



Conceptualising Generational Dynamics in Feminist Movements: Political Generations, Waves and Affective Economies

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This article reviews efforts to account for dynamics of continuity, change and complexity in contemporary feminism, with a particular emphasis on the utility of the ‘generational paradigm’ of the wave metaphor. We draw on assessments of the wave classification from feminist historians, political theorists and social movement scholars to make a case for the concept of political generation as way to explore patterns of generational-based contest and collaboration across the women’s movement. While political generation allows for an assessment of the role of context in shaping the activist identities of feminists from different generations, it lacks the explanatory power to explain the continuing purchase of the wave metaphor and its function for feminist claims making. Here, we turn to work on the centrality of loss within the affective economies of feminism to explain the functions of the wave metaphor for different elements within women’s movements. This analysis is grounded in a brief empirical case of the Irish women’s movement characterised as highly fragmented and marked by generational dynamics.

Introduction

The delineation of the women’s movement into first, second, third and fourth waves has been adopted as a historical narrative and a way to describe different generations of women who mobilised for gender equality over time. The wave approach has been widely critiqued for downplaying the importance of individual and small-scale collective actions, indirect and covert acts along with movements of women from different classes and races (Gillis et al. 2004; Guy-Sheftall 1995; Hewitt 2010; Mann and Huffman 2005, 17; Laughlin et al. 2010; Spelman 1988; Springer 2002; Vogel 1991). Scholars recognise that despite expansive critiques, it remains a popular trope used to mark a distinction between different generations of feminists and in turn co-opted by media and anti-feminist forces to caricature second wavers in particular and to pronounce the death of feminism more generally (Dean 2009, 2010; Redfern and Aune 2010; Mann and Huffman 2005; McRobbie 2009). Some of these treatments throw out the wave (Nicholson 1997) others use scientific notions of ocean waves or radio waves (Garrison 2000, 2005; Hewitt 2010) to reclaim the concept. Each has a remedy to resurrect the concept while equipping the most recent generation of feminists to resist the reductive notion of intergenerational conflict and progress the agenda of gender equality. Drawing on the concept of political generation developed most recently by Reger (2012), we argue for an analysis of generational dynamics that is sensitive to the overlap and contest that characterises the women’s movement in the contemporary moment. We contend that critiquing the wave metaphor must also include an assessment of its continuing power for feminists. Here, we turn to the political theoretical work of Dean (2009, 2010, 2012) and Hemmings (2005) in arguing for an assessment of the affective economy of

contemporary feminism and in particular the reproduction across feminist generations of a narrative of the loss of a 'real' form of feminism. Combining the concepts of political generation and affective economy allows for an appraisal of the shifting context and dynamics between feminists and feminisms across time as activists from different social contexts and generations enter into the women's movement. This work also speaks to recent efforts to assess the emergence of newer forms feminism or what some have termed 'cyber feminism'. For some, contemporary feminism is ineffectual or introspective (deCaires Narain 2004), with younger activists blogging rather than agitating, while other analyses proffer more institutionalised forms of state feminism as co-opted and neutralised by neo-liberalism (Eisenstein 2009; Fraser 2009; McRobbie 2009). Others (Dean 2010, 2012; Eschle and Maiguashca 2013; Mackay 2011; Walby 2011) reject the notion that younger feminists are incapable of waging effective campaigns. As most analysis is rooted in US cases, we look to a relatively under-theorised case of the Irish women's movement to explore generational dynamics across the women's movement and the function of the wave metaphor for feminists. This reformulation can help in the empirical assessment of the differences and similarities in tactics, organisations and narratives across different generations of the women's movements and the roles they play in constraining and facilitating campaigns.

The historiography of feminism

Feminist historian Nancy Hewitt (2010) details the origin of the wave metaphor in 1884 by the Irish activist Frances Power Cobbe to refer to social movements more generally. Accordingly, the origins of the term were irrelevant by 1968 as American feminists had claimed their existence in a second wave and "lumped all their foremothers into a "first wave" that stretched back to the 1840s... this version of feminist waves influenced media and scholars through the twentieth century. In the 1990s younger activists constituted themselves as a "third wave" (Hewitt 2010, 2).

