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The Effects of Divided Government on Women's Organizations' Political Activity in Developed Democracies

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**THE EFFECTS OF DIVIDED GOVERNMENT ON WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS'
POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN DEVELOPED DEMOCRACIES**

by

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B.A. University of South Florida, 2012

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between divided government and women's organizations' political activity. In the literature divided government is associated with political openness leading to a decline in the repression of alternative political views and increased organizational activity. In this thesis I hypothesize that divided government is related to increased participation in political activity by women's organizations. Political activity is expected to increase during periods of divided government due to increased opportunities to influence formal government as political parties and elected officials compete for public support.

This study analyzes political activity by organizations associated with the women's movement in two developed democracies, the United States and Ireland during periods of (1) divided government and (2) periods of unified government in each country. This study focuses on activity revolving around the issues of reproductive rights and violence against women, two of the most salient issues to the women's movement. Organizational activity includes participation in protests, letter writing campaigns to political elites, and the endorsement of political candidates or parties by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and The Third Wave Foundation in the United States, and The National Women's Council of Ireland and The Irish Feminist Network in the Republic of Ireland. This study examines organizational activity in two cases of unified government controlling for partisanship of the executive, and one case of divided government in each country case.

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that divided government is related to an increase in political activity by women's organizations in the United States. However, more

research is needed to address alternative explanations for the level of political activity of women's organizations during periods of unified government. In addition, more research is needed to address explanations of political activity of women's organizations in Ireland.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Several theories explain organizational activity in social movements including resource mobilization and theories of individual psychology. However, previous studies have not looked specifically at divided government as a form of political opportunity and its effect on an organization's political activity. Therefore, this study relies heavily upon political opportunity theory, which argues that the political environment may affect social movement activity, participation, and also its success or failure (Costain, 1992; Buechler, 1993). This study will examine the link between political opportunity and organizations' political activity, specifically the link between divided government and political activity. Divided government is a prominent form of political opportunity that has the potential of occurring in all democracies with divided systems of governance. The discussion over the effects of divided government has increased in recent years as social scientists explore how it influences political parties and the democratic process in general. Some studies have found that divided government increases political opportunity given that no party or coalition has total control, so elites work to garner additional support from groups usually not represented in politics (Piven and Cloward, 1977; Jasper, 2012). These groups can include organizations, specific demographic groups, or the public in general. Divided authority forces elites to seek support from such sources therefore increasing the political opportunity of groups and organizations to engage in politics (Piven and Cloward, 1977; Tilly 1978).

This study focuses on divided government because past studies show that divided government increases opportunity for organizations to influence elected officials. This study shows that women's organizations political activity is influenced by changes in the government.

The argument of this study is that when the government is divided, opportunity arises for organizations to take part in government due to elected officials and political parties' attempts to expand their public support. This opportunity results in an increase in political activity by organizations. Divided government is defined as a difference in the governing party or coalition in the executive branch and in the legislative branch. In a presidential context, such as the United States', this occurs when one party controls the executive branch and the other the legislative branch. In a parliamentary system, such as Ireland's, divided government is referred to as a minority coalition. This occurs when the coalition of parties holding cabinet positions do not have a majority support in parliament (Strom, 1990; Laver, 1999). This study examines the relationship between political opportunity and organizations' political activity in cases of divided government and unified government in the United States and Ireland. This study looks specifically at the effects of political opportunity during periods of divided government on women's organization's political activity.

Due to the similarities of the women's movements in the United States and Western Europe, this study focuses on women's organizations in the United States and Ireland. These countries are selected because the movements in each country share similar histories, resulting in similar ideology and strategy in the organizations that represent the movements. However, the organizations in each country operate under different forms of democratic systems; therefore, this study provides an analysis of the effects of divided government in different forms of democracies. The similarities in women's organizations' ideology, purpose, and strategy in both countries will control for some factors and allow for a better understanding of the effects of divided government on organizational activity in both presidential and parliamentary systems.

I conduct qualitative case studies of political activity of women's organizations during periods of divided government and unified government in the United States and Ireland. In the United States the cases include the period of unified government from 2005-2007 when the Republican Party controlled both the Presidency and Congress. The period of 2007-2009, a period of divided government, as the Republican Bush administration controlled the White House and the Democratic Party controlled both houses of Congress. Additionally, the period from 2009-2011 is included as it represents a period of unified government, under the Democratic Obama administration. Cases of unified leadership under the Republican Party and Democratic Party are included in the study to control for the influence of political party. The organizations studied in the American context will be The National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Third Wave Foundation.

In Ireland, the first case includes the twenty-seventh government, which lasted from 2007-2008 and included a coalition of Fianna Fáil, the Green Party, and the Progressive Democrats, which enjoyed a majority support in Parliament. This coalition was led by the center-left party Fianna Fáil. The second case is the twenty-eighth government of Ireland from 2010-2011. This was a minority government with a coalition of the Fianna Fáil and the Green Party with a few independents in the cabinet, which were not supported by the majority of the parliament. In addition, this study includes the case of the twenty-ninth government of Ireland. It is a center-right coalition of Fine Gael and Labour. This coalition was formed in 2011 and represents a right leaning majority government in order to control for political party influence. The two organizations that will be studied during these time periods are the Irish Feminist Network and the National Women's Council of Ireland.

In this study I use news articles of major newspapers in each country and direct contact with the organizations to determine the frequency and level of participation in which protests were being organized, letter writing campaigns at the national level, and the extent of an organization's involvement in endorsing political candidates or political parties. Only those activities regarding the issues of reproductive rights and violence against women are included. I use the information of frequency and level of participation in these activities during periods of divided government and unified government in each country to determine how division and unification of governing branches affects women's organizations' political activity in developed democracies.

In the following chapters I examine the existing literature on political activity, analyze the cases, and draw conclusions. In chapter 2 I review the literature on political activity of organizations in the United States and Ireland. In chapter 3 I list my hypotheses and discuss my selection of cases. In chapter 4 I provide an analysis of the political activity of the National Organization for Women and the Third Wave Foundation in the United States during periods of unified government and divided government. In chapter 5 I provide an analysis of the political activity of the National Women's Council of Ireland and the Irish Feminist Network during periods of unified and divided government in Ireland. Finally, in chapter 6 I provide a conclusion with an interpretation of my findings.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Movements

Since the early twentieth century social scientists have been studying the formation of and participation in social movements. There has been less research on the organizations that facilitate movements, however, since organizations are a product of a larger social movement it is important to understand how social movements, in general, garner participation and engage in activity. One of the early theories on movement participation was published in 1970 by Ted Robert Gurr. Gurr (1970, 2010) argued that protest activity is a product of relative deprivation which is caused by a discrepancy between an individual's expectations and an individual's actual capabilities within their society (Gurr, 2010; 37). Other theories attempting to understand individuals' participation in movements followed, including ideas on selective and collective benefits for engaging in movement activity (Klanderman, 1993; 385) and the extent to which an individual feels connected to the particular identity group engaging in protest (Tarrow, McAdam, Tilly, 2001; 22). These theories require the costs of engaging in activity to be lower than the rewards of succeeding (Klandermans, 1993), therefore organizations should engage in more political activity when the likelihood of being rewarded for that activity is higher.

The theories of individual participation provide insight into the women's movements in developed democracies throughout the twentieth century. During this time, women were becoming more educated and seeking to become independent politically, financially, and socially. However, the society in which they lived was not conducive to this new feeling independence (Hewitt, 2010). Therefore, sparking protest from women in the early part of the century for the right to be included in politics, during the mid-century women protested for

economic independence, and in the later part of the century women protested for the right to be in control of their own health (Banaszak, 2005; Freeman, 2005; Gelb, 1989).

