This is a repository copy of *Networks as 'laboratories of experience': exploring the life cycle of the suffrage movement and its aftermath in Ireland 1870–1937*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/160158/

Version: Published Version

Networks as 'laboratories of experience': exploring the life cycle of the suffrage movement and its aftermath in Ireland 1870–1937

Caitríona Beaumont, Mary Clancy & Louise Ryan

Published online: 07 Apr 2020.

Submit your article to this journal ⎘

Article views: 202

View related articles ⎘

View Crossmark data ⎘

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Networks as 'laboratories of experience': exploring the life cycle of the suffrage movement and its aftermath in Ireland 1870–1937
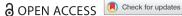
Caitríona Beaumont [a], Mary Clancy[b] and Louise Ryan [c]

aSchool of Law and Social Sciences, London South Bank University, London, UK; bSchool of Political Science & Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland; cDepartment of Sociological Studies, Elmfield, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

ABSTRACT

Applying an innovative conceptual framework this article presents an interdisciplinary re-appraisal of the suffrage movement and its aftermath in Ireland throughout the years 1870–1937. New social movement theory is utilised to consider how, in the words of the Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci 'the submerged networks of social movements are laboratories of experience'. Going beyond the previously published work of each author, this article uses the sociological lens of 'laboratories of experience' to re-analyse aspects of the suffrage movement, female activism and the wider women's movement in Ireland. This application of social movement theory to female networks, their origins, aims and strategies, along with their interconnectedness, provides a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the 'life-cycle' of this movement. The article aims to demonstrate how an analysis of network dynamics and application of the concept of 'latency' is useful in further understanding the significance, impact and longevity of the women's movement in Ireland.

Introduction

2018 marked the centenary of female enfranchisement in Britain and Ireland as well as in other European countries, including Germany and Poland. In 1918 Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. This meant that under the terms of the 1918 Representation of the People Act Irish women over thirty, who met the required property qualifications or were university graduates, won the right to vote in parliamentary elections alongside British women. The winning of the vote for women in Britain and Ireland was in large part due to a successful campaign undertaken by individuals and groups active in local, national and international contexts. Like all suffrage campaigns, the Irish movement encompassed diverse experiences, ideologies, religious beliefs and tactics under the banner of 'votes for women'. Diane Urquhart has argued that in the Irish case 'there

were rural and urban distinctions and regional differences between the north and south of the country'.[1] The campaign for Irish Home Rule during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century caused additional tension. This was a result of suffrage activism becoming embroiled in the competing priorities of winning the vote for women over unionist and nationalist demands within Irish politics.[2]

Much of the path breaking research on the Irish suffrage movement was carried out in the 1980s by pioneering feminist historians such as Rosemary Cullen Owens, Margaret Ward and Cliona Murphy.[3] Since then a considerable body of work has emerged uncovering the significance of place, experience, religion and politics in the Irish women's movement.[4] During the 1990s, Louise Ryan made an important contribution to Irish suffrage research by adopting a sociological lens to analyse the movement. In so doing, she drew on concepts developed by new social movement theorists as an analytical framework to offer insights into particular dimension of the suffrage movement such as collective action, gender and identity politics.[5] Along with Ryan, Mary Clancy and Caitríona Beaumont have published on different aspects of the Irish suffrage and women's movement. Their work focussed on local activism, the contribution of women to national politics and the continuation of female activism in the Irish Free State after the vote was won.[6]

Events held to mark the 2018 centenary celebrations provided an ideal opportunity to re-visit this earlier work and to develop a new collaborative approach. The aim is not to provide another account of what is now a well-known history. Instead an interdisciplinary methodology has been utilised to re-assess and analyse aspects of the movement and its immediate aftermath. By drawing on new social movement theory we seek to engage with this sociological theorisation. In doing so our objective is to offer new insights into the complexity, dynamism and structure of the suffrage movement, and its aftermath, in Ireland. This approach contributes to debates about the success or otherwise of the women's movement and female activism once the vote was won.[7] We argue that adopting this method enables a more in-depth understanding of the life cycle of the movement over time, from submerged networks to periods of mobilisation and back to networks once again. This emphasis on continuities of activism, in its many varied forms, is evidenced through a focus on the key role of networks of Irish women as 'laboratories of experience'.

The term social movement is often used as a descriptor of a protest group rather than a conceptual framework for analysis.[8] Nonetheless, there is enormous potential to use a social movement lens to analyse the aims, organisation and activities not only of recent collective action but also of movements from the past.[9] As argued elsewhere the apparent division between old and new social movements has been exaggerated in ways that underestimate continuities over time.[10] Indeed as Karen Offen has observed, the tendency towards a dichotomy of old and new women's movements leads to the unhelpful split between so-called first wave and second wave feminism.[11] This misrepresents the complexity of the early women's movement and underestimates the continuity of concerns among female activists across the generations.

What is argued here is that applying a social movement lens, especially the work of Alberto Melucci and the American sociologist Verta Taylor, allows for a re-examination of continuities over time through periods of mobilisation and latency, visibility and invisibility.[12] In so doing, we highlight the key role of networks and their manifestation as 'laboratories of experience'.[13] In analysing the suffrage campaign as a 'social movement', we are not suggesting that this was a cohesive and united organisation. As in many other

countries, the movement in Ireland included a diversity of views and tactics, including constitutional and more militant methods. Moreover, in the Irish context there were disagreements about the country's political future. Nonetheless, as is argued in this paper, using a social movement lens ensures that such divisions and tensions are acknowledged. This in turn enables a more nuanced understanding of how the movement reacted to protect and promote unity across such disparate groupings.

The article now develops through five sections. The first begins by briefly presenting the conceptual framework and research methods. In the second section Louise Ryan discusses the development of Irish suffrage activism as a complex, dynamic and multi-faceted movement. To illustrate our analysis further, the third section presents a case study of one particular regional context, suffrage activism in the West of Ireland. The Irish suffrage movement was influenced by place and detailed accounts of the development and shape of the campaign in all four provinces of Ireland have now emerged.[14] In this article Mary Clancy returns to her ground-breaking work on the movement in the West of Ireland to illustrate how this case study can be seen as exemplifying the importance of networks as 'laboratories of experience'. The next section then moves on to allow Caitríona Beaumont to re-consider the ways in which women's groups continued to mobilise around rights based issues throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This re-appraisal demonstrates that the application of social movement theory to these decades further highlights the ability of the movement to survive in what was undoubtedly a hostile environment. Finally, the article concludes by reflecting on what this conceptual framework can add to histories of women's movement and its aftermath.

Conceptual framework and methods

In the past, social protest tended to be viewed negatively as threatening to social order, peace and stability. However since the 1960s, sociologists have increasingly come to reappraise collective action as 'purposive, meaningful and potentially creative'.[15] Nevertheless, movements are not always easy to define or study. They may be fairly fluid and loosely structured and cover a diverse range of social issues. As Alain Touraine observes, a social movement is often 'an unstable ensemble, never fully coherent and almost always mixed up with other forms of collective action'.[16] Nonetheless, in order to be considered social movements rather than, for example, single issue, special interest, lobby groups, it is necessary to have some criteria or specific characteristics. Hence, it has been argued that social movements 'involve political and collective action, resistance to oppression and have a network'.[17]

In defining social movements, Melucci identifies three key characteristics. Firstly 'a form of collective action which involves solidarity, that is actors' mutual recognition that they are part of a single social unit'. A second feature is 'conflict … opposition to an adversary', i.e. a clear sense of who or what is being opposed. Thirdly, 'a social movement breaks the limits of compatibility of a system' by challenging the 'tolerance limits' of that system.[18] In other words, social movements often generate ideas and beliefs that are widely considered new, challenging and even shocking and thus represent a challenge to what is taken for granted as 'the norm' in society at large. Therefore, social movements are engaged in an oppositional/ conflictual relationship. This oppositionality is made manifest in different forms of protest.

