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## Successful Social Movements and Political Outcomes: A Case Study of the Women's Movement in Italy: 1943-48

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**Successful Social Movements and Political Outcomes: A Case  
Study of the Women's Movement in Italy, 1943-48**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

By

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B.A., University of Dayton, 2003

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Wright State University

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Francesca Luciana Rubino ENTITLED Successful Social Movements and Political Outcomes: A Case Study of the Women's Movement in Italy, 1943-48 BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

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Successful Social Movements and Political Outcomes: A Case Study of the Women's Movement in Italy, 1943-48.

This thesis examines the definition of civil society, social movements and success and then analyzes these variables through a historical case study. It looks at the role of two women's groups in Italy from 1943-48 as they worked to achieve three political goals (women's suffrage, greater representation in politics, and the new constitution), during the social movements that emerged as a result of fascism. After providing background information on the women's movements and the three political goals they sought, the thesis will look at whether the variables necessary to social movement success were present in the movement in helping Italian women in the movement who mobilized and organized to achieve their said goals and objectives. It will conclude with remarks as to the lessons learned from the study of civil society and social movements and why these are important to the establishment of political and democratic goals and objectives. The conclusion will also discuss how social movements, civil society and women are inevitably linked and the impact of active Italian women in this movement on Italian history.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIF *Center of Italian Women*  
DC Christian Democrats  
GDD *Defense Group of Italian Women*  
GF *Young Women of Catholic Action*  
GUF *Fascist University Group*  
PCI Communist Party of Italy  
UDI *Union of Italian Women*  
WWII World War II

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Table 1: Comparison of Success Variables for UDI and CIF

## **I. Introduction**

An inscription on the World War II memorial in Washington D.C. reads “Women who stepped up were measured as citizens of the nation, not as women...this was a people’s war and everyone was in it.” Ruth and Simon Henig argue that World War II was indeed a people’s war and that women found themselves in many different aspects and situations. Women had an enormous impact on the war, while war had a great impact on them. Although this quote speaks of all women during the war, it is particularly applicable to the efforts of active Italian women during WWII. Women played an integral role in the strength of Italian civil society and in the movement that emerged during the Resistance. Women were powerful forces for change in a society ruled by fascism. Their determination and courage during the Resistance proved to be the foundation for the formation of women’s groups and organizations, which in turn led to the establishment of their later political goals. The mass movement of women during the later years of the war mobilized women to bring about social change, advocated for women’s suffrage and other rights and promoted the role of women in politics. It also influenced the new constitution in Italy. The new social movement not only advocated for women’s rights, but had a profound effect in establishing key principles of the Italian Republic after fascism.

To date, there has been less research and writing on women in Italian history than women in other countries. Scholars have explored feminist movements in the U.S and other European countries but very little has been written on the Italian women’s movement. There has been a growing amount of literature on Italian women in the last decade. The topic of women’s struggle for emancipation and social movements is both an interesting and an important component of Italian history in general. More importantly,

this case study provides a greater lesson to how women make up a large portion of civil society in a country and what makes social movements successful. As Anna Rossi-Doria explains, “Italian women were central to the great processes of modernization and ‘nationalization of the masses,’ to the relationship between State intervention and the development of civil society and to the mix of elements of change and continuity between the Fascist era and the social and political order under The Republic” (89).

Therefore, this thesis will explore how Italian women became an integral force in civil society and in social movements during the Italian Resistance. The thesis will look at civil society and social movements within this context as well as the variables that make social movements successful and explore if these characteristics were present in the movement. The focus of the thesis will be on the women’s movement, in particular the women’s groups of *Union of Italian Women* (UDI) and the *Center of Italian Women* (CIF). Both organizations will be discussed within the context of one movement, because of their collective action throughout the war to achieve better social and political rights for women. The thesis will show how the movement was successful in achieving three goals important to the establishment of the Republic. These goals include women’s suffrage, the establishment of the new constitution, and expanding women’s participation in politics. Although this is only a survey of particular goals women sought during the movement, this case study will demonstrate the necessary variables important to successful social movements and show how these variables were important to achieving some goals for some Italian women during this period.

## **II. Research Questions and Review of the Literature**

### Research Question

Between the years of 1943-1948, did two prominent social groups in the women's movement in Italy display the variables necessary for successful social movements and a strong civil society in order to achieve three political goals: women's suffrage; women's rights in a new constitution; and greater representation in politics?

### Methodology/Research Design

The methodology for this study is qualitative using primarily a case study of the period between 1943-48 in Italian history. Specifically, a case study of women's groups in Italy will be used to examine variables necessary for successful social movements. This study focuses primarily on two women's groups, the Union of Italian Women and the Center for Italian Women. The literature reveals that these were the two most prominent women's groups during this period and the two that were the most successful in advocating for women's rights in Italy. The UDI and CIF were chosen because they became political active after the breakdown of fascism in 1943 and worked throughout the war's end to bring political social equality for women.

Bruce Berg defines the nature of case studies including the systematic gathering of information about a particular person, social setting, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions (251). In discussing design types, my study is a descriptive case study, which requires that the investigator present a theory, including the elements of study questions, theory, identification of the units to be analyzed, logical linking if the data to the theory, and finally, interpretation of the findings (Berg 257).