Although, these micro-level studies provide insight into individual participation in movements they do not specifically look at how organizations within the movement engage in political activity. This leaves us with the need for meso-level theories in order to understand how movements organize within the national context and how organizations engage in political activity. One theory that attempts to explain movements on a national level is resource mobilization theory. According to resource mobilization theory, movement organizations increase in activity and participation when the resources are provided for them to do so (Buechler, 1993). Buechler (1993) and Costain (1992) critique resource mobilization theory for not taking into account movements, such as women's movements, that have consistently remained underfunded and lacked a formal leadership structure. Moreover, the organizations involved in the women's movement have relied on a loose network of individuals and cannot be fully understood by their ability to garner resources (Freeman, 1970; Buechler, 1993; 223). This is especially relevant given that many of women's movement's legislative changes have taken place when the movement was fractured ideologically and underfunded (Costain, 1992).

Therefore, we turn to another meso-level theory, political opportunity theory, which provides additional understanding of organizational activity within the women's movements. According to political opportunity theory, movements gain participation and engage in activity when the political environment in which they are operating opens up, therefore allowing desirable changes to be made if the movement's organizations are already in place to take action when the opportunity arises (Costain, 1992). Scholars have found that, political opportunity

comes about through many different factors, including division of elites, decline in repression of alternative viewpoints to the dominate viewpoint, increase of political pluralism, and/or increased enfranchisement (Meyer, 2004; Cragun and Cragun, et.al, 2008). Tarrow (1996) also identifies four types of political opportunity: increasing access to power, influential allies inside or outside of government, changing political alignments, and division within and among elites (Tarrow, 1996; 54).

Divided Government

This study will focus on the effects of divided government on organizational activity. One reason for this is that all developed democracies with a separation of power have the potential to experience divided government. Additionally, studies have shown that divided government leads to a decline in repression of alternative views due to elected officials and parties' need to garner additional support (Piven and Cloward, 1977). Vráblíková (2013; 206) argues that democratic institutions that allow more access to power encourage political action. Divided government can provide this additional access to power as parties and elected officials seek the support of groups or organizations.

One way in which divided government has been linked to organizational activity is because parties and elected officials seek additional support from outside the government. Strøm and Müeller (1999) show that parties are interested in three objectives; gaining office, obtaining votes, and influencing policy. Some parties and elected officials are more interested in one objective over another at any particular point in time and may sacrifice one for gaining another in the next election (Strøm and Müeller, 1999; 12). In addition, Hamann and Kelly (2010) found, in their study of social pacts, that political actors support social pacts when they will receive

electoral benefits from them. These benefits include being elected to office and promoting the party's legislative agenda (Hamann and Kelly, 2010). Political parties and elected officials are less likely to ignore a group that they may gain support from, they may even endorse a group's cause in order to gain their support (Piven and Cloward, 1977; Jasper and Goodwin, 2012; Tilly, 2008). Although, this support may be modest due to trade-offs between gaining the support of new groups and maintaining the support of existing groups, the literature shows that organizations will take advantage of this opportunity and engage in political activity. Piven and Cloward (1977) studied the effects of divided government on low income groups and found that when government is divided the authority of elected officials is weakened. This forces them to campaign for the support of groups that would otherwise be left out of the political debate. This in turn, can help the group by giving it an opportunity to take part in formal government (Piven and Cloward, 1977; 13). Piven and Cloward (1977) go on to conclude that even when elected officials do not actively campaign for the support of these groups, groups or organizations will respond to a lack of authority by using the opportunity to protest. Therefore, divided government results in political parties and elected officials acting as either allies for social movement organizations or distracting attention, allowing movement organizations to engage in political activity (Jasper and Goodwin, Tilly, 2008).

The institutions in which the movement organizations operate influences the participation and frequency of political activity. Tarrow (1996) found that political opportunity allows weak and unorganized challengers to engage in political activity. He argues that organizations and movements that lack power and money can still take part in government when a political opportunity presents itself (Tarrow, 1996). Peter Eisinger's (1973, 15) study finds that non-violent protest is most likely to occur in systems of mixed open and closed environments.

Therefore, in political environments that are always open and those that are always closed will see less activity from non-violent social movements (Eisinger, 1973). According to Eisinger's findings, divided government should result in greater opportunity because it occurs in intervals in democratic institutions, therefore, providing for a mixture between an open and closed political environment.

Women's Movement Organizations

Since the Women's Liberation Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, women's issues have been a constant part of politics in the United States and Western Europe. Some argue that feminism is dead, the need for the movement no longer exists and participation is lacking. However, this does not stop political debate on women's issues in the United States as well as other Western democracies. The phenomenon of increased attention to women's issues without a movement has been coupled with an increase in female leadership roles and political participation both in high and low politics (Banaszal, 2005). Women's organizations act as the transmitter of movement ideology and goals to the public and to government, giving these organizations a crucial role within the movement.

The women's movement has been evolving over time in both ideology and goals. However, there has been a constant exchange of ideas, strategies, objectives, and language between the United States and other Western European countries (Bosch, 2004). The women's movements of the United States and Western Europe have shared similar ideology, structure, and goals. However, the participation and successes of each movement have been influenced by the politics of the country in which they are acting. Cross-nationally, women's movements peaked in the early twentieth century, the mid-twentieth century, and again in the late 1980s and early

1990s, and during each of these peaks the movement made substantial successes socially and legally (Katzenstein, 1993). In addition to sharing a similar timetable, cross-national women's movements have stemmed from similar parent movements, such as the abolitionist movement and left-wing movements, which feminists' organizations relied on for support and organizational structure (Freeman, 2005; 33).

Women's movements share many characteristics cross-nationally; therefore, the organizations that support these movements also share many characteristics. One shared characteristic is that these organizations have continuously remained underfunded (Costain, 1992), despite high movement participation and general support during certain periods of time. In addition, women's organizations have always relied on support from other females, a group of people who are dispersed throughout society and separated by many other identity factors such as race, religion, and socio-economic status. Yet, women's organizations attempt to create the common "female" identity on which to organize (Freeman, 1970, 2010). Finally, the movements have relied on an informal network of women's organizations and feminist groups, resulting in a lack of structured organizational hierarchy and a lack of formal leadership (Freeman, 1970). These factors contribute to the necessity of organizations to rally and organize the public, as well as transmit policy messages to political leaders. However, not only must there be grievances to protest against and organizations to facilitate this, there must also exist opportunity for change.

Politics of Democratic Government

The cases included in this study are from developed democracies. The countries selected experienced similar women's movements, leading to similar organizational structure and strategy (Bosch, 2004; Ferrier, 2008; Hewitt, 2010). The women's movements in the U.S. and Western

Europe experienced a suffrage movement in the early twentieth century, a peak in women's movement activity in the 1960 and another peak in the 1980s and decline through the 1990s (Gelb, 1989; Outhoorn, 2010). Although some theorists, such as Outhoorn (2010), may argue that the women's movements are in decline, issues of concern to feminists are constantly present in political debate within the U.S. and Western Europe. The issues of high concern cross-nationally include women's reproductive rights and violence against women and girls. The issue of violence against women and girls manifests itself in the U.S. context as concern for domestic violence and sexual abuse and in the European context concern for trafficking and slavery of women and girls (Bindel and Kelly, 2003; Farquet, Mattila, Laczko, 2005). Therefore, this study will focus attention on organizational activity revolving around the issues of (a) reproductive rights and (b) violence against women.

In addition, the cases were selected from developed democratic institutions. Although the United States and Ireland have different democratic structures, they both experienced a period of divided government in the twenty-first century. Divided government is best understood in the democratic context as a division between party governance in the executive and legislative branches. The U.S. experiences this through one of the two major parties governing the presidential administration and the other party holding the majority control of Congress. In the Western European context this division is best understood as a minority coalition. Minority government in a parliamentary system has been likened to divided government in presidential systems due to the division between the legislative and executive branches in both situations (Laver and Shepsle, 2005). During divided government, the executive or president represents a different party than the majority of the legislative branch. In the case of a minority coalition, a cabinet is formed and the party or coalition of parties that formed the cabinet does not have a

majority of seats in parliament. Strøm (1990), Laver (1999), and Laver and Shepsle (2005) make the connection between divided government and minority government in their work by showing that when a coalition in a parliamentary government does not enjoy the majority support of the members of parliament similar consequences occur as under divided government in a presidential system. This can result in gridlock and the inability to pass legislation due to the instability of the government. This occurs because the governing parties must secure the support of outside parties; therefore, the opposition can unite to prevent the passage of legislation. Additionally, the government's inability to pass legislation can influence public support of the government.