> Collective action and oppositional political activism are firmly established features of any society and pose a challenge to inequality, exclusion and injustice rooted in the oppression of people. Oppressive practices and exclusionary policies are often the catalyst for participation in collective action to generate a conscious move towards social, cultural and political change.[19]

Moreover, Melucci draws attention to the dynamism of collective action over time. He uses the concept of 'cycles of activity' to describe how movements go from phases of 'latency' to phases of 'manifest mobilisation' and then back to being latent again.

However, Melucci is keen to assert that 'latency does not mean inactivity'.[20] Because a movement is not visible during this latency period does not imply that nothing is going on. During periods of latency, 'submerged', networks of actors continue to interact, exchange experiences and generate ideas. Within these invisible 'laboratories of experience', 'new problems and questions are posed. New answers are invented and tested, and reality is perceived and named in different ways'.[21] Verta Taylor further argues that applying the notion of 'latency', or to use her phrase 'abeyance', to periods between peaks of activism reveals the ability of 'challenging groups to continue in non-receptive political climates'.[22] To survive in such an environment, as the Irish women's movement in the decades after enfranchisement undoubtedly had to do, social movements must quickly adapt and develop new tactics. As discussed later, in the Irish case these strategies included a willingness to champion multiple causes, form new alliances and consolidate existing memberships, no matter how small.

Here, the concept of networks as 'laboratories of experience', 'latency' and 'cycles of activity' are used to analyse the dynamic character of the Irish women's movement over time, through the ebbs and flows of mobilisation and the quieter 'in-between' times. Focusing on particular people, places, groups and events, the article examines how new problems and questions were posed and new answers invented and tested by female activists from the 1870s through to the late 1930s.[23] It is argued that this conceptual framework in particular allows for the identification of continuities over time, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, when the women's movement supposedly entered a 'quiet' period.

In order to study these continuities and the diversity of women's networks that remained active throughout this period, a range of different methods and sources are utilised. In so doing, the aim is to go beyond the cult of personality to uncover the underlying processes of communication, organisation, mobilisation and identity formation, at work in the movement as a whole.[24] Historical movements can only be reappraised if we access sources that reveal the multifaceted nature of these movements from the past. Contemporary documentary sources are therefore essential to inform this type of research. While not without their shortcomings and omissions, textual sources such as the suffrage print media are invaluable in providing an insight into the movement. For example, suffrage newspapers provide an insight into the role of publicity, propaganda, public spectacle and self-representations. These publications also highlight the diversity of issues taken up by the suffragists and the feminist analyses that they applied to these various causes. We draw on the *Irish Citizen* (1912–1920), the only suffrage newspaper published in Ireland.[25] The case study of the movement in the West of Ireland, especially Galway, makes use of primary archival sources, in particular the local press of the period. Organisational records, along with evidence submitted to government enquiries, are useful in tracing

the activities of the network of women's societies that continued to campaign for gender equality in the decades after the vote was won.

The Irish suffrage movement—from network to movement and back again

Research on suffrage activism has tended to focus largely on the pursuit of the vote. Thus the movement may be misunderstood not only as a single-issue pressure group but also as a reformist campaign demanding inclusion in formal democratic institutions. However, adopting a social movement lens offers a more nuanced way to understand suffragism and reassess the nature of feminist activism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[26] In so doing, we go beyond a narrow focus on enfranchisement to uncover the complexity of identities, actions and motivations behind women's collective action. Although small in number, the Irish suffrage movement was indeed complex and multifaceted.[27] Following Touraine's observation that a social movement is not a single-issue lobby group, it is argued that the suffrage movement had a wide agenda that went far beyond 'the vote'. It brought together women and men who questioned all aspects of Irish society from the nationalist movement and the legal system[28] to the role of the press.

The term 'Irish suffrage movement' may be applied to a loose amalgam of scattered groups of varying sizes, which began in the 1870s. Of course, there was women's activism in Ireland prior to the suffrage campaign, for example, against the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDAs) in the 1860s.[29] The early suffrage groups included the North of Ireland Suffrage Society founded in Belfast by Isabella Tod in 1873 and Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) founded in Dublin by Anna and Thomas Haslam in 1876. Interestingly, both Haslam and Tod were active in the campaign to repeal the CDAs, illustrating the links and continuities between these various campaigns. These early suffrage groups tended to remain small throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with a dedicated core of members. The main tactics adopted included writing letters and petitions to Parliament as well as holding small meetings, usually in the drawing rooms of members' houses. It was not until the early 1900s that the suffrage movement grew and developed a higher public profile.[30]

As noted earlier, networks are fundamental to a social movement. Melucci suggests that 'the existing networks of social relationships facilitate the processes of involvement'.[31] Hence, as Melucci shows, social movements do not suddenly appear from out of nowhere. Their roots can be traced through the networks that exist beneath the surface and somewhat off the radar of everyday life. These loose and often invisible, or 'submerged', networks of friends and acquaintances form what Melucci describes as 'laboratories in which new experiences are invented'.[32] This is clearly the case, for example, with the Irish suffrage movement and helps to explain why such small groups seemed to blossom into a movement of several thousands.

There were a number of reasons for this mobilisation. The emergence of a group of highly educated women with university degrees but barred from most professions, played a key part. Other factors included the example of transnational female activism, the large British suffrage movement, the emerging trade union movement, as well as the cultural revival.[33] Some of the best known and most active suffrage campaigners of this period were highly involved in the arts, literature and theatre. Cultural nationalism

experienced a renaissance in the beginning of the 1900s.[34] These cultural activities provided fruitful environments for a 'laboratory of experiences' and within this milieu of creativity and radical critique the suffrage movement grew considerably.

Hence, by the early 1900s the numbers of suffrage activists had increased quite dramatically. The movement reached its peak of activity between 1908 and 1914. As in Britain the Irish movement was made up of numerous regional and local groups. However, unlike Britain the Irish movement was not characterised by the militant versus constitutional dichotomy. While there were some groups who adopted militant tactics such as the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL)[35] and Irish Women's Suffrage Society (IWSS), there were many more non-militant groups including the long-established IWSLGA, the Munster Women's Franchise League (MWFL) and the Irish Women's Reform League (IWRF). In addition the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation (IWSF), an umbrella organisation founded in 1911, brought together a number of smaller, non-militant, local groups.

