ten academics warned that students could become 'emotionally kidnapped ... through encounters with an organised homosexual movement before their psychosexual identity was crystalised', that recognition could be 'taken to imply the express approval by the UCD teaching staff of an active homosexual lifestyle as an

acceptable alternative for students’ and that recognition would imply the ‘university’s involvement in officially supporting what is against the law’ (*Irish Independent*, March 17, 1990). The letter also claimed that staff held a position of *in loco parentis*, and that it was not up to UCD ‘to anticipate changes in the law, which may not occur, and which in any case might be opposed by a large number of parents and students’ (*UCDSU News*, March 8, 1990). However, much to the chagrin of the academics, the letter was republished in full in the students’ union newspaper, *UCDSU News*. As recalled by then UCDSU president, Tom Duke:

There was a lot of subtext behind this, many of the signatories, as far as we were aware, were members of Opus Dei and it was an Opus Dei organised letter ... my father was professor of Zoology and received a copy but we couldn’t get our copy from him as that would implicate him as breaching the confidentiality of academic council, so we had to get it from someone else. One of my comrades, Emmett Malone, went to the professor of history, Ronan Fanning and said, ‘I believe there’s a letter doing the rounds’. He said ‘there certainly is’ and slapped it out in front of us, so we printed it and put it in the student paper and they wrote a letter to the student paper objecting to the fact it was printed.

(Duke, 2015).

That year, the university’s academic council voted to recognise the society, noting dissent (*UCDSU News*, May 1990). Students’ unions at other colleges adopted various strategies to make gay students feel welcome. At DIT Kevin Street, the students’ union launched a student gaysoc society in the hope that gay students would step forward to take over its direction. As recalled by former DIT Kevin Street students’ union president and former deputy president of USI, Damien O’Brion:

When I was elected president one of the first things we did was we realised a LGBT society had not come out organically ... so we set one up ourselves. On Fresher's Day we established a LGBT society, we put a stand up and a couple of people joined ... It wasn't a priority for the union but we felt there was a gap there, perhaps for fear of the consequences, so we decided that if we go ahead and set it up it might provide a catalyst for other people to feel a little but more comfortable.

(O'Brion, 2015).

By 1991, it was recognised that training on LGB issues for all students' union officers was now necessary. At the beginning of that academic year, TCD's gaysoc organised a Pink Training Day where officers from students' unions all over the country were introduced to 'aspects and issues of concern to lesbian and gay students in the college environment' (*Gay Community News*, 1991, September). Representatives from ten students' unions attended, along with members of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), the Gay Switchboard, Lesbian Line and parents' groups. It was agreed that all unions would facilitate the distribution of information and literature – such as *Gay Community News* (founded in 1988) – on campuses (*Gay Community News*, 1991, October). The following year, USI took over the training day and held its inaugural Pink Training Day at Dublin City University.

Along with identity workshops, students' unions re-energised their sexual health campaigns. With the HIV/Aids crisis continuing, information on safe-sex practices was a key concern for students. In the early 1990s, USI ran more risqué sex education campaigns in order to engage with students and these campaigns quickly became more integrated, including same-sex relationships, therefore normalising the discourse around them. As recalled by former deputy president of USI, Damien O'Brion:

I remember Mick Canny who was campaigns officer for USI running a safe-sex campaign which [up to this point] were heavy on metaphor and light on specifics. Mick came up with a set of posters and adverts which showed grown naked men and women kissing ... it created a bit of a wave ... those sort of things were gradual, breaking down the attitudes.

(O’Brion, 2015).

In 1991, the students’ union of Queen’s University Belfast held a ‘Loving With Care’ safe-sex conference which aimed to:

aggressively challenge the tenets of sexual repression, advocated by Church and State ... [and aimed at moving away from] throwing condoms at the problem, and towards embracing a more strategic examination of the issue ... [permitting] a more mature and wide-ranging examination of the controversies which surround sex and sexuality in Ireland, than has been allowed so far.

(Wolfe, 1992).

However, QUBSU officers soon faced questioning by the RUC when a gay and lesbian roadshow, with illustrative posters, visited campus. The, then, Ulster Unionist Party MP, Ken Maginnis, complained to the university’s vice-chancellor and the RUC about the posters, stating that they were ‘an example of pure filth which some perverts consider to be their “civil right” to impose on the public’ (Maginnis, December 16, 1991). The students’ union officers were cautioned, interviewed, and advised that a file was to be prepared for the Department of Public Prosecutions. Tom Wolfe of QUB advised USI’s 1992 congress that the students’ union officers had been interviewed without legal representation being present. The 1992 congress voted for full adoption rights for gay and lesbian couples and the equalisation of consent laws for gay and heterosexuals in the UK. It was at this congress also that USI decided that a part-time paid Lesbian and Gay Officer be elected for the first time (*Irish Press*, 1992, April 4).

By this stage, many of those, including Cathal Kerrigan, who had cut their teeth in the student movement, had moved on and had helped to establish the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN). In 1993, members of Ógra Fianna Fáil requested a meeting with GLEN. Having been unable to engage Fianna Fáil on the issue of decriminalisation, two GLEN representatives (Kerrigan and Kieran Rose) met with two Ógra Fianna Fáil members. As recalled by Kerrigan:

They explained that there was a discussion at their committee for Ógra Fianna Fáil to bring forward a motion to support gay rights and decriminalisation. There are some, they said, senior members of the party that felt like this would be a good way to proceed, in that, the movement coming from Ógra Fianna Fáil [support] could build up. That it would be the youth and young people of Ireland ... Fianna Fáil needs to move, that kind of line. There are people in the party who want to follow these things ... but this needed to happen ... so I gave them all the information ... they go away and Kieran and we hear nothing for six or seven weeks. We thought it was just a stunt. Then suddenly out of the blue I get a phone call from the same guy. We met them again and they start reading through it (the policy to be proposed) and our jaws dropped. They had taken everything we want, equal age of consent, decriminalisation and then they go and say, 'we actually think, looking at all of this that it's only fair that gays should have the right to marry'. Kieran and myself looked at each other and thought this would be a godsend to our opponents, Family Solidarity.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

Kerrigan and Rose asked the Ógra Fianna Fáil representatives to remove the concept of gay marriage from the motion, as they believed this would have given groups such as Family Solidarity a stick with which to beat GLEN. At its 1993 conference, Ógra Fianna Fáil launched a policy document that described the existing law as 'life threatening and unjust' and call for homosexuality to be decriminalised (*Irish Times*, 1993, February 10). Decriminalisation followed some months later in June 1993.

6.5 Conclusion

The role of the student movement in the formation and progression of the gay rights movement was an influential one. From the very inception of the campaign for gay rights, students offered their support. While it is clear that these students were initially only a handful, they quickly were able to influence local students' union and national (USI) policy culminating in Eamon Gilmore's 1977 press release calling for the decriminalisation. The media interest in the congress that decided USI's pro-decriminalisation stance is a testament, not only to the movement's growing importance within the public sphere, but the fact that the student movement was considered a legitimate space for debate on such a contentious issue highlights its role as a legitimate actor in the public sphere to speak on issues such as sexuality.

The establishment of student gaysoc societies within third level institutions and the campaigns to have them recognised personalised the campaign for decriminalisation for many students. The refusal to recognise these societies was a reminder to students of the criminalised nature of the love their gay friends and lecturers experienced. The gaysoc recognition campaigns clearly motivated students' union leaders and activists to engage in the topic on a national level.

It is clear from the evidence presented in this case study that the student movement employed a traditional repertoire of political engagement – lobbying, press releases, protest participation etc., to achieve the desired outcome of decriminalisation. It is also clear that participation in this campaign had a profound impact on many of those student activists and leaders, such as Cathal Kerrigan, and the networks built within the movement were influential in establishing national gay rights organisations such as GLEN.

Further evidence of the student movement as an agent of social change is offered by its participation in sexual education campaigns in the height of the HIV / AIDS crisis. The movement's role was particularly important, as it gradually normalised perceptions of

homosexual sexual activity and also provided important sexual health information to gay people.

It should be noted that the movement's participation in the campaign did waiver in the late 1980s. Internal political wrangling within USI, increases in tuition fees, coupled with the emerging higher-profile contraception and abortion campaigns, most likely overshadowed the gay rights campaign. However, this did not stop an active autonomous campaign growing within the movement for LGB rights, which eventually saw the creation of a USI officer position to advocate on behalf of LGB students. In an interview for this work Tonie Walsh, activist and archivist of the National Queer Archive in the National Library acknowledged the central role that the student movement played in the decriminalisation campaign:

They were and have been persuaders, not just active agents for change but persuaders for change ... if you wanted evidence of this you just have to look at how various LGBT campaigning groups recognise the unique and specific role the student body has to play.

(Walshe, 2015).

It is also important to recognise the processes of deliberation that student activists undertook as movement intellectuals in order to reach their final conclusion that decriminalisation was a necessary change in Irish social policy. There is a deliberate engagement with the issue with the initial attendance by students at the Coleraine conference. Students deliberated the issue of decriminalisation as individuals, through their formation and defence of motions of policy at USI congress, they argued at student societies which later took positions on the decriminalisation agenda. They wrote about it in their own publications, engaged mainstream media by means of editorial letters and actively rebutted responses from opponents. They proactively engaged with not just the fledgling gay rights movement but actively supported it and the creation of gaysocs. They engaged other organisations such as the ICCL and within the student movement the women's rights movement championed the decriminalisation agenda.

This case study has clearly shown that the role of the student movement in the decriminalisation campaign was pivotal. The critical reflection by students on sexuality was an important one and it further solidified the role of students as intellectuals and agents of social change within the public sphere. The movement achieved an incredible level of praxis moving between a critical reflection on the issue to critical action. It significantly raised the awareness of students of issues surrounding sexuality and identity which saw students engage emotionally, morally and politically.

Chapter 7

Case Study 2

The campaign on contraception availability

7.1 Introduction

In the early years of the state's existence, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1935, had made it an offence 'to sell, or expose, offer, advertise, or keep for sale or to import . . . for sale, any contraceptive' (section 17). Penalties included a fine of £50 and imprisonment for up to six months. However, a loophole existed in that the importation of contraception to give away for free or in return for a donation was not covered by the legislation.

In the 1960s, the rise of feminism and the emergence of a strident form of female journalism, which focused on issues of real concern to women, resulted in the issue of contraception coming to the fore in terms of the emerging women's rights movement. In the re-invented women's pages of the *Irish Press* and the *Irish Times* (edited by Mary Kenny, and Mary Maher and Maeve Binchy), female journalists frequently covered the issue of contraception (O'Brien, 2014).

In 1968, a group of doctors, dismayed at the lack of progress on the issue, established a contraceptive and pregnancy advice service, known as the Family Planning Circle, and began to distribute contraception in return for a donation. The following year, the first private clinic, the Fertility Guidance Company, was opened. These services were immediately identified by Catholic groups as a major threat to the 'moral fibre' of Irish society.

In March 1971, TCD Senators, Mary Robinson, Trevor West, and John Horgan put forward a Private Members' Bill, legalising the importation and sale of contraceptives. However, as outlined by Robinson, 'in an unprecedented move we were refused leave even to publish and distribute the bill, and were denounced from Catholic pulpits all around the country' (Robinson, 2014, p. 193).

The establishment, in 1971, of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) and the publication of its reform manifesto 'Chains or Change' led to more sustained coverage of the demand for access to contraception. In May 1971, members of the IWLM travelled to Belfast by rail to purchase contraceptives. Their return to Dublin's Connolly Station and the confrontation with customs officers caused a media sensation and put the debate on contraception firmly on the political agenda (*Irish Times*, 1971, May 23).

Politicians and Church leaders condemned them. Thomas Ryan, Bishop of Clonfert, issued a staunch condemnation, stating that 'never before ... was the Catholic heritage of Ireland subjected to so many insidious onslaughts on the pretext of conscience, civil rights and women's liberation' (Bourke, 2002, p. 200). In December of that year, the Fertility Guidance Company published *Family Planning – A Guide for Parents and Prospective Parents* which was immensely popular and distributed across the country. Attempts to have the publication banned were unsuccessful and it sold 7,500 copies (Hug, 1998).

7.2 Students and contraception information

As was the case in relation to gay rights, third level students were also at the centre of the campaign for women's rights and the free availability of contraceptives. The welfare officer of TCD students' union, Kathy Gilfillan produced a contraception guide in 1971 which included information on sexually transmitted diseases for students. The students' union believed the guide to be illegal in its content and feared a police raid, so it was decided to make the collective student body the author of the guide and distribute it only within the university grounds. Not that the threat of prosecution would put the union off. As recalled by Murray:

We weren't that afraid, we didn't give a shit really, in fact I think a lot of the times in those days students loved the notoriety of getting arrested or being charged with something.

(Murray, 2015).

No prosecutions or Garda enquires were made in relation to the booklet. In December 1973, following a challenge to the ban on contraception by Mary McGee, a married woman whose contraception had been seized by customs officers, the Supreme Court ruled that there existed a constitutional right to marital privacy which also allowed for the use of contraception, but also ruled that the ban on the sale and importation of contraception was not unconstitutional. What was significant about the Supreme Court

ruling, and worrying for anti-contraceptive campaigners, was that the seizure was deemed an interference with the plaintiff's right to marital privacy. It was this case that spawned a number of lay-Catholic groups into organising. The Irish Family League was established, fronted by Mary Kennedy, and co-chaired by civil servant, John O'Reilly (O'Reilly, 1992).

Within the universities and colleges, debates began about the rights and role of women in Irish society. In the early 1970s, UCG's Literary & Debating Society held a debate on contraception. Among the speakers were *Irish Times* journalist, Nell McCafferty, and the Bishop of Galway, Michael Browne. As recalled by student activist Patsy McGarry, much criticism was directed at the bishop:

[they] had it out hot and heavy with him eventually walking off ... he was an extreme traditionalist and was utterly opposed to the idea and even the discussion of the idea and the cheek of her, a woman, and us 'brats' of students challenging him, a prince of the Church! ... I suppose we had all moved on from the narrow view of the Church ... and quite a broad spectrum of Irish society were not accepting of the Church's teaching on contraception, including clergy.

(McGarry, 2015).

In early 1974, USI's congress passed motions, highlighting the discrimination that women faced in society, higher education and the workforce. It also called for a government backed sex education programme and the 'right of every woman to decide when and if to have a family' (USI Steering Committee, 1974, January 10-13). Looking back on the emerging campaign within the student movement in relation to contraception, the, then, UCG student activist, Patsy McGarry, contended that his, and others' position on the issue was fuelled by family stigmatisation around single mothers:

My aunt was a single mother who had to emigrate in the 1950s when she became pregnant from her partner, they both emigrated to England and he abandoned her there ... I was acutely aware of the stigmatisation that went with being a single mother and the direct emotional impact it had on the woman

herself, her family ... on the rare occasions that my aunt came home she had to hide down the back seat of my uncle's car and when she did go to Mass my grandmother wouldn't sit in the same pews which blew my mind ... and I don't blame my grandmother I blame the Church for that ignorance.

(McGarry, 2015).

Compelled to act in light of the Supreme Court judgment in July 1974, the Fine Gael – Labour coalition government introduced the Control of Importation, Sale and Manufacture of Contraceptives Bill that permitted the licenced importation and sale of contraception to married couples only (*Irish Times*, 1974, March 28). However, the bill was defeated in the Dáil after government TDs were given a free vote on the issue, with Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave, voting against the bill (*Irish Independent*, 1974, July 17).

7.3 The student movement and the women's movement

It was at USI's 1975 congress that the student movement decided to build allegiances with various groups to campaign against the 'continuing repressive legislation on contraception' which it believed was 'a denial of fundamental human rights ... constitutionally anomalous and discriminates particularly against women' (USI, 1976, p. 36). At that congress, USI declared its support for the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) and Family Planning Service (FPA) and began to promote their services in colleges and universities (USI, 1976, p. 36).

The same conference also directed the USI officers to hold a conference on the issue of women's rights. A women's commission, chaired by TCDSU deputy president, Anne Connolly, was established to look into USI organisational development in the area.

The commission was later renamed the women's rights advisory committee (WRAC) (USI, 1998, July 13). Nine members were appointed by November 1975 (Contact, 1975, December), but it was not until February 1976 that it began its work (Contact, 1976, January/February). In April 1976, USI's first Women's Rights Conference was held at NCAD. The conference was addressed by members of the Free Legal Advice Centre

(FLAC), the Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement (NIWRM), the IFPA, the Council for the Status of Women and Irishwomen United, a consciously left-wing grouping the membership of which included socialists, nationalists, republicans, lesbians, and radicals. Issues discussed included women in politics, contraception, abortion, women's rights in marriage, and the role of women in Irish society. The conference also heard from many female students who were angered with what they believed to be the lip service USI paid to women's rights issues. They complained that, while USI supported them on paper, the union was short on action and few resources had been committed by the union (USI, 1976). Reflecting on this debate, the, then, USI president, Eamon Gilmore, recalled that:

The most important social movement of my lifetime was the Women's Movement, which campaigned for contraceptive rights, divorce, equal pay and equality for women. Some of the women at that conference wanted the student campaign to be confined to female students. I thought, that USI as a movement should support the broad campaign for Women's Rights. Those of us, men, who grew to adulthood in the early 70s were hugely influenced by our female friends and contemporaries (among them was Carol Hanney – who I later married). I never saw the struggle for Women's Rights as a women-only struggle. It liberated and changed all of us.

(Gilmore, 2015).

The following September, Peter McEvoy, then USI deputy president, attended a meeting of the IFPA's information and education committee at which he admitted that USI had, on paper, a strong policy but had done little in the way of substantive education on the issue of contraception. The IFPA thus agreed to work with USI and students' union welfare officers to ascertain the needs of students and construct a campaign around these. In return, USI agreed to distribute IFPA material and McEvoy was also co-opted onto the committee (IFPA, 1976, September 2). USI's national council subsequently voted to affiliate with the IFPA and mandated USI officers to approach the Labour Party Women's Committee, trade unions and other interested groups with a view to building alliances. It also instructed USI officers to provide information to students' union welfare

officers on family planning and contraceptive methods, with a view to establishing pregnancy counselling services in all colleges.

Some colleges had already begun to distribute contraception. By 1976, UCDSU's welfare office had been providing condoms to students. The university's medical service had refused to supply contraceptives to students and so the union began to plan its own clinic, seeking advice from the IFPA. Some students expressed concern that the provision of contraceptives might attract the attention of the Gardaí, but, at least in the early days of the campaign, this was not the case. As recalled by former USI president, Eamon Gilmore:

To my recollection, the Gardaí did not actively seek to prevent students' unions from 'distributing' contraception. There was a general feeling at the time (perhaps influenced by events in Greece and Chile) that the police should stay off the campus. It was an inclination probably shared by the Gardaí themselves.

(Gilmore, 2015).

While UCDSU had expressed its disappointment with USI's previous lack of engagement with the issue it welcomed McEvoy's appointment to the IFPA's information and education committee. UCDSU thus began its first information service in partnership with the IFPA and coordinated by USI. It was attended by a nurse and provided a range of information on contraception. It was hugely popular and the IFPA committed to continuing the service despite potential legal issues (IFPA, 1978, November 1). In addition, David Kavanagh, IFPA's welfare officer, and Charles McNally, IFPA president, made contact with the TCDSU to support them in any case they would take to the previous confiscation of contraceptive literature by customs (IFPA, 1976, September 3).

In 1977, USI officers agreed to present a motion to its congress to give the WRAC constitutional standing and grant its chairperson and deputy formal status (USI, 1977, January 21, WRAC). The second women's conference later that year urged USI to build

upon its work with the IFPA and run a national campaign for the state funding of a voluntary contraceptive service administered through health boards (USI, 1977, April).

7.4 The student movement and the Health (Family Planning) Bill

In 1978, the Minister for Health, Charles Haughey, introduced the Health (Family Planning) Bill which permitted the use of contraception and allowed for 'family planning or for adequate medical reasons', provided the purchaser had a doctor's prescription (section 4). As the bill was working its way through the Dáil, the chair of USI's Women's Rights Advisory Committee, Mary Raftery, wrote to all USI's member organisations to ascertain how the bill would impact on their services (USI, 1978, April). Raftery also wrote to the Family Planning Service (the doctors' group that had distributed contraception in return for a donation) to secure additional information and to get the results of its survey on doctor's attitudes to contraception in order to make a submission to the minister (USI, 1978, April 11). In its subsequent submission on the bill, USI highlighted international practice in relation to contraception and outlined six proposals for the legislation:

1. Legislation should be enacted without delay and all possible contraceptive methods made legally available to those over the age of consent.
2. Devices which do not require special fitting should be made immediately available.
3. Devices which required medical supervision should be made available through doctors or special clinics.
4. All contraceptives should be made free under the Medical Card Scheme.
5. No restriction should be placed on the availability of contraceptive devices in respect of marital status.
6. Information should be made accessible and widely available.

The submission also highlighted the demand for contraception in the Dublin universities, with over £5,000 having been donated to the various students' unions in return for

condoms. USI also requested a meeting with the minister to discuss its submission (USI 1978, July). It also participated in marches calling for changes to the proposed bill, as it believed the bill could be unconstitutional given the Supreme Court's decision in 1973. The bill, which limited contraception to individuals with a prescription, also outlawed the sale of non-medical contraceptives by anyone other than doctors.

In September 1980, the IFPA held a Contraception Action Programme (CAP) Youth Conference at TCD, with talks, films and workgroups discussing topics such as sex education, family planning methods, sexually transmitted diseases and other conditions. While turnout was slightly disappointing, it was decided that more should be held (IFPA, 1980, September). The following month, TCDSU and CAP organised a public rally at TCD to discuss Haughey's legislation. A number of political and civic society groups attended and several resolutions were passed, calling for a broad front to be established, drawing in students' union women's groups, trade unions, political organisations and parties and family planning clinics and individuals. The campaign was entitled C-AFA, Contraception Access For All. USI became a lead member and distributed C-AFA lobbying material and surveys to students' unions (*Irish Times*, 1980, November 3). USI requested each union to write to the minister for health and party health spokespersons, pass policy at general meetings, invite speakers from C-AFA, circulate petitions, and return them to USI and support their local family planning clinics. USI also lobbied heavily for changes to the legislation and objected in the strongest terms to several elements of the Act including the restrictions on availability of non-medical contraceptives and the requirement of prescription and pharmacist dispensing of contraceptives (USI, 1980, September 4).

Several students' unions continued to provide contraception in protest against the legislation (Contact, 1979, January). At Trinity College, the SRC installed a condom vending machine in its building 'to provide a service for students outside the normal operational hours of their existing service', while at UCD, the incoming students' union president Chris O'Malley, declared his desire to hold a referendum on the provision of contraceptives on campus (*Irish Times*, 1979, March 9). The union subsequently ran a successful information and advisory service on campus in conjunction with the IFPA (IFPA, 1979). The issue of reproductive rights had become a contentious issue during

that year UCD's students' union elections with Deirdre Mullen, an anti-contraceptives campus activist running for welfare officer. She received 1,500 votes. The duly elected candidate, Colm DeBhaldraithe, polled 1,000 more votes, but it was clear to O'Malley that too much emphasis was placed on the issue of abortion and contraceptives and that a referendum was required on the issue (*Irish Times*, 1979, March 9).