In parliamentary systems Stephen and Hobolt (2010) found that the electorate holds the head of government's party more accountable for policy outcomes than other parties within a coalition. The opinion of the electorate on policy results in retrospective voting in subsequent elections (Stephen and Hobolt, 2010). Although, parties have been found to have three objectives: obtaining office, obtaining votes, and influencing policy (Strøm and Müller, 1999), Marsh and Mitchell (1999) found that throughout the late twentieth century, Irish parties became office seeking parties. Therefore, their attention shifted from a focus on obtaining votes and promoting favorable policy to obtaining and maintaining office. The two largest parties have become less ideological and taken on many issues of important to the electorate, becoming catch-all parties. March and Mitchell (1999) attribute this to the lower house, the Dáil not meeting frequently and having poor attendance. Therefore, parties had to gain seats in the executive branch to influence policy. In addition, the Irish electorate has suffered from weak party attachment, making office seeking more important than vote seeking in this context (March and Mitchell, 1999; 37). Therefore, minority government can be linked to political opportunity

much like divided government, which has been shown to require political parties and elected officials to campaign for additional support by the public and even support groups that they usually would not (Piven and Cloward, 1977). Given the results of previous studies, this study uses political opportunity theory to examine the effect of divided government in presidential and parliamentary systems on women's organization's political activity.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH DESIGN

Hypotheses

1. Divided government in developed democracies will result in an increase in women's organizations' political activity.
 - 1.1. In a presidential system, divided government will result in increased women's organizations political activity.
 - 1.1.1. In the United States, during the period of divided government from 2007-2009, The National Organization for Women (NOW) and The Third Wave Foundation will increase both frequency and participation in organizing protests, letter writing campaigns, and/or endorsing political candidates or party based on issues of reproductive rights and violence against women, compared to the periods of unified government in 2005-2007 and 2009-2011.
 - 1.1.2. During the period of 2009-2011 frequency and participation in protests, letter writing campaigns, and endorsement of political candidates or party organized by NOW and The Third Wave Foundation, will be greater than in the period of 2005-2007 due to Democratic Party's control of the government and its left-leaning ideology, but less than the period of 2007-2009 during which time the government was unified.
 - 1.2. In a parliamentary system, minority coalitions will result in increased women's organizations political activity.
 - 1.2.1. In Ireland, during the minority coalition from 2007-2008, The Irish Feminist Network and The National Women's Council of Ireland will increase in both frequency and participation in organizing protests, letter writing campaigns, and/or endorsing political candidates or party based on issues of reproductive rights and violence against women, compared to the periods of majority governments of the 2008-2010 and 2011-2012.
 - 1.2.2. During the period of 2007-2008, the frequency and participation in protests, letter writing campaigns, and endorsement of political candidates or party organized by The Irish Feminist Network and The National Women's Council of Ireland, will increase due to the left-leaning ideology of the parties in the majority coalition, however will be less than in the period of 2010-2011 when a minority government was in place in Ireland.

Design of Study

This study examines the relationship between divided government and women's organization's political activity using a case study approach. The study includes cases of divided government and unified government in the United States and the Republic of Ireland. The cases examine political activity in organizations associated with the women's movement in each country. The organizations that were chosen as part of the study operate at the national level therefore, giving them increased exposure in media outlets, as well as, high levels of membership participation in order to organize political activity.

The cases selected represent periods of divided government and unified government in the United States and periods of minority government and majority government in Ireland, providing for a comparison of organizational activity under each type of government. The cases are the different periods of government, making for six cases in total. First, I provide a brief history of organizing in the women's movement in each country and an overview of the political process and institutions of the country. In each case I examine the political situation that is occurring during the time frame of the case study, in order to explain how division of party elites is or is not occurring in both the presidential and parliamentary context. Next, for each case I use reports in major newspapers from each country, historical information from the organizations website, and direct contact with representatives of the organizations to evaluate activity initiated by the organization revolving around the salient issues of reproductive rights and violence against women. Organizational activity included in the study is organized protests, letter writing campaigns to elected officials at the national level, and the organizations' endorsement of political candidates or political party. In order to compare organizational activity throughout the six cases I look at types of activity engaged in and the level of participation.

Case Studies

The first three cases examine organizational activity within the women's movement in the United States. The organizations included in the study are The National Organization for Women and The Third Wave Foundation. The first case examines political activity in these two organizations during the period from 2005-2007. This was a period of unified government, that is, both the executive and legislative branches were controlled by the Republican Party. The second case examines activity in these organizations during the period of 2007-2009. During this time, the executive branch was controlled by the Republican Bush administration and the legislative branch, Congress, had a democratic majority in both houses, producing therefore an environment of divided government. The third case examines activity during the period of 2009-2011. During this time the Democratic Party controlled both branches of government. This third case is included to control for party differences. If unified government leads to less organizational activity than divided government, then this result should occur when the government is unified by the Republican Party or Democratic Party.

The fourth case looks at the organizational activity in Ireland during a period of majority government. This includes the period of 2007-2009 during this time the government was composed of a left leaning majority coalition with the dominate party being Fianna Fáil. The fifth case examines organizational activity in Ireland under a minority government from the period 2010-2011. The sixth case examines women's organizations' activity under a right leaning majority government controlled by Fine Gael and Labour. This government has lasted from 2011-2014 and is added to control for ideological difference in political parties. The national organizations used for the study will be The National Women's Council of Ireland and the Irish Feminist Network.

The organizations chosen to represent the women's movement in each country represent the varying traditions within the women's movement. The National Organization for Women (NOW), in the United States, and The National Women's Council of Ireland are older organizations, formed out of the liberal feminist tradition. Therefore, these organizations are focused on changing laws to better suit women (www.now.org, www.nwci.ie). The Third Wave Foundation, in the United States, and the Irish Feminist Network, are newer organizations, formed out of the third wave tradition (www.thethirdwavefoundation.org, www.irishfeministnetwork.org). They are focused on the intersectionality of gender and other social cleavages including socio-economic status, race, religion, and sexual orientation. In addition, all the organizations selected operate at the national level.

In all cases, organizational activity involving protests, letter writing campaigns to elected officials at the national level, and the endorsement of political candidates or political party is evaluated within the context of reproductive rights and violence against women. Throughout the twenty-first century these two issues have remained the cornerstone of the feminist movement. I focus on these two issue areas because there is activity revolving around these areas in most feminist organizations and have been salient in political debate in both countries. In order to determine the frequency with which organizations engage in these activities and the level of participation for each activity, this study relies on historical records available through these organizations websites, as well as, media coverage of events in national newspapers and direct contact with the organizations. For media coverage of NOW and The Third Wave Foundation I rely on reports from The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. For media coverage of The Irish Feminist Network and The National Women's Council of Ireland I rely at reports in the Irish Times and the Irish Independent. These newspapers are national newspapers with the

highest circulation in their respective countries. Therefore, this provide for a multidimensional approach to examining the relationship between periods of divided elites and women's organizations' political activity.

CHAPTER 4 – WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS’ POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The following three cases look at two examples of unified government and one example of divided government in the United States. They are examined in chronological order and the case of divided government occurred between the two cases of unified government. During the time of these case studies there were many high profile political debates occurring, such as the Iraq War during both the Bush and the Obama administration and the Affordable Care Act in the Obama administration. However, through these high profile debates there were concerns voiced by women’s organizations over various issues during both periods of divided and unified government. The twenty-first century in American politics has had a history of high polarization and discernible differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties more so than previous decades (Theriault, 2008). In addition, the women’s organizations included in the study have had a long history of ties to the Democratic Party, even so they have engaged in political activity for women’s issue both during the Bush and Obama Administrations.

