

State Instituted Sexual Violence:
How the Northern Irish State Weaponised Gender to Enforce Authority During the Troubles,
1968-1998

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Regularly, “[she] was bodily assaulted, thumped, trailed and kicked,” explained Republican prisoner Rosemary Callaghan in a 1990 interview.¹ Callaghan was routinely hauled from her cell to be interrogated by prison officers during her time in Armagh Gaol, Northern Ireland.² However, the physical violence of the officers was not her primary concern. What Callaghan found the most distressing and “degrading,” was how the officers embarrassed and disrespected her body as a woman. She recalled how the officers would intentionally uncover her breasts to the entire prison wing as they dragged Callaghan from her cell.³ Routinely, her body was forcefully exposed, “to the jeering and mocking eyes of the screws [the prisoner’s nickname for prison officers].”⁴ Callaghan’s experience offers a glimpse of how the Northern Irish State instituted intentional sexual violence against Republican women during the period commonly known as “The Troubles” (1968-1998). Within prison institutions—whether the officers intended to or not—the female prisoner’s gender was often used by officers as a disciplinary tool. This would have lasting cultural ramifications.

The Troubles was a result of long-term sectarian conflict stemming from colonial and religious divisions in Northern Ireland. The *Government of Ireland Act* (1920), divided Ireland into North and South. This partition of Ireland created two separate governments and consequently spawned two distinct cultural and political identities. The North splintered and fostered six counties, all of which remained in the United Kingdom. Subsequently, it consisted of a mainly Protestant majority, which politically aligned itself as “Unionists.” The South became the Irish Free State in 1922, and then a republic in 1949 - completely separated from British authority. The South was mostly Catholic, and politically, its citizens were “Republicans.” The Troubles represented the divisions within the Northern community between these two opposing identities: Unionists and Republicans. The creation of two separate Irish states called for the restructuring and division of a homogenous and colonized Irish identity. In a sense, religious affiliation came to define political identity. This was further complicated as many Republicans remained in the North and rallied for a United Ireland. They formed the paramilitary terrorist group called the Irish Republican Army (IRA) that would fight for this cause.

Since Irish independence (1921), and the subsequent Irish Civil War (1922 to 1923), historians have extensively researched how Republican women’s national and cultural identities have been shaped by wartime experiences.⁵ These violent periods (including the Troubles) were motivated

by Ireland's resistance to its British colonial oppressors. In the wake of sovereignty, Republican values (alongside the Catholic Church) came to believe that it was a women's role to safeguard the morality and integrity of Irish culture through motherhood.⁶ Catholic ideology and Irish mythology influenced *traditional* ideals of gender roles, where a women's national importance was limited to her domestic duty.⁷ Recently, gender has started to become a tool for analysis among feminist historians exploring how violence shaped Republican women's national identities.⁸ Within this scholarship historians have begun to analyze how women's bodies were a space for violence.⁹ Of course, bodily violence has been extensively theorized by scholars to show its disciplinary qualities.¹⁰ This essay also uses gender as a scope of analysis to explore the relationship between authority and gender within "total institutions" like prisons. I argue that the interactions between the prison officers and female prisoners should be explicitly recognized as sexual violence.

To assess and analyze violence is not without complications. The scope and reach of violent actions encompass a broad spectrum of severity, both psychological and physical. Following the United Nations' 1992 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women,' which defined violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. It also included threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.¹¹ Using this definition and engaging with interviews, documentaries, and archival resources, this essay shows how the State could weaponize gender vulnerabilities within prison institutions. Here "State" refers to the Loyalist Northern Irish government, not the British government which was the North's superior authority. Unfortunately, because of archival and geographical restrictions, parts of this essay rely on interviews conducted by other historians. The analysis of these answers and findings remains my own. Sexual violence, in the form of language, threats, and strip searches, was instrumental in degrading, punishing, and disciplining Republican women.¹² Ultimately, this paper underscores how the violence that these Catholic Republican women experienced in prison were indeed sexual. Whether the State intentional or not, sexual violence was employed by prison authorities as a disciplinary tool that evoked cultural shame, fear, and power.¹³ Violence and war are famously known to work synonymously, further influencing the severity of the prison experience of Republican women during tumultuous times.