UCD was not the only third level institution that experienced a divide on the issue. Despite a well-attended freshers' exhibition at Kevin Street College, the IFPA was advised by the students' union welfare officer that the student body was deeply divided (IFPA, 1979, October 10). In Cork, UCC's students' union held a referendum on the liberalisation of the contraceptive laws, with 1,200 students voting. Fifty-four per cent of votes cast supported the free availability of contraceptives to those aged over 16 years. Twelve per cent supported no restrictions whatsoever, with only twenty-six per cent voting for a 'married couples only' rule. Sixty-four per cent were opposed to abortion with only eight per cent voting for the right of a woman to choose (*Contact*, 1979, May). The following year – 1980 – UCC's students' union published a welfare guide that included information on sourcing condoms, diagrams on using various contraceptive devices and other sexual health information. When the sale of the publication was banned by university authorities, the, then, students' union president, Cathal Kerrigan, stood in the university quad and gave the guide away for free (Kerrigan, 2015). Other colleges also ran into trouble with information booklets. As recalled by former GMIT students' union president, Stephen Grogan:

We included some provocative artwork in the booklet – a doctored picture of the main political party leaders and the pope showing them pregnant under a slogan questioning their opposition to contraceptives if this could happen to them. To our surprise the college authorities took offence to this [but] as the booklets had already been distributed it was brushed aside.
(Grogan, 2015).

As recalled by Eamon Gilmore, those students' unions that did provide contraceptives to students often received support from university staff but were opposed by other groups:

Student demands for contraceptive rights were taken seriously and were often supported by university staff. The UCGSU attempt to fund a family planning clinic was actively (and successfully) opposed by church groups and by anti-contraception campaigners.

(Gilmore, 2015).

USI continued to circulate information to colleges and universities, including material from the Student Christian Movement – a movement that was relatively liberal in a number of areas of sex and sexuality. That year, Christine Donaghy was appointed as USI's representative on the Information and Education committee of the IFPA. A year later, she was appointed information and education officer of the IFPA and later become its chief executive officer. As recalled by Donaghy, students played a central role in the contraception campaign:

They played a key role in providing information on contraceptives and condoms in some colleges and displaying that information and providing access to contraception is a powerful way to change attitudes among a generation of young people. Apart from that I'd say that the students' unions in universities played a large role in protesting in support of the various campaigns organised by other groups.

(Donaghy, 2015).

As the 1980s unfolded, more legislation followed. In 1985, the minister for health, Barry Desmond, introduced the Family Planning Act 1985 which permitted the sale of contraception to over-18s without a prescription. However, the legislation confined the sale of contraception to pharmacies. In April 1988, the newly elected deputy president of USI, Garbhan Downey, approached UCG's board of governors for permission to install

a condom vending machine in the students' union building. The reaction, as recalled by Downey, was that 'they would pull it down and throw it out' (*Sunday Independent*, 1988, April 10). Despite such opposition, as recalled by former president of GMIT students' union, Stephen Grogan, various students' unions continued to offer contraception via vending machines:

The law had just changed at the start of my time in Galway RTC during the mid-1980s – the condoms we sold 'behind the counter' in the students' union shop could now be sold to people over 18 without having to present a prescription; however the students' union shop was not one of the category of places where the sale was allowed. The guidance from my predecessors was that the condoms weren't available for sale but could be had for a 'donation'. It has to be said that we never sold or donated very many condoms but it was a conscious defiance of the law in its own small way.

(Grogan, 2015).

Very often, the machine's cost money rather than made money for the students' unions. As recalled by former president of TCDSU, Ivana Bacik:

In 1989-90 we were still seen as radical to have a condom machine in the students' union office. It was vandalised on almost a weekly basis, cost us a fortune in repairs ... it was still one of the very few places in Dublin, apart from the Virgin Megastore where you could buy condoms.

(Bacik, 2015).

Indeed, as recalled by former president of UCDSU, the machines also attracted the attention of university authorities:

We sold condoms and we had a series of condom machines. We had a cat and mouse game going on with the authorities where we would put a condom machine up and at night they would come into the union and rob our machine. So we ended up taking the machines off the wall and hiding them in our offices at night. Then they started to search our offices and robbing the machines. These things weren't cheap, we had to bring them in from England, I think they had robbed seven or eight machines before condoms were finally legalised. I remember going to the Buildings Committee and kindly asking 'now that it's legal can we have our machines back please'.

(Duke, 2015).

In 1992, as part of USI's Safer Sex Campaign, students' unions countrywide installed condom machines on their campuses to mark World Aids Day. Thirteen students' unions participated, including DCU, Dublin Institute of Technology campuses UCD and several regional technical colleges. This act, in defiance of the law, was carried out so as to 'provide a service to students, whereby they can purchase condoms anonymously and also to confront current family planning legislation which prevents people from acting responsibly to protect their own health' (*Gay Community News*, 1992, December). In 1992, the Health (Family Planning) Amendment Act permitted the sale of contraception to individuals aged over 17 years of age.

7.5 Conclusion

The contraception campaign, while not without some internal divisions, was a product of early bodily autonomy debate within the movement. By the early 1980s, USI had developed significant policy in all areas pertaining to equality of women, including family law, prison, discrimination in employment, violence both in and outside the home, divorce, rape, and technology (USI Women's Affairs, 1982). However, during the 1970s, it was USI's work in the area of reproduction that drew the most public and media

attention. The Women's Rights Action (Advisory) Committee was also a significant step in the policy formation and the engagement of women within the student movement. Whilst much of the references to WRAC in this thesis refers to its work in relation to contraceptives, and later reproductive rights, the WRAC was predominately a group within USI which sought to empower women in the movement. It campaigned on issues specific to women in areas such as access to higher education – retention rates in secondary school, crèche facilities, marriage and the home, supports for women in higher education, the gender pay gap amongst academics, women in the workplace and women in political life. It actively engaged with other women's groups and government on a number of initiatives. It would be remiss not to acknowledge these activities in this work.

The student movement's campaign was predominately one of empowerment. It provided information to young adults about one of the key aspects of being a responsible person, that all too often schools, churches and even parents dared not refer to. The student movement's campaign on the availability of contraceptives provided a much-needed platform for other lobby groups such as the Irish Family Planning Association. Students unions' disregard for the law, by providing condoms and vowing to continue to do so, showed how unworkable the laws on the sale and distribution of contraception actually were. It provided a necessary discourse around individual rights, sexual health, and the role and influence of religion on matters of personal conscience and health.

Students engagement with government through submissions and direct lobbying, coupled with the network of connections through the various civic society groups, provided the student movement with an excellent opportunity to play a key role in the contraception debate. Clashes with Gardai and university authorities over the installation of condom machines provided tangible examples of how easily the laws were ignored, but also provided the general public with locations to purchase condoms and see for themselves the nature of contraceptives. The contraceptive campaign was the first step in the student movement's campaign on bodily autonomy, but was an important step within the women's rights campaign also.

Chapter 8

Case Study 3

The campaign on bodily autonomy and the right to information

8.1 Introduction

From the mid-1970s, the issue of abortion was discussed and debated at USI's annual congress, as the union sought to define its position. One of the earliest such, reported, debates occurred in 1974, when the congress called for the 'right of every woman to decide when and if to have a family and therefore the right to free abortion on demand, excepting medical limitations to the performing of an abortion' (USI Steering Committee, 1974, January 10-13).

In 1975, the congress voted to defer a motion, proposed by TCDSU, that abortion be legalised. Proposing the motion, the, then, TCDSU deputy president, Anne Connolly stated that 'a growing number of girls from Ireland were forced to travel to Britain to have an abortion and to pay high prices for it'. TCDSU was, she told the meeting, 'in the process of starting a service to give these girls as much information as possible before they left Ireland' (*Irish Times*, 1975, January 11). TCDSU was the first student representative body to take a stance on abortion. As later explained (in 1980) by TCDSU deputy president, Alex White, it was 'not a policy which says abortion is right or wrong – it emphasises that the decision should be a purely personal one' (*Irish Press*, 1980, January 17).

In 1976, the congress, again, voted to defer a motion, again proposed by TCDSU, that called on USI 'to set up an abortion information service, on the government to allow the advertising of abortion services, and to introduce abortion on demand'. The deferral arose from the belief that 'colleges felt they did not want to vote unless they had a very specific mandate' (*Irish Press*, 1976, January 10). In 1977, the congress 'agreed that USI could not have a policy on this matter [abortion] but would provide available facts and information on the pros and cons of the medical and moral issues involved'. The union's president, Eamon Gilmore, 'emphasised that the union was neither for nor against abortion as it simply was not an issue on which it could take a stand' (*Irish Times*, 1977, January 17). However, the following April, USI's women's rights advisory committee's (WRAC) conference voted on the proposal that 'women have the right to choose whether they have an abortion or not'. The motion was passed by an overwhelmingly

majority. The conference, thus, urged students' unions to tell their students that abortion information was available and advocated that training be made available to those who wished to assist women with an unplanned pregnancy (USI, 1977, April). Whilst WRAC was supportive of the availability of abortion information to those who needed it, not all in the student movement were happy to see the movement talk about the topic let alone hold a policy position on it. The holding of such debates often incensed some student leaders who threatened disaffiliation from USI if the national union held views in variance with either them or their home union.

In 1978, a lively debate took place, with the congress passing a motion that 'noted the emotiveness of the issue, recognised that it was physically impossible to prevent Irish girls having abortions in England, and asked the union to provide information and formulate a policy' (*Irish Times*, 1978, January 16).

It was at the 1979 congress that USI finally agreed a policy on abortion. The motion, again proposed by TCDSU, resulted in much procedural wrangling. While the original motion called for congress to recognise that the issue of abortion was an individual's choice, called for the decriminalisation of abortion, and called on the government to legislate for abortion, the final motion limited USI's policy to condemning the continued criminalisation of abortion, but not for USI take a pro-abortion stance (*Contact*, 1979, February). Reflecting on the congress debate and subsequent reaction, Peter Davies, the, then, USI president recalled:

At that stage there were 50 to 60 women a week going to Britain and [the spirit] was that women who had taken that route were to be treated with compassion and we took the decision, because previously it had always been kicked to touch and we decided that it was effectively a minimalist position to say we are not passing judgement on people. It is not a choice you can require anyone to make but if someone has made it you must treat them with compassion, not contempt or condemnation. I had people phoning me up at home at 3 o'clock in the morning saying the Rosary after that. It was extraordinary the reaction to what we, at the time, regarded as a reasonable position. There

was no public acknowledgement of the number of women going to Britain every year to have terminations. It was just hypocritical to go on ignoring it.

(Davies, 2015).

The following year, 1980, motions from UCC and St Patrick's College Maynooth that sought to have abortion designated as 'murder' were defeated. Instead, congress agreed that 'every human being has the right to life from the moment of conception'. Further, congress 'recognised the life of the unborn child' and urged that women 'should not be forced to seek abortions' (*Irish Times*, 1980, January 21). The motion, proposed by Carysfort College, also called for the concept of illegitimacy 'to be abolished and for the state to give more support to parents, single or married ... and ... to provide adequately for every child in the country so that the right to life of all unborn children be recognised and so that women will not be forced to seek abortions' (*Contact*, 1980, February, p. 3). Seeking to clarify the matter, the, then, USI president, Tom Costello, stated that the motion 'meant that students felt abortion should not be treated as a criminal matter' (*Irish Times*, 1980, January 21). Reflecting on that congress, Costello contended that the debate ultimately fell towards centralist ground, conscious of what the ramifications would have been for the movement:

This was dynamite in the public arena, and as we know in later years became absolutely explosive. Here you were, exactly where you should be as a student movement talking about these issues, but very much prey to where you ended up on it and how that reflected reputationally on the student movement as a whole and that was a concern ... but if you take it in a historical sense, it opened up the debate ... [politicians] were afraid to touch this issue.

(Costello, 2015).

8.2 The student movement and the 8th amendment

By the early 1980s, the issue of abortion was on the political agenda. In 1980, the formation of groups, such as 'Women's Right to Choose' and the Irish Pregnancy

Counselling Centre, was matched by the formation of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC). In the wake of the McGee judgment, which allowed access to contraception on the grounds of marital privacy, many Catholic lay groups feared that a similar challenge to the ban on abortion may be overturned on similar groups (Kerrigan, 1983). Despite the fact that the general population was opposed to abortion - in a 1977 survey, 74 per cent of respondents believed abortion was always wrong, while another 21 per cent believed it was generally wrong (Whyte, 1980, p. 400) – there emerged a concerted campaign to insert an anti-abortion clause into the constitution. In 1981, the leaders of the two main political parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, committed themselves to holding a referendum on the insertion of ‘pro-life’ amendment into the constitution. The wording of the 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 is practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right’ – would, in time, have far reaching consequences.

At its 1982 congress, USI adopted a motion that called for the decriminalisation of abortion and declared the union’s opposition to the constitutional amendment (*Irish Times*, 1982, April 19). In a letter to the *Irish Times*, the, then, USI deputy president, Liam Whitelaw, noted that the union believed that ‘many unwanted pregnancies come about as a result of ignorance’ and that it advocated ‘the introduction of sex education in schools and the media under a centrally planned curriculum’ (*Irish Times*, 1982, May 5). In May 1982, USI’s women’s rights advisory committee requested that the union affiliate with the anti-amendment campaign (USI welfare committee, 1982, May 24).

The following year’s congress reaffirmed its anti-amendment policy and condemned ‘the holding of such an amendment at any time, believing it to be unnecessary, unworkable, sectarian, anti-woman and a waste of public money’ (USI, 1983, April 10, p. 16). The same congress also adopted a policy, calling on the government to adopt coherent public policy to protect the rights of the unborn child that is compassionate and fair, the ending of illegitimacy, the decriminalisation of abortion, and the amendment of the Landlord and Tenant Act so that no woman could be evicted because of pregnancy.

For adopting an anti-amendment stance, USI was criticised by several other student groups suspected of being fronts for the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC). The Student Pro-Life Movement (SPLM) was one such student group. Founded after a conference held in Maynooth, the group had significant funds, an office in Abbey Street, Dublin, and had two full-time staff members. In October 1982, it held a conference entitled 'Abortion – a threat to Ireland' in St Patrick's College Drumcondra that included speakers from the American National Right to Life Committee and the British Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). During one press conference, the SPLM accused USI of 'bombarding the colleges with anti-amendment propaganda [that is] totally at variance with the views and wishes of the majority of students' (*Irish Times*, 1982, October 20).

In August 1983, USI deputy president, Mark Durkan, released a strong statement, attacking the SPLM and its stance:

Who do these people think they are, with their pious airs and venomous tongues? The arrogance of this group and others involved in PLAC is frightening. First they insist the legislature and judiciary can't be trusted, then they declare that a dangerously ambiguous amendment will only interpreted according to their convenience.

(USI, 1983, August 24).

USI's position was to seek a coherent public policy to protect the rights of the unborn child and to oppose amendments that would 'perpetuate the criminalisation of abortion' (USI WRAC, 1983). The union criticised PLAC for labelling any organisation or person against the amendment as pro-abortion and for causing division in society. The USI anti-amendment campaign had five main points:

1. The amendment would not solve the problems of unwanted pregnancies or address the level of education and contraception access

2. The amendment would not allow for cases where a pregnancy threatens a woman's health or where the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest
3. The amendment was sectarian, seeking to enshrine the teaching of one religious denomination
4. The amendment would stifle any proposed legislation on abortion
5. The referendum was a waste of public funds given the exchequer crisis

USI also opposed the amendment on the grounds that it would be a further obstacle in the constitution to the rights of women and the aspirations for a democratic and pluralist society. The constitution had already been used to justify a ban on divorce, trapping women in unhappy or dangerous marriages. Condemning the referendum and its genesis, USI deputy president, Mark Durkan, declared that:

... it has divided friends, families, groups and churches. Meanwhile thousands of abortions have been taking place – how could a woman suffering an unwanted pregnancy not feel alienated and helpless in circumstances where the rest of society seem totally indifferent to her predicament and obsessed with their own prejudices and preferences? ... passing this amendment would be a national act of self-delusion that can only lead to more abortions.

(USI, 1983, August 24).

Despite USI's campaign, and the fact that Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald appealed on the eve of the referendum for people to reject his government's proposal, the referendum was passed in September 1983. Turnout was low, at 54 per cent, but the result was clear: 66 per cent in favour, 33 per against. Interestingly, support for the proposal was lowest in the 25–34 age group (Kerrigan, 1983).

In the years following the referendum, USI's position in relation to the decriminalisation of abortion remained unchanged. Its 1984 congress reaffirmed this position and also supported a pro-divorce position (*Irish Times*, 1984, April 16). The following year, a proposal from the woman's rights advisory committee that called for the availability of

‘free, safe and legal abortion on demand’ was defeated (*Irish Times*, 1985, April 15). The motion declared that legislation banning abortion had ‘enshrined women as biological slaves in Ireland’ (*ibid*). The motion was defeated 43 votes to 35 with 17 abstentions. Speaking in favour of the motion, the USI women’s rights officer, Rosa Meehan said that it was hypocritical to condemn abortion without remembering the hundreds of women who travelled to England to have unwanted pregnancies terminated. Other contributions in support said ‘the results of our uncaring society are evident in the death of Anne Lovette and the tragedy of Joanne Hayes. We can no longer cover these things up and it is time that students got around to debating them’ (*ibid*). In opposition to the motion Bolton Street student Susan Donohue said, ‘we have spent this congress talking about our rights but by calling for abortion we are denying someone else the most basic right of all – the right to live’ (*ibid*).

Michael Drennan of Athlone RTC also spoke against the motion, ‘It is only a minority of cranks and trendy lefties who want abortion. They are alienated from the women of Ireland who showed their opposition clearly through the [8th] Amendment’. (*ibid*). Whilst the motion failed, a subsequent motion – that women have the right to control their own fertility – was passed which allowed USI officers to widened the previous policy which only allowed officers to call for decriminalisation.

Various student groups, including USI, also participated in the unsuccessful 1986 divorce campaign. USI congress passed policy to accept and support the principles and aims of DAG and USI officers encouraged individual students’ union participation in their local Divorce Action Group (DAG) because divorce was ‘a basic civil right but also because the attempted change in the “de Valera” constitution is symbolic of much of the progressive change we are seeking in Irish society’ (USI, 1986, May, p. 5). A number of students’ unions offered their services as secretarial backups for DAGs. USI also supported Youth for Divorce, a group set up by students advocating a yes vote which also ran a voter registration drive on campuses.

As the 1980s unfolded, USI continued to discuss the issue of abortion. At its 1986 congress, USI adopted a motion that asserted a woman’s right to choose by a majority of

two to one (*Irish Times*, 1986, April 5). At the subsequent annual general meeting of the National Youth Council of Ireland, USI proposed a motion that welcomed the establishment of the IFPA's confidential telephone service – Open Line. The motion also acknowledged the 'severe oppression against young people developing awareness of their sexuality, sexual orientation and taking control over their own sexual lives ... [and that] the education system; curriculum and ethos reinforces sex-role stereotyping' (IFPA, 1987, December).

At its 1987 congress, USI passed policy to support the Open Line and the Well Woman Clinic (founded by student activist Anne Connolly). In December 1986, Justice Liam Hamilton had granted SPUC a high court injunction against Open Line Counselling and the Well Woman Clinic. He ruled that 'the constitutional right to life of the unborn [8th amendment] made it unlawful to provide counselling in Ireland which facilitated abortions in Britain, even if such abortions were legal in the latter jurisdiction'. Thus, Hamilton ruled, the clinics were 'not allowed to assist pregnant women in getting abortions abroad, or in getting further information to get an abortion' (*Irish Times*, 1986, December 20). While SPUC had claimed that the information 'constituted an actionable criminal conspiracy to corrupt morals contrary to common law' (USI, 1986, October 11, p. 5), Hamilton found that the activities did not amount to a conspiracy to corrupt morals.

As the Well Women Clinic and Open Line Counselling waited for an appeal against the Hamilton ruling, USI urged students' unions to raise funds for the clinics and in February 1988 TCDSU held a 24 hour fast to raise funds (*Irish Times*, 1988, February 2). In March 1988, the clinics lost their Supreme Court appeal – although the court amended the High Court injunction 'to make clear that while information on abortion was in itself not subject to restraint, information which could be construed as assistance in procuring an abortion – such as the names and addresses of abortion clinics – was in breach of the constitution' (*Irish Times*, 1988, March 17). Reacting to this judgment, the, then, USI president, Patricia Hegarty, stated that 'USI will continue to defy the Hamilton Judgement by providing information on abortion', while USI's women's rights officer, Fidelma Joyce, noted that:

The numbers of women travelling to Britain had not decreased since the injunction was imposed; the denial of information only makes the experience more traumatic and potentially more dangerous'. USI also condemned SPUC for enforcing their own moral attitudes on all women in Ireland.

(USI, March 1988).

That year's USI congress mandated USI officers to provide information packs with abortion information to students and to publish abortion clinic details in *USI News* and to supply such information to callers over the telephone (USI steering committee, 1988). As recalled by former TCDSU president, Ivana Bacik:

By the time I came into office in 1989 the counselling services, the Open Door and the Well Woman could only operate clandestinely ... so students' unions were the only place actually openly offering information ... on a phone number of a clinic in London, that basic information that you couldn't get any other way but the back of toilet doors.

(Bacik, 2015).

8.3 The student movement and SPUC

By the late 1980s, many students' unions were openly providing information on crisis pregnancy options and details of abortion clinics in the UK. USI material included a guide for welfare officers entitled, *'Unplanned Pregnancy: The choices'*. The booklet included a checklist for welfare officers, a list of various options to be explored and the contact details for abortion services in the UK.

In the wake of the Hamilton judgment, SPUC turned its attention towards the student movement. In October 1987, the inclusion of abortion information in UCDSU's handbook prompted SPUC to seek legal advice on whether the handbook contravened the Hamilton ruling. In response, the, then, USI president, Patricia Hegarty, stated that the union would 'provide all necessary support in defending the union from interference', while the union's women's rights officer, Fidelma Joyce, stated that USI will provide

information on abortion as long as women seek it' (*Irish Times*, 1987, October 15).

UCDSU's welfare officer, Belinda Flaherty, told the *Evening Herald*:

It's becoming patently obvious that women will have abortions anyway and I would prefer that those women, particularly those I represent, would have access to the best information available, with regard to counselling and clinics.

(*Evening Herald*, 1987, October 14).

Nothing came of the threat until the following year, when, at a meeting of USI's national council in June 1988, a memorandum was circulated, advising that SPUC could take an injunction against the provision of abortion information by students' unions. The meeting was informed that SPUC could seek an injunction against named individuals, as well as unions. UCDSU expected to be a named union in any action and it requested that other unions support it by also supplying information. TCD, Carlow RTC, and Cork RTC advised the meeting that they would supply information on services. St Patrick's College Maynooth and St Patrick's College Drumcondra refused to do so, as both unions had a policy against the provision of information. NIHE Dublin students' union stated that it would give out basic information but would not publish referral addresses, while UCGSU advised the meeting that its policy backed information but not the right to choose. It was suggested that, where unions could not support the right to choice, they might support the democratic autonomy of a students' union to determine its own policy (USI, 1988, June 20).