The organizations selected for the cased studies represent two different stems of feminist activity and ideology; however, the issues of reproductive rights and violence against women seem to be at the top of their agendas. The National Organization for Women engages in regular political activity at the national, state, and local levels. NOW was established in 1966 and is the largest feminist organization by membership in the United States (now.org/about/history/founding). It was founded after complaints that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was not taking sex discrimination seriously in employment

(Dicker, 2008; 71). Throughout the twenty-first century, NOW has taken on the issues of reproductive rights and ending violence against women. With regard to the issue of reproductive rights, NOW's goals include supporting access to legal abortions and a women's right to effective contraception (now.org/issues). In addition, NOW advocates for an end to many different types of violence against women including, sexual violence, harassment, and domestic violence (now.org/issues).

The Third Wave Foundation is a younger organization than NOW. It was started fifteen years ago as one of the first organizations of the third wave feminist movement, one of its founding members was Rebecca Walker daughter of famous second wave activist Alice Walker (thethridwavefoundation.org/about-us/history). After the hype of the second wave feminist movement, women in the United States became less interested in feminist issues. However, in the early 1990s the third wave of feminism came about as a reaction to the conservatism of the 1980s and the rolling back of many changes that the second wave feminists had accomplished (Dicker, 2008; 103-135). Third wave feminism in the U.S. is generally marked by the appointment of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court after he was accused of sexual harassment by Anita Hill. The Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas scandal sparked controversy about how far women had come since the beginning of the feminist movement and why issues of concern to women, such as sexual assault were not taken seriously by the American public (Dicker, 2008; 116-117).

In addition, third wave feminism sought to be more inclusive than the previous waves. Unlike second wave feminism, these new organizations included issues associated with the intersectionality of gender, race, sexuality, and socio-economic class, advocating for more than just an end to sexism in their political activity (Dicker, 2008; 126-127). The strategy that these

organizations use tends to be different from that of older organizations. Organizations like the Third Wave Foundation operate under less of a hierarchical leadership. They have a central leadership and more recently have begun operating mainly through technology. This includes members blogging on behalf of the organization to spread awareness about particular issues and announce activities that the organization is engaged in, they also use social media to gain support and membership (thirdwavefoundation.org).

The organizations' ideology and strategy can be seen throughout the following case studies with their engagement in political action. These cases represent a period of American politics that was characterized by heightened political polarization, making divided government all the more contentious (Therriault, 2008). In addition, there were many political issues of concern to women's groups all of which intensified political activity during this twenty-first century.

Unified Government – Rule by Republicans 2005-2007

The 109th Congress began January 3, 2005 and continued until January 3, 2007. During these two years the Bush administration controlled the presidency. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate were controlled by a majority of Republican representatives. The main political debates during these years were the War in Iraq¹, the retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and the prospective appointment of a new Supreme Court judge. The American public was also inundated with news about the upcoming presidential election. Women's organizations including the National Organization for Women took positions on all of these issues. They also engaged specifically in activity regarding reproductive rights and violence against women.

In July of 2005, at NOW's annual convention they cancelled workshops and instead engaged in a protest march. Hundreds of members marched to the state capital supporting reproductive rights². The protest was spurred by debate over the selection of a new Supreme Court justice and the possibility of an overturn of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision. NOW voiced their concerns over the appointment of a new Supreme Court justice by protesting against the nomination of Samuel Alito through their "Enraged and Engaged" campaign (now.org, Highlights 1996-2006). Also in 2005, NOW organized protests against the Justice Department for failing to mention emergency contraception as a treatment for survivors of sexual assault (now.org, Highlight 1996-2006).

In addition, throughout this two year period, two letters were written to the *The New York Times* by representatives of NOW. One letter in 2005 addressed the need for the Manhattan district attorney to eliminate the statute of limitation in rape cases³. Another letter in 2006, addressed the issue of human trafficking. The letter calls for the New York state legislature to pass legislation to protect women and girls from becoming victims of human trafficking⁴.

In addition, to the activity directly related to reproductive rights and violence against women, NOW engaged in activity in other issue areas. Other activity throughout this time included, being a lead organizer of the anti-war protest in New York City¹ and a march in Washington D.C. about immigration reform in 2006 (now.org/highlights/1996-2006).

Throughout 2005 and 2006 the Third Wave Foundation did not directly engage in protests, letter writing campaigns to political parties or elected officials or the endorsement of a party or candidate. However, in 2006 they encouraged activists to blog about their experiences with feminism at the US Social Forum (thirdwavefoundation.org, 2006). Throughout these two years the Third Wave Foundation focused much of their energies and resources on funding other

groups. The groups that they funded include women's clinics, educational organizations focused on improving education for young girls, sex worker advocate organizations, and organizations focused on improving the lives of women and girls in minority communities. The Third Wave Foundation funded many groups on a broad range of women's issues; however they went from funding three groups that focused specifically on reproductive rights and/or violence against women in 2005 to five groups in 2006. A full list of the groups funded, that address either reproductive rights and/or violence against women, by the Third Wave Foundation in 2005 and 2006 can be found in the appendix.

The Third Wave Foundation engaged in few traditional political activities, such as protests or letter writing campaigns. However, true to their third wave philosophy they did take part in blogging. They also supported organizations that were not focused specifically on gender but those also focused on other forms of social justice.

NOW and the Third Wave Foundation engaged in few protests and no letter writing campaigns to elected officials. In total, NOW engaged in one protest over reproductive rights in which "hundreds of members" took part (now.org, Highlights 1996-2006). They also engaged in protests against the Department of Justice for an update to treating rape victims that did not list emergency contraception. Two representatives from NOW wrote letters to the editor to the New York Times although the organization did not engage in letter writing campaigns to elected officials.

The Third Wave Foundation engaged in no protests, no letter writing campaigns to elected officials, or endorsement of political candidates with regard to reproductive rights or violence against women. The organizations that the Third Wave Foundation supported could have participated in these forms of political activity, however, the foundation itself did not. The

only political activity directly supported by the foundation was its membership engaged in blogging of experiences of gender and intersectionality.

This case study shows a relative lack of political activity revolving around the issues of reproductive rights and violence against women. This period of unified government under Republican control had many high profile issues that received attention including the war in Iraq and various congressional scandals all of which could have contributed to the lack of political activity from women's organizations. However, when these organizations did take part in activity it was low participation, single letters written to the newspaper, or funding of other organizations and did not focus specifically on reproductive rights or violence against women.

Divided Government 2007-2009

Divided government is not untypical in U.S. politics. Divided government is a regular occurrence since the U.S. operates under a Presidential system of government and a two-party system (Elgie, 2001). Divided government usually occurs at mid-term elections when the majority of those elected to the House of Representatives are from the opposite party as the President (Elgie, 2001). Divided government can result in grid lock, which can hinder the passing of legislation. However, it can also have the effect of encouraging political activity outside of government (Strøm, Karen, 1990; Piven and Cloward, 1977). This case study will examine the period of divided government between 2006 and 2009.

The 110th Congress was composed of a Democratic majority in both the House and the Senate. The Democratic Party held less than 50 seats in the Senate however they maintained a majority through two independent representatives that caucused with the Democratic representatives (Amer, 2008). This Congress also included the first female Speaker of the House⁵

and was held during the second term of George Bush's Republican administration.