This paper will focus on two main prison experiences for Republican women to assess State-perpetrated sexual violence as an authoritative measure. The first part of this paper examines the 1982 "Dirty Protest" at Armagh prison, where thirty-two Republican women—nearly all under the age of thirty, from working-class backgrounds, and members of the IRA (or had been imprisoned on the suspect of such grounds)—refused to wash until they received political recognition from the British government, and subsequently, the Northern government. At the time Armagh was the only women's prison in the North. In 1986 it was relocated to Maghaberry prison, County Antrim. This

will be explored further in the latter half of this article. I conclude by considering the experience of the frequent strip searches at Magaberry between 1986 and 1991 to tabulate and expose State-perpetrated sexual violence.

The Effect of Cultural Conservatism

Republican values for women were permeated by cultural roots that stemmed from traditional, nationalistic tropes of “Mother Ireland” (*Mná na hÉireann*, in Gaelic). This ideology created a symbiotic relationship between women, family, and nationalism that was wrapped up in conservative Catholic values that sought to protect Irish culture from colonial oppression. Catholicism, in particular, its values of virtue and modesty were core parts of this Republican culture.¹⁴ These traits were also significant in distinguishing Irish culture from previous British rulers who were perceived as Protestant, immoral, and lacking in virtue.¹⁵ In this light, the Republican women in the North had a nationalistic duty to produce and raise children for the generation of Irish voters to achieve a United Ireland. This was further propped up by the Catholic Church’s ban of the use of birth control in 1930.¹⁶

Traditional Republican stories used women as nationalistic tropes, mythical symbols, and emblems of Irish identity that connected female patriotism with motherhood. The figure “Kathleen Ni Houlihan” (*Caitlín Ní Uallacháin*) was the personification of Ireland in the form of an older woman. The persona was extensively used in Republican literature, poetry, and texts. After the Anglo-Irish War (1919 to 1921), the figure was mostly associated with the IRA in the North. During the Troubles, it became an emblem of patriarchal patriotic duty. Bill Rolston has researched the representations of women in over 200 novels that focus on women’s identities during the conflict. In his analysis, he proposed that Irish female identities could be separated into two distinct groups: “Mothers” and “Whores and Villains.”¹⁷ Rolston’s work suggests how contemporary gender expectations fed into political affiliation.

War also helped to preserve conservative gender stereotypes.¹⁸ For the case of Republican women during the Troubles, many dutifully accepted and continued to perform the domestic role removed from violence, allowing men to be war-time heroes.¹⁹ Though this is not to say that women had not been involved in Republican military experience, as the history of Cumann na mBan underlines.²⁰ Prisons provided the interspace that disrupted traditional gender and political norms. Hence, for the women protesting, despite being physically removed from the world, they were not removed from the gendered-cultural expectations and values steeped in years of history, understanding, and experience. Exploring the brutal experiences of these women illuminates the mechanisms of institutional authority and abuse. For prisoners, the State’s treatment was understood as acts of violent sexual abuse.

Political Power, Prisons, And Patriarchy

Political status was repealed by the Margaret Thatcher government in 1976, deeming all IRA prisoners as “terrorists” and “criminals,” rather than prisoners of war. In 1978, the male IRA prisoners in Long Kesh prison refused to leave their cells, work, wash, or use the toilets in protest against the British government within prison authorities. The rebellion became commonly known as the “Dirty Protest,” and was described by the British press as “the most bizarre protest by prisoners in revolt against their gaolers” and thus, “self-inflicted degradation.”²¹

Initially in Armagh in 1980, many of the prisoners embarked on a campaign of non-cooperation where they refused to do prison work, removed themselves from educational programs, and rejected the institution of prison discipline - in demand for political status.²² The Dirty Protest in Armagh began on the 7 February 1980 when these “non-conforming” prisoners were separated from the rest of the prisoners by a different wing, and “objected” to be searched by the officers.²³ Subsequently, violence ensued between the women and officers. As punishment, the women were locked in their cells for five days with no natural light or access to toilet or washing facilities, thus embarking on their form of the Dirty Protest.²⁴ The women maintained that they were ‘forced’ onto the protest after being subjected to brutal violence by the jail officers in April 1980.²⁵ For over a year these women were “existing in deplorable conditions,” filth and starvation, with the added complexity (and societal horror) of menstruation blood.²⁶ Like the male prisoners, these women were protesting for the “five demands:” the right to wear their clothes; the right not to do prison work; the right of freedom of association among political prisoners; the right to receive weekly visits and parcels; and the right to organize recreational events.²⁷ Both protests were deemed by the British government as a terrorist threat.²⁸ Mairead Farrell, one of the most illustrious Republican leaders, especially while at Armagh, wrote in a letter to her family that Britain’s plan to classify them as criminals “to disguise the war situation here,” demanded a united objection.²⁹ The “protest of dirt,” confronted Northern State officials with simultaneous demonstrations, both of which called for the same demands only distinguished by gender. However, the deployment of authority was framed in a way that would inflict the most cultural shame on Republican society – exploitation through sexuality.