In July 1988, SPUC's solicitors sent a letter to the incoming UCDSU officers, requiring them to give an undertaking that they would not print any information on abortion in their forthcoming welfare guide. The letter described such information as 'illegal and unconstitutional' and stated:

We hereby request from you an undertaking that you will forthwith cease publication and or promotion of the Welfare Guide in its present form or in any other form which promotes in any way abortion, in this or any other jurisdiction.

(Collins, Crowley & Co. 1988, July 1).

The union responded with an open letter, advising SPUC it would comply with policy as set by the student body. The letter was viewed as a threat to the autonomy not just of UCDSU but all students' unions. At a press conference, Diarmuid Coogan, UCDSU president, told journalists that his intention was to make the Hamilton judgement unworkable; UCDSU would continue to distribute abortion information and if they could not print their material any more they would seek material from USI or abroad (*Evening Herald*, 1988, July 5).

USI's women's rights officer, Fidelma Joyce, wrote to all students' unions, advising them of the situation and of USI's advice that it would be highly unlikely that SPUC would take legal action if UCDSU went ahead and published the information as 'the publicity generated would, for them, outweigh the legal benefit of obtaining an injunction against a publication that has already been distributed' (USI, 1988, July 13). However, SPUC went ahead with its action and sought an injunction against UCDSU. The union's four officers – Diarmuid Coogan, Anna Farrell, Anne-Marie Keary and Francois Pittion – appeared in the High Court to argue against the injunction. At a press conference, Coogan stated that the union feared that a judgment against UCDSU would be used by SPUC 'to implement a McCarthyite witch-hunt that would extend to other organisations'. Fidelma Joyce, USI's women's rights officer, stated that USI, in its own student manual, 'would be providing similar information to that being issued to the UCD students' (*Irish Times*, 1988, August 25).

However, Justice Mella Carroll refused SPUC's application, stating that SPUC did not have the legal standing to take the case and 'could not act as self-appointed policemen by attempting to injunct the students before publication of their annual guide'. But, she also warned UCDSU that it needed to be aware of both the Hamilton and the Supreme Court (Hamilton appeal) judgments and that, if it disregarded these judgments, then 'it should be prepared to take the consequences' (*Irish Times*, 1988, September 8). UCD authorities put significant pressure on Coogan not to continue with the publication, but, despite this, the students' union went ahead and published the welfare guide containing the abortion referral information (UCD, 1988, August 11).

In the late-1980s, TCDSU also published referral information, which included information on the logistics and costs of going to Britain, as well as the address and contact details of UK abortion clinics. In an interview, Mark Little, the, then, president of TCDSU, admitted that the union had received advice that legal action would be inevitable if they published such information but he believed 'that it would be an even greater crime if we were to ignore what is the only way out for thousands of Irish women. Abortion exists as an option for pregnant women, to try and cover this up and pretend it doesn't exist is not only ludicrous but completely irresponsible' (*Hot Press*, 1988, October 20). Over the summer of 1988, TCDSU dealt with 12 requests for referral advice and a further 24 were given referral advice by UCDSU. Dozens more were estimated to have sought similar advice in other colleges (*The Star*, 1988, August 25).

Given the number of students' unions distributing referral information, SPUC appealed the Carroll judgment to the Supreme Court in October 1988. After much legal argument, judgement was reserved. In July 1989, USI and several students' unions announced their intention to publish referral information in the welfare booklets being prepared for the forthcoming academic year (*Irish Times*, 1989, July 6). Ultimately, the Supreme Court ordered that the original High Court case against UCDSU be reheard as SPUC, as the Supreme Court ruled, did have the legal standing to seek an injunction against the publication of referral information (*Irish Times*, 1989, July 29). Reacting to the decision, the, then, USI women's rights officer, Karen Quinlivan, stated that:

Students' unions have an obligation to fulfil the democratic mandates of their members, and will continue to publish information for pregnant women in their handbooks.

(USI, 1989, July 28).

One of the student activists named in the original High Court case, Anne-Marie Keary, also reacted:

This judgement is not a solution. It will not prevent one woman from travelling abroad for an abortion. However it is intended to

prevent them doing so without advice, information or professional counselling.

(USI, 1989, July 28).

For its part, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties declared that the Supreme Court decision ‘would appear to support the conclusion that the Supreme Court has created a charter by which the moral police in our society can muzzle those who take the democratic freedom to impart information seriously’ (*Irish Times*, 1989, July 29).

In September 1989, SPUC sent a legal letter to 14 named USI and students’ union officers, seeking an undertaking that they would publish referral information. The student activists, from USI, TCD and UCD, were given one week to give the undertaking. In response, the activists declared their intention to publish the information (*Irish Times*, 1989, September 20).

Student Name	Age	Institution	Role
Karen Quinlivan	23	USI	Women’s Rights Officer
Grainne Murphy	21	TCDSU	Deputy President for Welfare
Lorcan Fullam	21	UCDSU	Entertainments Officer
Jim Davis	21	TCDSU	Entertainments Officer
Martin Whelan	23	USI	Education Officer
Eoin Lonergan	22	TCDSU	Education Officer
Eoin O’Neill	21	UCDSU	Education Officer
Ivana Bacik	21	TCDSU	President
Tom Duke	21	UCDSU	President
Anne Marie Keary	24	USI	Welfare Officer
Joan O’Connor	19	UCDSU	Vice President for Welfare
Michael Murphy	26	USI	Campaigns Officer
Maxine Brady	21	USI	National Development Officer
Stephen Grogan	24	USI	President

Table 10: List of students named in 1989 SPUC High Court action

The, then, USI president, Stephen Grogan, declared that all 14 student activists were 'prepared to go to jail over the matter if it came to it' (*Irish Times*, 1989, September 20). In an interview, he recalled his initial reaction to SPUC's letter:

Strangely, I think I just moved on to the next letter ... it was normal business ... it was a bunch of lunatics with a lawyer [wrote] to us wanting to us stop USI News. In one sense a lot of crazy things used to happen in USI so nothing seemed too unusual or out of the ordinary.

(Grogan, 2015).

Responding to SPUC's demand, the, then, TCDSU president, Ivana Bacik, stated that TCDSU had already distributed 'a guidebook to 1,700 first year students this year which includes information on abortion as well as on keeping the child, adoption and foster care' (*Irish Times*, 1989, September 20). Both TCDSU and UCDSU issued public statements, stating they would continue to publish referral information. In one such statement, Bacik defended the publication of such information:

Our students have voted by an overwhelming majority at a Union Assembly last May that we should include information on all pregnancy options in our annual guidebook. The guidebook contains information on keeping the child, adoption, foster care and abortion. This is information our students need, and we have the support of the majority of them in our defiance of SPUC. We will not allow the wishes of our members to be censored undemocratically by a lobby group like SPUC.

(TCDSU, 1989, September 18)

In a press release, the, then, president of UCDSU, Tom Duke, also condemned the actions of SPUC:

Through the manipulation of the 1983 referendum, and with the backing of the Supreme Court, SPUC have now managed to set themselves up as the moral police in Irish society. They have totally ignored the circumstances which lead to Irish women

choosing abortion, and have instead used the courts to create a climate of fear.

(UCDSU, 1989, September 19).

The SPUC action strengthened the resolve of student activists. As recalled by, the, then, DIT (Bolton Street) SU equality officer, Helen O'Sullivan:

It was too important, it was ridiculous, knowing that you could go to the country just across the channel and actually avail of abortion facilities but it was also about women's health. Places like the Rape Crisis Centre, The Open Door, The Well Woman Centres were also being attacked. It was much broader than getting a phone number of a clinic in London. It was a full-scale attack on women's health and women's rights. I was incensed.
(O'Sullivan, 2015).

As recalled by student activist (and later USI president), Maxine Brady, a culture of censorship had developed around women's reproductive rights:

Hard to imagine now, but there was no internet. And the telephone directories in the GPO for the UK had the pages for the abortion clinics torn out. UK women's magazines also self-censored after a mass seizing of a delivery when the magazines were burned by customs. So really, there weren't a lot of places where you could get the information other than the students.
(Brady, 2016).

Along with providing referral information to students, students' unions were also counselling the general public in relation to crisis pregnancies (Student Support Trust, 1994, September 24). Looking back at her time as a student activist, O'Sullivan recalled:

I certainly took phone calls from women who were desperate, looking for the names of clinics and the phone number ... these were women older than I was at the time and the last person I am sure they wanted to talk to was a twenty-something year old student but we were the ones giving out the information. The WRAC did a lot of training about telephone [calls] ... about how to deal with women and what to say, and the first thing you had

to say was 'I have the information you need' and get that out of the way ... there was a group in Liverpool called 'Escort' who were also female students and they used to offer their bedsits and accommodation for people who had to make the trip. They would meet them at the airport, get a bus with them, take them to where they needed to go, offer them a bed, a cup of tea, it was just a face, a little bit of support. Often these women were totally on their own. It was vital.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

The, then, UCDSU president, Tom Duke, recalled the sometimes visible, sometimes clandestine, nature of information provision:

A good few of the clinics had stopped providing information services directly ... it fell back to the Women's Information Network, which was the number we had on our t-shirts. It became a volunteer underground thing, the number was put on posters and written on toilets ... the clinics were still there but a lot of the established companies like the Rape Crisis Centre, Well Women's etc felt that they couldn't give out the numbers so they would have to say to people, 'you can get these numbers but you'll have to go to Trinity or UCD' or wherever the nearest place was.

(Duke, 2015).

In late-September 1989, SPUC began its action by seeking a High Court order against the fourteen named officers of USI, UCDSU and TCDSU and a printer. In response, USI welcomed the publication of student handbooks at Waterford and Carlow RTCs, DCU and TCD, all of which 'contain information on all pregnancy options, including abortion' (*Irish Times*, 1989, September 29). In early October, SPUC secured a High Court interim injunction, prior to the full hearing, that prevented TCDSU from providing referral information. However, as the full hearing approached TCDSU's student handbook continued to be circulated, raising the prospect of the union's officers being found in contempt of court (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 6). In an interview published in the *Irish Times*, the, then, TCDSU president, Ivana Bacik, declared that a second copy of the interim injunction had been delivered to her but that the handbook would continue to

be circulated. The plan, according to Bacik, was 'to create a situation whereby it's more embarrassing for the government to have students in jail than it would be to change the law' (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 6). As recalled by Bacik, SPUC's action provoked a reaction from TCD's student body:

In Trinity it was very, very protective of their officers and we had a referendum during our year, which entirely vindicated our stance. Student voted overwhelmingly in support of the provision of information.

(Bacik, 2015).

This reaction was reflected in a press release issued by TCDSU:

Even if the court decides to imprison us there will still be information on abortion available. SPUC will have to jail every one of the thousands of students who have shown their active support for us ... if they wish to succeed in their campaign of intimidation.

(TCDSU, 1989, October 7).

As the High Court hearing loomed closer, the 14 student activists met to discuss their option. As recalled by the, then, president of USI, Stephen Grogan:

I can recall the first meeting of all 14 officers in the back office on 16 North Great George's Street as we tried to understand all the implications and consequences of what faced us as individuals and as students' unions ... but the most important outcome of this meeting was the determination and personal commitment that each officer displayed – putting aside any concern or reservation for the wider principle of the rights of students to form representative bodies and to decide upon policies and actions democratically and free from outside interference.

(Grogan, 2009)

As recalled by the, then, UCDSU president, Tom Duke, the 14 student activists were determined to face SPUC down:

Amongst the fourteen of us there was a view that we push it to the edge – that these people are trying to get us to capitulate and what we needed to do was try and force them to act, otherwise the thing could drag on forever. The legal structures of the unions caused them difficulty, they found it difficult to bring the unions in on the legal action and there were also questions as to whether they wanted to do that, so we were all individually named so to scare us, but I think they forgot when you are at that age you don't care if you have this 'debt' against you, you are fighting for a greater cause. You had a bunch of young people who felt they had nothing to use, it was a stupid tactic.

(Duke, 2015).

In terms of strategy, as recalled by the, then, USI president, Stephen Grogan, there was much discussion about how to protect USI and its assets:

Our first step was to understand injunctions and the law, secondly, regardless of what the law is, we are still going to publish the magazine [*USI News*] and we would keep distributing it ... we made the decision that we would distribute the magazine wherever we wished to rather than if students' unions accepted it or not. We had the ability to distribute it that way. The other concern was would we get the printer to print them in the Republic or to find someone in Northern Ireland to do it ... the next step considered was should we create a company in Northern Ireland and transfer all of the assets there so that they couldn't be sequestered ... the shares in USIT, there were fuck all assets, but there was cash in the bank account ... as it transpired anything we could have done would have been open to challenge.

(Grogan, 2015).

A communications strategy was also implemented, with USI undertaking to organise the activists' media strategy centrally so as to co-ordinate the flow of information to the press. It also prepared all students' unions for interviews and supplied key talking points for student leaders. The student activists were represented, *pro bono*, by solicitors, Taylor & Buchalter, and Mary Robinson, SC, and Seamus Wolfe, SC. In the run-up to the hearing, convinced they would be put in jail, the student activists held a last night of freedom party:

We had a last night of freedom party on the Sunday night, because Mary Robinson told us absolutely in straight forward terms to pack a tooth brush because we would be going to prison, it was a daunting prospect [but] we took a decision ... we discussed it amongst ourselves, we talked to our families, who had varying degrees of support on the issue, ... but we all decided that we would stick to it and go to prison if needs be.

(Bacik, 2015).

On the day of the hearing, as recalled by Tom Duke, the resolve of the student activists was strong:

The only thing we could have been sent to prison for is breach of an injunction, there was nothing criminal ... we walked into the court with the numbers on our t-shirts, part of our campaign was that this was going nowhere if we didn't bring it to a head, we were trying to get jailed to be honest, certainly at one stage in the campaign. Irish people are reasonable and if they see something that they believe is unreasonable they tend to react but you have to have that situation. So this long drawn out legal and financial thing was of no benefit to us.

(Duke, 2015).

The legal advice given to the students also touched upon the impact a ruling would have on their travel options and even careers, as Maxine Brady, USI's, then, national development officer, recalled:

... it was a very scary time for us all. We were students. We earned a grand total of IR£9000 a year, (the average 3rd level student grant). We knew that our position was publicly, an unpopular one. Many may have supported us privately, but there were few leaders who would come out to speak in our support. Our initial legal advice was that we may never be able to travel to the USA, get a mortgage, could end up in jail. Those of us studying law were told that they may never be permitted to be called to the bar. All of these issues were brought to us to consider. There was no pressure on any student officer, national or local, to remain in the campaign. Any officer could

have at any point decided to obey the injunction. However, we all decided as one, all three Student unions together, that we would continue to publish and disseminate.

(Brady, 2016).

On October 9 1989, the case began in the High Court, with SPUC seeking an injunction against USI, TCDSU, and UCDSU in relation to the publication of referral information and a committal order against TCDSU's representatives for its distribution of its welfare booklet while subject to an interim injunction (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 10. As recalled by Ivana Bacik:

Our fresher's week was earlier than theirs (UCD) so we had started distributing ... because in Trinity we had started distributing our fresher's guide which contained within it information on all the options open to women in crisis pregnancy including abortion information. We were then taken to court for contempt of court ... the four of us [TCDSU's reps] were facing prison for contempt.

(Bacik, 2015).

In its submission, SPUC expressed a preference for the TCDSU representatives not to be jailed but to be dealt with through other methods such as fines.

Addressing the court, Mary Robinson, SC, argued that the Hamilton judgment and the related Supreme Court judgment had been based on the provision of *counselling* rather than the provision of *information*. SPUC was, she continued, unjustly seeking to extent the Hamilton and Supreme Court judgments to cover the provision of information whereas the Supreme Court had not ruled that 'there was no right to information in relation to services lawfully provided for in another member state of the European Community'. Whether students 'had a right to disseminate information about abortion information in Britain was' she concluded 'a matter for European Community law' (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 10). On the hearing's second day, over 400 students from all over Ireland held a two-hour protest outside the Four Courts, with students sitting down on the road and chanting the telephone number of the Women's Information Network

(O’Brion, 2015). Ultimately, Justice Mella Carroll decided to seek clarity from the European Court prior to reaching a decision on whether to grant full injunctions against the student movement. She also concluded that no evidence of a breach of the interim injunction, other than newspaper reports, had been presented to the court. SPUC immediately decided to appeal the decision not to grant the injunction to the Supreme Court (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 12).

In its appeal, SPUC argued that, in not granting an injunction against the student movement, the courts ‘as the judicial arm of the government, would be failing in their right to respect, defend and vindicate the right to life of the unborn guaranteed in Article 40’ of the Irish constitution and argued that the High Court erred in its distinction between the provision of information and the provision of counselling (*Irish Times*, 1989, November 29). Ultimately, the Supreme Court granted SPUC an injunction on the basis that the information being distributed by the student movement was, as then Chief Justice Thomas Finlay put it, ‘constitutionally illegal’. This judgment, in effect, negated the distinction, made in the Hamilton appeal judgment, between the provision of counselling and the provision of information (*Irish Times*, 1989, December 20). However, the court also found that Justice Mella Carroll’s referral of the case to the European Court be continued. Reacting to the judgement, USI’s, then, women’s rights officer, Karen Quinlivan, noted that:

Today’s decision is a sad decision for Irish women in that it shows no concern for the plight of the many Irish women who travel to England every year to have abortions. It is worth remembering however that while SPUC are attempting to silence 14 students, over 21 students’ unions throughout the country have policy, decided by students, in favour of printing information on abortion. These students’ union remain unaffected by today’s Supreme Court decision.

(USI, 1989, December 19).

TCDSU officers continued, unconcerned by the ruling, to provide information, as, then, TCDSU president, Ivana Bacik recalled:

The TCD welfare officer, Grainne Murphy, and I used to take five or six calls or personal visits every week from distraught women who had nowhere else to turn, and who were desperate for the information. We weren't going to stop helping them just because of a court order – so we continued to distribute contact details for the English clinics when requested.

(Bacik, 2013, p. 186).

The students were aware that some of these calls had the potential of being setups:

The guards called into us, we were investigated for conspiracy to corrupt public morals, a file was opened in Harcourt Street on us and the guards came in to us ... Trinity certainly had taken a lead ... for practical access. We were the first port of call for many women at the time ... we were faced with these absolutely desperate women ... we were driven by compassion as well as political background.

(Bacik, 2015).

As recalled by Stephen Grogan, USI officers were also subject to Garda enquires:

We were also subject to a form of enquiry/investigation by the Garda with special branch detectives seeking to interview the USI officers in relation to an allegation of a conspiracy to corrupt public morals (or something along these lines). Eventually after a number of cat and mouse games each of the USI officers were interviewed, but nothing ever came of it.

(Grogan, 2015).

In light of the continuing court actions many third-level institutions held referendums seeking a mandate from their memberships to continue to supply abortion information. In October 1989, UCGSU (which had disaffiliated from USI in 1988 (Connaught Sentinel, 1988, December 13)) held a referendum on the provision of abortion information. The result, 1,358 against, versus 871 in favour, was decisive (*Irish Times*, 1989, October 27). Shortly afterwards, UCCSU (which had disaffiliated from USI in 1988) held a similar referendum, with two-thirds of the membership voting against the distribution of

abortion information in the one of the highest turnouts in the history of the university. The referendum was held on the foot of a petition organised by the anti-abortion student group, Students for Life (*Irish Times*, 1989, November 4).

In November 1989, NIHE Dublin (DCUSU) held a general meeting where it voted to provide full information on contraceptives, abortion, and birth control. The meeting was well attended by the student body, as former students' union president, Clare Daly, recalled:

I remember the big debate we had in the old canteen and it was packed to the gills, there were about 3,000 [students in the university] and there must have been 1,000 people at the AGM. It was incredible. We were actually praised in the *Irish Catholic* for the manner in which the meeting was conducted ... I think only eight people voted against it ... the outcome was utterly overwhelming ... I remember people getting up and saying 'I'm against abortion but', many prefaced their support with that.
(Daly, 2015).

Looking back at the meeting, Daly recalled her motivation to be involved in the issue at a national level:

... because we were very active in USI, because I saw the national protest movement as important, and [abortion information] was a huge issue for USI we fed that back [to the students] because we saw a responsibility to give people the information and be part of that army or that campaign.
(Daly, 2015).

UCDSU also held its referendum on whether to continue the policy of publishing the information in November 1989. The wording on the ballot paper was:

Do you support the proposal that, as part of its policy of providing information on all pregnancy options, UCD Students' Union continues to provide information on abortion, both verbally and in its publications.

(*Suss*, 1989, Autumn, p. 3).

The student body rejected the proposal by 55 per cent. Tom Duke, the, then, president of UCDSU, stated in an interview with the *Irish Press*:

Personally, I asked for a Yes vote ... I appreciate the decision of my members and I will uphold their mandate ... now the policy of the students' union will be not to publish such information. And at Union of Students in Ireland conferences, where we control ten per cent of the vote, we will be voting against including abortion information in guidebooks.

(*Irish Press*, 1989, November 18).

However, the student group established to seek a 'Yes' vote in the UCD referendum, the Right to Information Action Group, continued to exist, promoting change within the students' union membership.

TCDSU held its referendum in January 1990. This referendum was not without controversy, with the anti-abortion campaign calling on students to boycott the referendum over the wording (*Irish Independent*, 1989, December 7). The group, Students for Life, established by TCD students, was denied funds by the Central Societies Committee, which was responsible for funding student societies. The committee denied the funds on the grounds that the society was a single-issue group whose concern could be dealt with by the students' union welfare officer, Gráinne Murphy, a named individual in the SPUC injunction case (*Irish Press*, 1989, November 28). In light of not being able to obtain funding, the Students for Life group was supplemented by what the *Irish Times* referred to as 'a variety of shadowy organisations such as Students for a Democratic Action and the Right to a Fair Referendum Group' (*Irish Times*, 1990, January 18).

A wording issue dogged the referendum in TCD, attracting national media attention. The ballot question was a five-point welfare policy, which included the publication of abortion information. Several students objected to the methods employed by the students' union to call the referendum, including the use of an emergency meeting,

which required little notice to decide upon the referendum question. The final wording to be put to the membership read:

We mandate the students' union to provide all information on all pregnancy options, including abortion as this information is presently being censored in Ireland; campaign to make professional counselling available for Irish women; campaign for greater availability of comprehensive sex education and contraception and promote the sale of condoms in the students' union shops; continue working for more and cheaper places in the college crèche for children of students; campaign against all discrimination against single parents and work to ensure a living income and decent housing for them and their children.

(Irish Times, 1989, December 7).

The referendum attracted the highest turnout of any referendum held in the college, 65 per cent. Trinity students voted three to one in favour of providing the information. The yes campaign in TCD was supported by the IFPA which issued a statement calling on Trinity students to vote yes:

While the IFPA policy does not favour abortion, we have campaigned for over 20 years for the right of adults to have access to information on a wide range of subjects. Censorship of books, information and ideas in this country has already undermined and eroded an essential. When information is denied, for example in the area of sex education, we can see the untold misery for many in our country.

(IFPA, 1990, January 10).

