

The Battle to Control Female Fertility in Modern Ireland

The Irish battle for legal contraception was a contest over Irish exceptionalism: the belief that Ireland could resist global trends despite the impact of second-wave feminism, falling fertility and a growing number of women travelling for abortion. It became so lengthy and so divisive because it challenged key tenets of Irish identity: Catholicism, large families, traditional gender roles and sexual puritanism. The Catholic Church argued that legalising contraception would destroy this way of life, and many citizens agreed. *The Battle to Control Female Fertility in Modern Ireland* provides new insights on Irish masculinity and fertility control. It highlights women's activism in both liberal and conservative camps, and the consensus between the Catholic and Protestant churches views on contraception for single people. It also shows how contraception and the Pro-Life Amendment campaign affected policy towards Northern Ireland, and it examines the role of health professionals, showing how hospital governance prevented female sterilisation. It is a story of gender, religion, social change and failing efforts to reaffirm Irish moral exceptionalism.

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To my granddaughters, Isabel, Abigail and Emma

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	x
Introduction	1
1 Late Marriages and Large Families: ‘The Enigma of the Modern World’?	9
2 The Pill, the Pope and a Changing Ireland	46
3 ‘A Bitter Blow’: <i>Humanae Vitae</i> and Irish Society, 1968–1973	81
4 Contraception: Access and Opposition, 1973–1980	123
5 ‘Against Sin’: An Irish Family Planning Bill, 1973–1979	161
6 The 1983 Pro-life Amendment	197
7 ‘Bona Fide Family Planning’: The 1980s and 1990s	248
Conclusion	302
<i>Bibliography</i>	314
<i>Index</i>	326

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Acknowledgements

ix

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Abbreviations

AAC	Anti-Amendment Campaign
CAP	Contraception Action Programme
CMAC	Catholic Marriage Advisory Council
CMO	Chief Medical Officer
COSC	Council of Social Concern
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSW	Council for the Status of Women
CSWB	Catholic Social Welfare Bureau
CTSI	Catholic Truth Society of Ireland
CYMS	Catholic Young Men's Society
DD	Dáil Debates
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
DUWGA	Dublin University Women Graduates Association
<i>EH</i>	<i>Evening Herald</i>
EHB	Eastern Health Board
FF	Fianna Fáil
FGC	Fertility Guidance Clinic
FPS	Family Planning Services
FRCS	Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons
GMS	General Medical Scheme
ICA	Irish Countrywomen's Association
ICC	Irish Council of Churches
ICDG	Irish Catholic Doctors Guild
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
<i>IER</i>	<i>Irish Ecclesiastical Record</i> ,
IFL	Irish Family League
IFPA	Irish Family Planning Association
IFPRA	Irish Family Planning Rights Association
<i>II</i>	<i>Irish Independent</i>
IMA	Irish Medical Association
<i>IMT</i>	<i>Irish Medical Times</i>
INO	Irish Nurses Organisation

List of Abbreviations

xi

<i>IP</i>	<i>Irish Press</i>
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IPU	Irish Pharmaceutical Union
<i>IT</i>	<i>Irish Times</i>
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
IUD	Intra-Uterine Device
IWLM	Irish Women's Liberation Movement
IWU	Irish Women United
JAMA	<i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i>
JIMA	<i>Journal of the Irish Medical Association</i>
MHB	Midland Health Board
MWHB	Mid-Western Health Board
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NAOMI	National Association for the Ovulation Method in Ireland
NEHB	North-Eastern Health Board
NHC	National Health Council
NWHB	North-Western Health Board
OMAS	Ovulation Method Advisory Service
PLAC	Pro-Life Amendment Campaign
PSI	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
RCGPI	Royal College of General Practitioners of Ireland
RCPI	Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SD	Seanad Debates
SEHB	South-Eastern Health Board
SHB	Southern Health Board
SOS	Save Our Society
SPUC	Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
UCDA	University College Dublin Archives
UCG	University College Galway
WHB	Western Health Board
WHO	World Health Organisation
WW	<i>Woman's Way</i>