Scholarship dedicated to the Troubles’ prison experience has mostly been male-dominated. Writing in 1980, journalist Tim Pat Coogan captured the disdain for the cultural embarrassment and failure of women in jail: “the protest was hard to contemplate when men [were] on it. But it becomes even worse when it is embarked on by women.”³⁰ However, there are significant texts that have begun to overturn the patriarchal historiography. Though, much of the scholarship surrounding the women’s Dirty Protest through the lens of gender has not addressed the sexual nuances of the experiences adequately. Nell McCafferty, who documented the event as it was unfolding in 1980, anchored her thesis on the challenges of female political struggles and framed the protest as a feminist movement.³¹ Laura Weinstein recognized the protest as simultaneously a Republican and a feminist

issue, within an anti-colonial struggle.³² While historians have looked at the feminist ideologies and their repercussions on Irish politics, scholars have generally neglected how sexually-orientated the violence and interrogation during the protest was. Expanding on the sociologists Teresa O'Keefe and Begona Aretxaga, I will show how women's increased political status within these total institutions provided a new space for sexual violence.³³ When they began their protest, the Armagh women did not consider their gender as significant and perceived their struggle as the same as that of the men in Long Kesh.³⁴ However, gender should not be separated from experience. Sexual exploitation was viable within a prison and exploited by some of its staff.

When Armagh's protest started in 1980, an immediate cell and body search of the "non-conforming prisoners" was conducted by male officers enlisted from Long Kesh.³⁵ It was peculiar because female officers usually performed this duty. Prisoner Anne Bateson recalled how "three male screws [officers] burst in with riot gear ... and dragged [her] out of the cell," continuously punching her.³⁶ While prisoners were not unfamiliar to male officers, as pointed out by Aretxaga, why would male officers be brought in "if it was not for a gendered form of punishment?"³⁷ The rest of the search would be carried out by an excessive number of male officers, all unnecessarily over-equipped in full riot gear. The sound of barking dogs was also mentioned in some of the prisoner's accounts.³⁸ The clear presence of male officers fitted in the obviously unnecessary gear should not go ignored. Similarly, the female officers present were also equipped in full riot gear, blurring the boundaries of gender, arguably to make them appear more threatening.³⁹ The event unfolded when the prisoners were unarmed (and unwashed) in their cells. Hence, the situation did not account for such a high level of security or precaution. However, it did suggest there was a fear-dimension to the narrative. As described by Margaretta D'Arcy, the officers were "unable to see us as individuals"⁴⁰ proposing that there was a connection between the relationship of gender ideology and sexual difference in the deployment of authority.

The relationship between disciplinary techniques of the body in the deployment of power, especially in total institutions like prisons, has been extensively elaborated by Foucault. Foucault has also recognized that sexuality can be used as a "dense transfer point for relations of power, one endowed with the greatest instrumentality."⁴¹ Expanding on Foucault's analysis, since the start of the protest the prison officers incorporated a gendered element to enforce discipline in prisons. Authority administered through the prism of colonial male dominance provoked fear of women's vulnerability of sexuality. Building on Foucault's theory of discipline, where punishment becomes "an art of effects," it underscores the tactical and strategic use of technologies of power to gender relations and the power of the State.⁴²

For the prisoners, the assault was as much a political attempt to discipline through punishment as a humiliating assertion of male dominance.⁴³ The media and personal letters of the prisoner's relatives further reflected this feeling. A letter from the mothers of active protestors to the Secretary of

State in May 1980 feared that the "dignity, spiritual rights, and self-respect of the girls had been violated to a serious degree in Armagh prison."⁴⁴ The letter informed the Northern government that "All the members of the families of these girls [were] personally insulted and injured by the cruel, inhuman and degrading attacks on their sisters and daughters."⁴⁵ They stressed their concern about the "deliberate escalation of punishment ... in physical beating by men." Finally, they concluded that this type of violent and immodest regime was "not tolerable to Catholic people." In the Northern working-class Catholic culture, rape and sexual violence fall into the space of the unspeakable, evoking feelings of deep vulnerability and shame. The emotional dimension of gendered violence was entangled within cultural stereotypes, myths, and religious expectations which invoked genuine fear in a community. As one woman explained, "It's keepin' your dignity more than anything else."⁴⁶ Bodily discipline carried an emotional complexity that was integral to violent intentions.⁴⁷