Following the result, the, then, TCDSU president, Ivana Bacik, indicated that, while the SPUC injunction existed, TCDSU would 'continue union policy on abortion information and will have discussions amongst ourselves on how best to do this with due regard to the interlocutory injunction' *(Irish Times, 1990, January 19).*

For its part, USI continued to disseminate abortion information. In a letter to the *Irish Times*, it defended its policy, citing the fact that twenty students' union had passed policy in favour of the distribution of information, including 'eight of the regional technical colleges, three DITs, the art colleges in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, the teacher training colleges in Drumcondra and Thomond Limerick and Sligo'. USI added that, in numbers, this still represented a clear majority of students (*Irish Times*, 1989, December 18). The, then, USI president, Stephen Grogan, recalled his concern over the campus referenda:

It was a divisive issue within the student movement which attracted many negative reactions – not least threats to disaffiliate or humiliation if the college-by-college vote contradicted the USI Congress motions, and by implication our claim to be representative.

(Grogan, 2015).

USI received support from the Federated Workers' Union of Ireland in DCU, which publically supported and donated money to USI's campaign. It also encouraged other branches in universities to support USI (*Irish Times*, 1989, November 28) and published clinic information on their own noticeboards in the campus (Socialist Worker Movement, 1989). Seeking funds to support the campaign and to raise awareness on the right of information, USI held four concerts in partnership with TCDSU, UCDSU, and DIT students in Hawkins House, D'Olier Street. Funds went to assist the students' unions with their legal costs.

USI also engaged in a letter writing campaign to high profile politicians, past and present, as well as public figures, seeking support for its campaign for the right of women to access information on all pregnancy options, including the option of abortion. USI received positive responses from Michael D. Higgins (who later would become president of Ireland), and Dr Noel Browne, the former health minister. Browne's wife also lent her name to the campaign. In his letter to Karen Quinlivan, the, then, USI women's rights officer, Bowne stated:

I have not changed my conviction on the woman's right to know as well as the woman's right to choose abortion. You may recall in the Mother & Child issue the 'education of the mother in respect of motherhood' just 40 years ago was a crucial point of difference between me and the hierarchy. We have slipped backwards – what was simply a law has become a constitutional provision. I regret that I am no longer active politically except in my pen from time to time. But use my name as well as that of my wife. We are with you in your campaign.

(Browne, 1989).

Mavis Arnold, journalist and co-editor of *The Abortion Referendum: The case Against*, also gave her support to USI. Arnold played an active role in the Women's Political Association and supported the fundraising activities to cover the legal costs of the students (Student Support Trust, 1994).

Former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald wrote to USI advising Quinlivan of his opposition to abortion and outlining his objections to the 8th amendment wording:

As was made quite clear at the time, my opposition to the abortion amendment as passed by Dail Éireann was based on concern that it could be open to misinterpretation by the Supreme Court either in a manner that would permit abortion, or (more probably) in a manner that could render unconstitutional operations at present carried out for the purpose of protecting the life of the mother when it under threat as in the case of an ectopic pregnancy.

(FitzGerald, 1989).

In March 1990, in an attempt to meet the costs of the campaign, the Student Defence Fund (SDF) was established to raise funds for the fourteen students named and the students' unions in the 1988 and 1989 actions. Letters requesting support from politicians and public figures were written and a mini-marathon was organised in Dublin. Support was also sought from trade unions, TCD graduates and students' unions abroad. Band nights and discos were also held across the country. The campaign gained an impressive list of sponsors including, Louise and Kadar Asmal, Eamonn Gilmore TD, Michael D. Higgins TD, Bernadette McAlliskey (née Devlin), journalist, Nell McCafferty,

Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, Sylvia Meehan, Dr W. A. Watts (provost of TCD), and Senator Shane Ross. Both Young Fine Gael and Labour Youth also supported the SDF (Murphy, 1990, July 19). Staff in TCD and UCD also erected posters in the staff common rooms, seeking donations for the fund. On May 11, USI held a benefit gig in the Olympia Theatre that featured Mary Coughlan, Katel Keineg, The Frames, Siobhan McGowan, and Honey Thieves. As recalled by, then, student activist, Damian O'Brion:

There was a lot of people there who were politically aligned, people like Michael D. Higgins, the legal team ... there was a strong connection with particularly the Labour Party ... the left at the time, small as it was, was very much on side ... they felt, even the ones not fully on side in relation to pro-choice issues, felt that SPUC was bullying and intimidatory and a threat to freedom of speech. There was a genuine solidarity there.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Despite struggling to raise funds, other students' unions continued to supply information on abortion. UCDSU and USI also launched a brand of condoms for sale in order to raise much-needed funds. As recalled by, then, UCDSU president, Tom Dukes:

We figured we'd bring two campaigns together, the contraception campaign and the SPUC v Grogan campaign and we brought out a line of condoms called 'spuckers', so the logic was you'd buy your 'spucker' condom and the money would go towards the SPUC campaign. They were famously distributed at USI congress and then around the campuses. We were told afterwards they were not the best quality.

(Duke, 2015).

In the academic year, 1990-91, Waterford RTC, Cork RTC and DCUSU, none of which were subject to the injunction, distributed handbooks with abortion information. Supporting the decision of these unions, USI president, Karen Quinlivan, declared that:

SPUC's attempt at censorship of students have failed yet again to stop students' unions from providing women with access to abortion information. For as long as SPUC's campaign of

censorship continues the Irish student movement will do all in its power to ensure that Irish women have access to information on all pregnancy options, including the option of abortion

(USI, 1990, October 1).

In October 1991, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) delivered its judgement. It ruled that:

1. Abortion was a service as defined by the Treaty of Rome
2. That it was not contrary to community law for Ireland to ban distribution of abortion information by students since the link between the students and the clinics was too tenuous, i.e. the students' unions did not gain financially from referrals

This was a partial victory for USI. The ECJ had found that abortion was a legitimate medical service tradable across borders, but it also meant that Irish courts could ban information in relation to this service in this instance because the student movement was not 'an economic operator' in the specified service. The judgement made headlines at home and all over Europe. Reacting to decision, Maxine Brady, the, then, USI president, stated 'we remain firmly convinced of the moral legitimacy of the provision of information to our members, and of the moral illegitimacy of a state right to interfere in what we see as essentially the private sphere' (*Irish Times*, 1991, October 5). USI vowed to continue to supply information to those who required it. This position was once again endorsed at its 1991 congress, even with the legal position of such actions being clear to delegates. USI continued to circulate 15,000 copies of its newspaper, *Micleinn le Chéile*, which included clinic information. The magazine was also handed out by the full-time officers of USI across the road from the GPO in Dublin to members of the public. While SPUC threatened to take contempt of court proceedings against USI, it never did.

The final injunction issued by the High Court restrained the student activists and ‘anyone having knowledge’ from:

Printing, publishing or distributing or assisting in the printing, publishing or distribution of any publication produced under their aegis providing information to persons (including pregnant women) of the identity and location and methods of communication with a specified clinic or clinics where abortions are performed.

(Courts Service, 1988).

USI subsequently received advice that the injunction included written or verbal information as to the numbers of addresses of clinics, but not purely factual information on abortion, post-abortion counselling, or pregnancy counselling services, provided numbers or addresses were not provided (USI, 1994, February).

The injunction did not stop USI distributing leaflets. In fact, it escalated its campaign in the city centre of Dublin, handing out flyers weekly (USI, 1991, July 4). Shauneen Armstrong, women’s rights officer, took office in October 1991 and immediately began working on USI’s right to information campaign. Armstrong wrote to various trade unions and women’s rights and advocacy groups, including clinics, seeking their support. She also organised training events for welfare officers and women’s rights officers in students’ unions on pregnancy counselling assisted by the Women’s Information Network. USI also became a member of the Escort campaign, established to assist women who were travelling abroad to have an abortion and provide them with accommodation where necessary and accompany them to the clinic. It assisted in linking those women seeking abortions with the Escort service via the Liverpool John Moore’s University Students’ Union and other unions.

The courts eventually awarded costs against USI. SPUC submitted costs of £60,000, which was significantly reduced by the taxing master to £22,913.30, at 8% interest. In May 1993, SPUC moved to change the proceedings from the fourteen named student leaders to the unions they represented, therefore threatening the very existence of UIS,

UCDSU, and TCDSU. When SPUC made an application for a receiver to be appointed to USI, a cross-party group, Student Support Trust, was established to ensure that a national union continued to exist and to free USI and the other named students' unions from threat of asset seizure. The members of the trust included Alan Shatter TD, Senator David Norris, Sabina Higgins, Jim McDaid TD, Liz McManus TD, and Senator Mary Henry. The Dublin city sheriff would later attempt to seize USI assets but was unable to gain access to its offices. He served a notice of his intention to collect at a later date (City Sherriff's Office, 1993). In August 1993, the sheriff arrived at USI's offices in North Great George's Street and removed office equipment. USI issued a public appeal 'to every Irish citizen who values democratic institutions and admires the actions of the unions in standing up for women's rights against the likes of SPUC to come to the aid of the students' unions in our time of need' (USI, 1993, August 4). Young Fine Gael (YFG) called on the government to supply the three unions with an interest free loan to cover the costs awarded against them. YFG's national chairperson Colm Brophy noted that:

Student leaders who were hounded and attacked through the courts were also acting in the public good by ensuring freedom of information, a view which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the Irish people in the most recent referendum. The government should pay these costs so as to protect the continued existence of these vital student groups.

(YFG, 1993, June 30).

The issue continued to dominate as students' unions that simply ignored the rulings and threats from groups such as SPUC. USI's headquarters were located above the pro-life group, the National Association for Ovulation Method in Ireland, in North Great George's Street. Located further down the street were the offices of the Moonies (a religious cult) and, at the end of the street were located SPUC's offices. Such proximity, and closeness also to the office of Youth Defence, left several USI officers feeling intimidated:

There used to be some interesting characters hanging around. I remember one night one Youth Defencer hanging around outside our office, myself, Helen O'Sullivan and Shauneen Armstrong were there. There was this guy hanging outside, in the dark waiting for people to come out of USI. There was some quite intimidating moments.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Reflecting on the reaction of the public to the student campaign, Maxine Brady recalls how understanding the public became of their aims, but also how, equally, some disagreed:

Lots of people were deeply unhappy that we were standing our ground. We were subjected to letters, both posted to our offices, in the *Irish Times* and other publications, and as the campaign progressed, we would often be spat at in the street. More militant groups would be more excessive and personal. But I did find that the general public were often willing to listen, and people who perhaps were on the fence, began to understand what it was we were trying to do. Not force women into having abortions, but rather attempting to address the very high abortion rate in Ireland, and giving support to women who had nowhere else to turn.

(Brady, 2016).

Students' unions continued to ballot their members on the issue of abortion. In 1992, UCCSU held a referendum on the right to information and full pregnancy counselling. The outcome was crystal clear: 1,786 students voted in favour, 109 against. This was a significant change by the student body of UCC, which had previously been vehemently anti-abortion (voting 2 to 1 against the provision of information only two years earlier) to the extent of threatening student societies that disseminated abortion information with expulsion from the union (Irish Women's News, 1992, May, Issue 15). The abortion issue finally drew to a close in 1997, when the Supreme Court lifted the High Court injunction and awarded costs against SPUC for the application. The Supreme Court however upheld the previous awarding of costs against USI, TCDSU and UCDSU for the 1992 High Court hearing (*Student Voice*, 1997, April).

8.4 The X Case, Maastricht, and the 1993 abortion referenda

In March 1992, a fourteen-year-old girl was prevented by means of a High Court injunction from travelling to the UK to procure an abortion. The girl, known only as Miss X, had been the victim of rape and had become pregnant as a result. As abortion was illegal on the island, Miss X and her parents intended travelling to the UK for a termination. Having identified the perpetrator to the Gardai, Miss X's parents enquired whether DNA from the foetus, procured after the abortion, would be admissible as evidence in a trial. Once the attorney general's office was notified of these events, an interim injunction, preventing Miss X from travelling abroad was sought, and granted on the grounds of the right to life of the unborn. Public outrage was palpable. There was an absolute outpouring of support for X and absolute horror at the injunction from students (O'Brion, 2015). Dublin students joined women's rights groups and members of the public on a march to the Office of the Attorney General. Commenting on the ruling, TCDSU's welfare officer, Louisa Moss, stated 'It's very worrying that these women might now not report cases of rape simply because they are worried about the implications this might have for an abortion' (*Trinity News*, 1992, February 25).

The parent's appealed the injunction to the Supreme Court where the injunction was overturned on the basis that X was suicidal. USI was extremely vocal once the case became public knowledge. Reacting to the decision, the, then USI president, Maxine Brady stated:

We are delighted for the girl and her family, that they will be allowed to make their own decisions as to what is the best choice for them, without state interference. Hopefully this decision will be the beginning of a more benign attitude to the whole question of freedom of Irish citizens to travel to the UK for abortions.

(USI, 1992, February 26).

The Supreme Court ruled that, if there was a real and substantial risk to a mother's life, an abortion could be obtained within the state [this was the finding that Garret FitzGerald and others had warned about many years previously]. The judgement did not

consider whether a danger to the health of the woman could be considered a mitigating factor. Miss X later miscarried and never travelled. Reflecting on the X case, Maxine Brady recalled the reaction of the public and how the X Case was everything the student movement's campaign warned could happen:

Sad to say it, but the X case created the perfect storm on the issue of abortion information. We had always contended that the 8th amendment would result in some woman whose life was in danger being denied her constitutional rights. But the X case didn't only challenge the state and the constitution on the right to information, but on the right to travel. This was the turning point in the campaign. People could live with the idea that there were no abortion clinics, or rights, here in Ireland. But the idea that we would stop women from travelling in case they were going to England for an abortion was a step too far for most. We often contended throughout the campaign that it wasn't until the issue hit you on your doorstep that you would truly know how you felt about abortion.

(Brady, 2016).

As recalled by Brady, students, civic engagement groups, political parties, and members of the public attended marches to protest against the High Court ruling in the X Case, following which, there was an immediate outcry that something must be done to avoid a repeat:

The vista of a landscape where sexually abused teenage girls would be stopped from not only accessing an abortion, but stopped from travelling, was a step too far for most people in Ireland and they marched in their thousands. Everyone, everyone on that march had a daughter, a niece, a sister, and everyone was horrified that we would put a young girl through so much, after all that she had been through.

(Brady, 2016).

A new EU treaty was under negotiation and SPUC and other anti-abortion campaigners began an intense lobbying campaign of government and politicians seeking safeguards against abortion. An addendum or protocol to the treaty was secured which on

appearance seemed to guarantee that the Maastricht Treaty could not affect abortion laws in Ireland.

The X Case framed debates over the addendum and USI campaigned against the adoption of the treaty. USI established the Youth Campaign Against Maastricht and distributed flyers on campuses, advising students about the addendum. The flyers also carried information on abortion clinics. Pro-life groups from campuses around the country held an inter-varsity life day in UCD in April (1992). The event had been organised prior to the X Case but was widely criticised by pro-choice groups as being in bad taste and poorly timed. A pro-information campaign table was set up beside the life day information stand handing out abortion clinic information and contact details. A number of public talks were also held with speakers, including Dr Eugene Gath (co-founder of Life UCD), two medical doctors, and Hugh Fogarty, a member of PLUS (Pro-life Union of Students). The inaugural address was delivered by Prof. Jack Scarisbrick, the founder of Life UK (UCDSU News 1992, April).

Both DCUSU and NCADSU held referendums to re-affirm their position on the supply of abortion information, with both student bodies returning a yes vote of 88 and 95 per cent, respectively. An attempt was made to hold a referendum in UCD and a petition was gathered with the necessary votes. The petition was referred by the SU president to an arbitration board which ruled that the student body had no right to mandate the students' union to break the law. The ruling galvanised pro-information activists.

USI's campaign on repealing the 8th amendment had gained it many admirers. Eastern Health Board senior clinical psychologist, Fred Lowe, later contacted USI president Maxine Brady. Lowe was the psychologist who had given evidence in the X Case. He outlined his perception of the 'male dominated family' that both 'men and women within the establishment conspire to support the existing system ... with men controlling the means of reproduction'. He expressed his solidarity with USI, 'as someone who has felt the strength of the forces that now are opposing' students. Lowe also spoke about how his evidence had been received during the X Case hearing:

In the High Court, anything I had to say about the damage to the mind of a woman who has to endure an unwanted pregnancy, where both the father and the foetus are repugnant to the woman, was ignored. The court could only consider the risk to the life of the woman, not her anguish. Psychological torture is, in all other areas, seen as an affront against humanity, but the torture of a female who has to endure the months of a situation she finds unbearable is totally disregarded unless she threatens to take her own life as a result.

(Lowe, 1992).

Lowe went on to express his confidence in Brady in the fight for female reproductive autonomy. Lowe's support for USI and Brady was significant to the students. The debate around the morality of abortion was compounded by the roll out of expert after expert espousing the anti-abortion side's case. Brady later recalled how important it was to have people like Lowe on her side:

We were 100% certain of the moral right of what we were doing. We were not forcing people into having abortions. We were not forcing people into agreeing with us. We were merely ensuring that, to quote Justice Mella Carroll, 'The self-appointed policemen of the moral state', were not going to set the agenda for everyone else in the country, regardless of the creed, beliefs and religious grouping of the entire country. But support such as that from Fred Lowe was important to have. The anti-choice and anti-information campaign were able to roll out expert after expert, sometimes you felt like you were drowning in a sea of experts who were telling you that you were wrong, and indeed morally reprehensible.

(Brady, 2016).

The X Case galvanised many student activists who were no longer content to campaign within the student movement. In October 1992, the TCD student branch of Democratic Left picketed the offices of Youth Defence. A strident pro-life lobby group established in February 1992, Youth Defence had attracted notoriety and public condemnation after they picketed the home of TD Nuala Fennell, who labelled their behaviour as totally 'fascist' (Youth Defence, 1992, September 18). The students were charged at by a group of men who emerged from under the Youth Defence offices. Journalists covering the picket were also attacked and one photographer from *The Star* had his camera smashed.

Two of the seven injured students were hospitalised. Youth Defence chairperson, Niamh Nic Mhathuna, claimed that Youth Defence had no hand or part in the attacks and alleged that the student protestors had spat and attacked a group of old women and children at a previous protest. In a press statement, Youth Defence claimed that 'the pro-abortionists forcibly entered the side entrance to the pub, injuring one member of Youth Defence and knocking another to ground'. Despite a Youth Defence claim to the contrary, one of the attackers was arrested (*Trinity News*, 1992, October 30).

In the aftermath of the X Case, the government declared its intention to hold three referenda to amend the constitution. The proposals would, if ratified by the people:

- Exclude suicide as a legal reason for an abortion to be carried out (*12th amendment*)
- Give women the right to travel outside the state to have an abortion (*13th amendment*)
- The prohibition on abortion would not limit the right to distribute information on abortion services outside the state (*14th amendment*).

USI aligned itself with a number of groups, which supported the second and third questions put to the Irish people and opposed the first proposition.

Student activists were also members of the Alliance for Choice, a group made up Doctors for Freedom of Information, Psychologists for Freedom of Information, Women's Coalition, IFPA and the Women's Information Network. As recalled by the, then, USI president, Maxine Brady, USI was consulted on the wording of the referenda by Desmond O'Malley, leader of the Progressive Democrats and a government minister:

... we also had support from Dessie O'Malley of the Progressive Democrats. Des O'Malley called us to a meeting in Leinster House to show us the working of the second referendum that was being proposed, (around the time of X I think). Had it not been for him, that wording would have been put to the people and we would be in an even bigger mess than we have right now.

(Brady, 2016).

Several student groups were also established to campaign for a no vote on the proposed 13th and 14th amendments. Rónán Mullen, former president of UCGSU (1991-92), led one such campaign. Referring to the 13th amendment, Mullen wrote in *Cool – Caint*, the UCG campus newspaper:

The prolife group in college believe it is impracticable to limit movement of people and travel. However we do not believe that the right to travel to have an abortion should be enshrined in our constitution, as the right to travel to have an abortion could imply a right to abortion.

(Mullen, 1992, November, p. 5).

On the 14th amendment, he wrote, 'we hope the [status-quo] position will be maintained by a strong "No" vote, as we believe the "so called information" being voted on is information which leads directly to the procurement of an abortion' (Mullen, 1992, November, p. 5).

Many students' unions around the country held public debates. Maynooth College Students' Union invited Alan Dukes TD, Breda O'Brien (Feminists for Life), Ruth Riddick (Open Line), and Caroline Simmons of the pro-life campaign to address its students. Over 500 students and staff attended the event. Dukes called for a no vote on the first question, and yes on both the second and third, while O'Brien expressed 'regret' that the amendment on travel would be located in the constitution. Simmons called for a no vote on all three amendments (*Route 66*, 1992). The results of the referendum – the 12th amendment was rejected while the 13th and 14th amendments were passed – were seen as a major public vindication of the position of the student movement.

8.5 Conclusion

While the numbers of students who campaigned for the liberalisation of laws around reproductive rights was extremely small, the willingness of the student body to engage on the topic is indicative of its maturity as a collective body to engage on serious issues, respectful of democratic outcome of the debate. The topic of abortion resulted in disaffiliation of a number of students' unions from USI and the position of USI and the students' union of both UCD and TCD attracted the attention of national media and conservative lay groups who were against any form of discourse on the topic of abortion.

It should be acknowledged that in the 1980s debating the issue of abortion was, in itself, a radical concept. The student movement provided the most open and transparent democratic forum in which the debate was held. The holding of these debates were not without conflict within the movement as many objected to the movement holding a position on abortion in any way. The role of WRAC was extremely radical both within the movement and subsequently within the public sphere. WRAC was uncompromising in its desire for USI to hold a liberal position on abortion. It engaged rigorously with all within the movement and this is evidenced by its consistent and repeated attempts to have WRAC policy become USI national policy. Whilst the participation of women in students' union life had increased thanks to the work of WRAC, participation rates of women were still quite low and it is a testament to the stamina and will of WRAC that it achieved so much in relation to policy development and action in relation to reproductive rights. The WRAC role was not merely one of agenda-setting but also of engaging, informing and intellectualising a debate around a contentious issue, building allies and ultimately winning the resolve of the leadership of the movement to take on SPUC and any other organisation in challenging the abortion information policy of the student movement.

The SPUC action, in hindsight, could be viewed as a major miscalculation on the part of the conservative lay groups. It thrust into the public sphere the uncompromising position of pro-life groups and their lack of compassion for women. It also opened up

the public debate on abortion and the halls of students' unions became the host for debates that no other venue could. The student body remained relatively reflective of the general position on the question of abortion but the SPUC tactics served to galvanise support for student leaders, who then were able to advance the agenda on the area of reproductive rights. Looking back on the position of the general student body, Damien O'Brion summarised:

As a whole the student body were definitely more liberal than the general population but still balanced. You saw it in the disaffiliation votes at the time, you saw it the votes in UCD to block the provision of information, there were a lot of people still quite conservative and there were intersecting things, you had political and social conservative positions around abortion, you had a slightly selfish attitude in that 'we don't want to do this in case we get into trouble', the SPUC injunctions were definitely having an impact there.

(O'Brion, 2015).