Within the case study, a variety of methods will be analyzed such as communication strategies and publications to identify the relationship between successful social movements and Italian women's groups. Records and narratives from Italian women and Catholic documents such as papal documents and encyclicals serve as sources for the primary data in this thesis. The two main sources of papal documents include a compilation on the Vatican's views on women called The Woman in the Modern World and a typed booklet of Pope Pius XII's encyclical called "Woman's Duties in Social and Political Life." An analysis of women's publications during the Resistance will also serve as another primary data source as well as eyewitness accounts from women themselves. Other data, mostly from secondary sources, includes arguments and research from scholars in the fields of civil society, social movements and Italian history and other information relevant to my study.

It is important to note that two case studies will be used in this thesis. The case studies will be similar in nature, but will vary in their success. There are several reasons for using two similar case studies. First, the two groups differed because while the UDI was secular in nature, the CIF was a religious based organization. This affected their success as well as the degree to which they displayed the variables important to social movements. Two case studies will also be used in order to show how the variables necessary to social movements differed in two similar groups working toward the same goals and objectives. Although both movements were successful, these factors such as religious and political backing affected their success. Two similar case studies will be utilized due to the limited amount of information on unsuccessful social groups during this time as well as to show the variation in social movement success between these two individual groups.

## Literature Review

This study explores several areas of political science and social science research. This includes literature in civil society, associations, social movements, Italian Fascism and the Resistance, political parties including the Christian Democrats and Communist Party and finally women's organizations and associations in Italy.

## Women in the Italian Resistance and Postwar Period

Several scholars have written on women's role during the Resistance. Perry Willson discusses European women during the war and Resistance in countries such as Italy, France, Spain and Europe as a whole. Their positions in the war included participation in Resistance activities, political mobilization and membership in organizations as well as political campaigning. His chapter on Italy describes the exertion of women's political rights as well as their involvement in lay organizations during the war as well. He also explains what Italian women in Fascist Italy did to change their circumstances and causes of mobilization in the war. Women mobilized into political and social organizations, helped prisoners of war and campaigned for better rights in a new Italy. Willson also highlights the importance of women in advocating for social and political change during this period. Examples of this activism include political marches and rallies, the formation of women's groups and communication networks. He also discusses some of their Resistance activities in detail and looks at the personal narratives that women wrote during the period. He also discusses the legacy of emancipation for

women after the war's end and the impact women had on Italian history, especially their success in achieving social and political rights for women.

Jane Slaughter focuses on Italian women and the Resistance and provides a detailed description of their activities from fascism until the war's end. Slaughter traces the women's movement from the years before the war, during fascism, and into the Resistance. She explains how women's groups organized using communication networks and mobilization strategies, how they recruited new members as well as their alliances with the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats. Also, she discusses the important women's associations during the war, including the UDI and the CIF. She also discusses the success of the women's movement and women's continued involvement after the war. One of the most interesting aspects of this work is that she uses real life accounts and interviews from the women participating in the war, which contributes to the understanding of how Italian women came to be such a powerful force during the war.

In addition, two other scholars focus on the role of women's associations and organizations in Italy, during the Resistance and after the war. Ana Prata Pereira discusses how women's participation in Italy made a difference in the democratization of Southern Europe. She compares Italy and Spain, two Catholic countries who were under authoritarian rule. In the case of Italy, she specifically discusses the actions of women in achieving democratic principles, primarily through participation in the organizations *Union of Italian Women* and the *Christian Association of Italian Workers*. Pereira discusses how participation in such groups advanced the transition to the Republic, through the activities of its members.

Wendy Pojmann's research discusses the women's movement in Italy in a similar fashion as Pereira. Her article is more extensive and thorough and provides discussion of

additional associations, including the *Center of Italian Women*. She argues that these organizations were so successful in their actions because of their ties to the Christian Democrats. Pojmann traces the women's movement from its inception until the 1970s, with particular emphasis on its role during the Resistance and WWII.

Other scholars have written on the conditions of women in postwar Italy. Joni Luvendoski provides a description of the history of the Union of Italian Women as well as other facts about the Christian Democrats and the Center of Italian Women. Luvendoski also addresses the continuation of women in politics after the close of the war emphasizing their participation in government and association with political parties. Additionally, Martin Clark provides a brief description of women's activities in the postwar period and the expansion of women's participation after the war. Laura Balbo and Marie May provide a careful analysis of women's participation in employment, politics and family life after the war. They explain the advances women made, women's situation in family life and in the home, and women's continued participation in politics. They point to women's affiliation with political parties and the importance of collective behavior in mobilizing women during and after the war.

Ruth and Simon Henig explain the importance of women's representation in politics and its importance to democracy. They also provide statistics for Italian women in parliament as well as a short history of Italy's new feminism and the rights they sought after the war. Finally, Robert Ventresca examines how political parties attempted to mobilize women to participate in politics, particularly in the election of 1948. After Italy achieved universal suffrage, the vote of women became more important than ever. Women had an influential role in the elections as well as running for political office. All

of these scholars address the importance of women in postwar Italy in many different facets of life, the home, work and the political arena.