Acts of sexual violence encompass more physical interactions. During interrogations, officers employed carnal language that was unsettling, unfamiliar, and embarrassing for these young women. Probing the vulnerability of traditional Republican women's culture, officers often used religious modesty as a threat; "Catholic girls just fuck anybody, you sluts."⁴⁸ One woman recalled in detail how an officer was explicitly threatening sexual intentions as a form of intimidation during prison interrogation: "You know we [prison officers] can rape you right here, and nobody is going to believe you."⁴⁹ The prisoners almost expected this type of personal gendered insult. In later interviews, one woman remembered being addressed by the officers as an, "'Irish whore,' and you know, 'Slut. Fenian.' Just the usual."⁵⁰ This specific language discourse shamed the prisoners' cultural heritage and was thus understood as demeaning and disrespectful. The prisoner Maureen Gibson described her time in jail as a "dehumanising experience ... You lose your femininity completely ... because you have to, in order to survive in jail."⁵¹ The prisoners' experiences underscore how cultural ideas that constructed the idea of femininity could be exploited. It also played into wider themes of Republican culture. The "state of panic" that the female prisoners endured underlined the continuous colonization of the female body by the British.⁵² In Long Kesh, some of the male prisoners mentioned that many prison officers will exploit family ties and "try to break the wife" during interrogation.⁵³ One male prisoner recalled a prison officer threatening that "The boys [prison officers] are down at your place screwing your wife."⁵⁴ Directly and indirectly, across an array of sources, Armagh prisoners and their feminine identity of virtue was subjected to the "continuous sexual abuse," by threats of rape, inappropriate touching, and commenting on their breasts.⁵⁵

Security, Sexuality, And Strip Searches

Before 1982, strip searches were only performed in prisons when a woman first entered the jail as part of a systematic procedure, which also included a bath. However, the methodology of strip searches changed after the women's 1981 protest. In 1982 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,

Jim Prior, sanctified that officers could perform strip searches whenever they found it suitable. Warning the prisoner was now no longer necessary.⁵⁶ When Labour politician Kevin McNamara inquired on behalf of the House of Commons to Secretary Prior of the criteria "for deciding to strip search a prisoner," Prior's response underscored the arbitrary motivation for the new method of security. Prior claimed that strip searches were dependent on "matters for operational judgment," and would, therefore, "not be appropriate for [him] to go into detail [about the criteria]."⁵⁷ This exchange between the British Commons and Stormont (Northern Ireland's parliament) traces the specific experiences that allowed the State, in the form of prison institutions, to exploit sexuality as a tool that enforced discipline. The State's policy reform was not motivated by the paranoia of prisoners smuggling dangerous resources into the prison. In the same exchange above by the two diplomats, Secretary Prior revealed that the only materials found during the strip searches were "keys, letters, and cigarettes."⁵⁸ Furthermore, the government set a new precedent in Armagh for the interaction between the female prisoners and prison officers. Bodily searches were no longer an initial routine check, which incorporated a consoling bath. Instead, the State's new policy transformed the grounds that facilitated strip-searching. Framed as a security measure, any officers could perform strip searches based on suspicion, regulation, or imposing fear - if *they* believed it was warranted. As described by a group of Catholic priests in 1985 who were condemning "the immoral practice of strip-searching women:" "We say that this immoral practice has nothing to do with security but is another blatant example of the way British authorities try to degrade and humiliate the Irish People."⁵⁹ For these women and their community, strip searches were brutal, degrading, and unexpected. While the men were also being stripped searched in Long Kesh, it echoed in a less culturally poignant way. Described by Cardinal O' Fiaich, the strip-searching of women "has caused deep revulsion among many members of the public."⁶⁰ Indeed, by 1982 the "great symbol" that underlined the "contempt of government for the human person, [was] the stripping naked of the girl prisoners."⁶¹ The State's policy change highlights the institutional methods that enforced authority through exploiting gender vulnerabilities.⁶²