During this period, politics revolved around the upcoming election in 2008. Women's organizations took part in these political debates. Although, the National Organization for Women maintains a close relationship with the Democratic Party, the organization endorsed within the party during the primary election ⁶. In 2007 the National Organization for Women formally endorsed then Senator Hillary Clinton for President ⁷. They also pledged to use their membership of 500,000 to raise funds for her campaign. Subsequently in 2008 the National Organization for Women, as well as, another feminist organization, Emily's List, began email campaigns to cable networks to combat sexism. The campaigns were started after a concern that Hillary Clinton suffered sexist media coverage by cable stations during her campaign against Barack Obama ⁸. The campaigns were meant to energize the organization's membership to write to cable networks when they saw signs of sexism on television.

In addition to endorsing Hillary Clinton, the National Organization for Women endorsed Representative Carolyn B. Maloney to replace Hillary Clinton in the Senate if she were to become the Secretary of State ⁹. In this case, the senator would be appointed by Governor David Paterson and would not be elected by the citizens. Carolyn Maloney was popular among feminist groups, however, another female Kirsten Gillibrand was also a potential for appointment. Gillibrand was a supporter of Hillary Clinton and was supported by the Democratic establishment. In 2008 the National Organization for Women also endorsed Stephen Harrison for Congress ¹⁰. They endorsed him over other Democratic candidates for the seat for his support of gender issue while serving on the city council.

These endorsements represent the interesting relationship between feminist groups and the Democratic Party. NOW's endorsement of Hillary Clinton as the Democratic candidate for

President and subsequent critique of President Obama reveal a close yet strained relationship between the organization and the party. NOW's President said that they wanted a person to be elected that would support women's issues once in office regardless of sex and they felt Barack Obama did not have this quality ⁷. Therefore, the organization receives support from the Democratic Party and supports Democratic candidates when they represent their stance toward women's issues. This conflict is further represented in the endorsement of Carolyn Maloney for Senate when the other potential successor, Kirsten Gillibrand, was supported by the Democratic establishment and even supported by Hillary Clinton supporters ⁹.

In 2007 the Third Wave Foundation funded eight organizations that fought violence against women and supported reproductive rights. Four of the organizations that the foundation supported, worked to promote reproductive rights and four work to stop violence against women in different forms. Additionally, in 2008, the Third Wave Foundation funded six other organizations that worked to combat violence against women and promote reproductive rights. Three of which work to promote reproductive rights and three that work to stop violence against women. The Third Wave Foundation did not take part in any direct protest activity including letter writing campaigns, endorsement of political candidates or party, or protests. However, the organizations that they funded could have taken part in these activities.

This case study shows an increase in political activity surrounding the election of 2008. NOW and its chapters engaged primarily in endorsements to promote the election or appointment of candidates they felt would support women's issues once in office. Other than their endorsements they did not engage in political activity at the national level. The Third Wave Foundation also increased the number of groups that they funded based on violence against women and reproductive rights, but they did not engage in other forms of political activity.

United Again – Democratic Rule 2009-2011

The 111th Congress started on January 3, 2009 and lasted until January 3, 2011. It was composed of a Democratic majority in both the House and Senate. This was Barack Obama's first term in office and resulted in the Democratic Party having control of the executive and legislative branches. Unlike the 109th Congress, which was labeled a "do nothing Congress" by political pundits, the 111th Congress was considered one of the most productive as far as passing legislation ¹¹. The main political debate during this period was health care reform; the issue most contested in this legislation was the compromise for selective abortion in the new health care act. The head of the National Organization for Women stated that the organization would not accept a compromise that would prevent full abortion rights for women ¹². The other legislation that concerned women's organizations was the debate over the passing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay act which was passed and signed into effect in 2009 (NWLC.org).

Apart from legislation, women's organizations during this period were concerned with judicial cases involving domestic violence and the representation of reproductive rights in media. In 2009 the National Organization for Women called on members to engage in a letter writing campaign to Judge Erlbaum in New York ¹³. He would be deciding the fate of Senator Monserrate, who was accused of domestic violence against his companion. The letter campaign was meant to urge the judge to administer the maximum charge of felony assault to Senator Monserrate, for slashing his companion's face with a broken glass, after the Senator opted for a bench trial rather than a jury trial. In 2009 the President of the National Organization for Women also wrote a letter to *The New York Times* regarding protests surrounding an abortion clinic in Nebraska, which had been the spot of many protests and violent activity surrounding the clinic and personal. 2009 saw most movement centered around reproductive rights, however, in 2010

NOW's focus shifted to high profile trials of abuse and violence against women ¹⁴.

In 2010, the National Organization for Women, along with other women's organizations, publicly criticized CBS for running a commercial during the Super Bowl with a pro-life message¹⁵. In 2010 the organization engaged in more activity surrounding violence against women. In addition to the Senator's act of domestic violence, the National Organization for Women also called on the football team, the Raider's to suspend their coach, Tom Cable, after he was accused by his wife and girlfriend of physically abusing them during their relationships ¹⁶. The Raider's undertook an investigation into the accusations, however, NOW called on the team to suspend him as well. The organization also engaged in two protests surrounding the trial of Tony Simmons, a juvenile justice worker accused of sexually assaulting three girls ¹⁷. The protests were staged to prevent a plea deal for Simmons. The organization's New York chapter also called for the resignation of Governor Paterson due to his mishandling of a domestic violence case in which Governor Paterson attempted to contact a woman who accused his senior advisor of assault ¹⁸.

In 2009 the Third Wave Foundation was also concerned with the issues surrounding reproductive justice and violence against women. The foundation along with its membership funded eight organizations focuses on reproductive rights and four organizations that are focused on violence against women.

In 2010 the Third Wave Foundation continued to sponsor these organizations. They resulted in sponsoring seven organizations who work for reproductive rights and three organizations that work to end violence against women.

These three case studies show that the women's organizations were concerned with issues that were made public at specific points in time. Political issues such as elections and court appointments were on their radar, but were not their primary concern. The National Organization for Women demonstrates a high concern for political issues. It seeks to promote women's issues through occasional protest by its membership. More often, it displays political activity through the endorsement of political candidates. In addition, the Presidents over the years of these cases penned letters to *The New York Times* as a way to increase public support. In addition, to these overt political activities, NOW, engaged in letter writing campaigns concerning high profile media cases and even attempted to persuade the outcome of trials. Their work did not specifically focus on reproductive rights and violence against women; however, these were highly prioritized. It is also obvious that NOW was not necessarily concerned with their relationship to the Democratic Party more generally. They endorsed candidates in democratic primaries and spoke out against other candidates supported by the Party. This represents a strained relationship with the party that represents their base of supporters.

Unlike NOW, The Third Wave Foundation did not engage in active political activity as often. Instead the foundation and its membership sponsored other organizations during this time across the United States. Another difference is that they had a much higher focus on other issues besides gender. This organization funded many organizations that worked to promote LGBT rights and those seeking environmental justice and economic justice separate from the identification of gender.

CHAPTER 5 – WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS’ POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN IRELAND

In 1973 Ireland went through political changes, many of which effected women. In this year Ireland became a member of the European Union, which has since been a source of conflict between the EU’s Council on Human Rights and the strict abortion laws in Ireland ^{19, 20}. Also in 1973, the Commission on the Status of Women was formed and the marriage bar was abolished, which meant that women were no longer forced to give up their employment with the civil service once they were married ²¹. These changes have resulted in continued debate within Ireland regarding the status of reproductive rights and social benefits for women. In addition, issues regarding abuse, both domestic and treatment of sex workers have become issues of concern for women’s groups within Ireland ^{22, 23}.

The early 1990s also saw a new wave in feminist activity in Ireland. Mary Robbins ran for President. She was once a women’s rights activist in the 1970s. However, when she ran for President she took on a more moderate stance in order to appeal to Ireland’s Catholic majority (Ferrier, 2008). She was elected in 1990 with 38.89% of the first preference votes and 76.73% of the transfer votes from the Fine Gael candidate (ElectionsIreland.org). Robbins’ election was a major win for feminist activists because she promoted a more open and tolerant Ireland. In addition, the female president was an encouragement to other women to become involved in Ireland’s political system (Ferrier,2008;201). In the early 1990s in Ireland, much like in the United States, women began to increase in number in the legislative branch. Women also took 9 of Irelands 28 seats within the European Commission (ec.europa.eu/ireland). Also, in 1997, Mary McAleese followed President Robbins as the second female President of the country (Ferrier, 2008).