### Civil Society and Associations

What exactly constitutes a civil society? Many authors have explored this definition. As defined by Robert Taylor, global civil society is “the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organizations, associations, networks, and individuals located between the family, the state and the market and operating beyond the confines of national societies, politics and economies” (341). Adam Seligman explains that the idea of civil society embodies an ethical idea of the social order, one that harmonizes the conflicting demands of individual interest and social good” (21). Putnam argues that a strong civil society reinforces a strong state (21). Furthermore, a healthy civil society is considered by some theorists to give people a unity and a common purpose, and a social network through which to organize and challenge the power of the state hierarchy. In particular, women’s associations and organizations had a profound effect within Italian civil society and the social movement that emerged.

Jan W. van Deth explains the importance of recognizing how voluntary associations mobilize citizens. She looks at the arguments of mass society theorists who believed that the active membership of individuals in all kinds of voluntary associations were characteristic of mass societies. These groups provide an opportunity for people to cooperate and to counteract the negative activities in society that citizens experienced. Mass society theorists believe that participation in civil society associations creates cross-cutting cleavages, fosters the necessary skills for democratic governance and helps to generate a “consciousness of common interest” (34). Italian women epitomized the

concept of mass society as they were reacting to upheavals in society. The voluntary associations that arose out of the oppression of fascism gave them an opportunity to act against it which strengthened civil society and played an essential role in achieving democratic values in postwar Italy.

June Howell argues for the usefulness of looking at the role of women within the context of civil society. He explains that the rise of women's movements can be viewed within a number of different contexts and that women's activism illustrates the dynamism and vibrancy of empirical civil societies (6). Moreover, women's movements and collective action impose upon the spaces, organizations and frameworks governing civil society. Civil society allows for the possibility of exploring how collective action is used and women organize. Howell argues that in examining the relationship between civil society and gender, women have been significant actors in the theatres of civil societies around the world (5). So what exactly is civil society and where do women's associations fit within its realm? More importantly, how can women's associations viewed within this context promote the formation of democracy?

Other scholars have focused on the importance of associating voluntarily within civil society. Putnam argued that "the greater the density of associational membership in society, the more trusting its citizens" (73). These arguments of trust and civic engagement are relevant to the importance of associations and cooperation. Italian women's associations were born out of the necessity for realizing equality among the sexes in Italy and were crucial to the founding of democratic values such as women's suffrage, political representation and labor. Women's associations and activities were not only important to civil society, but to the larger concept of civil culture. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba explain that membership in associations leads to a more competent

citizenry and pluralism and argue that this may be one of the most important foundations of political democracy. Thus women were not only contributing to the strength of civil society and democracy but to the civic culture of Italy simultaneously.

Similarly, Michael Foley and Bob Edwards argue that a “dense network of civil associations” is said to promote the stability and effectiveness of the democratic polity through both the effects of association on citizens’ “habits of the heart” and the ability of associations to mobilize citizens on behalf of public causes” (38). The authors argue that political movements are a necessary component in the relationship between the effectiveness of civic associations on democratic governance. They emphasize the ability of associational life to foster patterns of civility in the actions of citizens in a democratic polity (39). Understood to be the realm of private voluntary associations, civil society has come to be seen as an essential ingredient in both democratization as well as the health of established democracies (38). Sola Akinrinade explains that civil associational life incorporates numerous associations, including labor, religious, student, professional and women’s associations. The study of the Italian women’s movement is not only important for understanding civil society, but examining what makes civil society and social movements successful.

Finally, S. Laurel Weldon defines the notion of a feminist civil society and the importance of women in the public sphere. She also relates this argument to democratic policymaking. Feminist civil society refers to “voluntary associational activities aimed at promoting the empowerment or status of women, with women’s status being a focus of the organizations” (Weldon 3). Organizations in feminist society are usually run by women and the network of women’s newspapers, magazines, protests and lobby groups constitutes a discussion among women about their lives, priorities and differences

(Weldon 3). According to Weldon, “a feminist civil society is a sort of women’s public sphere, where women self-organize to work to undermine the social practices and norms which devalue them” (3). Feminist civil society denotes the existence of a women’s public, consisting of organizations and institutions created by and for women (Weldon 10). Weldon believes that the development of feminist civil society makes democratic policymaking processes more inclusive of women’s voices and reflective of their perspectives by introducing them into the broader public sphere while enriching democratic politics and improving state responsiveness to women’s concerns (2).

The concept of feminist civil society accurately describes and characterizes Italian women within civil society during the Resistance and in the post war years. Women sought a number of objectives including suffrage, including adequate representation in politics and other rights to education and organized in order to promote their status in society. The movement allowed for the development of women’s rights and for their voice during the transition to democracy in Italy. The actions of the women resulted in a greater response and inclusion of women in both the public and private spheres. Weldon’s description of a feminist civil society is appropriate to the women’s movement in Italy and important to their political success.