In 1986, Armagh jail closed and all its prisoners were transferred to Maghaberry Prison in Lisburn, Belfast.⁶³ Unlike the dated Victorian infrastructure at Armagh, Maghaberry was equipped with high-class technology, rendering security breaches practically impossible.⁶⁴ However, strip searches, sexual language, and excessive male dominance were not left behind at Armagh. In the first six months in Maghaberry, a total of 210 strip searches were conducted on the women.⁶⁵ Again, when the North's Secretary of State, now Michael Mates (1992), was inquired about the legitimacy or need for such extensive methods of security, he assured the Commons that it was vital that "Full searching takes place routinely ... and at any other time [was] deemed necessary for security reasons."⁶⁶ It should also be noted that the Northern Irish experience of sexual violence was not in isolation. Sexual violence as a tool of oppression and domination can be seen in the wider British colonial history. Caroline Elkins' work looks at British violence in the Gulags in Kenya, and how it was used as a form of control

throughout the mid-twentieth century. Elkins writes, "Whether conscious or not, sexual violence was a method of regaining masculine control."⁶⁷ In Armagh, one woman's experience encapsulates this masculine dominance. She recalls that "It was worse with having a man there present, so you would not struggle so much. You were frightened. You were *frightened* of *getting torn down* there."⁶⁸ Alongside invoking feelings of shame, fear, and vulnerability, such methods enforced institutional power and gender hierarchy.

Strip searches during the 1980s have been compared to rape by the prisoners. On 2 March 1992, the female prisoners experienced what would be a horrific and unexpected cell and strip-search. Officers started strip searches at eight am, and finally finished after nine pm. The women were locked in their cells all day. This event continues to several sources recall how a male officer singing "Happy Days Are Here Again," during his morning patrol.⁶⁹ "All day long these screams of anguish came from the cells," Karen continued that she remembered how "the male screws stood laughing and taunting the women and were in the wing while these women were being raped."⁷⁰ The discourse and use of societal and institutional rape under the British state is a part of a wider history. Judith Walkowitz, the author of *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, discusses how nineteenth-century feminists recognized that the treatment of prostitutes (during periodical medical examinations) was equivalent to rape.⁷¹ The prostitutes spoke of how "unnatural" and degrading the examination process was - "a form of 'instrumental' rape."⁷² Like Armagh, the self-respect, dignity, and control were stripped from the women, thus, relating their experiences to a form of rape. Sexual remarks and anti-Catholicism were a consistent theme throughout the prisoners' experience.⁷³

Most of the prisoners resisted when informed that they would be strip-searched. However, their efforts were often futile. Regardless of their objections, the officers would violently force the women to the floor or bed and coercively remove their clothes: "You feel degraded. It's like a rape of some kind. They are ripping the bra and the panties off you [sigh] you felt like crying, you felt like rolling back in a ball and getting into the corner and never coming out of there again!"⁷⁴ In public reports, the prisoner's Governor claimed that the women were not "internally searched." However, the officers were sanctioned to forcefully open the prisoners' anal and vaginal passages with hands and fingers, as it did not technically constitute "an internal" search.⁷⁵ The prisoners were acutely aware that the officers had the power to "touch any part" of their bodies.⁷⁶ Linda Quigly, a former prisoner said, "There must be some similarity between what [they] feel and what a rape victim feels, [their] bodies are [also] being violated."⁷⁷ From the women's experiences with the officers, the same themes continue to arise: shame, dignity, their awareness of gender. The prisoners in Long Kesh were also often strip-searched and mirror searched, as well as subjected to anus "probing."⁷⁸ Many of the men maintained that "these practices amounted to sexual assault."⁷⁹ Though regardless of gender, the prisoners in each Northern institution maintained their experiences were equal to sexual assault. Though, in the case of Armagh, Republican social and cultural vulnerabilities linked to Catholicism

felt exploited. Their feeling of safety was stripped alongside their clothes. By 1992, it had been reported that over 4,000 strip-searches had been carried out on women in prisons in Northern Ireland and England and that nothing had ever been found to threaten security.⁸⁰