The role students' unions played was equally important, both for the women affected and for positioning students' unions at the coalface of the issue of crisis pregnancy. O'Brion best summarised the pressure and importance of the student movement in the debate on reproductive rights and bodily autonomy:

When you look back, the role the student movement played on [abortion] has been completely overlooked to a massive extent. Obviously the X Case was the defining moment but the four years before that when the Well Woman was closed down and other clinics, they had gradually gone after everyone, but the students' unions were the last people standing and they went after the students' unions again and they didn't break. They kept it going when nobody else was able to keep that line open and they managed to pull it through at great risk ... their futures were on the line.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Chapter 9

Discussion & Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the Irish student movement through the lens of existing international research and to address the neglect in the existing literature of the student movement's contribution to social change. In particular, it seeks to determine the characteristics of the student movement as a social movement and to analyse the role the student movement played in the liberalisation of social policy in three major areas in the latter half of twentieth century Ireland: the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the availability of contraceptives, and access to information on reproductive health and abortion services abroad.

The three case studies demonstrate that the student movement's role as an agent of social change was a positive one and that collective student action in these campaigns was an important and influential contribution within the public sphere. The student movement's role and positive impact has been acknowledged by leaders within the gay rights movement and the women's rights movement, as cited in this work, and through their vindication, in part, by the ECJ ruling in *SPUC v Grogan*, and fully by the subsequent 1993 referenda on the right to travel to procure an abortion, the right to information on abortion services and the exclusion of suicide as a grounds for an abortion..

The process of how the student movement debated and eventually championed the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the liberalisation of contraceptive laws, and the laws around abortion has been traced in detail and the case studies provide us with substantial evidence corroborating the international literature. This chapter now frames the findings of the case studies within the existing literature, explaining the meaning and importance of these findings and offering suggestions for further research.

Kezar's (2010) definition of student activism, as outlined in the literature review, is an excellent mirroring of both the activities and motivations of the Irish student movement. As can be seen by the first twenty years of USI, a period where national collective student action can be seen to evolve and be measured, the student movement has concerned itself with affecting change both on and off campuses on a broad range of

social, political and economic issues. Students utilised all means within their political repertoire, and effectively engaged with the main actors in the public sphere to affect the desired change.

Case study comparison with literature review

The literature review has framed the case studies, providing a baseline comparison for examining the Irish student movement. The first section of the literature review explored the concept of the 'student condition', the set of characteristics that typified the student population in a society. This was framed within the context of the system of higher education and by the time period under examination the Irish higher education system comfortably fell into, namely Trow's (2007) mass education system classification. The resulting analysis of the shifting patterns of Irish higher education participation by middle class students is dealt with in the literature review and will not be repeated here. It is sufficient to say that a widening of access to higher education occurred and the introduction of the regional technological colleges contributed greatly to higher education uptake.

9.2 The student condition

Altbach's (2007) four characteristics of the student condition are evident amongst those student activists interviewed. Most leaders, activists and active followers (those interviewed and otherwise identified) were from the humanities faculties of their respective universities or colleges. However, this characteristic does not explain the motivation behind the reasons for RTC sector students participating at leader/activist level. These students played a significant role in various student campaigns, despite the fact these colleges were predominately focused on engineering, sciences, or business faculties. Nonetheless, throughout the time period in question, students of the humanities dominated the ranks of the student movement.

Much of the activities and campaigns of students in the areas of social justice or in reproductive rights are significantly influenced by ideological debates or beliefs of student activists and leaders. This is the second of Altbach's characteristics. As

evidenced by case study one, the decriminalisation of homosexuality was acknowledged by students as a human rights issue and the continuation of the criminal status of homosexual acts was not morally justifiable. However, international issues were also important to many student activists, as Eugene Murray, president of the TCDSU in 1972 remarked:

I ended up joining the United Nations Student Association which membership was quite left-wing and took over the years strong positions on American imperialism, the Vietnam War, anti-apartheid, the Greek Junta ... so I came at more from a left-wing perspective.

(Murray, 2015).

Catherine Byrne explained what motivated her to attend Carysfort Teaching College and what fuelled her sense of injustice that she brought to the students' union:

From the very start of my young adult/womanhood I was really interested in politics and I was interested in debate ... I worked for a couple of months in Donnycarney in a really disadvantaged school ... I saw what disadvantaged children upfront and that fuelled my passion to be as good a teacher as I could be and want to make a difference.

(Byrne, 2015).

A similar position was taken by students on apartheid and civil rights issues in Northern Ireland. Access to the information on abortion and contraceptives was justified by students by means of a multifaceted ideological approach. It is possible that this was done for political reasons, particularly in the area of abortion, where feelings and emotions were particularly heated. A number of ideological arguments were made; human rights, arguments from a feminist perspective, service provision (capitalism) and, finally, when the students' unions were under threat, from a perspective of freedom of information, conscience and freedom of association.

Altbach's third characteristic of the student condition focuses on educational attainment within the family and their social class. It is evident from the literature review's

examination of the intake within the higher education sector that a strong upper middle-class intake continued, with lower middle-class students entering the system post the introduction of free second-level education. The support of the RTC sector on the various issues, along with the steady increase of lower middle-class participation in higher education, coupled with the issues tackled by students, would indicate that social-class may only be a small influence on activism and advocacy, especially into the 1980s and 1990s. Several interviewees who became important student leaders or activists from the 1980s would have been the first of their family to attend higher education. The growing disparity between youth culture and adult culture could also be explained by the difference of exposure to new concepts of democracy, international cultures and music by television, radio and other forms of exposure such as travel, introducing exciting and radically different concepts than those experienced by their parents. If the generational role does not explain the rise of student activism, it is certainly plausible that, in an Irish context, these factors played a significant role, with several interviewees referencing this. This would seem to confirm Braungart's multivariate analysis of student social class, which found the influence to be overemphasised.

The particular activities and campaigns engaged in by students invariably led to conflict with the Catholic Church from an early stage and supporting evidence from the interviews with student activists would instead support Braungart's belief that family political and religious views and the culture of debate and discourse within the family setting was far more influential than simply a desire to differentiate oneself at a generational level. Ruairi Quinn recalled his mother's attitudes to politics and the debates at home:

She had no interest [in politics] ... on one occasion when there was a row ... when my father and I were having an argument, a discussion that sounded like an argument as voices were raised she said 'for God's sake Malachy ... will you stop it, you always wanted one of your sons to be interested in politics, it's just hard luck he's chosen the wrong party!'

(Quinn, 2015).

Eugene Murray also reflected on his family debates and topics growing up:

We always had lots of political discussions around the kitchen table. My older brother, John, had been president of USI and had at that stage had quite a left-wing perspective, he brought them into the Moscow backed International Union of Students as opposed to the one backed by the CIA and he famously laid a wreath on Lenin's grave as a student and there was all that going on in our family. My mother was particularly strong on a few issues, she was pro-contraception, she was pro-divorce, she was a very strong supporter of the anti-apartheid movement and so that was all there in the background.

(Murray, 2015).

Cathal Kerrigan, former president of the students' union in UCC in 1980, recalled his home life as son of a Labour Party TD:

We were very internationalist in the house, I was very much a radical and was very critical of my father for being too conservative ... my father was very busy ... politics was a drug, politics was my father's life, my mother was an old fashioned wife, she loved him, they had a very strong and steady relationship ... my father was very prominent in the Labour Party, he was on the National Executive from the late sixties ... and he was lord mayor of Cork ... and a senator ... the family had a very strong belief in education ... there was a high premium on knowledge and ideas.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

Tom Costello, a former USI president, also recalled vivid memories of political debate and meetings in his own family home and his father's Fianna Fáil position during the Arms Trial. Commenting on the impact of this and what 'politics' he brought with him into college, Costello attested:

I brought the politics but I was very keen to escape from what I come to see as a claustrophobic Fianna Fáil, even though they had lost power the year I came to Dublin (1973-1974) nonetheless they were the monolith, they were up there with the Catholic

Church and even the GAA ... but there was sense of claustrophobia that you wanted to break out of.

(Costello, 2015).

This is linked with Altbach's fourth and final characteristic, that parental attitudes and the lack of family conflict, coupled with an atmosphere that encouraged the challenging of dogma and accepted practices and teachings influenced students to become activists. Ruairi Quinn refers to his home as 'an open and disputatious house' (Quinn, 2015). Again, the interviews conducted with former student activists would indicate that this is a characteristic in an Irish setting, with several interviewees attesting to the religious ethos being strong in their household and political engagement quite high.

The home of Ivana Bacik was a different one, with ideology being a dominate theme:

I was always political as a student from the start, I had been involved in the Labour Society from first or second year, the Socialist Society and the students' union itself in the women's group and then as a class rep. It was something I was attracted to as my mother is a very strong feminist and I suppose I had inherited her politics. She brought me out campaigning for women's rights in Cork in the early 80s so I felt strongly about these issues, even in '83 as a secondary student I remember arguing about the 1983 8th Amendment. My mother was against it, I was against it, even though I didn't understand much about the issues.

(Bacik, 2015).

Ruairi Quinn recalled how his father was a devout Catholic and how he began to question his own beliefs as he began his studies in UCD. Quinn explained how he settled his question of faith:

We were a typical middle-class Catholic family, I was an altar boy, went to St. Michael's ... I had a big interest in religion and felt even at the time had the traditional teenage doubts ... if I was going to make a decision it had to be an informed decision on whether I would remain a Catholic ... I didn't finally take that decision until first or second year in UCD where I attended a study group with friends, it was run by the Opus Dei and I just

felt if I was going to reject, as I had started to do, I wanted a rational basis for my decision.

(Quinn, 2015).

Cathal Kerrigan recalled the conflict he had with his own and his father's ideology and his father's religious beliefs:

Religion and my father; I was an atheist since the age of 14 so intellectually I couldn't see how he was the liberal, I could understand my mother coming from this peasant background having those attitudes but I thought my father was just doing this because you couldn't be an elected politician in Ireland without being seen to being Catholic. But when he was dying ... I would drop in to [the hospital] I got to see he had a personal, sincere religious belief, which as I grew older I began to respect.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

Catherine Byrne recalled her upbringing and home experience as one of a fair and just household. Her father was also involved in politics:

My father was involved in Fianna Fáil, he was secretary of the local cumman and he was a huge supporter of Jack Lynch. Once I became a teenager and moved on there was murder at home because of politics because I didn't support Fianna Fáil ... and he was absolutely opposed to the kind of politics I supported, which at the time would have been Sinn Féin and the Workers' Party.

(Byrne, 2015).

Helen O'Sullivan, former women's rights officer and president of USI, reflected on her home life and the 1983 abortion referendum:

I do distinctly remember the 1983 abortion referendum and it was a point of huge contention. It was a tipping point for me.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

In the case of Quinn, politics was a major theme within the household. A number of other interviewees referred to parental active participation in politics. Quinn reflected on his first engagement with politics:

My first consciousness of it was the Hungarian Insurrection in 1956 when I was ten years of age. I followed that. My father was a republican and had spent six months in jail in Crumlin Road, never joined Fianna Fáil, joined Clann na Poblachta for a while ... politics was always discussed ... on Sunday it would take 20 minutes to finish the meal and two hours to finish the discussion.

(Quinn, 2015).

The family home and the attitudes of parents or the prevalence of debates around social issues seem to dominate the childhood experiences of many student leaders and activists and therefore may be the dominant characteristic of the student condition, in an Irish context.

9.3 Attending university and the catalysts for activism

The disruption caused to the linear patterns of social life by the uptake of higher education by young people, and the subsequent freedoms associated with the student status, as argued by Bourdieu and Passeron (1979), was regularly referred to by several interviews across the generations. It is clear that the student status afforded activists and student leaders both time and space to test the boundaries of acceptable social norms and to engage in non-traditional political repertoires to campaign and highlight their grievances and campaigns. In reflecting on what the catalyst for her own activism was, Clare Daly summarised the 1980s:

It was the 80s, it was a time of education cuts, a radical enough national student movement in terms of opposition to the cuts ... there was an opposition within society at the time to the health cuts generally but education was the main one ... it was mainly out of that ... it was a time of more protest on the streets.

(Daly, 2015).

Ruairi Quinn reflected on his very conscious decision to go to a university for the challenges it would bring:

I wanted the intellectual stimulus and the idea that I would be in an intellectual supermarket where you can mix and match ... and be immersed in other things as distinct from what was a much superior technical architectural training in Bolton Street at the time.

(Quinn, 2015).

Cathal Kerrigan also referred to his decision to go to university and to obtain the education he wanted, an arts degree, with subjects he wanted to explore, as opposed to one that would be a pathway to a career:

I was feeling very tortured [when I first started], you had to make a decision the next day [on the subjects] so I went out feeling very confused. I went down to the river asking myself what would I do, then I had, as Joyce would say, an epiphany, 'I've put all this work into redoing the Leaving Certificate, why?' Because I want my dream ... of a good liberal education, the kind of British ideal of foundation in culture ... I want to do English literature, philosophy and classics, so that's what I did.

(Kerrigan, 2015).

Some participants were naturally rebellious. Catherine Byrne spent two years of her post-school life in a convent to become a nun. She joined the convent because she wanted to make a difference in the world, but quickly found it was not for her:

In 1969 I entered a convent never to come home again and I stayed there for two years. But I knew after eighteen months that it wasn't for me. I was forever in trouble, I was always rebelling, I didn't approve of a lot of things that were happening so in '71, in early Autumn I got out, I had to force my way out because they felt that I was having normal doubts ... I secretly started applying for jobs, I got one of the students attached [to the convent] to send out letters for me and I got an interview ... I got a job replacing a teacher in Holy Faith in Baggot Street.

(Byrne, 2015).

The evolution of the positions held by several interviewees on issues such as abortion provide us with evidence of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development. Several interviewees refer to how their position on various issues changed as they learnt more about the issue and were exposed to the realities of abortion, for example. Damian O'Brion explained how debates at various levels saw his position on abortion change:

Taking it from college level up it would have first become an issue when I was in first year and I remember sitting at council meetings and discussing it and coming from a traditionally Catholic family I would have had concerns around it. Abortion information was the issue, we were six years after the 1983 referendum and I do remember in first year thinking if abortion is wrong then surely abortion information is wrong. It took me a little while to get past that and that was part of general political development and understanding, and for myself a distancing from the Church and its philosophy ... for me things like the Casey affair and the X Case were hugely important in how my own thinking developed.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Of course, it cannot be stressed enough that those student activists are a small cohort of the student population. As indicated by Altbach's layers of student activism, the majority of the student population will be uninvolved. Tonie Walsh, a prominent gay rights activist and a student of UCD in the early eighties, recalls his perception of UCD engagement:

Belfield was bristling with homophobia ... I imagined before I arrived there that it was going to be a microcosm of radicalism and student fabulousness and I discovered it was full of the children of conservative bogger Roman Catholics. I think as much as one would imagine otherwise ... my memories of colleges being microcosms of society in actually representing the whole gambit of prejudice and discrimination and also radicalism that was manifesting in society. You had pockets of shocking conservatives, illiberal conservatism and you had pockets of bright, angry radicalism.

(Walsh, 2015).

9.4 Intellectualism and the role of the university

The nature of universities and colleges as centres of learning was an important factor in the rise of activism and a collective student consciousness in Ireland. As Lambert et al. (2006) contend, universities and colleges expose students to new concepts of democracy, fairness, and lifestyles. It is clear from the roadshows, talks and events held by students' unions that students were open to being challenged on their beliefs and actively sought to convince other students that alternatives to the status quo were possible. USI and students' unions held or facilitated meetings, talks, roadshows and information evenings for a myriad of civic society groups such as the ICCL, the gay rights movement, the IFPA and the various groups lobbying for abortion information. Patsy McGarry, when asked about the university reaction to controversial debates held by the Literary & debating Society in UCG, remarked:

The university authorities tended to let us away with it. I was never aware of any attempt to stop us debating or discussing any subjects. We knew certain individuals were very conservative and Catholic but there was never any attempt to censor what we had to say and we took full advantage of this even to the degree of occupying university offices in our fight on fees.

(McGarry, 2015).

It is clear from the evidence contained in the case studies that students were not simply allies to the various other social movements (gay rights and women's liberation movement). Student leaders and activists consciously engaged in movement intellectualism, exploring the concepts around the issues of sex, sexuality and reproductive rights, developed policy, wrote op-eds and published material in student and mainstream publications. Students developed their own formal and informal networks to present and argue their intellectual platforms. The university environment was the ideal place in which students could cultivate these ideas. Freedoms afforded by the status of the university in a community promoted thought processes and exploration that would have ordinarily been frowned upon or indeed impossible outside the walls of

a campus; concepts of identity, religious freedoms, secularisation, sex and the enjoyment of sex and bodily autonomy. These were radical concepts not just within society but within the movement too. Catherine Byrne, former president of Carysfort College Students' Union recognises the importance of not just a reactionary student movement but one that is also actively thinking,

The voice of students is core to building and strengthening democracy. A thinking, active student population is vital for a healthy society and democracy.

(Byrne, 2015).

Stephen Grogan, former USI president also reflects on this role the student movement in forming a praxis and the intellectual process within the university,

It's a forum for students to debate and discuss wider issues that affect their lives. A society is better for having social organisations that bring people together, provide an opportunity for debate and discussion about things that directly and indirectly affect people.

(Grogan, 2015).

Several participants were struck about the freedom that college life gave them and the new experiences and challenges this brought. Carol Coulter, a former student activist and law student, recalled her first months in TCD:

There were people from so many diverse backgrounds there ... college opened up whole other worlds, literally at the time Trinity not only had people from northern and southern Ireland, protestant and catholic, it also had a fairly good minority of students from other parts of the world, Africa, Asia and the UK.

(Coulter, 2015).

Eugene Murray also argued that the universities, as institutions, should be given some credit for their hands off approach to student radicalism:

I think the provision of paid sabbatical officers back in the seventies, that was a very enlightened thing for the universities to do at that point in time ... these things didn't happen just on their own ... you have to give credit to the institutions themselves, that they allowed these things to flourish and certainly we misbehaved pretty badly on campus on many occasions and the consequences, in my view, were never too severe ... I think to have that type of environment in a university is hugely important.

(Murray, 2015).

While the impact on students of lecturers such as Robinson, McAleese, Asmal, Garret FitzGerald, Michael D. Higgins and Norris would have been a positive one on students, Tonie Walsh noted that Norris may have been both and positive and negative when it came to ally building for the decriminalisation campaign:

David's status as a lecturer could have been enabling and alienating in equal measure. Some of that is down to his personality, as fabulous as he is, he's a complex character that can provoke the best and worst in people because he has such a measure of his conviction, because he is so opinionated. But I say this out of a position of huge fondness and respect.

(Walsh, 2015).

Silent academic support for vocal and active student leaders to affect change on campus was also mentioned by a number of interviewees. Pat Rabbitte recalled how he worked with some academics secretly in order to make changes as president of UCGSU:

It was being recognised that [UCGSU] was chalking up little victories. In Galway it was particularly dramatic because there were six bishops on the Governing Body. Michael Brown, the dominant figure after Charles McQuaid was the chief whip. He was the dominant personality on the Governing Body ... the academics kept plying me with information, they wouldn't use it themselves ... there were some unmerciful rows between the bishop and myself.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

Brym's work (1980) on the growth of secular leftward drifting students and academics is broadly supported by the activities of the Irish student movement. It could be argued that attitudes towards abortion was tempered by the Catholic upbringing of many students and the internal debates around the concept of an individual's freedom of choice may have been an easier way for many students to justify their desire to see the decriminalisation of abortion, if a women was to seek one, and the ability to disseminate the information of clinics abroad.

The evolution of student policy on the issue of gay rights (and later adoption, civil partnership and civil marriage) and in the abortion issue nationally would support Ladd and Lipset's (1971) assertion that each generation of students move further to the left than their predecessors. Lipset's (1969) other research, indicating that students were more likely to rebel where faculty are authoritarian in their management, is also evidenced by the actions of students in relation to both the 'gentle revolution' in UCD and the Carysfort dispute.

The influence of lecturers on the Irish student movement is equally important. The early campaigns outlined in chapter 3, along with the three major case studies show clear evidence that lecturers such as David Norris, Mary Robinson, Mary McAleese, Garrett Fitzgerald, Michael D. Higgins and Kader Asmal played an important role in inspiring and engaging students. Ruairi Quinn recalled the influential role that junior staff played in the Gentle Revolution:

We had big buy-in from staff. There's a book entitled the 'Gentle Revolution' and a wonderful chapter written by Kevin Myers ... I can nearly recite it by heart, 'only the generals of the winning side of great battles and wars get to write their memories and it is no accident that the junior staff have written most of this book' ... it was encouraging, it was liberation, it wasn't 'them and us', undergraduates, graduates, junior staff and then professors.

(Quinn, 2015).

These lecturers would be considered ‘cosmopolitans’ by Merton (1957), their tendency to look outside for inspiration and improvements. Undoubtedly, there were other lecturers who did the same across the country. When asked what support she received in TCD during the SPUC cases, Ivana Bacik replied:

A lot of Trinity academics were hugely supportive ... we always felt supported within the college ... the college would have had a good tradition and my own law colleagues, as a law student, were very supportive, it was one of my former lecturers who arranged for Taylor & Buchalter Solicitors to represent us and Mary Robinson to be the counsel all within a few days.

(Bacik, 2015).

In contrast, Clare Daly, who attended the NIHE (DCU) highlighted that the university was traditionally a conservative pro-business one and such an ethos was mirrored in the attitude of college officials:

It was quite right-wing in its ethos from the very beginning, it was a very pro-business college ... they wouldn’t have been encouraging of alternative views or protests ... it was very much set up as a right-wing business ... within that context the students were there to learn, not necessarily be listened to ... but there were academic staff exceptions to that.

(Daly, 2015).

9.5 Marginal elites

Pinner (1971) compared students with the traditional marginal elites in society, judiciary, politicians, clergy etc. While he uses the definition in the broadest of terms, there is some evidence from an Irish perspective that students may fulfil the role of a marginal elite in society. The case studies and interviews offer evidence that students have been producers of social intelligence through their formal and informal networks within the student movement, such as students’ unions, political and debating societies, gaysocs, women’s rights action committees, etc. More formal links include alliances with gay rights campaigns, the IAAM, NICRM, and women’s rights campaigns. Students facilitated debates that were open to the public on all the issues examined and, furthermore, encouraged and supported external organisations by means of meeting

space, office space, and printing. These activities supported the development of fledgling civic society groups such as the Women's Right to Choose Group in 1982 and the gay collectives.

There is little evidence to support Pinner's suggestion that a conflict existed to any great extent between the championing of the rights of marginal groups within society and the future roles of students in society. Students, instead, sought a better society, a society where all would benefit. While not discussed in this work, students actively achieved partial success on campaigns for higher education funding, which, in theory, would protect their privilege but were also compelled to campaign for greater standards of living for working class people. Such campaigns included the inner-city housing action campaign, however, this campaign is beyond the scope of this work.