The trend of increasing women's representation in Irish politics followed into the twenty-first century with a continued increase in female cabinet members and junior ministers (Ferrier, 2008). Although in the 1990s and early twenty-first century there was an increase in female representation in high politics in both Ireland and the United States, both countries still had comparatively few women making up the legislative branch, compared to other developed democracies (ec.europa.eu/ireland).

Unlike the case studies of the United States, the case studies of Ireland represent the political activity of women's organizations under a parliamentary system. In parliamentary systems, such as Ireland, parties govern in coalition with other parties. The Irish government has been dominated by two major parties including Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. These two parties are considered the center left and center right parties respectively and govern in coalitions with smaller parties (Kirby, 2010). The history of these parties is rooted in the Irish civil war and many people see them as catch all parties without a distinct right or left ideology (Kirby, 2010). Minority coalition governments have been common in Ireland. As the two dominate parties gain seats in the executive branch or cabinet, however, the majority of the parliament is made up of smaller parties.

In the United States beginning in the 1990s, third wave feminists engaged in activities of changing society to better accommodate women, including fighting sexual discrimination as well as other forms of discrimination. However, Ireland's women's organizations were concerned with increasing the role of the state in promoting social welfare for women. One example of this is the demand for state run childcare in Ireland in the mid-nineteen-nineties (Ferrier, 2008; 202).

The two organizations included in this study have developed out of this history and hold changing society and government at the top of their agendas.

Much like the National Organization for Women in the United States, The National Women's Council of Ireland was founded in the 1970s and is a product of the political unrest of the mid-twentieth century. It was founded after the Commission on the Status of Women was set up by the Irish government and published its first report in 1972. The NWCI promotes equality between men and women and seeks to promote women in leadership positions. Like NOW and other second wave feminist organizations, NWCI has a major focus on reproductive rights and securing social benefits for the women of Ireland. (NWCI.ie/aboutus)

The Irish Feminist Network is a much younger organization than NWCI. It was established in 2010 by graduate students at Trinity College. The organization seeks to get young people involved in feminist debate and is aimed at those under the age of 30. In addition, the organization works to reclaim the term "feminism" and to oppose all forms of gender oppression and oppression from the intersectionality of gender and other social identity groups. It is the fastest growing women's organization in Ireland and currently has a membership of over 5,000 members (irishfeministnetwork.org).

This chapter will examine the political activity of these two organizations throughout three periods of government within Ireland. The lack of political activity during the left-leaning government from 2007-2008 will be addressed in the first case study. This will be followed by an analysis of resurgence in feminist activity in 2010 and the creation of the Irish Feminist Network. It will conclude with an examination of the activity of both of these organizations under the right leaning government from 2011-2012.

Left-Leaning Majority Government 2007-2008

The 28th government of Ireland held office in June of 2007 through May of 2008. This government was composed of the Fianna Fáil, the Green Party, and the Progressive Democrats. It was supported by 2 independent TD's. This government was expected to lean right in political ideology due to the dominance of the Fianna Fáil party in the coalition. However, during this time the National Women's Council of Ireland was focused on social benefits for the women of Ireland, specifically payment of pensions. Therefore, they did not engage actively for reproductive rights or against violence aimed at women during this time.

During 2007 and 2008 The National Women's Council of Ireland was heavily involved in the changes to Ireland's pension system. The NWCI opened a case against the state of Ireland for full pensions of women discriminated against prior to the removal of the marriage bar. The marriage bar that prevented women from working as civil servants after they were married was removed in 1973. The National Women's Council of Ireland led the case during 2007 and 2008 for these women to receive their full pensions. The NWCI was heavily invested in this case and even stated that they would go all the way to the European Court of Human Rights to win the case²⁴. In addition, the organization argued that since women work part-time and lower paid jobs they do not get the pensions that help provide for them in old age and therefore should receive more social benefits than they do currently²⁵ (*NWCI: Pensions What Women Want, May 2008*).

The NWCI's concern during this time for women's state pensions was a part of the ongoing work by the NWCI to improve social welfare benefits for women. Beginning in 2005, the organization hosted focus groups through Ireland to figure out what issues women were

facing with the current state of social welfare and how to go about resolving the issues. They found that women did not believe active protest would influence the government, so instead they decided to draw up a letter with the women's demands for welfare change and have women throughout Ireland sign the letter (NWCI/News, 2005). The organization delivered around 11,500 letters to the Minister of Finance in 2005 (Harvey, 2005, 78). The case in 2008 was a follow up to this action and an attempt to reform the pension system to allow for more benefits for aging women.

Smaller women's organizations, including the Irish Feminist Network were not nationally active throughout this time in overt political activity. The Irish Feminist Network was formally organized in 2010 and prior to 2010 the group engaged in small meetings of graduate students from the Women's Studies department of Trinity College in Dublin ²⁶.

This case study represents a period where one issue dominated the women's organizations within the country. The issue of social benefits and revising the pension system is a highly political issue since the government is the only agent available to change the system. Therefore, this issue required direct lobbying and protest aimed at the current government. The work regarding this issue dominated news sources during this time and became the main focus of the NWCI.

Minority Government 2009-2011

In 2009 the Progressive Democrats disbanded and the government became a coalition of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party with three independent TDs. This government lasted until March of 2011. During this time the European Court of Human Rights was hearing cases

regarding Ireland's abortion law. Many women were forced to go abroad for abortions, when carrying a child was a determinant to their health. Since Ireland is a signatory to the European Convention of Human Rights the judgment of the court would be binding ¹⁹.

During this time the National Women's Council of Ireland was again concerned with female representation in Irish politics. They argued that Ireland needed more female TDs. The NWCI pushed for a quota law that would increase the number of women in elected positions by requiring parties to run a set percent of female candidates. The lack of women in politics was brought to the main attention of the Ireland public by a publication by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice (2010).

In 2010, the newspaper article "Younger Sisters: Say Hello to the New Feminists", pointed out that feminism had been on the decline in Ireland, as women quit identifying as feminists. However, in 2010, the country experienced a resurgence of feminist activity that culminated in the creation of the Irish Feminist Network along with other young feminist organizations ²⁷. Madeline Hawk, a coordinator of the Irish Feminist Network, attributes the surge to sexist activity that continues to occur in Irish society even though anti-sexist legislation is on the books ²⁷. The Irish Feminist Network was officially organized from a group of six graduate students. They began meeting and organizing years before. They formally organized in 2010 as a group specifically for young feminists and those unidentified as feminists, but who are concerned about women's rights within the country ²⁶. During this year they developed the Sexual Harassment Monologues blog as a way for young women to express their experiences with sexual violence and form a community of support ²³.

In 2011 the Irish Feminist Network engaged in a protest that involved 200 members. This protest was a response to the inappropriate actions of the Irish police toward young women at a previous protest. It was reported that officers made jokes about sexually assaulting two of the young women protesters²⁸. The protest by the Irish Feminist Network was organized to shed light on sexual violence within Ireland, as well as, a demand for punishment of the officers for their actions.

This period of government resulted in a high amount of feminist activity throughout Ireland. One example of this is the increase in young women involved in the feminist movement. This is evidenced not only through the development of the Irish Feminist Network, but also other feminist organizations around Ireland such as Cork Feminista²⁷. In addition, this period resulted in a push for gender quota laws for women in politics and a commitment to reducing sexual abuse towards women. The Irish Feminist Network engaged in two protest activities, one including a blog and one a march.