Gendered Gratitude

Women who entered the prison as political agents in many ways lost their primary identity as mothers.⁸¹ Peggy, a Prisoner of Armagh Gaol in 1982, explained that once she left prison, her community in Belfast looked at her “differently from other women.” Peggy continued that her community now considered her “wild because [she] was in prison.”⁸² This was unlike the Republican prisoner’s male counterparts at Long Kesh, whom Belfast welcomed as “martyrs,” “gods,” and “heroes.”⁸³ Culturally, the gendered reaction to Republican prisoners relied on gender expectations and tradition. In the words of Father Raymond Murray, imprisonment of the women created “a grave psychological problem ... [as well as] Defeminisation.”⁸⁴ Women in this sense were believed to be hardened, no longer modest and pure, but damaged and different. As described by the Irish writer Cólín Toibin in 1987, “the past gave meaning to the present.”⁸⁵ In congruence with the wider nationalistic themes, the Troubles and the violence associated with it were perceived within a colonial framework.⁸⁶ Hence, the women’s experience under British institutions symbolized the long-term narrative of “the suffering of Ireland under British rule.”⁸⁷

Acts of sexual violence were indeed culturally found as humiliating and unnecessary. In this sense, sexual violence in these prisons was an embarrassment to nationalist history, the failure of Republican aspirations, and the defiance of Catholic ideals. Consequently, female prisoners were quietly left out of the Irish historiography and popular culture until recently. By 1980, Amnesty International had openly condemned the practice of strip-searching prisoners at Armagh on the basis that it was the officers’ “deliberate intention of degrading and humiliating [the] women.”⁸⁸ In 2017, *The International Journal of Human Rights* published an article that underlines how “conflict-related sexual violence have been marginal to the story of the Northern transition from conflict.”⁸⁹ While the women’s experience is starting to become recognized in respects of itself - and not as a subculture to the Long Kesh narrative - the masculine homogeneity of nationalistic prison stories still dominates the scene.

Conclusions

Much of the women’s experiences from their time at the prisons have been largely undocumented, as many prisoners were apprehensive about discussing their experience.⁹⁰ However, not labeling this type of violence as sexual only confirms the cultural injustices towards the female prisoners who endured years of feeling degraded and abused and have received little positive recognition for their political and patriotic contribution to Republican values. Furthermore, the strip

searches can be understood as more than an authoritative tool. They are also symbolic of the use of bodily violence to subdue the prisoners not only into the norms of the prison but also into the ethnic hierarchy of Northern Ireland, where Catholics had to be put in their (subjugated) place: stripped of political agency and cultural respect.

Notes

1. Begoña Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*, (Princeton, 1997), 129.
2. *Gaol* is the Irish translation for 'Jail.' While Loyalists did not use Gaelic language, Gaelic was a core aspect of Republican values. As this paper focuses on working-class Republican women, I felt it was necessary to include the dual names of Armagh's prison institution.
3. Catherine Rourke and Aisling Swaine, "Gender, violence, and reparations in Northern Ireland: a story yet to be told." *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 21: 9, (2017): 1333.
4. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 129.
5. The Government of Ireland Act 1920 divided Ireland into the North (a part of the United Kingdom) and the South, (the Irish Free State, and subsequently the Republic of Ireland in 1949). The Anglo- Irish Treaty of 1921 ratified this.
6. Louise Ryan, 'Negotiating modernity and tradition: Newspaper debates on the 'modern girl' in the Irish free state' *Journal of Gender Studies*, 7:2, (1998), 182; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, (London, 1997).
7. Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries: women and Irish nationalism*, (London: Pluto, 1989); Simona Sharoni, 'Rethinking women's struggles in Israel–Palestine and in the North of Ireland,' *Victims, perpetrators or actors? Gender, peace and conflict*, C.O.N. Moser and F.C. Clark (eds.), pp. 85–98. (London: Sage, 2001); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and nation*, (London: 1997).
8. See Sara McDowell, 'Commemorating Dead "Men": Gendering the Past and Present in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland.' *Gender, Place, and Culture Vol. 15, No, 4*, (August 2008); Meagan Sullivan, *Women in Northern Ireland: Cultural Studies and Material Conditions*, (Florida, 1999)
9. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*.
10. See Talal Asad, 'Notes on Body Pain and Truth in Medieval Christian Ritual,' *Economy and Society* (1983); Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, 1991); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York, 1991) (Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. (New York: Oxford, 1985)
11. Monica McWilliams, 'Violence against women and political conflict: The Northern Ireland experience,' *Critical Criminology* 8 (1997), 79.
12. Tereasa O' Keefe, 'Policing Unruly Women: The State and Sexual Violence during the Northern Irish Troubles,' *Women's Studies International Forum*, (2017), 70
13. Though the State refers specifically to the Northern Irish government, sexual violence as a disciplinary tool was used by the British Empire in its other colonies also.
14. Ivana Bacik, 'The Politics of Sexual Difference: The Enduring Influence of the Catholic Church,' Noreen Giffney & Margit Shildrick, *Theory on the Edge: Irish Studies and the Politics of Sexual Difference*, (New York, 2013), 18.
15. Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, 'Censorship as Freedom of Expression: The Tailor and Ansty Revisited,' *Historical Reflections*, 37, (2), (Summer, 2011), 25.