### Social Movements

Arguably one of the most influential writes of social movements, Charles Tilly traces social movements from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and provides a description of the features and characteristics of social movements. He also examines the correlation between social movements and democracy. He argues that not only does democratization promote the formation of social movements, but that social movements have a direct causal impact on

democratization. This occurs when social movements broaden the range of participants in public politics, create coalitions that cross important categorical boundaries within public politics, establish connections within previously immobilized and excluded categories of citizens and form alliances between newly mobilized groups and existing political actors (Tilly 142-143). Moreover, Tilly claims that social movements contribute to the creation of public space separate from governing institutions, which in turn promotes democracy (244).

Tilly also explains that there are three major elements to social movements; campaigns-sustained organized public efforts making collective aims on target authorities, repertoire which include the creation of special purpose associations and collations, public meetings, rallies, demonstrations and the like, and finally, public representation by participations of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitments on the part of themselves or their constituencies (3-4). WUNC displays are four of the most distinguishing features of social movements.

How do women's movements impact this process of democratic values? According to Jill M. Bystydzienski and Joti Sekhon, grassroots movements involve community based initiatives, actions, and organizations that were committed to making better the lives of local people and include base groups and local organizations (9). They are also groups that emerge and work at the local level to improve and develop their communities through community wide and specific memberships, such as women or farmers (9). Srilatha Batliwala explains that the concept of 'grassroots' means the basic building blocks of society, small rural communities or urban neighborhoods and signified the poor and working class, as opposed to dominant social elites (396). Many grassroots movements have emerged as a significant part of the efforts to create and expand

democratic decision making, to redefine the form and content of politics, to gain greater representation for ordinary people in formal political institutions, to raise political consciousness, individual self-development and enable more effective public participation (10). Social movements are an integral part of civil society and a strong civil society is an indicator of greater democracy.

Moreover, grassroots movements are important in ensuring that the state is responsive to citizens as well as in redefining the connection between the public and private sphere. They can develop the potential for influencing and altering state policies. As John Markoff argues, social movements challenge the ways in which power holders are chosen as well as particular policies of those in power (23). The developments of women within a strong civil society are important because “an active democracy is not sustainable without citizen involvement and participation” (Markoff 13). As Markoff reveals, “A civil society that consists at its core of a rich and complex associational life must be continually created in daily life with the participation of societal members” (13). It is precisely these arguments that define the women’s movement in Italy and its correlation to the success of establishing the foundation of the Republic. As scholars have argued, Italian women had a central role in the end of the war and the promotion of democratic ideals.

Srilatha Batliwala examines the importance of social movements, networks and organizations on global civil society and in turn, globalization. Transnational movements and campaigns broaden citizen formations. Activities range from lobbying, advocacy, and direct mobilization and organization of populations affected by certain issues (395). These definitions are important for the case study of Italian women because women were part of a vast array of organizations and networks as well as a mass movement to end the

fascist regime, lobbying for women's status and rights and to promote democratic changes in Italian society. Women were an important part of Italian civil society, and therefore a powerful force as a new social movement seeking political and social change.

How Social Movements Matter is a compilation of articles from social movements scholars that address issues involved in movements as well as the characteristics that make movements success. In particular, Tilly's chapter describes outcomes in social movements and explains the characteristics of movements that make them successful. Craig Jenkins looks at the different political actors involved, the importance of political opportunities in movements and the significance of political actors and systems in the success of social movements.

Many of the collective works in The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts look at the variables necessary to successful social movements. The anthology contains works by authors who discuss collective identity, protest strategies, and the importance of communication in social movements. In particular, the works by Nancy Whittier and Saul Alinsky explain the variables necessary for successful social movements. States, Parties and Social Movements specifically addresses the importance of political affiliation and the role of political parties in social movements. Jack Goldstone provides an overview of how social movements are intertwined with the state and explain how women in Italy were successful because of their alliance with political parties.

### **III. Defining Social Movements and Variables Necessary for Success**

#### **What is a Social Movement?**

According to Tilly, the three elements of social movements are as follows: a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (campaign); employment of combinations from among all the following forms of political action: processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, media statements and pamphleteering (social movement repertoire); and finally, participants concern with worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (WUNC displays) (Tilly 3-4). McCarthy and Zald define a social movement as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure” (Burstein 7). Central to all definitions is the desire for change.

Jackie Smith explains that “social movements should never be excluded from civil society, because they are the central bearers of democratizing pressures within Western democracies” (195). Smith argues that social movements are a direct causal variable to democracy. She cites Tilly’s argument that the emergence of strong national social movements demonstrates the strong relationship of social movements to the development of national political institutions (195). Further, “transnational social movements and other civil society organizations have been important forces shaping the structures of international political institutions, influencing their operations and democratizing the international polity” (Tilly 196). Finally, Tilly explains that transnational social movements serve to stimulate the creation of “networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (196).

According to Staffan Lindberg and Arni Sverrisson, “A social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common

interests and a common identity” (2). They continue by explaining that social movements are usually autonomous of the state and rely on mass mobilization and participation to pursue their goals (Lindberg, Sverrisson 2). In social movements, they argue, there is always an immediate and autonomous power, the power of the people (Lindberg, Sverrisson3). Both the political environment and organizing capacity of its members are essential to movements as well. Further, social movements are large informal groupings of individuals and/or organizations focused on specific political or social issues and on bringing about social change. Sidney Tarrow defined social movements as collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities. As women constituted an integral component of civil society, they directly impacted the process of democracy. Thus, in looking at the role of Italian women in democratization one can see the impact of social movements on democratization.