Despite the fact that membership was fluid and fluctuating, making it difficult to accurately assess, at its height, the movement claimed approximately 3,000 members.[36] But a simple head count of membership is hardly a good indication of what constitutes a social movement. A clearer understanding of what motivates a group is required. As noted earlier, a social movement challenges the dominant social and political forces within society, questioning taken for granted conventions and norms. Craig Calhoun highlights the ways in which social movements, especially the women's movement 'politicise everyday life' through slogans like 'the personal is political'.[37] While this may be considered unique to post-1960s feminism, there is evidence to suggest that so-called 'first wave' women's movements were also concerned with the complex relationship between the private and the public sphere.[38]

An analysis of the pages of the *Irish Citizen* newspaper reveals the extent of feminist thinking especially on topics like sexual abuse and domestic violence in ways that challenged the public/private split.[39] By calling public attention to private abuses of women and children in the home, writers offered a critique of social structures. These women attempted to reveal the widespread nature of domestic violence in Irish society and pointed to economic dependency as a key factor in forcing women to keep their abuse silent and hidden. In an article entitled 'Wife Beating' Mrs. Priestly-McCracken wrote that 'an age-old tradition prevails that in matrimonial affairs what transpires in the home must be carefully concealed from the world without'.[40]

In problematising the privacy of the home Priestley-McCracken added that such privacy 'gives a sense of security to the stronger, fiercer and more dominant partner' and argued that women were forced to stay in violent relationships and to keep them secret because of their economic dependency on men.[41] Furthermore, she claimed that the legal profession were completely on the side of men and offered no help to women who complained of brutality.[42] Legal institutions reinforced the view that it was a man's prerogative to beat his wife. This analysis is going beyond a mere critique of private patriarchy. Priestley-McCracken's account calls into question the relationship between the private world of the home and the very public world of the courtroom. In this way, links are drawn between power, privilege and exploitation across the spheres from domesticity to public institutions.

As Melucci notes, a shared collective identity is fundamental to a social movement. Indeed, Larry Ray argues that movements like the women's suffrage movement were not only concerned with citizenship but also raised issues around identity.[43] The notion of being a 'feminist' as opposed to simply a supporter of female suffrage illustrated the concern with a wider array of interests than just enfranchisement. Many contributors to the *Irish Citizen* described themselves as feminists and analysed the relationship between suffragism and feminism. For example in December 1912 Margaret (Meg) Connery wrote:

> What is called the Votes for Women movement is but a side-issue of a much greater and more far-reaching problem. It is true that the Votes for Women movement is the chief manifestation of Feminism in these countries; but though public attention has been particularly focused on this one phase of Feminism, the girl who first defied conventions by riding a bicycle … the poorest and meanest woman anywhere who is revolting against the conditions of her life and longing for a chance to relieve its monotony—all these are part and parcel of the great uprising amongst women.[44]

However, that is not to suggest that all suffrage supporters would describe themselves as feminists. As mentioned above, the movement reflected a wide spectrum of views about how to improve the lives of Irish women. Moreover, suffrage campaigners were also divided on key issues of national politics. Interestingly, in Ireland, it was not differences regarding militant and constitutional tactics that caused the most significant fault lines but rather the tensions between nationalism and unionism. The Irish case, therefore, bears many of the hallmarks of similar clashes elsewhere in countries which experienced the consequences of colonial rule.[45] In Ireland nationalist men, especially the militant wing of the nationalist movement, believed the suffrage movement should postpone its campaign for enfranchisement until after Irish independence. This was also the line taken by Ireland's representatives at Westminster. Although many suffrage supporters endorsed the idea of Irish self-determination from Britain they were dubious about postponing female enfranchisement until after Home Rule had been won.[46]

Furthermore, the Irish suffrage movement was not only made up of nationalist women but of unionist women and also those who were suspicious of both positions.[47] The movement attempted to overcome party loyalties in negotiating a tricky path between their needs as women and the needs of their 'nation'—be that Irish independence or the Union with Britain. As politicians persisted in excluding female enfranchisement as part of an Irish Home Rule Bill, a mass meeting was organised on 1 June 1912 in Dublin. The newly founded *Irish Citizen* gave detailed coverage of this important event in Irish feminist history. The meeting was chaired by Professor Mary Hayden (the first woman professor of Irish History) of the IWSLGA and was an attempted show of unity on the part of a range of women's groups. The well-known feminist and nationalist, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, of the IWFL, wrote that in response to the call for the meeting:

> Suffrage societies and other women's organisations throughout the length and breadth of Ireland instantly responded. Constitutional joined militant—for the day at least; Unionist was allied to Nationalist, Party claims (so dear to our loyal women) were for once subordinated to sex principle … [48]

The report went on to describe the diversity of attendees representing not just the many scattered suffrage groups across the country but also different professions including trade unionists, doctors, lawyers and craft workers. Thus, it is apparent that the movement sought not only to connect a particular concern with enfranchisement to wider issues such as economic grievances, but also to connect across different networks of activists. Sheehy Skeffington concluded her account by further connecting the Irish meeting to a wider, global endeavour: 'the women who are behind this world movement will most surely achieve their purpose'.[49]

Melucci argues that there is a planetary or transnational dimension to recent or so-called 'new' social movements.[50] But clearly movements such as the suffrage campaign had begun to develop a transnational focus long before the age of global communications. While it is important to acknowledge the cultural specificities of the Irish movement it is equally important to recognise the extent to which movements forged links across national boundaries.[51] Reflective of this global solidarity, the *Irish Citizen* carried regular reports on campaigns around the world firmly locating Irish feminism within a global movement.[52]

Having explored the suffrage movement at a broad level, through a social movement conceptual framework, in the next section Mary Clancy revisits her earlier work. Here she considers what is gained by applying the concept of 'laboratories of experience' to a local study of suffrage activism. Although focusing on one specific region, the intention is not to suggest that suffrage organising in the West is representative of anything other than its local context and personalities. In that sense, Galway acts as an interesting illustrative case study of one historical and regional example.

Re-appraising suffrage in the West through the lens of social movement theory

The story of women's suffrage in the West of Ireland offers an important insight into regional female networks made up of 'laboratories of experience'. A distinctively Gaelic speaking region, known for its poverty, high levels of emigration and scenic landscape, it attracted much political and philanthropic interest.[53] As this section aims to show, adopting a social movement framework is helpful in revealing how activists mobilised in the region. Although the organised campaign for the vote in the West of Ireland mostly took place in the early twentieth-century, there were some important antecedents in the nineteenth century. For example, women had been active in local agrarian agitation especially in the 1880s and 1890s. By the 1890s, the extension of local government franchises saw women take up public positions as elected officials.[54] Local government suffrage organisations, along with advocates such as Englishwoman Lilias Ashworth-Hallett, helped to bring about change and the new register of voters was important to suffrage arguments.[55] These activities can be understood as taking place within 'laboratories of experience', which allowed women to develop expertise, generate new ideas and try out different methods of organisation and campaigning.

Suffrage activism in this region increased in the early twentieth century, especially during 1911–1915. The militant IWFL made a promising mark in Galway city in October 1911. The IWFL organisers persuaded the Urban Council to pass a resolution in support of the 1911 Conciliation Bill in line with suffrage strategy and organised a public talk in the Town Hall addressed by Christabel Pankhurst. The crowded audience

was composed mostly of academics from the local university and professional families. Gretta Cousins, of the IWFL, who introduced herself as a 'West of Ireland woman'—an important identifying approach in rural politics—was among the platform speakers. Christabel Pankhurst spoke of the importance of extending the franchise to Irishwomen in the event of Home Rule, praised the economic role of Irish emigrant women and raised the question of sweated labour. The well-organised event ensured that there were no disruptions. The only public note of dissent was correspondence in the local press criticising the organisers for inviting an English woman to speak in Ireland.[56] This example illustrates how local networks of suffrage activists were connected into the wider national and international movement.