16. Lorraine Dowler, 'And they Think I'm Just a Nice Old Lady,' *Women and War in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland, Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 5:2, 159-176 (Pennsylvania, 2010), 164.
17. Bill Rolston, 'Mother's Whores and Villains: Images of Women in Novels of the Northern Ireland Conflict,' *Race and Class* 1989; 31, (July 29, 1989; Ulster), 41.
18. Dowler, 'Nice Old Lady,' 160.
19. Dowler, 'Nice Old Lady,' 160.
20. There is a wealth of secondary scholarship around the subject. See for example Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable*.
21. 'The Guardian and Daily Telegraph, March 16, 1979', found in Azrini Wahidin, 'Menstruation as a Weapon of War: The Politics of the Bleeding Body for Women on Political Protest at Armagh Prison Northern Ireland,' *The Prison Journal*, 99:1 (2019): 114.
22. Banerjee, 'Politized Femininity,' 128- 9.
23. 'Women hurt in a row at Armagh Jail,' *Irish Press*, (9 February 1980), 3.
24. Tim Pat Coogan, *On the Blanket*, 133.
25. Nell McCafferty, *The Armagh Women*, (Dublin, 1980), 27; Fionnuala O' Connor, 'Armagh women prisoners claim dirty protest was forced on them,' *The Irish Times*, (2 July 1980), 7.
26. 'Women in Armagh "starved"', *The Irish Times*, (15 November 1980), 4.
27. 'Women in prison,' *Irish Press*, (6 June 1980), 8.
28. 'First Report Of The Working Party On The Administration and Enforcement of the law relating to Terrorism,' *CAIN: Conflict Archive on the Internet*, (https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/proni/1980/proni_CENT-1-9-22_1980-05-01.pdf).
29. Mairead Farrell, 'Letter From Armagh Prison,' (1980), *IFI Education*, (https://ifoplayer.ie/mairead_farrell/#tabs_desc_5819_2) [accessed: 21/05/2020].
30. Tim Pat Coogan, *On the Blanket: The inside story of the IRA Prisoners Dirty Protest*, (Dublin, 1980; 1997; 2002),
31. Nell McCafferty, *The Armagh Women* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1981), 29.
32. Laura Weinstein, "The Significance of the Armagh Dirty Protest," *Éire-Ireland* 41, no. 3-4 (2006),
33. Teresa O' Keefe, 'Policing Unruly Women.' 'Increased political status' referring to the fact that these women were (originally) political prisoners. Thus, women were not conforming to the traditional gender and cultural roles of domestic motherhood.
34. Begoña Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 138.
35. Barry, E. (1980). '[Annex A: Armagh Prison - Protest Action by Non-Conforming Prisoners](#)', (12 February 1980), [PRONI Public Records HSS/32/1/15/1A; 2 pages], [PDF; 393KB]. Belfast: PRONI
36. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 123.
37. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 125.
38. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 123.
39. Begoña Aretxaga, 'Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic,' *Ethos*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (June 1995), *Ethos*, 128.
40. Margaretta D'Arcy, *Tell them Everything*, (Galway, 1981), 73.