Feminist historians and women studies scholars have historicised and rendered more inclusive the official record of each distinct generation of the women's movement (Alfonso and Trigilio 1997; Gilmore 2008; Hewitt 2010; Laughlin et al. 2010). This research acknowledged the contributions of working class, racial and sexual minority women; emphasised the international links between feminists across time and has expanded the notion of specific sites and practices that did not register as feminist in earlier formulations and were therefore excluded from the waves (Hewitt 2010, 8). Insightful in this regard is Becky Thompson's analysis of dominant feminist historiography, which replaces a lack of emphasis or complete maligning of White antiracist feminism and feminism of women of colour with an account of multiracial feminism and its centrality to second wave feminism in the United States (2002, 337).

Hewitt in her collection on the US context includes work from scholars working on different waves that offer accounts of the diversity and complexity that characterised each period. In her introduction, she queries why even in the context of this historical revisionism the homogenising power of the wave metaphor still works to often erase this complexity. Reflecting on the function that the metaphor plays, she comments that "activists highlight their distinctiveness from and often superiority to previous feminist movements in the process of constituting themselves as the next wave" (2010, 5).

Garrison's efforts to offer a historical backdrop to the emergence of a third wave (2000, 2004, 2005) include a conceptual reframing of the metaphor, recasting it from oceanic waves to that of radio waves, to convey that feminism's reach as growing with each wave, moving

further away (in time and in sheer numbers) from the first wave. But she resists the assumption of a link between chronological age and a set of ideological preferences and strategies. She argues “when we automatically assume ‘third’ refers to a specific generation, we actually erase the significant presence and contributions of many overlapping and multiple cohorts who count as feminists, and more particularly, of those who can count as Third Wave feminists” (2005, 237). In other words, feminism is understood here not as purely an age-based generational experience.

Feminisms and feminist identities

While feminist historians have focused on the lack of historiographical power of the wave concept, others have looked instead at the function it has played for different interests including how it opens and closes debates within feminism in general (Gillis et al. 2004; Henry 2004); how third and now fourth wavers use it to create distance and distinction and how second wavers work a similar logic assuming the existence of post-feminism, younger feminists’ depolitization and lack of deference (Dean 2010, 2012; McRobbie 2009).

Much of this work explores feminist identities drawing from personal narratives, feminist first person accounts and personal and academic writings from those within university settings to simultaneously enter into and interrogate the claims and counter claims from second and third wave perspectives (Byers and Crocker 2012, 3). In these analyses, feminist identities are understood as driven by more than just age and generation. Bailey (1997) and Orr (1997) defend second wave feminism against ahistorical third wave representations highlighting the function that the metaphor plays for the intellectual, personal and social struggles between second and third wave feminisms. Indeed, since the middle of the 1990s, a range of popular and academic texts emerged claiming the existence and delineating the contours and complexities of the ‘third wave’ as a new (and improved) feminist generation (Baumgardner and Richards 2000; Findlen 1995; Walker 1995). Rebecca Walker’s declaration in a 1992 article entitled ‘Becoming the Third Wave’, ‘I am not a postfeminist feminist, I am the Third Wave’ (1995, 41), established the double character of third wave feminism as distinct from both a media-endorsed postfeminism and the existing frameworks of second wave feminism. Gillis et al. (2004) acknowledge that the third wave impulse to delineate its trends and tendencies is realised most starkly with the publication of Leslie Heywood’s two-volume *The Women’s Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third Wave Feminism* (2005) where the case is made that second wavers had neglected the everyday concerns of women of colour and ethnicity and were blind to how they appeared to a younger generation as austere and disciplinary.