From 1913, the IWFL undertook speaking tours in smaller towns, helped by the region's railway network. It tended to favour speakers who had local connections, such as Gretta Cousins and Meg Connery, and who were willing to reference both suffrage and nationalist politics. The 1913 IWFL tour included talks held in Town Halls, which were advertised in the local press. In a core sense, the debate was about political power and how to get it, something that audiences could appreciate. In January 1913, the women addressed a series of meetings in Ballina, Castlebar and Westport in County Mayo. Copies of the *Irish Citizen* were sold at these meetings. In Castlebar, where they attracted an audience of over 300 people, Meg Connery made interesting connections between suffrage, historically significant Irish women and agrarian dissent, situating the debate in meaningful local associations. Connery, whose imaginative approach to campaigning made her a public feminist of note, also discussed prostitution and White Slave trafficking.[57]

In addition to the IWFL, others suffrage groups sought to secure a presence in the West. In January 1913, when yet another Franchise Bill was in progress, members of the IWSF travelled to Galway to inaugurate a local branch. A new local group, known as the Connacht Women's Franchise League, was successfully established and remained active until World War 1 interrupted its work. This regional society was non-militant and non-sectarian, in line with the principles of the IWSF. Mostly the story of the Connacht League is of middle-class women drawing upon personal and social expertise, resources and contacts in order to advance the defining feminist cause of the era. One such suffragist organiser was Mary Fleetwood Berry, a woman in her late forties whose marriage to James Fleetwood Berry, Rector of St Nicholas Church, made her a public figure locally. She was active in Protestant charities, child welfare, public health and temperance and was twice elected president of the Irish Women's Temperance Union.[58] Through Fleetwood-Berry, the group had connections with Church of Ireland suffrage campaigners nationally. Interestingly, the Connacht League elected a Catholic, Edith Young to act as its president. Young brought a different set of contacts to the group. She had shared the platform with Christabel Pankhurst in 1911 and had connections in local politics through her husband, Joseph, a businessman. As such, she enabled the suffragists to find a voice in the council chamber.[59]

Many of these women knew each other well and were connected socially. There were clusters of mothers and daughters, women from other parts of Ireland, as well as England and Scotland, who had moved to the Galway region. They met in each other's houses where they discussed pressing social issues and wrote letters to the press and to Members of Parliament. As Verta Taylor has argued, social movements need to create

cultural spaces where collective emotions, beliefs, friendships and actions nurture a shared identity, thereby supporting and enabling on-going collective action.[60] Moreover, these women could mobilise resources to take their campaign out into formal, public spaces; the Town Hall, the Urban Council Chamber, the Railway Hotel, the Cinema Theatre, locally established places of public politics. The ability of the women to use such venues points to certain organisational status and strength.

One of the advantages of a local case study is that it allows us to go beyond the cult of personality, associated with well-known national leaders, and instead reveal the activism of lesser-known women. Such examples include Mary Donovan, a young activist, who earned a public reputation and made new social connections through access to higher education and women's suffrage. Donovan went on to become the first Professor of History in the local university and member of its Governing Body. She was a pioneering university woman and remained a life-long academic. Prominent university peers, who engaged in suffrage debates in college societies, also included women like Alice Perry, the first woman civil engineer in these islands.[61]

Of the Galway-based women, Florence Moon was probably the most experienced in suffrage politics. In her mid-forties and originally from Birmingham, she was Hon. Secretary to the Connacht League. Florence and her husband, Charles Moon, a local businessman, had three children, and she was especially associated with the Women's National Health Association (WNHA).[62] As she explained in an interview with the press in 1913, her mother was a suffrage supporter in Birmingham and so she felt she was born into suffrage activism. Moon's orientation was towards England and she likened Galway to a 'western outpost' of empire.[63] Here once again the importance of networks as 'laboratories of experience' is evident in passing on the skills and experience of activists, in this case from mother to daughter.

There are no minutes of meetings or extant records of the Connacht League and few personal sources remain. This inhibits analysis as to how the women met and why, whether there were internal tensions or hierarchies or sub-groups. Much of the analysis, therefore, relies on public genealogical and newspaper sources. A series of articles written by suffrage activists and published in the local press explained the rationale and intent of the women. The publishing of the pieces was important to a group with limited funding and demonstrated local good will. David Fisher, editor of the *Galway Express*, was a relative of veteran Irish campaigner Anna Haslam. The nationalist *Connacht Tribune* also published the suffrage articles. In writing the articles, the women constructed public feminist identities for themselves, as well as making public statements about grievances, rights and citizenship. They did not speak of specific conditions of Irish life, such as industrial conflicts or nationality, though the group supported inclusion of votes for women in the Home Rule Bill.[64]

The IWSF organised a meeting in August 1913 in Castlebar, leading to discussion in the local press about votes and 'Suffragettes'.[65] Mrs Keneton Parkes, Secretary of the Tax Resistance League and a well-known English speaker, accompanied Louie Bennett, of the IWSF and the Irish Women Workers Union (IWWU).[66] Visits such as these indicate that the women were able to interact and share their experiences across numerous societies and political stances. In October 1913, again under the auspices of the IWSF, Alice Abadam made a tour of the West. Abadam, a seasoned public speaker in her late fifties, was making her third Irish visit. She represented the recently formed Catholic

Women's Suffrage Society[67] and delivered a robust and lengthy address to a crowded meeting in the Railway Hotel, Galway, where she gave particular emphasis to White Slave Traffic.[68]

In 1914, the crisis of war saw the suffrage cause in Galway largely set aside. Many leading suffragists supported the war effort in solidarity with male relatives who went to the front or who organised recruiting. For example, Lady Clonbrock led much of the local effort in Galway.[69] However, this was not necessarily the end of political activism for all these women. As noted earlier, the work of Melucci and Taylor help us to identify and understand the connections between what appear to be different phases of the women's movement. In periods of apparent 'latency' or 'abeyance', the connections between activists can be carried on and become new 'laboratories of experience'. Here ideas are created and shared, enabling adaption and the development of different forms of activism.

It is hardly surprising that after limited enfranchisement was finally won in 1918, the suffrage movement across Ireland began to dissipate. However, it would be simplistic to assume that the movement entirely disappeared. The example of activism in Galway demonstrates how the suffrage campaign in that region emerged out of earlier 'laboratories of experience', made up of women interested in a variety of causes. Similarly after the vote was won new issues and forms of activism replaced what had gone before. Utilising the concept of 'submerged networks' as 'laboratories of experience' and 'cycles of activity' Caitríona Beaumont will now consider how these new networks of women facilitated the emergence of the next phase of female activism in the Irish Free State.

'Submerged networks' as 'laboratories of experience': Irish women's activism 1918–1937

Re-appraising the post suffrage years through the lens of new social movement theory further challenges assumptions that once the vote was won female activism stagnated in the Irish Free State. Adopting Melucci's concept of 'submerged networks' as 'laboratories of experience' and 'cycles of activity' allows for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of how individuals and groups of women came together in the wake of suffrage and sustained an identifiable, albeit altered, social movement. These women's groups, emerging from the upheaval of the First World War, War of Independence and Civil War[70], soon developed into a nationwide network of some twenty women's societies. As Touraine argues, social movements are never fully coherent and are mixed up with other campaigns and protests.[71] The Irish women's movement in the 1920s and 1930s was no exception and continued to focus on a range of social, economic and political issues and reforms relevant to women's lives.