Right Majority Government 2011-2012

The 31st Daíl was elected in February of 2011 and has been in control since then, however, this study will only examine the activity through 2012. It makes up the 29th government of Ireland with a majority coalition between Fine Gael and the Labour Party. During this time, Ireland has been under the control of a female president, Mary McAleese and Enda Kenny of Fine Gael was appointed Taoiseach. In December of 2011, this new government began with instituting gender quota laws. These new laws stated that parties will have state funding reduced by half if three of every ten of their candidates are not women²⁹. A year later in November of 2012 the World Economic Forum report showed that Ireland was one of the top

five places to live as a female. The president of NWCI, Eoin Murray, wrote a concerned letter about this finding to *The Irish Independent*. She stated that the two female presidents had artificially raised their score and in fact, out of sixteen members of the cabinet only two were women. The sentiment of women's lack of involvement in politics and public life in general in Ireland set the tone for the events that women's organizations have taken part in from 2011 to 2012.

During this period, the National Women's Council of Ireland has been particularly concerned with violence against women and reproductive rights. In November of 2011 the new government committed to combating gender based violence in other areas of the world, mainly developing countries and nations involved in conflict. In order to do this, the government aimed to send more women peacekeepers and promote support for victims living in Ireland. This was originally proposed by former president Mary Robinson. The government then issued a proposal to increase the overseas aid budget (Stack, 2011). However, the NWCI criticized the government for cutting the funding of domestic violence support services within the country (Stack, 2011)³⁰. The National Women's Council of Ireland, along with other women's organizations called on Ireland to sign the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women³¹.

In 2012, the Irish Feminist Network held its first conference in Dublin where they discussed the reasons for feminism today and a variety of feminist issues³². Also in 2012, Alison Spillane, a coordinator for the Irish Feminist Network, wrote a letter to *The Irish Times* questioning democracy in Ireland. She argues that the people of Ireland have never been able to vote in favor of abortion and she points to the increasing support of reproductive rights in the

country. She states that the people of Ireland have voted twice not to undue the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the X legislation that includes suicide as a reason of an abortion ³³. They also held a letter writing campaign on March of 2012 to support the case X legislation (irishfeministnetwork.org).

The X case legislation was ruled on in 1992 and led to an amendment to the Irish Constitution to allow women to travel abroad for an abortion if their life was in danger, which included the threat of suicide. This case was ruled on after a young female who was a ward of the state named only as “X” was sexually assaulted by a neighbor and was denied the ability to terminate the pregnancy by the Attorney General at the time. This led to her threat of committing suicide and ultimately the Supreme Court case of Attorney General vs. X ^{34,35}. This case was monumental to the reproductive rights movement in Ireland and continues to be a political debate within the country.

The debate resurfaced in 2012 due to the death of Savita Halappanavar after she requested that her pregnancy be terminated for health reasons and was rejected. She died of septicemia three days after she miscarried. Her death sparked protests throughout Ireland from women’s organizations demanding the ruling of case X be thoroughly implemented ³⁶. In addition, the Irish Feminist Network took part in the March of Choice on September 29, 2012. This march included thousands of participants from women’s organization around Ireland to mark the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion (irishfeministnetwork.org).

This case study represents heightened action revolving around the issue of violence against women and reproductive rights. The NWCI took the lead in criticizing the government

for cutting funding to domestic abuse services. At this time the Irish Feminist Network took part in a protest to promote pro-choice reproductive rights.

The case studies of Ireland show that women's organizations were concerned with the Irish government, but also the European Union and the international community's response to women's issues. The period of minority government led to an increase in feminist activity resulting in the creation of The Irish Feminist Network. Unlike the organization's concern for social issues within the U.S. in Ireland the organizations are specifically concerned with political changes and increasing the representation of women in Irish government.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

This study of the political activity of women's organizations in the United States and Ireland has produced three findings. This study has found that women's organizations engage in a broad range of activities and at different levels of participation. Political activity can be spurred by a variety of events and sources including: popular media, business, or political campaigns. In addition, older organizations engage in different tactics and strategies of political activity than newer organizations.

These case studies show that the women's organizations engage in a variety of activities for various reasons. They are not only concerned with violence against women or reproductive rights but other issues related to women in both politics and society. These issues range from sexism in media to the reform of social benefits for women. The National Organization for Women in the United States was heavily engaged in the endorsement of individuals during the election period of 2008. Also, during the period of 2007 and 2008 they were heavily involved in attempting to change social attitudes toward women. This is evidenced through their attempts to influence the outcome of domestic violence trials, as well as, addressing the media coverage of women in politics. However, throughout the cases NOW has had a particular concern for reproductive rights in the United States. In the first case study of 2005-2006, NOW was concerned about the appointment of a Supreme Court judge to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor who would not work to repeal the decision of Roe v. Wade. In the third case study of 2009-2010, NOW was concerned with the provision of public funds for abortion under the new healthcare act.

Similar to NOW, the National Women's Council of Ireland took on a variety of issues during the periods studied. The NWCI was particularly concerned with increasing welfare benefits for women from 2011-2012. They then became heavily involved in increasing female representation in positions of power in the Irish government. They were also involved in social issues, such as domestic violence; however, they tended to take an approach of lobbying the Irish government to provide more resources to organizations that assist women of domestic abuse, rather than protesting against society for its occurrence. Also, reproductive rights were a reoccurring issue for the NWCI much like for NOW. The NWCI was involved in EU politics and lobbied the Irish government to comply with EU standards of human rights, which include the right of women to seek abortions if their health is in danger. The cases show that for both NOW and the NWCI reproductive rights are the single most important issue for both organizations, however, certainly not their only issue of concern.

The size and scope of these national organizations allows them to take on a variety of issues of concern to women. In addition, this study found that activity was spurred by a variety of factors. Protests, such as NOW's protests regarding the appointment of a new Supreme Court justice sensitive to women's rights, occurred during one of their conventions. This protest was a reaction to the retirement of Justice O'Conner but it was also a matter of convenience, since the women of the organization were already gathered for the convention. In addition, the domestic violence cases that the organization attempted to influence were high profile cases, therefore the organization felt the need to take a public stance on the issue. Political action, such as the candidate endorsements in 2008 were a reaction to the upcoming election. The NWCI acted in a similar way. The abortion protests were spurred by the involvement of the EU in encouraging Ireland to comply with EU human rights standards. In 2012 the pro-choice protests were a

reaction to the death of Savita Halappanavar after being refused an abortion. Therefore, other factors besides political opportunity played a role in the issue and events that the organizations became involved in.

Finally, this study found that the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Council of Ireland took part in strategy and ideology consistent with their place within the second wave feminist movement. The Third Wave Foundation and the Irish Feminist Network took part in activities and promoted issues true to their history of being third wave organizations. In my email to a coordinator of the Irish Feminist Network I was told that they solicit input from women throughout Ireland to determine what issues are most important to them, rather than specifically deal with political issues. In addition, they work with politicians on specific issues, but never endorse a politician or party (*electronic correspondence, Oct. 15, 2014*). This is unlike the strategy of NOW and NWCII who are more overtly political. These organizations staged formal protests, lobbied government, organized on a national scale, and focused specifically on issues affecting women. The Third Wave Foundation and Irish Feminist Network promoted issues relating to gender, race, socio-economic class, and sexuality. They also took part in more grassroots level action. In my emails to a coordinator of the Third Wave Foundation, she said that her organization does take part in formal political activity at times; however, they feel it is more effective to focus their resources and efforts on growing grassroots organizations at the local level (*electronic correspondence, Sep. 26, 2014*). NOW and NWCII's concern with national level action represents their commitment to changing laws and public life for women. While, the Third Wave Foundation and the Irish Feminist Network's work with local, grassroots organizing represents a commitment to making societal change toward gender roles and other identities. This shows that the history of the organization is important for

understanding the types of issues the organization’s tackle and their strategy for making change. These cases show the fundamental differences between those feminist organizations developed out of the second wave and those that are a product of the third wave. Below is a table of findings with the highlighted rows representing the periods of divided government and the non-highlighted rows representing periods of unified government. The total number of political activities; including protests, letters written, and organizations funded, for each case is listed under reproductive rights or violence against women. Endorsements are recorded separately because it cannot be determined if a particular candidate was endorsed due to a specific issue or because of their position on both reproductive rights and violence against women.