There are several key variables that make social movements successful. As Tilly explains, the distinguishing features of social movements lie in sustained challenges to authorities and responses by those authorities, which are characterized by worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (WUNC). These elements are the necessary ingredients for success as argued by Tilly. In addition, other variables for social movement success are political affiliation, collective identity and communication. These three components coupled with WUNC are integral to the success of social movements.

It is imperative to analyze these variables to assess whether or not they were present in the two largest women’s groups in Italy, the Center of Italian Women and the Union of Italian Women. Some of these variables had a stronger presence in groups than others. In the case of Italy, they were all critical to the success of the women’s

movement. In particular, political affiliation, commitment and collective identity were among the variables that made women's groups successful. Now it is necessary to analyze these variables to see if they characterized women's groups in Italy.

### WUNC

As explained by Charles Tilly, WUNC displays create success in social movements. For Tilly, these are essential elements in social movements. WUNC displays can take the form of statements, slogans and labels that imply these features. Examples of worthiness include the presence of mothers with children, clergy and dignitaries while unity can take form in banners, costumes, marching, singing and chanting (Tilly 4). Numbers involve headcounts, signatures on petitions, messages from constituents and filling streets, while commitment involves braving bad weather, visible participation from all walks of life and resistance to oppression (Tilly 4).

Characteristics of worthiness can be displayed in different ways. As Tilly defines it, worthiness involves the presence of powerful people. The very presence of mothers with children, for example, in the movement displays characteristics that these women are worthy. Mothers who would bring their children into the movement culture and disrupt their family and home life to participate in a social movement shows that they believed in their demands. Worthiness can also be displayed through common commitments to a cause. Participants in any social movement take action because they feel they are worthy of something greater and want to achieve desired goals. This was the case for some women in Italy who joined the UDI and CIF. Worthiness was displayed in their active participation in the movement.

One of the most important background conditions for the mobilization of women in Italy was their resignation to the same cause. Their determination was a significant factor in paving the way for democratic ideals to develop, including suffrage, political rights for women and the constitution. Gill has interpreted unity as “agreement among citizens of democracy that they all belong to the same community, and that the aim is democratization of the existing political system to the creation of a new one” (Gill 43). As Slaughter notes, unity was required to defeat the enemy, the fascist regime and to end the war (128). Without women united in a national cause in the Resistance, their goals of fascism’s end as well as their political and social goals would never have come to fruition. Thus, the collective unity of Italian women became a hallmark in their mobilization.

The third component of WUNC is numbers. Numbers can be viewed in the context of resource mobilization, one of the most important concepts in social movements. According to John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, resource mobilization is important to the success of social movements in that it examines the variety of resources to be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success as well as the tactics used (169). The study of resources of social movements is important because they are necessary for engagement in social conflict (McCarthy, Zald 171). Resource mobilization also involves mobilizing supporters as well as achieving change in targets (McCarthy, Zald 172). These concepts will be applicable to the women’s movement as it must have adequate resources in order to be successful as well as organized strategies and tactics to achieve its desired goals.

Tilly’s last component of WUNC is commitment. He defines this as resistance to oppression and visibility within the movement. Commitment takes all kinds of forms,

from participating in rallies, to attending meetings and events, to joining a movement itself. Commitment is one of the major factors in social movement success. A movement must have members committed to its cause. Tilly's variable of commitment is directly in line with his first three principles. Worthiness and unity in turn lead to growing social movements, with participants who are commitment to achieving common goals and objectives. Social movements would not be possible with a solid and strong commitment from its members.

### Political Affiliation

Political affiliation is one of the cornerstones of successful movements and in the case of Italy, women's alliances with political parties were crucial to movement success. The two had a reciprocal relationship; women helped further the interest and garner support for political parties which in turn helped women to build a framework to achieve their political objectives. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans argue that political opportunities help to shape social movements. More specifically, they argue that political ideology and party leaders shape movement goals and tactics. According to them, social movements are inherently political because they are based on demands for social change (16). The state organizes the political environment where social movements operate creating opportunities for action. The political opportunity structure of a social movement is extremely important to its success. Porta affirms that stories of Italian social movements cannot be told without their main allies: political parties (113). The Communist Party welcomed affiliation with social movements because they were a mass party and found itself altered by collective mobilization" (Porta 113). The Communist Party wanted to open itself up to other political actors.

As Charles Kurzman explains, some groups are sufficiently organized to protest but may not do so until political opportunities are present. These may include having access to authorities, experiencing a decline of repression, or support from other elites or influential groups (Kurzman 5). Kurzman argues that these political opportunities may help movements to change laws or public policies (38). Movements can also make opportunities for themselves, instead of waiting for change. The political opportunity structure of its new social movement will be extremely important to its success. According to Kurzman, in order for social movements to be successful, they must align themselves with political parties (38).