This post-suffrage activism was shaped by women's experiences both before and during the suffrage campaign. In the Galway case, the skills and expertise gained through involvement in suffrage groups enabled these women to contribute to public life and on going campaigns in the decades after enfranchisement. Several Connacht women became high profile national politicians. Dr Ada English was returned in the 1921 parliamentary election and Eibhlin Ni Choisdealbha was one of the first women senators. Edith Young topped the poll in the 1920 local elections as an Independent. While some former suffragists left the region, and Ireland, others remained active in personal areas of interest. Mary

Fleetwood Berry, who lost her only son in the war, remained active in church-related social organising. Professor Mary Donovan O'Sullivan, as she was known after her marriage, continued to enjoy a busy academic career, and to engage in feminist politics into the twentieth century.

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington acknowledged this legacy of past activism when she wrote in 1941 that:

> The [suffrage] movement was a liberal education for all those who took part in it. It developed new camaraderie among women, it lifted social barriers … it helped women to self-expression through service, calling forth that spirit of sacrifice strong in most women … but this time, for the first time in history, not for a man's cause but for their own.[72]

New 'laboratories of experience' were created as a result of this collective action and were crucial in enabling the "carry-overs and carry-ons" [73] of skills and knowledge, an occurrence often overlooked in the aftermath of peak movement mobilization into new 'cycles of activity'.

The Irish Free State was established in 1922 and in the same year women within that jurisdiction won the right to vote in national elections on equal terms with men.[74] Despite this progressive act, and a guarantee of gender equality in the 1922 Free State Constitution, it soon became clear that gender discrimination would continue to negatively impact the lives of Irish women. A series of legislative measures introduced during the 1920s and 1930s signalled that the citizenship rights of men and women were differentiated by social function based on traditional gender roles. These included the 1924 and 1927 Juries Acts, the 1925 Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill, Section 16 of the 1936 Conditions of Employment Act and Articles 9, 16, 40.1, 41.2 and 45 of the draft 1937 Constitution.[75]

Protests by female activists against these measures are now well documented.[76] This work, however, has tended to focus most on brief moments of mobilisation during the 1920s and 1930s against specific legislative injustices. Revelatory as these accounts are, they leave the impression that the post suffrage women's movement was less successful than what went before. Despite the best efforts of campaigners, restrictive laws were enacted. Limited popular support and a reliance on a minority of educated, middle-class, and Dublin based women, are all regarded as obstacles to success during these years.[77] Applying Melucci's concept of 'latency' and 'submerged networks' to these years offers a fresh approach. As Melucci asserts latent periods during the 'life-cycle' of a social movement do not equate to inactivity. Shifting the focus onto these quieter times uncovers how female activists utilised previous experiences and developed new 'submerged networks' representing 'laboratories of experience'. In doing so they ensured that campaigning on a wide range of issues aimed at enhancing the lives of women continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

For the purposes of this discussion two such networks are considered, the National Council of Women of Ireland (NCWI) and the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers (JCWSSW). These two are useful case studies in that they played leading roles in campaigns against restrictive legislation but also embraced lesser-known causes. Together they disrupted ideas about women's role and status in Irish society, forced public debate on gender equality and achieved some success in challenging gender discrimination. Their activities may not have been as dramatic or garnered as

much support as the suffrage campaign. However by providing a 'legitimating base to challenge the status quo' these groups can be understood as 'sources of protest and change'.[78] As Taylor argues, during periods of 'latency' or 'abeyance' such groups perform a crucial linkage function. This was achieved by ensuring activist network survival, sustaining a repertoire of goals and tactics and 'promoting a *collective identity* that offers participants a sense of mission and moral purpose'.[79]

The NCWI provides a useful insight into how the Irish women's movement remained active during this period of 'latency' or 'abeyance'. Set up in 1924 the Council's remit was to act as an umbrella organisation to promote joint action among women's organisations on issues relating to social policy. Seeking solidarity across interest groups, the NCWI sought to 'promote co-operation among women all over Ireland interested in social welfare'.[80] Among its founding members were suffrage veterans and friends Lucy Kingston, Dorothy Macardle, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Mary Macken and Mary Hayden. Societies affiliated to the NCWI during the 1920s and 1930s included the IWWU, the Irish Women's Citizen and Local Government Association (IWCA)[81], the United Irishwomen (renamed the Irish Countrywomen's Association in 1935), the Belfast Women's Advisory Council, the Irish Girls' Friendly Society, Irish Save the Children Fund, the Irish Matrons' Association, Irish Union of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools and the WNHA.[82]

The NCWI looked beyond the Irish Free State to form links with international bodies campaigning for gender equality. Affiliated to the International Council of Women and the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, the NCWI supported international demands for peace, equal pay for equal work and for the equal status of men and women in all nations.[83] For example, throughout the 1920s and 1930s the NCWI repeatedly called on the Irish government, through its membership of the League of Nations, to support the right of women to retain their nationality on marriage.[84] Active involvement in international organisations represented continuity with the suffrage movement. Moreover it provided an international backdrop where activists could develop a sense of collective identity. This international solidarity was particularly useful in sustaining movement morale when individual activists faced repeated criticism back home.[85]

Despite its broad remit, the NCWI made a significant contribution to campaigns to prevent the introduction of discriminatory legislation during the 1920s and 1930s. Working in conjunction with the National University Women Graduates' Association (WGA)[86] and the IWCA the Council was successful in preventing the passing of the 1925 Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill. This Bill proposed to exclude women from taking exams to qualify for higher-grade posts in the Civil Service. The repertoire of tactics used for this and subsequent campaigns was informed by earlier protests, for example the repeal of the CDAs and the suffrage movement. These included letters to the press, the publication of pamphlets, deputations to public representatives and the forging of new alliances.[87]

In 1927 and again in 1932 the NCWI joined forces with a number of women's societies to protest against the 1927 Juries Act and the introduction of a public service marriage bar.[88] Some success was achieved ensuring that women could still serve on juries, albeit if only by special request. However a marriage bar was enforced from 1932 and remained in place for female civil servants until 1973.[89] In 1935, growing alarm about the willingness of successive Irish governments to introduce legislation limiting women's citizenship

rights, prompted the NCWI to establish a new standing committee. This special committee's aim was to study all existing and proposed legislation from 'the point of view of women's rights and interests and to endeavour to secure such improvements in it as they think desirable'.[90] Drawing on the existing network of women's groups, the new committee appointed Louie Bennett of the IWWU as chairman and Dorothy Macardle of the NCWI as Vice-Chairman.

The second organisation included in this re-assessment of female activism in the Irish Free State is the JCWSSW. The Joint Committee was set up in March 1935 in response to concerns expressed by nine women's groups regarding clauses included in the 1934 Criminal Law Amendment Bill.[91] Of specific concern was the proposal to set the age of consent in cases of indecent assault at 15 instead of 17 or 18 years, as recommended by women's organisations and social workers. Objections were also raised to the plan to increase the penalty for women convicted of solicitation from a fine to six months imprisonment. This sentence was considered too severe and women activists expressed frustration that male clients were rarely charged with any offence. Such inequity within the criminal justice system, based on gender, was condemned as unjust and unfair.[92]

Disappointed not to achieve any amendments to the 1934 Bill, it was decided to set up a permanent body, meeting monthly, to draw together the range of expertise shared by the nine women's groups. The objectives of the new JCWSSW were 'to work together in matters of mutual interest affecting women, young persons and children' and 'to study social legislation and recommend necessary reforms'. During its first year the Committee campaigned for more women to apply for Jury Service under the terms of the 1927 Act and for improvements in prison conditions for both male and female prisoners. Concerns regarding the Criminal Justice System extended to the demand for an increase in the number of Probation Officers employed by the State.[93] The leadership of the Joint Committee reflected a cross section of experience from the suffrage and nationalist movement and from its affiliated members. This included its President, Mary Kettle (Hanna Sheehy Skeffington's sister), who served in the role from 1935 to 1961, Honorary Secretary, Winifred O'Hegerty, Helen Chenevix, Louie Bennett, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Lucy Franks and Maud Gonne McBride.[94]