Dicker and Piepmeier (2003) in their assessment of second and third wave relations entitled *Catching a Wave* disagree that each wave is positioned in competition with one another but suggest retaining the concept, “because it provides a sense of solidarity and identity for young feminists” (2003, 20). They argue against significant cross-generational discord and suggest that a core set of beliefs attendant to feminism can be traced across the waves (2003 14–17). Alternatively, Mann and Huffman (2005) in a materialist analysis of factors that influenced the rise of the third wave in the United States dispute the notion of continuity arguing instead for “analysis more akin to those scholars who view third wave feminism as the visions and voices of feminists who positioned themselves “against,” rather than necessarily “after,” the second wave” (2005, 58). From their perspective, the diversity of competing feminisms should be acknowledged as a productive force in moving feminist activism forward (2005, 58).

Akiau, Erickson and Pierce (2007, 4–8) in their work *Feminist Waves: Feminist Generations: Lifestories from the Academy* take a middle position highlighting the conflicts between generational groups as well the continuities between them. Here, feminist generations refer to cohorts of women that entered into academia at different points in time and continue to generate knowledge simultaneously rather than displacing each other. Pointing to the importance of context, they suggest that feminist generations must be understood in conjunction with feminist waves in particular institutional and disciplinary locations. This is essential to avoid “the suggestion that second wave feminists are trapped within their wave and cannot escape it” (2007, 5). Byers and Crocker’s assessment of much of this debate on the rise of a third wave suggests that feminist analysis of the generational divide generally avoids entrenching the narrative of conflict and aims to address the genuine generational anxieties that arise when women attempt to adapt to or understand how to be feminist under shifting political and social conditions (2012, 3–4). In this way, analysis of actual generational dynamics allows for a problematization of the generational paradigm not only in terms of feminist identities but also more broadly as a way of understanding feminist mobilisation. For example, viewing the women’s movement as a multigenerational movement allows for criticisms by the next generation to be viewed as an accomplishment in that the second wave feminist generation has been successful in shaping the society and the discourse giving young women something to build upon and reject (Reger 2012, 193).

Continuity and change across feminist political generations

Social movement scholarship has long argued for an approach that understands generational and contextual variables when assessing the role of movements and social change. Analyses have reflected on the merits and drawbacks of classifying feminist activism into distinctive eras where mass-based protest can be detected (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005). This work has documented the staying power of the women’s movement on the national and international level as a function of its capacity to absorb the decline of groups and organisations through continual generation across time of new and diverse forms of organising locally, nationally and transnationally (Epstein 2001; Freeman 1995a, 1995b; Marx Ferree and Hess 2000; Marx Ferree and Mueller 2004; Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989; Whittier 1995, 1997; Roth 2004). Taylor (1989, 775) exemplifies this in her work on the North American Women’s movement between 1945 and 1960s where she emphasises the ways that organisational and ideological bridges span different periods and stages of mobilisation. Mannheim’s (1923, 1952) paradigmatic work on political generations has influenced explorations of generational dynamics across the women’s movement (Mann and Huffman 2005; Whittier 1995). The most recent effort by Reger (2012) employs political generation defined as ‘a group who share a similar political awakening brought about by societal changes’ (2012, 5) as a way of understanding patterns of continuity and change across generations of feminist mobilisation.

Reger (2012) uses political generation to explore diverse feminist communities in North America arguing that feminism is ‘everywhere and nowhere’. Each ‘wave’ is understood as containing multiple strands of activists entering the movement for different reasons and with different goals ignited by changing social contexts (2012, 11). In this sense, documenting shifts across time in the feminist movement is a story of the creation, merging and dissolving of organisations and networks of activists embedded in specific political generations (2012, 12). Political generations are a product of experience, ideologies and identities forged by the time activists are living in and not by the rates of mobilisation or a type of activism evident in the overall movement. Political generations are not monolithic

but are made up of activists with different identities and ideologies shaped by the social context around them (2012, 18). Reger (2012) draws on political generation then to unpack the wave concept, creating a new model to drill down into specific contemporary feminist communities in order to make sense of generational dynamics. Disidentification is a key part of this process where one generation intentionally distances itself from another in a movement.