Irish students do fulfil the criteria of marginal elites, especially where they rejected the party political system, seeing themselves as a political movement, and yet sought active links with other groups, both in solidarity and by way of necessity to ensure their own aims and objectives to ensure their elite status remained. Pat Rabbitte, former USI president, reflecting on the role of the student movement, highlights the privileged space the student body holds in Irish society and how it seeks to use that position to affect change,

I think its [role is] to channel the idealism of youth to a progressive purpose. They are still a privileged section of society, the Union is a vehicle to articulate concern, not just of their own student members but of young people generally to set about using that vehicle to influence policy, especially education policy, but not only education policy.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

The alliances made by the student movement did not provoke any major response from the political establishment per se, as would be indicated by DeGroot (1998), however, lay groups, such as SPUC and the PLAC groups certainly instigated swift and powerful

retribution for the alliances the student movement made and actions taken around the issue of abortion information

9.6 The student movement as an actor in the public sphere

It is generally accepted in the literature that a student movement is considered a social movement, as it fulfils most of the criteria characterising a social movement. The student movement's legitimacy within the public sphere was recognised certainly by most left wing political groups, which recognised the campaigns of students as important ones. Carol Coulter, who was introduced to student politics because of her work in national politics through the Fabian Society (a socialist political group), reflected on the importance attributed to these student issues:

Becoming involved in student politics was just an aspect of being involved in wider national politics, rather than the other way around ... the [student movement] issues were seen as important, university fees ... backwash of the radicalisation of students across the world particularly in Europe ... views on international affairs, not so much national party politics ... the [student movement] was seen as an arena that you wanted to influence ... contraception, divorce, international political matters; apartheid ... I would have very much been championing the opposition in Eastern Europe, which the leadership of USI was opposed to at the time because they had a link with the Soviet Union so it would have really been seen as a propaganda gain to have the student movement support any of these issues.

(Coulter, 2015).

The stability of Irish student unionism over the past fifty years has allowed formal structures and practices to be developed to facilitate activism and policy development by local students. The existence of a national students' union campaigning on issues such as gay rights and abortion was credited by a number of interviewees for informing and engaging them and others on these issues:

I was educated by USI raising the issue [of abortion information] ... without the activities of SPUC and their taking of the action against the union and that subversion of democracy on the basis

of information, without that I wouldn't have known about the issue.

(Daly, 2015).

I think it pushed the debate on significantly amongst what was a key segment of the population, you had the debate around both abortion and abortion information, running over three, four, five years in all the colleges and I think that did serve to push the agenda significantly in the greater scheme of things ... it was incremental and took a while to develop.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Former USI president, Maxine Brady, also referred to the debates having a galvanising and educational role amongst the student population, regardless of the position held by individual students, particularly on abortion information:

Ultimately, given that it was such an emotively and politically divisive issue, I found that students engaged in the debate very actively. Whether they took a pro-choice or anti-choice position was irrelevant. The reality, and indeed the positive, side to the debate was that it galvanised students into having an opinion and expressing it.

(Brady, 2016).

Unlike student movements in other jurisdictions, the Irish student movement did not always have to actively pursue external organisations in order to quicken the pace of desired reform on its social policy reform. Instead, many of these organisations approached students' unions and USI seeking their support and partnership. Peter Davies, a former USI president, also argued that engagement on human rights issues, such as the anti-apartheid campaign, united various groupings of students, who would have not necessarily worked together:

It was an alliance, you got people who would not normally come near students' unions like people involved in the Christian Union and that sort of thing who would be supportive of the anti-

apartheid view of the world, that equality and justice view ... it probably engaged much more of the student body than run-of-the-mill stuff like welfare committees.

(Davies, 2015).

Some exceptions within this are elements of the abortion information campaign, where it was necessary for UCDSU, TCDSU and USI to strengthen their public position by galvanising support. The fact that the decriminalisation campaign was born from the decision of students to engage with a seminar on gay rights in Northern Ireland, resulting in the establishment of the Sexual Liberation Movement in TCD, is further evidence of this.

The advice students' unions gave on abortion clinics abroad and various other options relating to crisis pregnancy on the foot of the closure of the various clinics and the relationships built with the IFPA, other students' unions abroad and family planning service in the UK provides us with clear evidence that students' unions in Ireland were proactive in their response on this social issue. Damian O'Brion highlighted the network of agencies and groups supporting USI and students' unions as the only port-of-call as a crisis pregnancy service:

A bunch of us, in our early twenties, were dealing with some of the most sensitive issues people were facing and we were the only people able to deal with it and despite that, with the support of the IFPA and Bpas in the UK ... who were basically supporting and training the frontline in students' unions, how we managed to do that was pretty impressive. You had people like Shauneen Armstrong, Helen O'Sullivan and Maxine Brady in USI who were able to manage a network of information provision to people having crisis pregnancies in colleges across the country and that the colleges were able to provide a forum for people to come and refer them on, give them the opportunities was amazing.

(O'Brion, 2015).

Peter Davies believed that the role in the contraceptive debate in Ireland was more important, thrusting the topic constantly into the public limelight:

It was USI being a catalyst for a wider public debate, I don't think that certainly not within the students' unions there were people around who saw this as a real question, it was self-evidenced, sensible and right, rather than something that should be controversial.

(Davies, 2015).

USI and students' unions did make alliances with the IFPA and other organisations in order to provide both legitimacy and authority to their own campaigns and such alliances no doubt assisted in quickening the pace of social reform.

Students also set up a number of socialising groups, independent, but often in cooperation, with their students' union or USI in order to impact change. These transgressive groups were important, in not only advocating for change, but in developing and debating the ideological and political reasons that change was necessary. By the mid-1980s, the women's movement in Ireland had been set back by the 1983 8th Amendment referendum and the subsequent closures of clinics and the restrictions placed on contraceptives. Nonetheless women continued to work towards an anti-amendment campaign and provide, where possible information to those in crisis pregnancy. A key component of women's liberation, a woman's control over her own reproductive rights, had been significantly reduced by the plebiscite and Haughey's 1979 'Irish solution to an Irish problem'. It was the student movement that continued the struggle on these issues and championed them, despite risking political and public backlash.

9.7 Agents of social change

These challenges to the status quo by student organisations, students' unions and the USI are examples of students' role in the public sphere as agents of social change through social reflexivity. The introduction of 'sub-politics' and the politicisation of

reproductive rights by their agitation required organs of the state to react and engage to these divergent views of the status quo. The support for decriminalisation by students attracted national headlines, encouraging debate, so too did its engagement with the IAAM, the civil rights movement of Northern Ireland and both the contraceptive and abortion information campaign. In the case of the latter political parties, police and judiciary were required to engage with students' unions, exploring and testing the limits of the 8th amendment and eventually the engagement of the ECJ. Reflecting on USI's role within the public sphere, Stephen Grogan stated:

We were one of the few organisations that you name the topic USI was involved in it ... there were so few social organisations in opposition to the rule of society back then that USI was there and we didn't limit or confine ourselves to a few topics ... there was a wide spectrum of things going on ... USI was, for young people, near enough the only organisation actively doing anything. Political parties had youth wings but they didn't do anything apart from attend conferences and meet themselves.

(Grogan, 2015).

These actions by the student movement also clearly showed the difference between the government and public sphere in Ireland, with the former more heavily influenced by the institution of the Church and lay organisations than the public sphere by the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The access enjoyed by the student movement to media organisations and media exposure is further evidence of the marginal elite status of the student movement. This access significantly increased on issues that were controversial. Student leaders' letters on a myriad of issues were carried by national newspapers and student action relating to apartheid often attracted front page headlines in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*, the two leading national daily newspapers. The coverage enjoyed by Maxine Brady (USI president 1991–1993) on the issue of bodily autonomy for women and the right to information on abortion services abroad are other examples. Brady's personality and her gender made her a particular focus for the media:

I think Maxine's public profile was hugely important. Certainly within the student movement she was this vivacious young woman and so able to hold her own. She was not the typical student hack. She was also a mother. It pulled the rug from people. She wasn't your typical student. I don't think you can underestimate Maxine's impact ... it was her agenda, not the media's agenda.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

Maxine was a key figure, she was bigger than USI and bigger than the movement and became a part of the whole debate herself.

(O'Brion, 2015).

What was initially kept quiet was the fact that Brady was also pregnant:

I was in the early stages of pregnancy. A fact that we decided as a group to keep confidential. We saw that this was a fact that would ultimately politically be useful. How could a woman, who was in the midst of a crisis pregnancy herself support a pro information, pro-choice campaign? This was one of the details that we saw as a group that could be used to explain that pro-choice was exactly that...choice. Not one thing or the other.

(Brady, 2016).

Brady's status as a mother was also important for the media. It presented the anti-abortion groups with an opposition that was difficult to discredit:

I do wonder sometimes though would we have had as much coverage if a male president were in office at the time. The fact that I was a single parent also made it all a lot easier for the media to use me. It's harder for the anti-choice camp to dismiss all arguments when the person you are attempting to discredit has a baby on her hip. For the media, having someone that the anti choice side couldn't completely discredit instantly, must have made it easier for them to give us the coverage.

(Brady, 2016).

The student role in the public sphere as organic intellectuals is further evidenced by the type of campaigns that the students engaged in, the defence of rights and equality for all citizens. By the late 1980s, the issue of the right to information on abortion services had dominated all other student campaigns, including the decriminalisation campaign. The right to information campaign became multifaceted during the SPUC cases. It was attractive to feminists, liberals, democrats and other political identities within the student movement. The campaign was a defence of free speech, a campaign for the right to sexual health education, the defence of student trade unionism, a central campaign for those who supported women's rights and those who supported the introduction of abortion and freedom of choice. It allowed students to come together and engage on their own terms, selecting what it was about the SPUC cases that particularly offended their sense of justice. Reflecting on the reaction of students to the SPUC case, Helen O'Sullivan recalled the anger of the student body:

There was outrage with the fact that SPUC, of all groups, were sequestering funds from students' unions on this issue. It really galvanised people at the time because something as basic as a right to information, the right to print names and addresses in our own publications in our own publications was under attack from what we considered to be an extremely dangerous group like SPUC. It wasn't just an attack on students' unions, it was an attack on women's access to abortion information ... it touched everybody.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

Damian O'Brien asserted that the SPUC issue was not simply about abortion, but about fundamental rights within a democracy:

The fact it centred on information allowed the debate to be framed in a slightly different way. It wasn't about abortion it was about freedom of information, it was about access to decision making and ultimately led into a choice argument. That chimed [with students], that this is silly, this is information that is freely available in the UK, when customs started cutting pages out of Cosmopolitan because it had adverts in it, people said this is crazy, what's the problem here? It's mad looking back now in the connected world, how that was even possible. I wonder how

today's college students would even look at the idea that you couldn't get a phone number for a clinic in the UK, that this would be illegal.

(O'Brion, 2015).

University campuses were central sites for the rebuilding of the Irish women's movement and provided safe spaces for debate and the exploration of feminism in the final decades of the twentieth century. These actions, providing a platform for campaigning and direct action, providing a safe space for debate and the growth of civic society groups is evidence of Brannelly et al.'s (2011*b*) theory that universities are highly influential in the development of civil society. While the university does indeed support this development, it was students who cultivated such growth. This, coupled with the freedom of expression that is normally afforded to students (Gill & DeFronzo, 2009), allowed students to test the very boundaries of laws in the area of the provision of abortion information services, testing at both national and European level. Similar actions were taken by students during the decriminalisation and contraception campaign, where students provided information on safe sex practices and, despite legal advice to the contrary, provided this information during the HIV/AIDS crisis. These challenges in themselves engaged others in the public sphere, such as the NYCI, opening up debates on such social issues to a broad spectrum of groups that would not ordinarily have involved themselves in such debates. Tonie Walsh argued that the role the student movement played in the early gay rights movement both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic was seminal:

Queen' University Students' Union got into trouble for their overt and consistent support of the [gay] society. They threaded a very fine line in facilitating a group that was open to non-students precisely because the physical confines of Queen's provided that safe space in a city that was brutalised by a lack of civil rights generally and endemic homophobia and economic poverty and I imagine something similar was happening in Trinity; in the absence of a social and commercial scene the colleges and college bodies, specifically the students' union facilitated the emergence of the gaysocs and probably

provided a range of social facilities when the [gay] civil rights movement was still in its infancy.

(Walsh, 2015).

In terms of decriminalisation, student leaders argued that they were representing the silent minority of young lesbian, gay, and bisexual students who were too afraid to come out and who were seeking to improve matters for future generations of students. Policy adopted and subsequent campaigns, letters published in the media etc. all indicate that student leaders and activists were conscious that, while the argument to support their own students was a politically convenient one, allowing them to adopt the policy of decriminalisation, it also meant that students were able to support the decriminalisation campaign in the interest of greater societal good. Student debates on these issues and other national issues such as the Troubles were not always harmonious and could be fraught with tension. Helen O'Sullivan reflected on her first USI congress in 1987, which was held in Northern Ireland:

Through my involvement in campus actions I got on the delegation for congress in 1987 which was in Portrush ... talk about having your eyes opened, having not been really aware of the 'national question' ... the tension in the room when there were debates on the North and issues like strip-searching, women's pregnancy, it was absolutely flabbergasting to bare witness to the stuff that was going on in the North ... even the physical act of getting there through the border, which I had never crossed before was very politicising.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

The contraceptive and bodily autonomy campaign occurred in a similar vein. As highlighted in the literature review the dominant discourse within the public sphere was dictated by the bourgeois actors, namely the Church, religious lay groups and politicians. The campaigns on contraceptives and bodily autonomy, culminating in the right to information on abortion services campaign, all exposed the proletariat narrative that was missing in these debates; 'the regulation and suppression of human experience itself' (Sandhu, 2007, p. 77). Students, thanks to their position in the public sphere, were successfully able to introduce this new narrative of human experience into the

debate. Student leaders and activists were able to produce records and data in relation to the use and demand for contraceptives and, through partnerships with organisations such as the IFPA, were able to produce research on education levels amongst young people on safe sex practices.

With the closure of the Well Woman Centre, and other clinics, students' unions quickly became the first point of contact for women in crisis pregnancy. Such encounters and the nature of the contacts were recorded, with the identities of those who contacted the students' unions never requested or recorded. This allowed student leaders and activists to engage both the bourgeois and proletarian public spheres on the issues, increasing support and understanding of the issues and, with it, political capital for reform and liberalisation of the areas. Reflecting on the reasons why USI took its initial position in 1979 on abortion, Peter Davies attested that it was done because it was a major issue:

USI chose [to take a position on abortion] because it was a big social issue at the time. There were a lot of women who were in this position who were then stuck having to be secret about it and the help was not widely available, support was not widely available ... pretending that [unplanned pregnancy] doesn't happen just left these women in the most awful of positions and our consensus was that that was not right.

(Davies, 2015).

9.8 The student movement, a social movement?

Successive studies and other literature have concluded that many national student movements exhibit a significant number of the traits and characteristics of a new social movement. As discussed in the literature review, the role of social movements in Ireland is particularly significant, with Connolly (2006) attributing social movements to the creation of a new politic and progress in Irish society.

An analysis of the varying definitions of social movements conducted in the literature review provides us with a number of characteristics to confirm the validity of the Irish student movement as a social movement. Dahlerup's (1986, p. 2) definition highlights key activities also. In his definition, he argues that a student movement is engaged in conscious, collective activities to promote social change. Collective action was coordinated, for the most part, through the structures of the national students' union and locally through student councils and student societies that focused on the issues requiring social changes. Such societies included LGB societies, women's rights groups, debating societies and other human rights focused societies. USI, through its engagement with the media and direct lobbying of politicians, presented a policy platform in partnership with various other civic society groups. Student participation in protests such as the anti-violence protest in the wake of the murder of Declan Flynn in 1983 were also important.

Students also engaged in agitation activities such as the publication of safe-sex guides for men who have sex with men and the handing out of abortion information leaflets in universities, colleges and the streets of Dublin in direct contempt of the civil wrong ruling imposed against them.³ Dahlerup highlights such involvement in conflictual relations, with clearly defined opponents (the courts, the Catholic Church and lay groups), as one of the three characteristics of a social movement.

He further contends that such movements are linked by dense informal networks and share a distinct collective identity. The defined structures of student representation from local college and university level to national level through USI is quite formal, however, the student-led societies and other groups were informal in nature within this formal network. Student activists and leaders have indicated in interviews that they felt that they were part of a collective identity or movement. It is doubtful those students who did participate in various campaigns felt such an affinity with the student movement, but many of the interviewees discussed their knowledge of the role of the

³ A civil wrong is one perpetrated against a person; it is not prosecuted as a crime, but failure to adhere to the ruling of a court becomes a crime

movement prior to their participation and others distinctly argued that they felt part of a movement:

I would have had a sense I was part of a movement ... less in terms of the moment but more in terms of the history ... there was a definite sense of the history of the movement, of how things had grown from the sixties, seventies and eighties and even within [my] period of time I would have seen it as a movement ... this was something you were intrusted to handle ... it was a movement which had in its form a forty year history, it was going to go on, it had notable achievements and notable moments in terms of Irish society and the changes that had happened. There was a sense of something bigger.

(O’Brion, 2015).

I was part of a movement, I was up at USI conference, I was very friendly with a lot of people in the Queen’s Students’ Union ... went over to the Czech Republic in March 1990 ... I met some of the students involved in the Velvet Revolution there ... definitely we were part of an international movement.

(Bacik, 2015).

We would had, in the main, had a very liberal disposition, and there were people who were very conservative as well ... but the group in the Student Assembly in UCG at that time [early seventies] wanted change and open to all these freedoms and supported movements towards them.

(McGarry, 2015).

Tom Costello recalled one of his earliest memories of his student activism, participating in a large protest march and the sense of belonging this instilled in him:

In 1974 there was a major mobilisation of students which was extremely large, at least 10,000 students and some were arrested. I think they had occupied the Dept. of Education on Marlborough Street. I remember in our canteen in St. Pat’s the following day the arrival back of Brendan Howlin [president of the students’

union], I'm not sure he was arrested, but my recollection is he was, but they were let go. I remember the banging on the tables, I was 17, this was so exciting after participating in the march.

(Costello, 2015).

The demands of the three campaigns discussed in the case studies and the activities of students in the preceding chapter shows us that students in Ireland demanded greater political participation, or, at the very least, were willing to allow student leaders, for the most part, to speak on their behalf on these issues. Peter Davies contended that students were on the crest of social change and were eager to participate in it:

It was the tide of social change in Ireland, younger people tended to be at forefront of that, younger articulate people, students, tended to be at the forefront of that again ... when you start raising the matter in public it becomes more difficult to flush out the arguments of those opposed to it, at that stage the Church was in a very powerful position ... and when you look back you see the changes that have taken place and with that hindsight you see that the student movement was at the forefront of it .

(Davies, 2015).

The inherent democratic structures of the formal student movement gave legitimacy to these positions. As Connolly & Hourigan (2006) assert, most social movements share such desires, and the student movement in Ireland is no different. The Irish student movement appealed to 'value- and issued-based cleavages' instead of simply sectorial interests, and such policy positions were endorsed through democratic processes (Handler, 1992, p. 179). In effect, student leaders were empowered to campaign on non-student issues because their peers demanded change for the society they wished to live in post-education. Patsy McGarry offered an example of why tuition fees constituted an important one for students individually, but also why students rallied against them for the common good:

At college level the issues tended to be around fees, the thinking there not just on how increased fees would affect us but how it would limit accessibility and we were very aware coming from our backgrounds of how important fees were when it came to accessibility to third level. We were of the privilege third-level allowed but also the right, we believed it should be to all kids who qualify.

(McGarry, 2015).

Reflecting on his participation in the tuition fees campaigns by USI, Tom Costello also asserted the position that the campaign was not simply about the cost to students, but a more ideological one:

It was a very principled campaign; the ones that were protesting, the drawbridge had already come up behind them, they were in college. It was a strong notion of education is a right not a privilege ... the whole notion of education as a right, also the whole idea of education as a passport to a good life, to success, and put against this the fact that there was very little working class representation in higher education, the tuition fees were a barrier, the value of the grant was being eroded so I think, particularly for the students of St. Patrick's College, the activity on this was as much altruistic or solidarity based as it was self-interest.

(Costello, 2015).

Tom Duke also offered insights into the wider political debate of censorship at the time of the SPUC action against the students. He argued that the SPUC action was compounded by the section 31 debate. Section 31 was a part of the Broadcasting Authority Act (1960), which allowed for a ministerial order to be given to RTÉ, ordering the broadcaster not to allow the voice or faces of Sinn Féin representatives to be broadcast, as it was considered the promotion of the aims or activities of an organisation which engaged in, promoted, encouraged, or advocated the attaining of any particular objectives by violent means.

The whole issue of censorship was one we were rallying against. Sinn Féin controlled the student movement for a good chunk of the eighties so things like section 31 were big campaigns and regardless of your position on Sinn Féin it was a commonly held view that the idea that a political party in Ireland could not be heard on the airwaves was insane, regardless of whether you agreed with them or not ... so another crowd coming in telling us you can't print this or you can't discuss this issue really got up people's backs.

(Duke, 2015).

Diani's (2008) definition of social movements is closely aligned to Dahlerup's but stresses that social movements should be analysed as networks not as organisations. Such an analysis would suit the Irish student movement, as the federal structure of the national union allows for local students' unions to deviate from national policy while the local students' union accept that the overall national wishes of the student body may differ from their local concerns, the most pertinent example of this being when UCD and UCC held anti-abortion information policies, arrived at by referendum on each campus.

USI's congress upheld its pro-abortion information stance, despite the position of the two university students' unions. This important diversity presents us with obstacles but also a unique opportunity to explore Diani's proposition. Diani's belief that social movements are movements of shared ideas and ideologies would not completely explain Irish student collective action, however, it is highly probable that a shared sense of freedom of speech, conscience, and respect for personal freedom was a common ideological thread through the movement.

During the SPUC cases, such a shared sense was highly prevalent, as Maxine Brady recalled:

It wasn't so much about abortion rights as the censorship of organisations that would help women in crisis. If we allowed SPUC to censor student welfare publications, then what would

be next? Would we be giving carte blanche to college authorities, other unconnected bodies and government, to censor all of our publications? Would we be saying that as a student movement and body that we could be swayed to drop any unpopular policy, no matter how morally right, by the threat of legal action? It is worth noting that there were people in the student group, who on a personal level disagreed fundamentally with abortion. However they did not espouse censorship of information on the issue.

(Brady, 2016).

The student movement also meets the criteria for a social movement, as outlined in a broader definition by Diani (2008). Diani argues that a social movement must show patterns of relationships between multiple actors, the circulation of resources and symbols, evidence of solidarities and identities being reinforced and the use of varied political repertoires by the movement as part of the same campaign.

Criteria	Homosexuality	Contraceptives	Bodily autonomy
Patterns of relationships	Gay rights groups approach USI for support. USI and students' unions hold information talks. USI letter writing in various papers supporting IGRM. USI gave facilities for Dublin Gay Collective.	USI officers holding positions in the IFPA. IFPA training for welfare officers. IFPA facilitated on campuses to give safe-sex talks and provide information on contraceptive services.	Working with ICCL, IFPA and Anti-Amendment. Campaigns / membership of groups. Facilitation of groups on campus. Support for groups in media.
Circulation of resources and symbols	IGRM written for student publications. Flyers distributed on campuses for helplines. Creation of MSM safe-sex material.	Use of IFPA flyers and booklets in students' unions. IFPA etc. writing for student publications. Creation of advice leaflets in partnership with IFPA and other groups.	Distribution of material from Anti-Amendment campaigns Provision and publication of information on abortion services abroad. Use of logos, and material published by groups.
Evidence of solidarities and identities being reinforced	Evolution of policies within the student movement on decriminalisation. Creation of LGB Rights Officers position.	Membership of the IFPA. Establishment of Women's Rights Action committees and officers ⁴ in students' unions and in USI.	Fundraisers for campaigns. Defiance of court orders by USI and students' unions. Anti-Amendment campaign groups being established on

⁴ The focus of these campaigns and offers was not contraceptives but the inclusion, engagement and participation of women in social and political life. The availability of contraceptives was an important tool of ensuring this engagement and participation.