One key campaign spearheaded by the Joint Committee, working closely with the NCWI, IWWU, IWCA and the Anglican Mothers' Union was the demand for women to be appointed to the Irish police force, the Garda Síochána. The call for women police officers was based on the assumption that women were best equipped to deal with women and children who came into contact with the law. In 1936 the Committee lobbied the government to establish a Corps of Women Police with powers of arrest, with the same pay, pension rights and working conditions as men. Urgency was emphasised due to the concern that the lack of women on juries and the absence of women police meant that 'a woman prisoner in the dock, or a victim in the case, may be the only one of her sex in Court'.[95] Repeated requests by the Joint Committee and its affiliated members to meet with the government during the late 1930s to discuss the appointment of women police were rebuffed on the grounds that there was no public support for such a measure.[96]

In spite of these setbacks, by 1937 it was evident that a unified, effective and dynamic network of women's organisations continued to exist in the Irish Free State. These 'submerged networks', with overlapping memberships, mutual goals and shared tactics became most visible when raising objections against specific discriminatory legislation.

They then faded into the background. However between these episodes of noticeable mobilisation, it is clear that organisations such as the NCWI and the Joint Committee were constantly organising around a range of different issues. Together they identified how the lives of Irish women could be improved and sought ways to bring about change through social and economic reform.

Establishing new coalitions, as both the NCWI and JCWSSW successfully did, significantly increased the size of the movement and facilitated moments of effective collective action.[97] Taylor identifies these traits as necessary for movements to 'retrench to adapt to changes in the political climate'.[98] By adopting such strategies Irish women continued to engage in meaningful activism throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In early 1937 the success of this approach became particularly evident. Responding to the publication of discriminatory Articles in the new draft Irish Constitution, these groups came together as one identifiable movement to protest. The women's campaign against these Articles is now well known.[99] It is important however to reiterate that some significant success was achieved as a result of the women's objections. Amendments were made to Articles 9 and 16, relating to Irish nationality and citizenship, to ensure those rights were extended to men and women 'without distinction of sex'. Article 45, relating to employment rights, was also amended so that the phrase 'inadequate strength of women' was removed. This was in response to concerns expressed by the NCWI, JCWSSW, WGA and IWWU that the right of women to paid work could be compromised.

These victories have been overshadowed by the failure of female activists to prevent the inclusion of Article 40.1 and Article 41.2 in the new Constitution. Article 40.1 stated that Irish citizens had different social functions. This clause left women's groups fearing that a definition of social function, based on gender, could justify further discrimination against women. Article 41.2 appeared to confirm these fears when it declared that 'mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home'.[100] The suggestion that a woman's primary duty was to work unpaid at home alarmed the WGA, NCWI, JCWSSW and the IWWU. They were convinced that this clause could be used to restrict Irish wives and mothers from working or having interests outside the home.

Perhaps unsurprisingly their concerns represented a minority view. In a predominantly rural and conservative society, dominated by Catholic Social Teaching, Article 41.2 was for many uncontroversial. The vast majority of Irish women at this time expected to marry and work full-time, unpaid at home.[101] When put to the electorate in July 1937 the Constitution passed with Articles 40.1 and 41.2 intact. It is worth noting however that the then Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Eamon de Valera conceded afterwards that the women's campaign had damaged the reputation of his party. He attributed the loss of Fianna Fáil's overall majority in the Dáil (the Irish parliament) in the 1937 general election to the actions of the women protesters.[102] Despite the failure to achieve further amendments, the campaign against the Constitution demonstrated that female networks were able to effectively engage in collective action, oppose an adversary and challenge the 'tolerance limits' of Irish society. These are the three key characteristics used by Melucci to define a social movement.

The application of new social movement theory when re-appraising the Irish women's movement of the 1920s and 1930s results in a re-assessment of how success or failure is measured during periods of 'latency' or 'abeyance'. Female activists failed to prevent gender inequality in Irish society during these years. Nevertheless they succeeded in

challenging assumptions about women's role and engaged in moments of mobilisation against specific incidences of discriminatory legislation. Applying key concepts of 'submerged networks' as 'laboratories of experience', 'latency' and 'cycles of activity' to this period of Irish history evokes new ways of thinking about social movement activism. It demonstrates that effective collective action can take many different forms, some quieter and less dramatic than others. In the Irish case the ability of the post-suffrage women's movement to adapt and change is noteworthy. This movement didn't just survive the 1920s and 1930s. Instead female networks ensured that the knowledge acquired by members before and during the suffrage campaign was shared and developed in new ways. These experiences were then successfully carried forward and paved the way once again for subsequent movement mobilisation.[103]

Conclusion

Incorporating the ideas of new social movement theory into a re-assessment of the significance, impact and longevity of the Irish suffrage movement and its aftermath is a useful exercise. Instead of narrowly focusing on the movement's leaders, key organisations and moments of peak mobilisation, the lens of social movement theory helps shift attention to other less visible individuals, groups, characteristics and successes. Taking a fresh approach reveals in starker contrast the extent to which the Irish suffrage movement, in both a local and national context, grew out of a variety of 'submerged networks' representing 'laboratories of experience'. This foregrounds the ability of individuals within these networks to share diverse experiences and work together, despite their different backgrounds, religious beliefs and political ideologies. What emerges is a greater awareness of the particular complexities and considerable achievements of the Irish suffrage movement.

Moreover, this conceptual framework offers a deeper understanding of the life cycle of the movement through various 'cycles of activity' over time. Once the vote was won these 'laboratories of experience' again facilitated the start of the next phase of the Irish women's movement. Operating within the hostile environment of the Irish Free State, women gathered in 'submerged networks' and continued to challenge, question and on occasion prevent gender discrimination. Melucci and Taylor's concept of 'latency' and 'abeyance' allows for a deeper understanding of the continuities over time evident between these various stages of the movement. The on going demands for equality made by women throughout the 1920s and 1930s illustrate how activism continued to occur, albeit in new and different ways. The fact that these now 'submerged networks' were able to engage in collective action and pose a challenge to inequality is illustrative of how the movement evolved and remained relevant in the decades after the vote was won.

Celebrating the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act has provided an ideal opportunity to re-assess aspects of the history of suffrage movements and their aftermath. This paper's application of the conceptual framework of 'laboratories of experience' and the life cycle of movements has produced new insights and understanding of the diversity and complexity of female activism in Ireland. This suggests there are further opportunities for the application of this framework to women's movements in many diverse contexts. Challenging the notion of inactivity during periods of 'latency' in histories of female activism can result in a wider re-appraisal of the long-standing dichotomy between so-called first and second wave feminism.