Reger explores the links between political generation and the specific activist identities that shape contemporary feminism by examining the distinctions between political generations participating in feminist communities in different regions of the United States. Interview data allow her to detail how women in these communities conceptualised different generations of feminism as coexisting yet being distinct. Generational disidentification, the broad political context and the specific community location then all work to shape the perspectives, identities, strategies, tactics and relations between women mobilising on gender equality (2012, 19). Contemporary feminists do work in organisations founded by their older sisters, and they continue to address many of the same challenges and draw on a similar repertoire of tactics; however, they mobilise and adopt strategies in different times (2012,16). What tactics they embrace is influenced by the relationship between their political generation and their community environment. This creates unique feminist identities that have political generations as part of their foundation (Reger 2012, 17). Reger's overall argument is that in political contexts hostile to feminism, cross-generational conflict is less likely and generational alliances are common. In contexts more open to feminism, generations of feminists interact and boundaries between them are permeable. In contexts where feminism is embraced, the strongest boundaries between generations are erected as younger feminists flourish without the support of older feminists. But in all communities, feminism continues albeit in focused, submerged and linked forms (2012, 104). Reger ultimately resists the sequential notion that younger generations replace older ones, arguing that feminist generations overlap, creating both cooperation and dissension in the movement (2012, 105). Generational dissension is then the product of a viable movement, negotiations across generations that range from admiration to antagonism create the dynamism that perpetuates the movement (2012, 105).

The perfect form of feminism and affective economies

In addition to historical, identity-focused and generational analyses of feminist waves, a body of work on feminist affect has emerged to conceptualise 'feminist storytelling' (Hemmings 2005). This work problematizes 'the stories feminists tell about feminism' and highlights inconsistencies and omissions to make feminist thought and practice 'fit' with dominant feminist narratives. For example, the teleological account of feminism entails a steady progression from essentialist and therefore 'worse' 1970s feminism to pluralistic, 'better' contemporary feminism. Through a review of the "techniques of citation", Hemmings (2005,117) highlights how this story of feminism as progress is ensured by unsupported generalisations, which are made precisely because contemporary understandings of feminism depend upon the retrospective construction of an outmoded, unified feminism of the second wave. According to Hemmings, part of the problem with "a shift from the naïve, essentialist 1970s, through the Black feminist critiques and 'sex wars' of the 1980s, and into the 'difference' 1990s and beyond" lies in the fixing "of racial and sexual critique of feminism as decade-specific" and of the positioning of poststructuralist theorists "as the first to deconstruct 'woman'" (2005, 117). Conversely, Hemmings argues, the story of feminist loss portrays 1970s feminism as a committed, unified political force that comes to

be corrupted and depoliticised in subsequent decades through its proliferation in academia and ideological splintering. For Hemmings, both the story of feminist loss and the story of feminist progress are erroneously repeated in feminist publications and teaching, despite their flattening of complexity and misrepresentation of feminist work. Hemmings notes that “feminist texts work to persuade at the emotional level” (2005, 120), hence the affective nature of these and other feminist stories.

Jonathan Dean (2012) further develops the notion of the affective story of feminist loss in the context of contemporary UK feminist practice and thought. Highlighting disparities between the recent resurgence in feminist activism, and repeated claims of young women’s lack of interest in feminism, Dean assesses the continued purchase of feminist narratives of loss. Drawing upon Srila Roy’s work (2009), he points out the centrality of loss to the “affective economies of contemporary British feminism” but questions the intransigence of “attachments to loss” (2012, 316) in the face of ample evidence to support the revival, rather than the death, of contemporary feminism.¹ According to Dean, this intransigence results in the erasure of young feminists and devalues contemporary forms of feminism. The affective attachment to loss functions not only through persistent claims of the apolitical and anti-feminist nature of young women but also through the rejection of young women’s activism as not properly feminist. While previous “attachments to loss” may have taken “the form of nostalgia, a melancholic longing for a now lost radical activism”, contemporary denials of young women’s activism constitute “a more active form of erasure and/or dismissal, whereby these newly visible feminist activisms are ignored, cast out or deemed not appropriately feminist” (2012, 319). Ultimately, for Dean, the repetitive assertion of young women’s lack of interest in feminism entails the automatic association of young women with anti-feminism, as the “stickiness of affect” is ensured through constant reinforcement. Hence, “the trope ‘young women are not feminist’ circulates largely independent of any empirical referent” (2012, 325). This attachment to the loss of a once perfect form of feminism travels across feminist generations and is the fuel we argue that motors elements of generational dissension, itself a product of both specific activist understandings and broader political and social conditions that constitute political generations.