Jack Goldstone argues that political parties and social movements are mutually dependent actors in shaping politics and often rely on their associations with social movements in order to win elections (4). He explains that social movements *can barely exist and cannot succeed* without sponsorship from institutionalized political parties (4). The Italian women's movement, more specifically the UDI and CIF, would not have had the success or visibility they did without the support of the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party.

### Collective Identity

John McHale asserts that a fundamental aspect of social movements is the construction and maintenance of collective identity (12). William Gamson contends that collective identity and concepts of solidarity expand the tradition resource mobilization network (12). As explained by Nancy Whittier, collective identity involves feeling part of a larger group, which provides a major incentive for collective action (103). Moreover,

collective identity involves a certain category of people thinking of themselves as belonging to a group with distinctive problems and interests (103). These can include Hispanic or gay identities or can be based solely on active participation in a movement (103). Collective identities can also be based on membership in organizations or on agreement as to the causes of oppression of daily life, as seen in the Chinese Revolution.

Identity is a fundamental component of social movement organization and success. Collective identity provides a name in which activists speak and includes feeling part of a larger group with distinctive problems and interests (Whittier 103). Whittier maintains that collective identity provides a major incentive for collective action and mobilization. It is one of the most important and most influential factors in the organization and success of social movements. The collective identity of participants in social movements is not only an essential factor in the mobilization of constituents; it is also a precondition to success as well. Nevertheless it plays a pivotal role in the formation of social movements.

As Whittier claims, the creation of communities and movement solidarity is necessary for mobilization (237). Identity for empowerment, meaning the creation of collective identity and the feeling that political action is feasible, is necessary for the success of the women's movement. She explains that collective identity is about more than consciousness; it is about seeing oneself as part of a group, a collectivity (107). This collective identity is constructed by group boundaries, or symbolic and material distinctions between members of the collectivity and others (107). Whittier continues by arguing that the manifestations of collective identity are visible in the interactions among group members and in the actions of individuals (107-108). In explaining commitment to the movement, Whittier believes that for participants, a transformed individual identity as

a woman meant seeing oneself as a member of the collectivity “feminists,” and adopting radical feminist as a public identity signified membership in the group of women who had experienced such a transformation (108). Thus, the identity of radical feminist was an important element in sustaining a woman’s commitment to the radical feminist movement.

Similarly, in his discussion of nineteenth century social movements, Tilly examines the role of identity in the formation of “new social movements.” Tilly cites the work of Craig Calhoun, who researched how nineteenth century social mobilizations stressed demands for both autonomy and identity. Tilly points to Calhoun’s claim that identity claims in social movements accompany program and standing claims. According to Calhoun, when new political actors appear in social movements, assertions of identity become crucial to the actors’ impacts on constituencies, competitors, political allies and the objects of their program or standing claims (71). Throughout his work, Tilly argues for the importance of identity claims in social movements, arguing that performances of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment back up identity claims (12). The collective identity of this emerging social movement will be pivotal in sustaining commitment of members and in its success as well.

Overall, the collective identity of participants in social movements is a necessary precondition for the mobilization and commitment of members as well as the success of the movement in reaching its goals and objectives. As scholars such as Whittier and Katzenstein have argued, collective identity is pivotal in giving women a voice in social movements and raising feminist consciousness. As Joshua Gamson’s article on the dilemmas of identity politics explains, collective identity is not only necessary for

successful collective action, but that it is often an end in itself. Thus, collective identity is a dynamic emergent aspect of collective action (337).

### Communication and Media

As John McHale explains, communication is an essential element in the cultivation of the collective identity that is a feature of social movement activity (13). Bert Klandermans believes that communication was necessary to forge and maintain shared beliefs and to “transform social issues into collective actions frames...a process in which social actors, media and members of a society jointly interpret, define and redefine states of affairs (McHale 13). Communication refers to messages sent through the media that promote shifts in the social and political construction of legitimate limits of social, political or economic conditions (McHale 3). Further, advocacy communication includes publication, mailings, mass media, interpersonal contact, meetings, phone calls, demonstrations, speeches, testimony, banners, disruptive tactics, publications, etc (4). Jo Freeman explains that a co-optable communications network must exist within social movements, one that can agree to new ideas of the movement and directs members to action (8). Communication must be present with the movement for it to succeed.

Saul Alinsky explains that “in order to be successful one must keep the pressure on with different tactics and actions” (226). Tactics mean doing what one can with what one has. He also suggests that tactics are more successful if those involved do not go outside the experience of their people. The concept of protest tactics proved to be a very important and successful measure for women in their communication, recruitment of members and in achieving their goals. Many of the most prominent women’s groups, including the Defense Group of Italian Women (GDD), the UDI and the CIF, used

publications as a means to advance their goals and strategies. The women published literature and wrote articles for prominent publications as a primary method for recruitment and to make their voice heard across Italy.

In particular, the first issue of *Noi Donne* (Our Women) began in July 1944. The newspaper still continues today in Italy. It was written by women of the UDI to express their concerns and voice their opinions. It also served as a primary tool for mobilization and recruitment of women as well. The journal began to offer women “the possibility to discuss the problems which are of particular interest to women, who are directly interested in all problems of national life” (Slaughter 111). It was geared toward college students, wives and mothers and working women in industries such as agriculture and education. Another publication, *La Voce delle Donne* (Women’s Voice), published in Bologna in 1944, welcomed women into political life and asserted that women deserved a place in society alongside men (Slaughter 105).