41. Foucault, *Sexuality*, 103; Aretxaga, *Shattering*, 129.
42. Foucault, *Discipline* quoted in Aretxaga, *Shattering*, 130, 153.
43. Aretxaga, 'Symbolic Overdetermination,' 128.
44. Letter from F. Maguire, then Independent MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, to H. Atkins, then-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, including a statement from families of women protesting in Armagh Prison, (28 May 1980), [PRONI Public Records NIO/12/176; 3 pages], [PDF; 502KB].
45. Letter From F. Maguire, then Independent MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, to H. Atkins, then-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, including a statement from families of women protesting in Armagh Prison, (28 May 1980), [PRONI Public Records NIO/12/176, 2.
46. Helen Harris and Eileen Healy (eds.), *Strong about it all... 'Rural and urban women's experiences of the security forces in Northern Ireland*, (Derry, 2001), 66.
47. Aretxaga, 'Symbolic Overdetermination,' 125.
48. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 133.
49. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 133.
50. Harris and Healy, *Strong about it all...*, 64.
51. Quoted in Margaretta D'Arcy, *Tell them Everything*, (Galway, 1981), 59.
52. Mairead Farrell, as reported in *Women Protest for Political Status in Armagh Gaol* (1980), 25; Wahidin, 'Menstruation as a Weapon of War,' 118.
53. Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 133.
54. Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 133.
55. Harris and Healy, *Strong all about it*, 64.
56. Kevin McNamara to Secretary of State Prior, *Hansard*, (HC Deb 18 March 1983 vol 39 cc294-5W)
(<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1983/mar/18/armagh-prison>).
57. Kevin McNamara to Secretary of State Prior, *Hansard*, (HC Deb 18 March 1983 vol 39 cc294-5W)
(<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1983/mar/18/armagh-prison>)
58. Kevin McNamara to Secretary of State Prior, *Hansard*, (HC Deb 18 March 1983 vol 39 cc294-5W)
(<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1983/mar/18/armagh-prison>) Recorded materials found from 1 August 1982 to 28 February 1983.
59. Signed by Revs. Patrick Fox, Bernar Magee, Daniel Whyte, Austin McGirr, Gerry Park, John Murray, Des Wilson, Seamus O'Connell, Michael Maginn, Frank O'Hagan, Eugene Boland, Pdraig O Raghallaigh, Joseph McVeigh, Michael Seery, Brian MacRaois, Patrick Kelly, James J. Kelly OSM, Denis Faulm Raymond Murray, Michael Harding, John Moley, Seamus Caracher, Kevin McMulla, Pdraig O'Gnimh, 'Strip Searching in Armagh' *Irish Press*, (10 January 1985), 8.
60. 'Cardinal hits strip searches,' *Irish Press*, (13 March 1986), 1.
61. Raymond Murray, *Hard Time: Armagh Gaol, 1971- 1986*, (Dublin, 1998), 87.
62. Though men in Long-Kesh still experienced strip searches, in Republican culture, there was more of a public outcry about the female strip-searching.
63. *Prison Memory Archive*, (<http://prisonmemoryarchive.com/armagh-stories/>)

64. Aretxaga, *Sexual Games*, 8
65. Loughran, 'Armagh and Feminist Strategy,' 66.
66. Dianne Abbot to Michael Mates, 'Strip Searches,' HC Deb 18 June 1992 vol 209 c644W), *Hansard*, (<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1992/jun/18/strip-searches>).
67. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*, (New York, 2005), 228.
68. Wahidin, 'Menstruation as a weapon,' 121.
69. Philomena Gallagher, 'Women Imprisoned as a Result of the Struggle,' *Canadian Women's Studies/ Cahiers de la Femmes*, 17: 3 (1997): 53.
70. Aretxaga, 'Sexual Games,' 8.
71. Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women class, and the state*, (Cambridge, 1980), 202.
72. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 202
73. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 11.
74. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 15- 16.
75. Gallagher, 'Women Imprisoned as a Result of the Struggle,' 53; Wahidin, 'Menstruation as a weapon,' 120.
76. Gallagher, 'Women Imprisoned as a Result of the Struggle,' 53; Wahidin, 'Menstruation as a weapon,' 120.
77. Sinn Fein, 'Stop Strip-Searching,' *Sinn Fein News*, (www.webarchive.org/web/2007102533401/http.www.sinnfein.ie/news/detail/21360).
78. In which the prisoner was forced to squat over a mirror.
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80. Gallagher, 'Women Imprisoned as a Result of the Struggle,' p. 53
81. Dowler, 'Nice Old Women,' 168.
82. Dowler, 'Nice Old Women,' 168.
83. Elana Bergia, 'Unexpected Rewards of Political Violence: Republican Ex-Prisoners, Seductive Capital, and the Gendered Nature of Heroism,' *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (28 June 2019), 4.
84. Raymond Murray, *Hard Time*, 56.
85. Quoted in Axtreaga, *Shattering*, 81.
86. See John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, (Oxford, 1991), 176.
87. Axtreaga, *Shattering*, 81.
88. Catherine O'Rourke and Aisling Swaine, "Gender, violence, and reparations in Northern Ireland: a story yet to be told," *The International Journal of Human Rights*. 21, (9) (2017), 11.
89. O'Rourke and Swaine, "Gender, violence, and reparations in Northern Ireland: a story yet to be told," 1, 11.
90. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence*, 7.