The Irish women’s movement

The Irish women’s movement provides an interesting case to assess a renovated notion of generational dynamics that includes both context and the affective economy of feminist movements. In the vein of standard Anglo-American feminist historiography, the Irish women’s movement is usually understood in terms of feminist waves. Most analyses date the first wave from the mid 19th century, with franchise secured for women in 1918 while still under British colonial rule. Accounts detail how first wave women played a role in the nationalist movement but were side-lined in the postcolonial period where their demands were relegated in the construction of a conservative Catholic post-independent Irish state (Cullen 1985; Cullen and Luddy 1995; Ryan 1995; Ward 1991, 1995). A period of abeyance ensued until the radicalised second wave in the 1970s. This was followed by a conservative counter movement in the 1980s, which led to the retrenchment of radical feminist politics and the emergence of a cultural turn involving the decentralisation and fragmentation of the women’s movement in the 1990s into a network of localised community and voluntary groups. The third wave culminated in a movement that has been characterised as professionalised and mainstreamed into a form of state feminism (Connolly and O’Toole 2005; De Wan 2010; Mahon 1995; O’Donovan and Ward 1999; Smyth 1993).

Connolly (2002, 2006) working from a resource mobilisation perspective argues that the women's movement in Ireland was characterised by a high degree of organisational continuity and that the first and second waves were directly linked in the 1940s by a network of activists and organisations that directly influenced the second wave. She acknowledges the role of changing structural conditions and international developments that buttressed and combined with feminist goals but maintains that existing networks of activists were critical in harnessing the mobilisation potential of the women's movement in the 1970s, when political opportunities arose and the cultural climate began to change (2006, 61). In this account, the wave metaphor does not suggest rupture or break between the waves but is employed to capture the complexity and continuity between feminist activism across time through periods of protest and abeyance (2002, 35).

Archival work by Connolly and O'Toole (2005) from within the second wave of the Irish feminist movement explored feminist networks and the development of feminist identities. Their analysis of the emergence of larger national women's organisations alongside grass roots activism revealed mobilisation that was multi-generational on issues including reproductive rights, domestic violence, social welfare provisions, family law and equality in employment. Connolly argues that there was significant coalition and interaction between these groups, and ideological distinctions were evident suggesting a degree of fluidity between groups, individuals and particular political stances (Connolly 2006, 78). Within this fluidity existed examples of feminist solidarity that was multigenerational in scope (2006, 66–67). Notably, efforts by the pro-life movement in the early 1980s to constitutionally ban a right to information and abortion referral services had galvanised a cross-generational group of activists including college students and women from the medical, teaching and legal professions to campaign against the referendum in groups such as Women's Right to Choose (Connolly and O'Toole 2005, 70–73). Other pro-choice groups with a cross-generational element included Alliance for Choice, Choice Ireland and Action on X (McAvoy 2008, 2013).

De Wan's (2010) assessment of third and perhaps fourth wave feminism in the Irish context offers some elements of political generation. While making reference to the wave metaphor, she rejects the evolutionary narrative, arguing that the movement has always been fragmented and focused on a variety of social inequalities under particular historical and political conditions (2011, 525). What sets apart the contemporary women's movement from earlier iterations are the new political and social contexts under which feminists construct their identities and advocate for gender equality (2011, 524). She argues that the success of the Irish economy and the success of the women's movement led to the restructuring of social relations indicative of late capitalism, and this in turn altered the conditions of possibility for feminist activism (2011, 522). Her account comes closest to the idea of political generation as multiple strands of Irish women from different cohorts mobilise together and separately according to their own feminist biographies and activist experiences.