Table 1: Political Activity by Case

Column1	Reproductive Rights	Violence Against Women	Endorsements
U.S. 2005-2007	5	8	
U.S. 2007-2009	4	4	3
U.S. 2009-2011	9	7	
Ireland 2007-2008			
Ireland 2008-2010		2	
Ireland 2010-2012	2	1	

As the table shows, the most activity was conducted in the U.S. during the period of unified government from 2009-2011. However, this is a result of the increase in organizations funded by the Third Wave Foundation. The period of unified government in the U.S. from 2005-2007 included the most activity with regard to letter writing and protests. In addition, most

activity in Ireland was conducted during the period of unified government from 2011-2012. However, the period of divided government included a surge in the formation of women's organizations, highlighting an increase in movement activity.

This study cannot conclude that divided government in developed democracies will result in an increase of women's organizations' political activity. This study found that there was an increase in political activity during the period of divided government in the United States. However, as it was an election year, the prospect of new elected representatives could have an effect on political activity, as it resulted in endorsements from women's organizations. This study found that the NWCI engaged in heavy activity regarding reproductive rights and the EU's involvement in promoting human rights in Ireland during the period of divided government. During this time there was also the creation of the Irish Feminist Network and various other women's organizations, highlighting a need for activity and change regarding women's issues. However, it cannot be concluded that this was a direct result of divided government because there was heavy activity in the previous period of government by the NWCI regarding welfare benefits for aging women.

In the case of the United States it was found that NOW and the Third Wave Foundation were more active under a liberal, Democratic, government than a conservative government. Even though NOW endorsed Democratic candidates during the election, they still maintained a close relationship with the Democratic Party as a whole. This was not the case in Ireland where activity was based around different topics during different periods of time, but the level of activity remained relatively consistent.

The conclusions of this study are limited in that they only include information from two organizations in each country. There could have been other factors at work that influenced these organizations to take on the issues that they did and use the strategies that they used. There is no doubt that politics influences these organizations but other factors of politics, rather than unified and divided government, could be the driving force. It seems that changes, such as election and the retiring of a Supreme Court justice were more influential in rallying activity than institutional divisions in the United States. In Ireland it seems that institutional changes such as elections had little effect on the organization's activity and the countries involvement in the European and international communities rallied more action.

In addition, this study only includes one period of divided government in each county. Future studies should examine many periods of divided government in both countries. Also, in order to more fully understand the influence of minority government in parliamentary systems on political activity, cross-national research would be necessary. In order to better understand the political activity of women's organizations an in depth analysis of various types of organizations would be needed. This study found many differences between older and younger organizations. This topic could be better flesh out with an in depth study of various organizations.

**APPENDIX:
ORGANIZATIONS FUNDED**

Organizations Funded by the Third Wave Foundation (those that specifically address reproductive rights or violence against women). Source: www.thirdwavefoundation.org

2005

- Exhale – A national hotline that addresses the emotional needs of women after an abortion.
- National Network of Abortion Funds – An organization that subsidizes the cost of abortion.
- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

2006

- Different Avenues – An organization that is aimed at helping African American women and girls who are involved with street economies have access to medical services and information on their rights to reporting violence.
- Exhale – A national hotline that addresses the emotional needs of women after an abortion.
- Los Angeles Indigenous People’s Alliance – An organization that works to stop sexual violence toward immigrants and promote reproductive health.
- Safer – An organization aimed at preventing sexual violence on college campuses.
- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

2007

- Birth Attendants – An organization that assists women in prison with pregnancies, family planning services, and documents abuse.
- Different Avenues – An organization that is aimed at helping African American women and girls who are involved with street economies have access to medical services and information on their rights to reporting violence.
- Exhale – A national hotline that addresses the emotional needs of women after an abortion.
- Just Be, Inc. – An organization that helps young women who have suffered sexual abuse overcome their feelings as victims.
- Los Angeles Indigenous People’s Alliance – An organization that works to stop sexual violence toward immigrants and promote reproductive health.
- Reproductive Justice Briefing Book – a book that was funded by the Third Wave Foundation as a compilation of essays that address reproductive health.
- Safer – An organization aimed at preventing sexual violence on college campuses.
- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

2008

- Backline – An organization that provides pregnant women with options regarding their pregnancy.
- Birth Attendants – An organization that assists women in prison with pregnancies, family planning services, and documents abuse.
- Brooklyn Young Mothers Collective – Is an organization that is a member of the Reproductive Justice Network and helps low income mothers have access to resources to improve their lives and stop the cycle of poverty.
- Different Avenues – An organization that is aimed at helping African American women and girls who are involved with street economies have access to medical services and information on their rights to reporting violence.
- Safer – An organization aimed at preventing sexual violence on college campuses.
- Spark Reproductive Justice Now – An organization that works in the South that advocates for reproductive rights.
- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

2009

- Birth Attendants – An organization that assists women in prison with pregnancies, family planning services, and documents abuse.
- Chicago Abortion Fund – An organization that assist low income women with information about reproductive choices.
- Choice USA – Pro-choice organization with a youth centered pro-choice agenda.
- Color – An organization that educates young Latina about reproductive issues.
- Different Avenues – An organization that is aimed at helping African American women and girls who are involved with street economies have access to medical services and information on their rights to reporting violence.
- Jasmyn – An organization that promotes the empowerment of LGBTQ youth. They educate on reproductive issues and were instrumental in the anti-harassment policy in public schools in Florida.
- Kalpulli Izkalli – An organization stationed in New Mexico that works to promote reproductive health that centers on the reproductive justice movement, as well as, education about midwifery and birthing practices.
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health – works through public education, community mobilization, and policy advocacy to promote the reproductive justice movement.
- New Voices Pittsburgh – works to promote civic engagement, activism, and leadership development for women of color. They conduct reproductive justice training and challenge homophobia in the African American community.
- Poder – An organization that promotes reproductive rights through environmentalism.
- Safer – An organization aimed at preventing sexual violence on college campuses.
- Spark Reproductive Justice Now – An organization that works in the South that advocates for reproductive rights.
- Young Women United – An organization that works to reduce violence, improve health, and build power through public education.

- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

2010

- Chicago Abortion Fund – An organization that assist low income women with information about reproductive choices.
- Choice USA – Pro-choice organization with a youth centered pro-choice agenda.
- Color – An organization that educates young Latina about reproductive issues.
- Colorado Anti-Violent Program – A community based organization that works to reduce violence in and violence against LGBTQ communities.
- Different Avenues – An organization that is aimed at helping African American women and girls who are involved with street economies have access to medical services and information on their rights to reporting violence.
- Jasmyn – An organization that promotes the empowerment of LGBTQ youth. They educate on reproductive issues and were instrumental in the anti-harassment policy in public schools in Florida.
- Justice Now- works to assist women in prisons, their families, and former prisoners. However, they are also involved in the reproductive justice movement.
- Kalpulli Izkalli – An organization stationed in New Mexico that works to promote reproductive health that centers on the reproductive justice movement, as well as, education about midwifery and birthing practices.
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health – works through public education, community mobilization, and policy advocacy to promote the reproductive justice movement.
- New Voices Pittsburgh – works to promote civic engagement, activism, and leadership development for women of color. They conduct reproductive justice training and challenge homophobia in the African American community.
- Spark Reproductive Justice Now – An organization that works in the South that advocates for reproductive rights.
- Young Women United – An organization that works to reduce violence, improve health, and build power through public education.
- Young Women’s Empowerment Project – An organization that helps young girls and women affected by violence due to the sex trade and street economies.

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