Another publication, *La Nuova Realtá* (New Reality), appeared in Turin in February 1945 and was published sporadically in other Italian cities throughout the Resistance. By May 1945, *L’Ora della Donna* (The Hour of Women), another publication supporting women’s public participation in a democratic republic was published, although this publication was short lived. Although exact figures are unknown, these publications were published and released frequently during the Resistance in order to recruit more women to the cause. Additionally, these publications adhered to the principle that equality and emancipation were women’s goals and continued to state this through the end of the war.

Women also went out in the communities while campaigning for suffrage and traveled throughout Italy to discuss their programs and recruit members. They held public

meetings, impromptu speeches and went door to door. As Pojmann notes, this proved to be a successful political strategy to mobilize women and promote political agendas. These strategies also proved to be successful in getting their message across and to reach other women who were also dedicated to women's issues and democracy.

The communication networks of the women's organizations were very important tool in their success. The publications acted as a source of mobilization and they also allowed women's concerns to be voiced across Italy. This provided women in the organizations with a greater visibility. The publications and newspapers provided a forum for women to voice the changes they sought while spreading a message that women demand better social and political rights. The communication networks, particularly those of the UDI, were an essential component in the successful mobilization of women to the cause of advancing political rights for Italian women.

#### **IV. Background: Fascism, the Resistance and the Emergence of the UDI and CIF**

##### Women's Groups and Fascism

The later years of World War II and the breakdown of fascism in Italy were defining factors in the emergence and growth of the Italian Women's Movement. The Italian Resistance during the last part of World War II was an important component not only in the defeat of fascism and the transition to democracy but in the growth of the movement as well. As explained by Harry Hearder, the Resistance began in September 1943, when the Committee of National Liberation formed. It consisted of anti-fascist groups including the Christian Democrats, Italian Communist Party and Italian Socialists. Large partisan forces began to form in the North through different political parties and these included women. The Resistance has been called several names in the course of Italian history including a war of liberation, a patriotic war, a class war, a civil war or the second Risorgimento (Willson 182). After the liberation of Italy in 1945, it continued and advocated for the restructuring of Italy and the advancement of democratic principles. There is little doubt that the Resistance was a major turning point in both Italian and World War II history.

The Resistance had both a political and symbolic impact on Italy as it was perceived as rehabilitation for Italy and a continuation of the unification of Italy because of the democratic socioeconomic demands it promoted (Slaughter 59). Leaders of the Resistance groups, including members of the Communist Party, the Christian Democrats, Socialists and Liberals sought to end the war and to create a new democratic and progressive Italy (Slaughter 34). This collaboration was new and important in Italian politics. Women in the movement claimed to represent the people of Italy and to have a role in the functioning of the new government (34). Clark explains that their collaboration

to begin the Resistance became the Foundation of the Italian Republic. The Resistance led to the breakdown of fascism which resulted in the formation of political groups and movements to bring democratic renewal as well as political, social and economic change to Italy. The Resistance also marked a turning point for Italian women, for as Perry Willson writes, “The Resistance not only demarcated fascism from democracy, but ushered in a new era of greater emancipation which female partisans had earned” (183). Furthermore, Willson quotes party leader Palmiro Togliatti, who explained that the Resistance marked the first real entry of Italian women onto the stage of history (183). Women were not the only actors in this new period of Italian history. Others played a role in achieving democracy such as political leaders and groups, Catholicism, etc. But women were an important factor in Italy’s path to a new Republic.

Fascism had a direct impact on liberal democracy in Italy. According to Adrian Oldfield, fascism and democracy are linked because of the unexpected presence of civil society. He argues that in liberal democratic theory, the existence of a large autonomous civil society is both legitimate and necessary (14). While operating within the overall framework of the state, such institutions remain immune from political influence (Oldfield 14). The separation of civil society from the state is crucial to the development of liberal democracy. This argument will prove relevant for women within civil society, who did not let fascism overtake their lives or discourage them from participating in the Resistance or engaging in other actions that promoted the foundations of the Republic.

The Italian Resistance represented the climax of two decades of fascism and attempted to create the foundations for a new, democratic, and republican state (Pasquino 51). The defeat of fascism opened up a new opportunity for Italy to achieve democratic values. A New Republic was viewed as the best alternative after fascism. Women were

prime actors in the Resistance and the social movement that emerged. As Perry Willson explains, Italian women from all age groups, social classes and geographical areas of occupied Italy and were present in the work of every political grouping within the Resistance (180). According to Willson, women took direct action such as opening sealed trains to release prisoners, transporting bombs, or connected to armed activities (181). Women also worked as couriers, carrying messages and anti-fascist literature concealed in bicycle tires, shopping baskets or handbags (Willson 181). Many collected food and money and made clothing for fighting groups (Willson 181). They also led protests and strikes and cared for the sick and wounded. Others were involved directly in combat activities. Willson explains that these activities of women widened the public sphere for them during the Resistance. Women risked their lives in order to defeat the fascist regime and to end the war.