	Support and facilitating the creation of GaySocs.	Public support in media. Fundraisers.	campuses.
Varied political repertoires	Letter writing campaigns to politicians as shown by archive. Letters published in newspapers. Participating in marches and protests.	Letter writing campaigns and submissions on legislation pertaining to contraceptives. Letters published in newspapers. Participation in marches and protests.	Letter writing campaigns. Defending actions in Court and taking appeal to the EUJ. Participation in marches and protests. Provision of space for public meetings.

Table 11: Breakdown of Diani's (2008,) definition of a social movement and evidence of activities by student movement campaign.

9.9 Student collective identity

As previously stated, many of the interviewees confirmed that, as students, they were conscious of a collective identity and the responsibility to the legacy of the student movement in Ireland. As Diani (1992) argues, a collective identity is an important criterion for a social movement to be differentiated from other actors who share some or all the movement's belief system. Within the case studies, it is clear that organisations such as the IFPA, IICL, GLEN, and other civic society groups do not meet such criteria. Yes, elements of the early gay rights movement could certainly be considered a new social movement, but many of these groups fragmented or joined together to become professional civic society organisations.

Student leaders both self-identified as being part of a movement and, in general, were identified by external actors; media, civic society groups and politicians, as a movement, thus fulfilling Melucci's (1992) criteria. Stephen Grogan (2015) argued that students were themselves tired of debate dragging on in the issues of sexuality, contraceptives, and reproductive rights and simply didn't tolerate the arguments being made by the conservative establishment:

An Irish Solution to and Irish Problem – access to contraceptives and family planning, divorce, unplanned pregnancy, AIDS were all emerging social topics in wider society at that time. Young people (and in my college and time in USI, with the absence of mature students, it was predominantly young people 18-23) were willing to challenge the consensus without fear, on this particular topic.

If I had to guess the reason why this challenge emerged during this particular time, I would suggest that these topics had been dragging on in wider discourse over the same period, along with the topics of economic stagnation and conflict in Northern Ireland. As the prospects became bleaker and as we grew up to our student years with these topics fermenting in the background the idea and practice of rejecting social and petty legal dogma became more accepted as the rationale for conforming diminished.

(Grogan, 2015).

9.10 A typology of the Irish student movement

Gill & DeFronozo (2009) offer us an excellent definition of a student movement, as outlined in chapter 2. They identify two prior contextual conditions that may provoke student collective action: nature and source. An analysis of Ireland during the time periods in question allows us to identify what contextual conditions provoked student collective action.

Case Study	Nature		Source	
Decriminalisation of homosexuality	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy of criminalisation. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. <p>Antecedent Cultural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of discrimination against LGB citizens. 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppression of human rights of LGB citizens. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. <p>Non-structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy of criminalisation. • Censorship of homosexual literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation criminalising homosexual acts • Legislation censoring homosexual literature • RCC¹ position on homosexuality • Lay groups opposing decriminalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCC¹ position on homosexuality and dominance over Irish government policy • UK decriminalising • Northern Ireland position on homosexuality

Table 12: Nature and source conditions that provoked collective student action in case study 1.

¹ – Roman Catholic Church

Case Study	Nature		Source	
Contraceptives Campaign	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government interpretation of constitution. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. <p>Antecedent Cultural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of discrimination against women, wed or unwed. • Sectarian nature of contraceptive laws. 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of human rights development for women. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. <p>Non-structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy on contraceptives. • Censorship of contraceptive literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation was narrow and restrictive. • Legislation of contraceptive literature. • Lack of sex education. • RCC¹ position on contraceptives. • Lay groups opposing liberalisation of legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCC¹ position on contraceptives and dominance over Irish government policy. • UK lay groups establishing presence in Ireland.

Table 13: Nature and source conditions that provoked collective student action in case study 2.

¹ – Roman Catholic Church

Case Study	Nature		Source	
Bodily autonomy and the right to information on abortion	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government interpretation of constitution. • 8th Amendment to Irish Constitution. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. • Public attitude towards abortion. <p>Antecedent Cultural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of discrimination against women, wed or unwed. • Position of children born outside marriage. 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of human rights development for women. • Dominance of RCC¹ in social policy. • Constitutional prohibition of abortion. <p>Non-structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy on contraceptives and abortion. • Censorship of contraceptives and abortion services abroad literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation was narrow and restrictive. • Legislation restricting contraceptives literature. • Lack of sex education. • RCC¹ position on contraceptives. • Lay groups opposing liberalisation of abortion laws and opening of discourse around crisis pregnancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCC¹ position on contraceptives and abortion coupled with its dominance over Irish government policy. • UK lay groups establishing presence in Ireland such as SPUC and US based funding of anti-abortion groups in Ireland • European Courts of Justice. • Maastricht Treaty.

Table 14: Nature and source conditions that provoked collective student action in case study 3.

¹ – Roman Catholic Church

Gill & DeFronozo argue that, when structural and cultural conditions are similar, a revolutionary movement is likely to be created within the student movement. As

evidenced above, both the structural and cultural conditions are very similar but no revolutionary movement materialised. Several mitigating factors can be identified for this:

Political stability and investment in democratic system

Broadly speaking, Ireland has a stable democratic structure that is heavily invested in by the major actors within the public sphere, including civic society groups. Political parties have a history of capitalising on certain movements such as the rural movement, anti-apartheid movement, and women's movement. This is not to suggest that parties do not support these movements, however.

The highly organised structure of the Irish student movement

The Irish student movement has a highly organised formal structure from local to national level. Almost all HEIs have students' union or some level of student governance, with their own set of rules and often a constitution. Decision-making is democratic and officers are accountable to the student body. The student movement, at a national level, also follows a similar pattern. Students did not need to establish a platform for themselves within the public sphere as one already existed.

Alternative national voice for young people

Such an established student movement provided politically engaged young people with a ready-made national platform and network to engage in political activity. Byrne (1997) indicates that many people turned to social movements and other civic society and alternative groups instead of mainstream political parties as a way of making their voices heard without the stigma of traditional party politics. Movements such as the student movement, with all the connotations that were prescribed to it, offered young people such an alternative. Yet, the student movement was also safe and proved an effective career path into senior trade union and political positions. Young people established organisations such as the Connolly Movement, but these were fringe groups, with little influence on the public sphere.

Existence of previous social movements and civic society groups

There is a strong pattern of social engagement by other social movements and civic society groups within the public and political sphere. Connolly & Hourigan (2006) outlined various movements such as the nationalist, labour, suffrage and cultural movements that impacted the public sphere. The existence of the women's movement can be traced back as far as the late nineteenth century and such movements played a pivotal role in the liberalisation of social policy in Ireland. The social conservatism in Irish society, and the role of the Catholic Church meant that such movements were often the only platform that these conversations could begin within the Irish public sphere.

The Irish student movement meets the characteristics of two types of student movement, but employs those characteristics dependent on both the campaign and circumstance.

9.11 Irish characteristics of an Identity Radicalism Student Movement

Chapter 2 outlines the primary characteristics of the four types of student movements as identified by Gill & DeFronzo. Two of the types, Structural Revolutionary and Social Revolutionary do not conform to the evidence in any account of the student movement's activities in Ireland or indeed in this work. However, the Irish student movement certainly exhibits a number of the characteristics of both a Reform Movement and Identity Radicalism Movement.

9.11.1 The Irish student movement as a Reform Movement

Gill & DeFronzo suggest that a Reform Movement is more likely to occur in societies where the political system is perceived to be relatively democratic by students. Students' willingness to participate in the democratic system by campaigning to have the voting age reduced, participating in state referendum campaigns, and engaging in information campaigns on the stances of political parties on education issues, show that the Irish student movement was, in general, comfortable with the democratic system.

While there were important conversations and contributions by students on reform of the system and the injustices within the democratic system, there was little appetite to see major structural or social revolutionary reform amongst the general student population. Student victories in Ireland on changing government policy, such as the reduction in voting age, the introduction of the third level maintenance grants, and the relationship it had with government departments when it came to student travel, all encourage reform movements.

It is important to highlight that many senior lecturers from the Dublin universities also held political roles and these same politicians, Mary Robinson, Mary McAleese, etc. all played important ally roles for the student movement throughout both their political, professional and academic careers. Such engagement with major political figures, coupled with the links the student movement had within media – such as John Horgan, both a senator and journalist, and later several prominent RTÉ journalists and producers – would have created a strong sense of engagement with the main pillars of the public sphere. Student leaders had a sense of their position within the public and political sphere and had little appetite for major political upheaval to be led by students. Crucially, students could influence the body politic from within, so did not need to organise a movement from without. Pragmatism worked for them.

Gill & DeFronzo (2009, p. 211) argue that students of a Reform Movement will object to policy based on ‘faulty political or other institutional leadership or information on which decisions are made and not due to structural characteristics of the society’. In an Irish context this is partly true. Such Reform Movement activities of the Irish student movement include the Northern Ireland civil rights campaign, the anti-apartheid campaign and campaigns relating to housing that are not touched upon in this work.

9.11.2 The Irish student movement as an Identity Radicalism Movement

As an Identity Radicalism Movement, the Irish student movement relied heavily on those students who were impacted by the discrimination or perceived injustice to champion policy within the movement. The student movement quickly accepted such personal

stories and the movement engaged in acts of solidarity with these students by passing policy and engaging in campaigns took place. These campaigns were identity-driven by those most impacted by the discrimination or restrictive legislation. The decriminalisation campaign was led by TCD students and soon after became USI policy. GaySocs were quickly established across campuses, which led to conflict with university and college authorities. USI would later appoint an officer and create an autonomous LGBT campaign.

Female students campaigned vigorously for contraceptive legislation liberalisation and sought the establishment of the WRAC. Women's rights officer positions were also created in students' unions around the country and WRAC became an autonomous campaign in USI. While the WRAC activities in the area of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy garnished much attention, these campaigns were more a bi-product of the primary objective of the campaign within USI, politicalising women and increasing their role in students' union and public discourse. Helen O'Sullivan, a former DIT Bolton Street (a predominately male college) and USI women's rights officer, explained:

Being very aware of being in a minority as a female student in Bolton Street and then the discussion around abortion and abortion information women's participation in students' unions was very poor ... this was the campaign, it was to get more women politicalised and to get more women involved in their own students' union in their own college ... that was the biggest campaign of all ... if you sort out the gender issue, other things tend to fall into place.

(O'Sullivan, 2015).

Such activities and the development of a group identity within the student movement are in keeping with Gill & DeFronzo's characteristics of an Identity Radicalism Student Movement. These group identities provided a 'sense of empowerment, pride, self-confidence and equality, but also this type of movement focuses on confronting the larger public's norms, beliefs, behaviours, and ways of thinking' (Gill & DeFronzo, 2009, p. 212).

Gill & DeFronzo also assert that the emergence of an Identity Radicalism Movement occurs when the nature of the condition provoking student opposition is 'a culturally rooted pattern of systematic discrimination' (ibid). As identified in Tables 12, 13, 14, all sources of discrimination or influence were internal with the source of the discrimination against homosexuals and the laws governing contraceptives and bodily autonomy being embedded into the dominate Irish culture and domestic institutional policies (government, courts, Roman Catholic Church, police, education and health services).

Gill & DeFronzo (2009, p. 212) contend that one of the circumstances that can give rise to identity radicalism is the exposure of students to 'concepts of freedom and liberation that were intended for the benefit of other groups, but have direct liberation implications to the members of another subordinate group'. As discussed in the literature review, the exposure to world events through radio and television allowed young people to see alternatives to paths many were destined to take. It allowed students to learn of new ideologies and forms of democracy and develop a sense of fraternity with students in France, the UK, and the United States, who were protesting on issues of civil rights and freedom of expression.

The debate within the student movement on women's rights and homosexual rights acted symbiotically to provoke students to campaign for greater liberalisation of sexuality laws and the role of women in Irish society. The talks and debates organised by USI and other student groups allowed students to make independent assessments of Irish society and the society they wished to live in. As evidenced in the case studies, these talks were often in defiance of the status quo but provoked a sense of injustice amongst students, so much that they felt it was their duty to campaign on these issues. Later, those students who were directly impacted by the injustice, women and gay and lesbian students, found enough support to run identity-led campaigns and garnished support for specific democratically elected officers (from within those campaigns),

whose role it would be to lead these campaigns. All method and manner of these student debates evolved is evidence of Friere's conscientization⁵.

9.11.3 Identifying the category of the Irish student movement

Gill & DeFronzo do not claim their typology is exhaustive but rather a useful innovation in the specification of variables and influential factors for categorising a student movement. The analysis in Tables 12 – 14 above, coupled with the evidence in the case studies, show that the Irish student movement's response to the sources and nature of the antagonistic conditions, present in Irish society, was pragmatic, rather than simply reactionary. As such, this work contends that the Irish student movement should be categorised as a *Pragmatic Student Movement*. Chapter 5 identifies the characteristics of a Pragmatic Student Movement as:

- Highly organised movement, with established recognition
- Open lines of communication, with a wide variety of institutional, governmental and non-governmental groups
- Defined set of democratically endorsed principles and objectives
- Will seek structural and institutional change where necessary
- Proactive on issues of importance to students and others – able to construct solutions to social problems facing society
- Strong ethical and moral beliefs informed by philosophies and teachings other than the predominant discourse of society
- Perceived to be a legitimate political actor
- Diverse membership
- Diverse repertoire of contention and willingness to share such resources

A pragmatic student movement is flexible enough to adapt to both the sources and natures of the conditions to engage allies within the public and political sphere. It facilitates more radical elements within its ranks by providing platforms and space for

⁵ The process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality.

activists to campaign and debate while engaging the public and political elites with traditional political repertoires, as Tilly (1978) advocates. It is a movement that is embedded within higher educational institutions, independent and an accepted actor in the public sphere.

The following table outlines the activities of the Irish student movement that correlate with the category of a pragmatic student movement.

Characteristic	Activities
Highly organised movement with established recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local students' union and national students' union structures with state and local recognition.
Open lines of communication with a wide variety of institutional, governmental and non-governmental groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of written communication with political parties, government ministers and civic society groups. Participation by these groups in student events.
Defined set of democratically endorsed principles and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' Union and USI constitutions. Archive evidence and newspaper reports of debates at national councils, congress and local SRC meetings and decisions. Archive evidence and newspaper reports of referenda on various issues.
Will seek structural and institutional change where necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation of Church and State in debate was advocated for. Reform of the political system so that the voting age was reduced. Reform of university learner representation. Participation in State referenda on abortion.
Proactive on issues of importance to students and others – able to construct solutions to social problems facing society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active campaign on various issues including student grants, tuition fees and student representation. Active campaigns in the liberalisation of policies pertaining to sexuality and reproductive rights. The National Question – put forward ideas for a new Ireland and alternatives of how Ireland should be governed.
Strong ethical and moral beliefs informed by philosophies and teachings other than the predominant discourse of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to new philosophies and ways of thinking through education and travel. Strong underpinning of justice, equality and human rights keystone to student positions in case studies.
Perceived to be a legitimate political actor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student events and press statements carried by newspapers and other media, including several

Characteristic	Activities
Highly organised movement with established recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local students' union and national students' union structures with state and local recognition.
	<p>front-page stories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of engagement by political parties and attendance of ministers and politicians at student events. Student groups approached by civic society groups for alliances. Trade Union and other professional body support and alliances.
Diverse membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership grew more diverse as access to second and third level education grew.
Diverse repertoire of contention and willingness to share such resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students utilised press statements, conferences, events, protests, marches, boycotts and advertising. USI and students' unions facilitated civic society groups with use of rooms, office space and facilities for printing, telephone calls and research.

Table 15: Characteristics of a Pragmatic Student Movement - Ireland

9.12 Conclusion

This work has offered an in-depth analysis of the literature surrounding the classification of student movements as social movements. It has examined the shifting demographics within the Irish student movement and provided an analysis of the cultural and political influences that impacted on the Irish public sphere in the time period examined. This work offers an analysis of the organised student movement since the foundation of USI in 1959, a body born from dissatisfaction at the level of political engagement by the ISA. Such a foundation quickly legitimised the activities of students on social and political issues, despite the protestations of the few within the student movement and externally.

The student movement played a pivotal role in raising awareness of the apartheid regime in South Africa and had a clear policy and took part in direct action, leafleting and organising demonstrations long before the establishment of the IAAM. The movement politicalised cultural events such as rugby as a means of highlighting the regime and was an integral part of the IAAM campaign across the country providing

platforms for speakers, funds and support. Beyond the limited timeframe of this minor case study the movement continued to play an important role, including in the Dunnes Stores apartheid strike in June 1984. The strike took place when a cashier Karen Gearon refused to handle South African goods at the till, on instruction from the shop steward. She was suspended and in solidarity nine of her colleagues walked out with her. The strike quickly escalated. The national and local unions provide financial support, raised awareness of the plight of the striking workers and participated in protests and rallies.

The introduction of student travel was significant for a number of reasons. It provided students with an independent revenue stream, away from their local community or family business or farm. It exposed students to new concepts of business innovation, justice, social order and ideologies. It provided them with access to a wealth of cultural and social experiences that they would have never been exposed to in Ireland. The US gay rights, civil rights and women's liberation movement was no doubt an influential factor on many young people. It was one thing to witness these events on television, it was quite another to be immersed in the discourse. Student travel also empowered young people to see and experience a world beyond their own borders.

The actions of students during the civil rights campaigns in Northern Ireland cannot be downplayed. They provided an example of how parity of esteem could be achieved to serve a common purpose. They highlight human rights abuses and injustices. They organised and marched, produced literature and engaged in intellectual discourse which helped shape the dreams of many in the province for peace and prosperity. The Peace, Jobs, Progress initiative showed that by setting aside differences it was possible for all traditions to plan for a future in Northern Ireland.

The actions of students in 1968 in UCD, in forming the SDA and protesting about wider social issues is an important example of how students can affect change institutionally and reinvent the concept of the university in society. Whilst some would see the gentle revolution as a failure. Its influence on those who participated in the protests, lectures and rallies cannot be underestimated. Students took control of their own education and championed their desire to see a more rich and critical curriculum that provided

graduates with the tools to not alone be able to understand the world and its people but also to be able to affect change and equip them to engage all aspects of the public sphere in achieving this. The gentle revolution renewed the legitimacy of students in the public sphere, solidifying their role as intellectuals beyond the confines of social movements and showed that their position within society was growing beyond that of a marginal elite.

The Carysfort dispute was an important empowering episode for female students. Whilst on the surface about the desire of students to organise and be represented the dispute was a conflict of old and new, church versus the individual. The students of Carysfort sought to protect their individualism, their uniqueness and break free of the imposed order from the college management. Their approach and actions were radical and brought them in direct collision with the most senior hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. The fact that the students were also battling the teachers' union, parents and local priests is testament to their resolve to be not just independent in how they were represented but also how dangerous their actions were perceived by the both college management and the Catholic Church. No doubt those students who went on to be teachers imparted this independence and bravery to some of their own students.

The three case studies offer clear historical evidence, supported by witness testimony, archive material and newspaper clippings that collective student action occurred in the areas of decriminalisation of homosexuality, the liberalisation of contraceptive laws and the right to information on abortion services abroad. Not only did students play an independent role as the student movement, but they cross-pollinated the wider gay and women's social movements. Many former student leaders and activists played important roles in these movements. Edmund Lynch, a prominent gay rights activist, credited much of the gay rights movement to the role of students:

The [gay rights] movement would not have developed the way it did unless the people that were behind it were both straight and gay students, who took their cue from the Stonewall Riots and liberalism ... they were focusing on the rights of people ... but

students were the leaders. There was no money in these organisations so the money was always found through the students' unions.

(Lynch, 2015).

Lynch's belief that the student movement played an important role in the development of the gay rights movement, particularly because of his own pivotal role in it, provides us with compelling testimony that students equally influenced the growth of the gay rights movement and helped legitimise it.

The impact of the Irish student movement, as yet unmeasured on Irish social policy, is one that clearly is worthy of further exploration.

The evidence garnered from interviews, coupled with the literature in the area of social movement participation, suggests that it can have a profound impact on both the individual and on wider society. Many of the interviewees offered their thoughts on the role that the Irish student movement plays in society.

Maxine Brady believes that the student movement helped to shape modern Ireland,

I think without the student movement either leading, or getting behind, campaigns on contraception, and reproductive rights, we would have a very different Ireland right now.

(Brady, 2016).

Ivana Bacik argues that the integral role of the student movement in the campaign for reproductive rights was something unique to Ireland. Those women's liberation activists who came to Ireland were unaccustomed to seeing the role of the student movement,

... when people come from abroad ... they are always struck by how in Ireland the movement on reproductive rights is being led not by women's groups particularly but actually by the student movement over generations of students ... over twenty or thirty years it's been students leading the charge for reproductive rights.

(Bacik, 2015).

Tom Costello, former USI president, reflecting on the movement's role as a social agitator and facilitator of debate highlights how, in the societal process of liberalisation of policy, the student movement's discourse on issues such as decriminalisation of homosexuality, abortion and contraceptives was considered extremely radical to Irish society,

It raises the issues that are not quite on the agenda yet ... popularising, discussing at the risk of bringing down a premium on your head. That's a crucial role. It is a role that the student movement has continued to play at various times, particularly in the area of reproductive rights, gay rights and so forth.

(Costello, 2015).

Interestingly, some participants spoke about the impact that student political debate had on the subsequent careers of certain former student activists. The 1980s was a politically turbulent time, not just for the nation, but within the student movement as various political ideologies clashed. Grudges forged from these debates lasted well beyond their time within the student movement and particularly blighted several careers in journalism. Reflecting on this, Carol Coulter noted that:

There were quite bitter debates, not just in USI but certainly nationally between the Workers' Party ... and others ... which the undercurrents, in my opinion, survive to this day. It has something to do with some of the differences within the Labour Party and it spilled over into RTÉ and the media, particularly RTÉ ... a significant number of students' union activists went on to become journalists and trade union officials and among those who were not associated [with the Workers' Party] and opposed them experienced a huge amount of hostility and I think in journalistic circles some of that heritage is still there and it's there particularly in RTÉ ... and there are people who felt their careers were blighted by that Workers' Party machine ... and it definitely was a machine ... [it was] very intimidating and at that USI congress where I ran, along with Ann Connolly and John Daly on the slate for the presidency, I have to say there was quite an intimidating atmosphere and that stays with you, because you just remember what that atmosphere was like and that

controlling ideology seem to permeate a lot of aspects of public life.

(Coulter, 2015).