Conflict and fragmentation are key elements for De Wan in understanding the development of feminism in the Irish context as she details how efforts to construct a unified movement in the 1970s had created forms of exclusion of feminist subjects and histories where differences that had in part generational bases on issues including nationalism, class, religion and abortion led to significant divisions within the movement. For De Wan, representing the women's movement as once unified and now fragmented "clouds the fact that feminist political practices in Ireland have consistently been characterised by high levels of fragmentation and divisiveness with only moments of unity" (2010, 525). She contends that activists no longer attempt to create a unified 'social movement' in a traditional sense, but practice 'movement activism' where groups and individuals coalesce into campaigns at

particular moments for important issues (2010, 524–5). Given De Wan's (2010) and Connolly's (2002) emphasis on diffuseness and division in Irish feminisms, political generations can account for such differences and disassociations through the conception of feminist waves as particular eras when diverse strands of activists join the movement in a changed social context.

As part as a reaction to economic recession, the resurgence of activism by the Catholic Right, and state-led austerity, new contemporary groups have emerged in the Irish context (Bacik 2012) such as the Irish Feminist Network (IFN) founded in 2010 and aimed at younger women. Research on the interactions between this new fourth wave and older generations (Cullen 2013) lends credence to the continuing existence of generational dissension, including tensions between third wave activists, who hold paid positions within academia and the apparatus of state feminism, and younger or fourth wave women who struggle to resource their activism and reject older generations' feminism as lacking in urgency and relevance.² Third wave women suggest that younger 'cyber feminists' were unfair in their critique of their third wave sisters as out-dated, posing the question, "does re-tweeting constitute activism?" (interview with third wave activist 2012). In some ways, fourth wave women were found to have adopted a referential attitude towards second wave women, reserving their most stringent critiques for third wavers who were seen to have colonised the political space around gender equality. In similar terms, third wave women occupied a space between both generations where they noted their own struggles as younger women trying to gain a foothold in the feminist movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s daunted by the particular cliques of second wave women that made them feel "no way that you were a feminist of their credentials" (interview with third wave activist June 2012). Each generation of women accuse then one another of a form of depoliticization underlining the strong affective element and attachment to loss that governs feminist identification. As Dean (2012) notes the attachment to affective feminist stories may cross generations and/or waves, with feminists of all ages being particularly attached to the story of feminist loss. The attachment to the loss of a former more authentic feminism and the repetition of processes of generational disidentification are as such evident in the Irish case. Dissension may then be an inevitable and generative element of multigenerational movements. Both the campaign for justice for survivors of Magdalene Laundries and the Irish pro-choice movement offer examples of such dynamics.

Interview data with third wave abortion rights activists suggest that cross-generational campaign group Action on X³ benefitted specifically from the energy and creativity of younger women "some of whom were born after the 'X case' and were unaware of how restrictive the law was and were so angry they wanted to do something" (interview with third wave activist 2013). These younger women were described as vibrant and less interested in the complex historical and political context of abortion but focused more on cultural tactics involving music and social media to fund and organise street demonstrations. Commenting on cross-generational tensions, she noted that she had made a conscious effort not to dismiss younger activists as she recalled being asked as an 18 year old to put up posters rather than participate in the 'serious stuff' of campaign organisation. While embracing younger activists, she was still somewhat critical suggesting that younger women were less political than previous generations.

Following Reger (2012), the more hostile the context the more permeable the boundary across the generational divide and the more likely alliances will form. Action on X illustrates that cross-generational collaboration occurred in a context where political support for liberalising law on abortion was weak, and a well-resourced pro-life movement created a strong countervailing force. Even within this context of permeable boundaries cross-

generational tensions were present as part of an affective structure that organised how younger and older women assessed each other's contributions and participation. Irish feminists still operate in spaces along generational lines where older and younger women question each other's approach. Disidentification is a productive but not always a benign force. For example, a conference held in May 2013 to commemorate women involved in activism during a historic lock out strike in Dublin in 1913 and to contemplate feminism 100 years later included no younger women in its programme.