Notes

1. Diane Urquhart, '"An Articulate and Definite Cry for Political Freedom": The Ulster Suffrage Movement', *Women's History Review* 11, no. 2 (2002): 273.
2. See Urquhart, 'An Articulate and Definite Cry', 273–92 and Senia Paseta, 'New Issues for Old: Women and Politics in Ireland 1914–1918', *Women's History Review* 27, no. 3, (2018): 432–49. Under the terms of the 1800 Act of Union, the kingdom of Britain and Ireland were united with direct rule from Westminster. From the 1870s a number of attempts were made to pass a Home Rule Bill in parliament to allow for a devolved government in Dublin. In 1912 a third Home Rule Bill was presented to parliament and became law in 1914 but its enactment was suspended for the duration of the First World War. Unionists wished to maintain the union and direct rule while nationalists were in favour of greater independence via Home Rule.
3. Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times: A History of the Irish Suffrage Movement 1889–1922* (Dublin: Attic Press, 1984), Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), Cliona Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century* (Hemel Hempstead: Pearson, 1989), Margaret MacCurtain, 'Women, the Vote and Revolution', in *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimension*, ed. Margaret MacCurtain and Donnacha O. Corrian (Dublin: Arlen House, 1978), 46–57.
4. See for example Marie O'Neill, 'The Dublin Women's Suffrage Society and Its Successors, *Dublin Historical Record* 37 (1985): 126–40, Urquhart, 'An Articulate and Definite Cry', 273–92, Sandra McAvoy, 'Relief Work and Refugees: Susanne Rouviere Day (1876–1964) on War as Women's Business', *Women's History Review* 27, no. 3 (2018): 397–413 and Leeann Lane, 'Rosamond Jacob: Nationalism and Suffrage', 171–88, Mary Clancy, 'Women of the West: Campaigning for the Vote in Early Twentieth Century Galway, c.1911–c.1915', 45–59 and Myrtle Hill, 'Ulster: Debates, Demands and Divisions: The Battle for (and against) the Vote' in *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens*, 2nd ed., ed. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2018), 209–32.
5. Louise Ryan, *Irish Feminism and the Vote* (Dublin: Folens Publishers, 1996) and Louise Ryan, 'An Analysis of the Irish Suffrage Movement Using New Social Movement Theory', in *Social Movements and Ireland*, ed. Linda Connolly and Niamh Hourigan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). See also Linda Connolly, *The Irish Women's Movement* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003). For a discussion of new social movements see Alberto Melucci, 'A Strange Kind of Newness: What's "New" in New Social Movements?' in *Social Movements: A Reader*, ed. Vincenzo Ruggiero and Nicola Montagna (London: Routledge, 2008), 218–25.
6. See for example Mary Clancy, 'Women of the West'; Mary Clancy, 'Aspects of Women's Contribution to the Oireachtas Debate in the Irish Free State, 1922–37', in *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990), 217–23 and Caitríona Beaumont, 'Women and the Politics of Equality: The Irish Women's Movement, 1930–1943', in *Women and Irish History*, ed. Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), 173–88.
7. The idea that the women's movement went into decline in Ireland following 1918 has been challenged by a number of historians including Beaumont, 'Women and the Politics of Equality' and Margaret Ward, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: A Life* (Dublin: Attic Press, 1997).
8. Jennifer Somerville, 'Social Movement Theory, Women and the Question of Interests', *Sociology* 31, no. 4 (1997): 673–95.
9. Craig Calhoun, 'New Social Movements of the Nineteenth Century', in *Repertoires and Participation: Popular Protest and New Social Movements*, ed. Mark Traugott (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004) and Larry Ray, *Rethinking Critical Theory: Emancipation in the Age of Global Social Movements* (London: Sage, 1993).
10. Ryan, 'An Analysis of the Irish Suffrage Movement Using New Social Movement Theory'.
11. Within the historiography first wave feminism refers to female activism and the suffrage movement from the mid nineteenth century up to women's enfranchisement. Second wave

feminism usually refers to the Women's Liberation Movement which emerged in the 1960s. Karen Offen, 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach', in *Beyond Equality and Difference*, ed. Gisela Bock and Susan James (New York: Routledge, 1992), 62–81.

12. Verta Taylor is the author of numerous publications on feminism and the women's movement including with Leila J. Rupp, *Surviving in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement 1945–1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

13. Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (London: Radius, 1989), 208.

14. See for example the work of Clancy, 'Women of the West' (Galway), Lane, 'Rosamund Jacob' (Waterford), McAvoy, 'Relief Work and Refugees' (Cork), O'Neill, 'The Dublin Women's Suffrage Society' (Dublin), Urquhart, 'An Articulate and Definite Cry' and Hill, 'Ulster' (Ulster).

15. For an overview see Peter Millward and Shaminder Takhar, 'Social Movements, Collective Action and Activism', *Sociology*, E-special Issue (2019): 3.

16. Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 84.

17. Millward and Takhar, 'Social Movements', 3.

18. Melucci, *Nomads*, 29.

19. Millward and Takhar, 'Social Movements', 1.

20. Melucci, *Nomads*, 71.

21. Ibid., 208.

22. Taylor is writing in the context of the US women's movement during the years 1945 to 1960. Verta Taylor, 'Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance', *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 5 (1989): 761.

23. This timeframe reflects the historiography of the Irish suffrage movement and the formative decades of the Irish Free State (1922–1937), up to the passing of the controversial 1937 Irish Constitution.

24. Louise Ryan, 'The Cult of Personality: Reassessing Leadership and Suffrage Movements in Britain and Ireland', in *Leadership and Social Movements*, ed. Colin Baker, Alan Johnson and Michael Lavalette (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 196–212.

25. Louise Ryan, *Winning the Vote for Women: The Irish Citizen Newspaper and the Suffrage Movement in Ireland*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2018).

26. See Ryan, 'An Analysis of the Irish Suffrage Movement'.

27. See for example Lane, 'Rosamond Jacob: Nationalism and Suffrage'.

28. See Louise Ryan's work on The Courts Watch Committee in Ryan, *Winning the Vote,* Chapter 2.

29. For an account of the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts see Maria Luddy, '"Abandoned Women and Bad Characters": Prostitution in Nineteenth Century Ireland', *Women's History Review* 6, no. 4 (1997): 485–504.

30. The size of the movement was estimated in the Irish Citizen newspaper as approximatly 3,000 members. *Irish Citizen*, 22 June 1912 and Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times*, 19–34.

31. Melucci, *Nomads*, 31.

32. Ibid., 6.

33. Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 1–13.

34. James Cousins and Margaret Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh & Co, 1950).

35. The Irish Women's Franchise League was set up in 1908 in Dublin by Francis and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington along with Margaret (Gretta) and James Cousins.

36. *Irish Citizen*, 22 June 1912.

37. Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference* (Cambridge MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995).

38. See for example Offen 'Defining Feminism' and Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Suffragist and the Average Woman', in *Women's History Review* 1, no. 1 (1992): 9–24.

39. Ryan, *Winning the Vote*.

40. *Irish Citizen* September 1919. By then the paper was only published monthly.