Pat Rabbitte recalled the impact the bitter Carysfort Dispute had on him and how, as a TD, it gave him pause for reflection:

The present Archbishop [Diarmuid Martin] invited me to the Palace when I was leader of the labour party and I drove up to see him and somebody joined him, a priest, with a notebook and pen, and he wanted to talk to me about education. I thought that it was remarkable that I ceased up and didn't engage with him and I was thinking about it afterwards; after everything had failed to settle the dispute a meeting with the archbishop Dermot Ryan was engineered to take place in the Palace. We were put into a waiting room for some time and there was at least one nun, if not two, on the [student] committee ... anyway after keeping us waiting for so long someone emerged to say his lordship would now see us. I let the women go on ahead of me and as I did two heavies combined to block me at the door and before I could do anything, and the women were going in I was hustled away by the two of them, grabbed me by each arm into a room and they stood guard at the door. I think that memory came back to me when I was again confronted by an entirely different archbishop with an entirely different perspective on life, a man for who I have some regard ... unconsciously that came back to me with my first visit back to the palace.

(Rabbitte, 2016).

An active and engaged student movement has a temporal duality of influence in the public sphere. The debates and campaigns waged by the student movement can have an immediate impact on the public sphere, providing space for debate on topics that otherwise would have been avoided. These debates are reported in the media and the public are then exposed to the early conversations around public policy reform. Student spaces are public ones, allowing members of the public to engage with the students and networks of sympathisers can be created. Peter Davies refers to such an influence on students,

... it also has a social role to push the boundaries on social issues that are a concern to people ... it is also part of the education

process, people learn a lot from being involved in student politics
... it's really important that people have these opportunities.

(Davies, 2015).

In the medium term, these debates impact student leaders, those who were active followers or sympathisers within the student movement, challenging not just their own beliefs about a perceived injustice, but also challenging them to use the same ideological arguments to examine their preconceptions on other issues. This *thematization*⁶ effect allows other issues to open for discussion within the public sphere. Even those students who disagree with the student movement's position are ultimately challenged internally as to why they disagree. Eamon Gilmore provides such an example of the potency and legacy of student debate,

USI avoided taking a position on Abortion during my time as President. At that time, in the mid-70s, it would have split the student movement. But I was personally persuaded by the arguments made by TCD Student Union representatives, such as Anne Connolly, and I have been pro-choice ever since.

(Gilmore, 2015).

Eugene Murray also argued that student debates, especially on ideology, had an impact on his outlook:

It had a huge impact on me. I went in and I did a degree in business and the normal path for someone doing a degree in business was to go into accountancy. In my case my three older brothers did professional degrees and my father had a good business and he was hoping I would go in and run the family business ... and at the end of the day I decided that I do not want to be a capitalist so journalism became an attractive option and that's what I did ... because I was able to make programmes about issues that I felt were important.

(Murray, 2015).

⁶ Della Porta & Diani (2006, p 232) refer to *thematization* in the context of the Global Justice movement's successful ability to have topics of social inequalities placed on the public agenda.

Stephen Grogan (2015) also reflected on the student debates around abortion, the democratic ways the decision to hold a position were taken and argues that the impact was an important one on the individual:

... the Congress discussion was enlightening – helping to enable people (those fortunate to be there as delegates) to form their own opinion and to do so in an organised and democratic framework. This process also contributed to the seriousness we took in our responsibilities to defend the policy.

(Grogan, 2015).

Damian O’Brion had a similar experience in his path towards being supportive through his time in college:

I would have gone from a position where would have been ... when I started college ... opposed to abortion full stop. By second year I saw it, regardless of your view on abortion, you shouldn’t be censoring this information, people should be able to access it, and from there a rapid change, over 18 months to two years to a situation where I felt abortion should be a matter for a woman, it is a decision for a woman to make with a doctor and it is nobody else’s business, that was rapid progress for me, partly because of the influence of the debates I was involved in with the students’ unions, the people I was exposed to, some very articulate and informed people who were advocating this and making the case.

(O’Brion, 2015).

Both of these are examples of how, as movement intellectuals, the debates allowed individuals to explore and tease out the issues and eventually come to a new perspective on issues.

The student movement’s established presence within higher education institutions allows generations of educated young people to be exposed to new concepts and to participate in any social movement campaign that collective students desire or support.

In the long term, the student movement's influence becomes more potent. As the campaigns grow within the movement, and alliances and networks are formed, the student movement becomes an active participant in a national social movement, such as the women's right movement, or gay rights movement. Social movements are pluralistic in nature, and marches, lobbying by individual members etc., create the perception of a political constituency that can be tapped into by politicians for support during elections. The debates held in campuses may have had a liberalising influence on those students exposed to them. In their later years, this may lead to a more complex and sensitive interpretation of issues of injustice or inequality and ensure those voters are more open to engage with social movements on policy reform.

Another long term consequence of the student movement's engagement on issues of social policy is the creation of personal networks that activists could draw upon later in life on areas such as transgender or marriage equality issues, campaigns that could not have been conceived during an activist's student days. Various literature on the women's movement in the 1960s indicate that this pattern exists in social movements and evidence in the interviews would indicate that such networks exist in the Irish student movement (Rupp & Taylor, 1987).

In summarising her perception of the long term impact of participation in the student movement, Clare Daly reflected on those who became political leaders:

I think [abortion] is an issue that stayed with a lot of people ... the impact of people getting involved in issues as students does carry the way through ... I know you'd look at some of the people who became our 'great leaders' and say they lose it but on issues of social change they don't ... they may not have the same passion for pushing it, they may partially forget but they don't become an anti-abortionist.

(Daly, 2015).

The later careers of a number of the student leaders and activists in this work highlight the profound impact engagement with the student movement had on their careers, as

several went into politics, advocacy, or charity enterprises. Ruairi Quinn recalled the 1963 housing crisis and the tragic death of two girls in Dublin because of the collapse of a tenement buildings and his realisation that his career path could affect change:

There was a panic in Dublin Corporation ... typically you would have between eight and ten families in a four story building with one outside toilet, from the previous century, there was a big housing crisis ... I was now an architectural student, housing, socialism, architecture all combined in making sense to what I was studying that could have an application to a world that needed to be changed.

(Quinn, 2015).

The role of the student movement in the three case studies should not be overstated. Its role was primarily an ally one, in principle supporting and campaigning on issues that were in line with its philosophy. As a social movement, it engaged its membership and the public sphere, but it remained primarily concerned with education issues. By means of conclusion, this work will offer a very short analysis of the Irish student movement's influence on policy. The response of the Irish government and institutions within the public sphere was to engage with the student movement and other social movements and civic society groups, accept submissions and invitations to events held by these groups. Schumaker (1975, pp. 494 - 495) argues that there are five levels of responsiveness from governments over collective demands:

Access responsiveness

Students were given access to politicians and political parties, where their demands were heard. They were also given media coverage and politicians attended congresses, conferences and other events held by students on the issues. Political figures who were also academics were often called upon to negotiate with student protestors and to address student gatherings. Evidence from the case studies shows that the student movement was actively engaged by politicians and political parties and this process was mutually beneficial. Whilst not all media coverage of students would have been favourable the coverage in itself is indicative of the legitimacy of

the movement in the public sphere and further evidence that government saw the movement as one that to not engage with would be counter-productive. Key campaigns such as the anti-apartheid campaign, decriminalisation of homosexuality and the right to information campaign provide us with strong evidence of access responsiveness.

Agenda responsiveness

While the placing of reform in these areas cannot be directly attested to student lobbying alone, the support that students gave policy reform provided a political constituency to justify, in part, such reform on the political agenda. The praxis achieved by students in these areas – from early critical reflection on issues such as homosexuality and reproductive rights – to critical action; the holding of protests, the establishment of gaysocs and supporting marches and events organised by the gay rights and women's liberation movement often led to greater coverage of these liberation campaigns in the media, reinforcing the topics and encouraging public and political discourse. Lobbying such as letter writing, support for legal actions and direct confrontation with organisations such as SPUC highlighted the need for reform in these areas to government.

Policy responsiveness

As each political party and successive governments dealt with the issues of reform, students continued to engage with the policy papers/legislation either by submitting critical examinations of proposed reform/legislation or by condemning or supporting the proposed reforms through the media. USI made submissions on draft contraceptive legislation, engaged with the judicial system and invited political leaders to their congresses and conferences in order to advance legislative and policy changes. In the case of student travel student leaders worked directly with government officials to improve relations with the US and promote Ireland as a destination. Government policy on student travel reflected this positive relationship. The gentle revolution and the Carysfort dispute also highlighted the need and desire for greater student participation in the management of HEIs, which was later achieved through long term campaigning.

Output responsiveness

The monitoring of the enforcement of legislation is another key role of any social movement after achieving change. In the case of decriminalisation of homosexuality, students continued to campaign after the decision of the ECHR to ensure final repeal of the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The establishment of the GLEN (by a former student activist) would be an example of monitoring agencies – GLEN received extensive funding from the Dept. of Justice to advise on issues impacting on the LGBT community. The USI LGB campaign continued to evolve and later became the LGBT campaign. It lobbied for changes in employment legislation, the introduction of civil partnership and was a key player in the marriage referendum.

In Northern Ireland post the civil rights campaigns students continued to work with various groups to fight discrimination against Catholics and other sections of society. The provincial student's union continued to exist and evolved to be its own students' union separate but equal to both the national students' union with full autonomy.

In the case of access to abortion information services and contraceptives, students defied legislation they believed to be unjust. They provided services that the state refused to do so; counselling, information, referral and other supports. It actively campaigned to ensure that the results of the 1993 referenda were enacted as quickly as possible and assisted in the creation of crisis pregnancy agencies and the monitoring of these to ensure they provided unbiased information. The movement continues to campaign for the repeal of the 8th amendment and works closely with a number of civil society and women's groups to achieve this aim.

Impact responsiveness

While decriminalisation was achieved in 1993, students continued to work on LGB campaigns, as discrimination in various other legislation continued to exist, including marriage and employment. The movement now works with mental health and youth organisations such as SpunOut and BeLonG To, that primarily concern themselves with pre-college young persons.

While contraceptive laws were satisfactorily liberalised, abortion laws and the rights to publish information continues to be an issue for student groups and one they

actively engage in. Students continued to campaign in the area, seeking the removal of the luxury VAT rate on condoms and woman's sanitary toiletries. They also campaign for increased sex education in schools.

It is incredibly difficult to trace the direct influence the student movement had by means of models. The Sabatier & Jenkin-Smith Advocacy Coalition Framework approach to analysing policymaking could offer one method of tracing the student movement's influence, as it offers us top-down, bottom-up and various intermediate strata of institutional and non-institutionalised actions. Such a model would allow an expansion of Gill & DeFronzo's typology of student movements, as it would accommodate much of the influences in source and nature. Such a study is beyond the scope of this work, however.

Alternative explanations of findings

It is not possible to interview every single student activist down through the decades or students who would have been defined as active followers or sympathisers by Altbach (1991). While the literature in this area is authoritative and generally accepted, other explanations, as to the broad support enjoyed by student activists for their campaigns and activities, could be explained, in part, by peer-pressure or the desire of young people to be seen to support that which their friends or those seen as popular on account of their ability to be elected. Participation in student elections and referenda in the time period in question was relatively strong and, certainly, it would be difficult to argue that the results of students' union referenda in TCD and UCC on the issue of abortion information were not representative of the wishes of the student body given the high turnouts. Such referenda turnouts would instead indicate that the issue of abortion information was one that students both cared about and informed themselves on before casting their vote, and by default gave their support to the actions of student leaders and activists.

9.13 Further research

Empirical research of graduates from the various eras would provide evidence as to whether the campaigns of student leaders in the various policy areas impacted or liberalised those students exposed to the debates and campaigns. It would also be helpful in ascertaining whether this translates to a conscious use of political repertoires, such as voting to ensure candidates were chosen based on the liberal views in these policy areas. This research makes the assumption that the international research is correct in an Irish context. It assumes that students are generally more liberal than the previous generation and certainly student leaders are too.

The skilled nature of the courses provided for in the technological colleges may have seen a significant increase in higher education uptake by students from traditional working class or semi-skilled backgrounds. Given the strong role many RTCs played in campaigns around contraceptives - and the access to information on abortion services, and the commitments showed by these students' unions to remain within a national union and remain engaged in many solidarity campaigns that did not impact students directly - a study in relation to the links between working-class solidarity, trade unionism and students' unions within the technological sector may provide a fascinating insight into the motivations of these students to heavily engage in these campaigns.

Chapter three explored, in some detail, the evolution of the student travel service within the student movement and clear evidence is presented that both the state and other jurisdictions valued the contribution student travel made to their respective agendas. As indicated by the interviews, there was significant personal gains for those individuals who partook of student travel, setting aside the obvious income generated to fund their college experience. The impact of student travel on these individuals in terms of exposure to new cultures, new politics and ideologies and new business methods may have had an impact on Irish society, as these students moved from their academic studies into their careers. It is also possible that programmes, such as the J-1, had an influence over the 'special relationship' cultivated between the United States and

Ireland, as evidenced by the willingness of high-ranking officials and politicians to engage with it.

The role of the student movement in widening access to higher education is another area that would contribute greatly to our understanding of higher education take-up. Student leaders, particularly those from the teacher training colleges, made significant contributions to the debates surrounding the value of higher education within the public sphere. Student lobbying and indeed protest won significant changes to higher education funding, structures and student representation. The role of students in modernising higher education and widening access is certainly worthy of further research.

As previously outlined in this chapter, this thesis has provided an in-depth account of the role of the student movement. A strong academic framework is now available for other researchers to begin measuring the influence of the Irish student movement on Irish public policy and its impact on other social movements. It suggests the use of the Advocacy Coalition Framework policymaking model to analyse this role.

9.14 Contribution to knowledge

This work has taken a triangulated approach to analysing the role and impact of the Irish student movement in liberalising social policy in Ireland. This approach, whilst with some disadvantages, has provided a significant extension of our understanding of the nature of the Irish student movement and why certain young people feel the need to organise to affect change in their society. It provides a strong framework for future analysis and introduces a wealth of new sources into the discourse of social movement theory in Ireland.

Historically this work provides us with new substantiated evidence that movements such as the Irish gay and women's liberation movements were greatly assisted and supported by the pragmatic and intellectual nature of the student movement. It further offers evidence that the student movement was often the only national voice on these issues.

Two of the key leaders of the early gay rights campaign have attested to the seminal role of the student movement in helping to shape the gay rights campaign and this work provides correspondence and other evidence to substantiate this.

This work also highlights the underground network of abortion information and a travel service organised by the student movement in both jurisdictions to assist women in crisis pregnancy. This is an important new insight to the role of the movement in the reproductive rights campaign.

It is clear that the role of students' unions and USI has been neglected in the history of sex and sexuality liberation in Ireland. Whilst newspaper evidence did exist it would seem there was little motivation to give credit to students in the existing literature. It is important that the evidence in this thesis is considered in future works on this area.

This work has documented the role student activists can play in shaping Irish public policy. It is clear that students play a movement intellectual role both within their own movement and in other social movements. There is a conscious and deliberate evolution to the praxis of student engagement with these issues, providing both the movement and the public sphere with space and material to consider issues of social justice and equality.

It is the author's hope that, in some small way, this work will provide a strong foundation to tell the untold story of the Irish student movement and go a long way in the recognition of the Irish student movement as the key actor of social change in Ireland.

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Appendix 1 – Biography of Interviewees

The table below provides a list of the former student activists who were interviewed for this study. Biographical notes on the interviewees are provided in the table underneath the table so that readers may familiarise themselves with the interviewees' involvement in the student movement.

Name	Biography
Bacik, Ivana	Ivana Bacik was elected president of TCD students' union in 1989. During her presidency, she became one of the figureheads in the SPUC cases against student leaders and was one of the fourteen named student leaders in the final injunction. Despite the injunction, she continued to provide abortion information to those who requested it. She resigned as president in 1990 after an internal students' union investigation involving voting at the USI congress. She has held the Reid Professor of Criminal Law position in TCD and was elected to the Seanad in 2007.
Brady, Maxine	Maxine Brady held the position of Convenor of NUS-USI from 1989 to 1990 and was president of USI from 1991 to 1993. Her time in the student movement was dominated by her media role as a young mother campaigning in the area of abortion and bodily autonomy in Ireland. She was a named individual in the SPUC action against USI. Brady also played a significant role in the USI women's liberation campaign.
Byrne, Catherine	Catherine Byrne was president of the Carysfort College students' union in 1973. She led a dispute with college authorities over elective subjects that quickly escalated. She became a school teacher and later deputy general secretary of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation but left to become executive director of the leadership initiative for females in trade unions. In 2009 she worked as a senior programme advisor to Atlantic Philanthropies. She currently is chairperson of the ARK – a purpose built children's cultural centre in Dublin and has served on the boards of Focus Theatre, Oxfam and the Abbey Theatre.
Costello, Tom	Tom Costello was president of USI from 1979 to 1980. He was previously president of St Patrick's College Drumcondra students' union. After leaving

Name	Biography
	<p>student politics, he entered the voluntary sector and became director of the National Youth Council of Ireland. In 2000, he joined Atlantic Philanthropies. Over a period of 14 years, Tom was instrumental in leading investments by Atlantic Philanthropies spanning programmes for Children, Older People, Education and Community Development. He is a member of the Board of the Charities Regulatory Authority.</p>
Coulter, Carol	<p>Carol Coulter was a student activist during her time at TCD (1968 – 1976) and ran for president of USI against Eamon Gilmore. She completed her undergraduate studies and PhD and became a journalist and commentator. She is a highly respected law academic and is currently director of the Child Care Law Reporting Project.</p>
Daly, Clare	<p>Clare Daly was president of the students' union in DCU in the late 1980s, serving two terms. She was a member of the Labour Party but was later expelled. She was elected a councillor for Fingal County Council in 1999 and was later elected a TD for the Socialist Party in 2011. She has presented private member's legislation on abortion in limited circumstances and is a major campaigner on the issues of abortion and workers' rights.</p>
Davies, Peter	<p>Peter Davies became president of NUU Coleraine students' union in 1976 and was elected vice president for international affairs of USI in 1977. In 1978, he succeeded Eamon Gilmore as president of USI. After his presidency he took up a position with the National Council for Educational Awards. In 1991, he became the director of development for Rehab Scotland and Rehab UK.</p>
Donaghy, Christine	<p>Christine Donaghy is a former welfare officer of USI. She became the education officer of the IFPA in 1980 after her term of office. She worked with students' union and clinics providing information on sexual health and reproductive rights. Christine founded the group Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI), a charity set up for victims of sexual abuse. She attests that her time in the IFPA showed her what it meant to be a true liberal and a humanitarian.</p>
Dukes, Tom	<p>Tom Dukes was president of UCDSU in 1989/90. He was a named individual in the SPUC v Grogan action. He became deputy president of USI in 1991, a position held for two years, and became USI president in</p>

Name	Biography
	1993. He is the director or Digital Revolutionaries, which provides solutions and strategies for progressive non-profits in Ireland, clients of which include the Labour Party and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.
Gilmore, Eamonn	First elected a class representative in UCG, Eamon Gilmore later became president of UCGSU in 1974. He served as president of USI from 1976 to 1978. He became a TD for the Workers' Party and the Labour Party, which he eventually led. He became Tanaiste in 2011, stepping down in 2014.
Grogan, Stephen	Stephen Grogan is a former president of GMIT students' union. He became president of USI in 1989 where he was one of the 14 named students in the SPUC action over the publication of abortion information and UK services in student publications. The case became known as SPUC v Grogan. After his presidency, he spent four years as an executive officer in the International Union of Students in Prague, leaving this to become director of ESIB, the European Student Information Bureau.
Kerrigan, Cathal	Cathal Kerrigan was a student activist in UCC and became president of UCCSU in 1980. He was a co-founder of the Cork and Dublin gay collectives, GLEN and Gay Health Action Project.
Lynch, Edmund	Edmund Lynch was a television producer and director for RTÉ. He was heavily involved in the early gay rights campaign, holding a number of positions in the Sexual Liberation Movement, Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform and the Irish Gay Rights Movement. His primary focus was on attracting media attention to the campaign, conducting research and creating links with external organisations such as USI. He produced and directed ' <i>Did Anyone Notice Us?</i> ' an award-winning television documentary exploring gay visibility in the Irish media from 1973 to 1993. He is currently producing an oral and visual documentary on the history of the Irish gay rights movement.
McGarry, Patsy	Patsy McGarry was auditor of the UCG Literary and Debating Society in 1974-75 and an active member of the UCG student assembly. He spent some time as a radio journalist and trade unionist before becoming religious affairs correspondent for The Irish Times.
Murray, Eugene	Eugene Murray served as president of TCD SRC in 1971. He was a member

Name	Biography
	<p>of the Student United Nations Association and active in the anti-apartheid movement. On leaving TCD, he went to work for RTÉ, the state broadcaster as a radio and television producer. Before retiring he was the chief executive of the Irish Hospice Foundation.</p>
O'Brion, Damian	<p>Damian O'Brion was elected president of DIT Kevin Street students' union in 1991 and subsequently became deputy president of USI in 1993. He ran unsuccessfully for president of USI in 1994. After his time in the student movement, he worked as a project manager with the Public Communications Centre, a strategic marketing and campaigning agency for non-profit organisations. In 2006, he founded his own communications company.</p>
O'Sullivan, Helen	<p>Helen O'Sullivan served as equal rights officer in DIT Bolton Street in 1989 (which later became the women's rights officer). In 1992, she was elected welfare officer of USI and subsequently became women's rights officer. She ended her career with USI as president from 1994 to 1995. She was heavily involved in campaigns around women's rights and social and education issues. In 1995, she moved to Brussels to work as a lobbyist for the Youth Forum. She is now an artist and resides in Tervuren in Flanders.</p>
Quinn, Ruairi	<p>Ruairi Quinn was a student leader and activist in UCD during the university's move from Earlsfort Terrace to Belfield. He led the student organisation, Students for Democratic Action. After completing his degree in architecture he ran unsuccessfully for the Dáil in 1973. He was nominated to the Seanad in 1976 and was elected a TD in 1977. He later held three ministerial positions including minister for enterprise and employment, minister for finance and minister for education. He was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1997.</p>
Rabbitte, Pat	<p>Pat Rabbitte elected president of NUIG's students' union in 1970. He became president of USI in 1972, a position he held for two terms. After completing his term he worked for the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. In 1985, he was elected to Dublin City Council. He has been a member of three parties, the Workers' Party, Democratic Left and The Labour Party. In 2011, he was appointed minister for communications, energy and natural resources. He also held the position of Labour Party leader from 2002 to 2007.</p>

Name	Biography
Walshe, Tonie	<p>Tonie Walshe is a prominent LGBT activist and the founder of the Queer Archive, currently housed in the National Library. He is a respected LGBT historian and played an important role in the establishment of Ireland's first LGBT community space, The Hirschfield Centre.</p>
Whitelaw, Liam	<p>Liam Whitelaw is a former sabbatical officer of NUU Coleraine students' union. He served as deputy president of USI in 1980, holding the position for two terms. He was a key player in the development of the LGB campaign within the student movement and worked directly with several NGO organisations to create grassroots student-led campaigns across the country. Whitelaw's election, along with Joe Duffy and Brendan Doris marked the beginning of the end of the control held by the Workers' Party on USI.</p>