Fischer's (2013) analysis of young Irish women's mobilisation suggests that there is a form of erasure at work where young feminists are easily rendered invisible by such exclusions. Feminist claims that young people simply are not interested in feminism or politics or that contemporary activism is not properly feminist illustrate the affective story of feminist loss in an Irish context. Coupled with shrinking resources in a challenging socio-economic climate, the discounting of young feminists through the perpetuation of this element of the affective economy, risks the diminishment of a fully recognised and resourced fourth wave.

Conclusion

This article reviewed work that highlights the significant shortcomings of the generational paradigm of the wave metaphor. Where the wave conception fails to take account of cross-generational feminist activism, Reger's (2012) notion of political generations is flexible enough to explain feminist movements in terms of differently aged, gendered and sexed beings that join feminism at a particular moment, therefore reflecting a specific socio-historical context. Reger's (2012) account recognises the likelihood of feminist disidentification, a feature of generational self-assertion that has been voiced most explicitly in the 1990s by self-professed third wave feminists. Work on the affective historical readings of feminism has taken specific feminist stories, rather than waves, as cues for assessment. Past research acknowledges episodes of cross-generational collaboration and contest. Recent research has confirmed significant cleavages among second, third and fourth wave activists (Cullen 2013). Emphasising the emotional investment of specific accounts of feminism, such work has also highlighted the function of the generational dissension and the potential for the side-lining of younger feminists (Fischer 2013). Given the linkages highlighted by Connolly (2002) between feminist waves in Ireland, and given De Wan's (2010) characterisation of campaign-based cooperation, Reger's (2012) concept of political generation comes to bear positively upon the Irish context, owing to its accommodation of cross-generational activism that is structured by a specific temporal, social setting. Both the affective and the political generational reading of feminism, then, apply to feminism in Ireland. Political generation provides for analysis of generational dynamics that include the historical, political and social context that shapes specific feminist identities and activism. Add to this an assessment of the role of an affective economy in fuelling generational disidentification and we allow for an analysis of feminist politics taking place rather than imagined histories.

Short Biographies

Pauline Cullen holds a PhD in Sociology from Stony Brook University, New York, USA. She is a lecturer in Sociology and Politics in the Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Her research has drawn upon social movement theory to investigate challenges faced by civil society coalitions representing diverse societal constituencies and the role of states and international governance in providing opportunities and constraints to relatively resource poor civil society actors. She has also published on the

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Clara Fischer holds a PhD in philosophy from Trinity College, Dublin. Her research is interdisciplinary, drawing upon politics, philosophy and gender studies. She has published in journals such as *Studies in Social Justice*, *the Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *Gender and Development* and *POLITICS*. Research interests include feminisms in Ireland, theories of socio-political change, democratic theory and feminist ethics. Her monograph, *Gendered Readings of Change* (Palgrave MacMillan forthcoming), surveys philosophical expositions of change and provides a feminist-pragmatist reading to redress gendered conceptions of mutability. She is co-editor of a volume on women's movements in Ireland, entitled *Irish Feminisms: Past, Present and Future* (Arlen House 2013). Outside of academia, Fischer is a director of the Irish Feminist Network, an organisation dedicated to promoting gender equality in Ireland. <http://independent.academia.edu/ClaraFischer>

Notes

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¹ Sara Ahmed (2004) describes emotions as economic to emphasise their relational, rather than intrinsic nature, with emotions being “a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity but is produced only as an effect of its circulation.”

² Second wave women are in fact less critical of younger women, lamenting that the third wave generation were of more concern, as they exist in a vacuum of sorts, being in their 40s now, doing all the things expected of them (building careers, having families) but having become locked into a form of depoliticisation (Interview with second wave activist 2012).

³ Action on X mobilised in 2013 on the 21st anniversary of a court case that overturned a prohibition on travelling to the UK to a 14 year old rape victim that sought an abortion on the grounds of suicidality. The Irish state was compelled to legislate for the X Case because of a European Court of Human Rights 2010 ruling but had delayed until implementing legislation. This campaign was emboldened by public outrage at the death of Savita Halappanaver a woman denied an abortion while in miscarriage at an Irish hospital in October 2012. The Irish government finally legislated for a highly limited form of abortion in the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act passed in July 2013.

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