41. Ibid.

42. Up until the passing of the 1919 Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act the legal profession was entirely male dominated.
43. Ray, *Rethinking Critical Theory.*
44. *Irish Citizen,* 28 December 1912.
45. Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).
46. See Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries.*
47. Ellen Hazelkorn, 'The Suffragist and Political Views of Louie Bennett', *Saothar* 13 (1989): 32–44.
48. *Irish Citizen*, 8 June 1912.
49. Ibid.
50. Alberto Melucci, 'The New Social Movements Revisited', in *Social Movements and Social Classes*, ed. Louis Maheu (London: Sage, 1995).
51. Lucy Delap, Louise Ryan and Teresa Zackodnik, 'Self-Determination, Race, and Empire: Feminist Nationalists in Britain, Ireland and the United States, 1830s to World War One', *Women's Studies International Forum* 29, no. 3 (2006): 241–54.
52. Ryan, *Winning the Vote.*
53. Since 1861, the West of Ireland (Connacht) has recorded the highest number of Irish language speakers (Census Returns) in Ireland. John Walsh, *Contests and Contexts: The Irish Language and Ireland's Socio-Economic Development* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang 2010), 27. For more on the history of this region see ed. Ciara Breathnach, *Framing the West: Images of Rural Ireland 1891–1920* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).
54. The Poor Law (Guardians) (Women) Act 1896 and the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 extended local franchises to qualified women. See Mary Clancy, 'The "Western Outpost": Local Government and Women's Suffrage in County Galway 1898–1918', in *Galway History & Society*, ed. Gerard Moran et al. (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1996), 557–87.
55. Clancy, 'Women of the West'.
56. *Connacht Tribune* and *Galway Express*, 7, 14, 21, October and 11 November 1911.
57. *Connaught Telegraph*, January and February 1913.
58. Clancy, 'Women of the West', 48–9.
59. Ibid.
60. Taylor, 'Social Movement Continuity', 761–75.
61. Clancy, 'Women of the West', 48–9.
62. The Women's National Health Association was set up in 1907 by Lady Aberdeen and established rural branches throughout Ireland.
63. *Galway Express*, 24 May 1913.
64. Based on an analysis of local newspapers including the *Galway Express* and *Connacht Tribune* 1913.
65. The use of the generic term suffragettes to refer to all suffrage activists was common in newspaper reporting at this time.
66. The Irish Women's Workers Union was set up in 1911 and represented the interests of working class female workers.
67. The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society was set up in England in 1911 and an Irish branch was formed in 1915.
68. *Galway Express*, 11 October 1913.
69. Clancy, 'Women of the West', 51–5. Suffrage campaigners in other parts of Ireland, for example in Cork, also contributed to war relief work, see Paseta, 'New Issues and Old: Women and Politics in Ireland 1914–1918'.
70. The Irish War of Independence lasted from 1919 to 1921 when the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed. The Civil War erupted in June 1922 as a result of the Treaty terms, in which Ireland was divided North and South, and ended in a truce in May 1923.
71. Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye*, 84.
72. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, 'Reminiscences of an Irish Suffragette' (1941) in *Votes for Women: Irish Women's Struggle for the Vote*, ed. Andre Sheehy Skeffington and Rosemary Cullen Owens (Dublin: Trinity College Library, 1975), 14.

73. Joseph R. Gusfield, 'Social Movements and Social Change; Perspectives of Linearity and Fluidity', in *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*, ed. Louis Kriesberg, 4. (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press), 324.
74. This was six years sooner than women in Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.
75. Caitríona Beaumont, 'Women, Citizenship and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922–1948', *Women's History Review* 6, no. 4 (1997): 563–84. See also Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870–1970* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005), 251–79.
76. See for example Caitríona Beaumont, 'After the Vote: Women, Citizenship and the Campaign for Gender Equality in the Irish Free State (1922–1943)', in *Irish Women and the Vote*, ed. Ryan and Ward, 231–49, Maryann Valiulis, 'Power, Gender and Identity in the Irish Free State', *Journal of Women's History* 6/7, no. 4/1 (1995): 117–36 and Clancy 'Aspects of Women's Contribution to the Oireachtas Debate in the Irish Free State, 1922–37'.
77. Caitríona Clear, *Women of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922–1961* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 1–46.
78. Taylor, 'Social Movement Continuity', 762.
79. Ibid.
80. *United Irishwomen* 1, no. 7, February 1926, 16.
81. The IWCA was set up in 1923 and emerged out of the IWSLGA.
82. Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers Memorandum to the Commission on Vocational Organisation, 15 November 1940, National Library of Ireland, Ms. 941, Document 200.
83. Ibid.
84. Mary E. Daly, 'Wives, Mothers and Citizens: The Treatment of Women in the 1935 Nationality and Citizenship Act', *Eire-Ireland* 38, no. 3-4 (2003): 244–63.
85. For example activists were accused of 'perversion and misrepresentation' of the facts and in contravention of Catholic Social Teaching for their campaign against the 1937 Constitution. *Irish Press* 17 December 1937.
86. The Association was established in 1902 to represent women graduates from the National University of Ireland. By 1940 the association had approximately 300 members in branches in Dublin, Cork and Galway.
87. Beaumont, 'Women and the Politics of Equality'.
88. Ibid.
89. Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland*, 264–6.
90. Republican Congress (Reel 45), 21 December 1935, National Library of Ireland.
91. The nine included the IWCA, the Mothers' Union, the Irish Save the Children Fund, the Irish Girl's Friendly Society, the Central Association of Irish School Mistresses and the WGA.
92. Joint Committee Women's Societies and Social Workers, '50 Years Work' (1935).
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid. Lucy Franks was Honorary Secretary of the Irish Countrywomen's Association and a niece of the suffrage campaigner Charlotte Despard.
95. 'Memorandum on Women Police', submitted by the JCWSSW to the Department of An Taoiseach, November 1955, National Archives of Ireland, S/6210.
96. Ibid. It was not until 1959 that trained policewomen with powers of arrest were appointed to the Garda Siochana. See also John Johnston-Kehoe, 'Women in Policing in Ireland, 1915–78' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2015).
97. The Joint Committee claimed a total membership of 28,000 in 1940. Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers Memorandum to the Commission on Vocational Organisation, 15 November 1940, National Library of Ireland, Ms. 941, Document 200.
98. Taylor, 'Social Movement Continuity', 772.
99. See for example Beaumont, 'Women, Citizenship and Catholicism', 573–9 and Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland*, 270–9.
100. Beaumont, 'Women and the Politics of Equality', 183. Both Articles remain in the Irish Constitution despite repeated recommendations they be deleted or amended.

101. The 1936 census revealed that 552,176 women were engaged in home work compared to 226,816 women in paid employment. Beaumont, 'Women, Citizenship and Catholicism', 577.
102. Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland*, 275.
103. New groups emerged in the 1940s, for example the Irish Housewives' Association. The Women's Liberation Movement, working in conjunction with older women's societies, made an impact from the late 1960s onwards. Connolly, *The Irish Women's Movement*, 55–111.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Caitríona Beaumont is Associate Professor in Social History and Director of Research for the School of Law and Social Sciences, London South Bank University. She is the author of *Housewives and Citizens: Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England 1928–1964* (Manchester University Press, 2015) and 'After the Vote: Women, Citizenship and the campaign for gender equality in Ireland, 1922–43' in eds. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward, *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens* (Irish Academic Press, 2018).

Mary Clancy is a Lecturer at the Centre for Global Women's Studies, School of Political Science & Sociology, NUI Galway, Ireland. She is the author of 'Women of the West: campaigning for the vote in early twentieth century Galway, c.1911-c.1915' in eds. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens* (Irish Academic Press, 2018) and curator of the exhibition 'Histories of Women Graduates', NUI Galway (2016–2019).

Louise Ryan is Professor of Sociology, at the University of Sheffield. She is the author of *Winning the Vote for Women: the Irish Citizen Newspaper and the Suffrage Movement in Ireland* (Four Courts Press, 2018) and the edited collection *Irish Women and the Vote: becoming citizens* (with Margaret Ward) Irish Academic Press, 2018. Her most recent book is *Irish Women and Nationalism*, (also with Margaret Ward), Irish Academic Press, 2019.

ORCID

Caitríona Beaumont http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1017-8059
Louise Ryan http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1386-7212