The Resistance Movement and the fight against fascism were important to the emergence of the Italian Women's Movement for several reasons. As Donald Sassoon explains, the Resistance resulted in the formation of several women's associations and saw women's entry into politics as well. Under fascism, the Italian state sought to organize the subordination of women around their central role of "devoted spouse and exemplary mother" (Sassoon 117). The Resistance also allowed for the emergence of new groups in Italy, including women's associations and organizations who collectively sought change for women while promoting democratization after fascism. Thousands of women were active in both the promotion of anti-fascist sentiment in southern Italy and partisan movements in the North (6).

Additionally, active women came from all regions of Italy, from Catholic groups and universities, from all different ages and walks of life. Jane Slaughter explains that in

1943, 27.4% of Italian females in the Resistance were 19 years or younger, 42.4% were between 20-29, 15.4% were in the 30 to 39 age group, and many were over the age of 40 (39). Slaughter also notes that most women were housewives, while others worked part time in agriculture, industry or retail (39). The majority of women who participated in the Resistance and later the social movement organizations were homemakers, students, and working women. Many of these women had been politically active before 1943 due to family or personal connections which had influenced them to demonstrate, distribute literature, or be involved in other public activities (41). Slaughter also explains that most of these women had no party affiliation prior to the war. The fact that women became active at this point in Italian history shows that they were united to achieve similar goals of ending the war as well as working for better social and political rights for themselves. The primary reason that women became active was for betterment of their own lives and their country.

Fascism and the Resistance Movement were the primary foundations for the emergence of women's groups and associations during the war. Fascist policy toward women saw them as mothers and procreators who belonged only within the private sphere. The social conditions under fascism gave women direct cause to participate in public life. The new mass groups that formed during Fascism gave them a form of political participation (Rossi-Doria 89). Women became responsible for the survival of their families and the community, propelling them into public and social life (90). Rossi-Doria explains that women began their activities by protecting runaway soldiers, a sort of "mass mothering" (91). When women hid people, arms or documents in their houses, they were essentially playing a role in public political life (Rossi-Doria 91). This was one of the first times that women had an opportunity to do this. Women also began by

organizing civilian clothing for soldiers. But as one woman pointed out in 1943, the women who were able to do this were also able to organize, pass out leaflets or do another activity for the Resistance Movement (Rossi-Doria 91). Views such as these can be thought to be the spark for the emergence of women's groups during the movement.

Slaughter provides a number of reasons that women became politically active in the later years of the war. She explains that motives included vague ideals, private rebellions, personal aspirations, expectations, and their own hopes and goals provided the motivation for women to become involved. She notes that participation among women at universities was especially prominent. Many college students were involved in anti-Fascist groups such as the Fascist University Group (GUF) and these connections among other students led to increased participation in the movement. These women, many of whom were raised under the fascist regime, wanted to be a force for change and hope in their society. Slaughter explains that while there was no single motive for participation, it is clear that political uncertainty, own expectations and hopes and goals created new hopes for both men and women as well as a possibility to take action (49). The activities and organization of the women, within the broader context of civil society, demonstrates their integral role in creating a positive force for change in society and bringing political change to the country.

### UDI and CIF

The two largest women's organizations during the war were the *Union of Italian Women* (UDI) and the *Center of Italian Women* (CIF). Before these were established, the first prominent association was the *Women's Defense Group* (GDD) in 1943. The GDD launched recruitment drives, encouraged women to act and brought women into many Resistance functions while connecting women to the political and social goals of the

Resistance (Slaughter 66). Members of the GDD included professionals and often had anti-Fascist experiences prior to the Resistance. Many were industrial workers and housewives and some had family connections with partisan or anti-fascists (Slaughter 67). Members were described as *ragionata*, or women having a strong feminist consciousness that provided the motivation for their activities (Slaughter 66). Women members usually had an anti-Fascist background and connections to political networks, which facilitating the organization of women within the GDD. Women organized in all regions, from Reggio Emilia to Bologna. Usually one woman was assigned to a particular area and traveled recruiting members. For example, Gemma Bergonzoni, an agricultural worker, was successful in recruiting members from her trade and organizing strikes, which raised political consciousness and made it easier to bring more members into the GDD (Slaughter 67). Another organizer, Lucia Coria, stated that “women’s groups in the GDD were often already formed in a spontaneous, autonomous and Unitarian way, and the GDD only had to incorporate them into the political scheme” (Slaughter 67). These units were organized in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools and hospitals. They engaged in activities such as gathering food and supplies for the Resistance, publishing newspapers and literature and public demonstrations and protests. By the spring of 1945, before the GDD merged with the UDI, the GDD had over 70,000 members (Slaughter 98).

Sassoon explains that the *Women’s Defense Group* later became the *Union of Italian Women*, one of the leading women’s associations of the women’s movement in Italy (117). Other women’s associations such as *I Gruppi Femminili Antifascisti* (Antifascist Feminist Group) and *Gruppi Femminili per l’Assistenza ai Combattenti della Liberazione* (Feminist Group for the Assistance of Fighters of Freedom) combined efforts

with the UDI in 1944. The goal was to “unite these in groups into one large Italian women’s organization of a democratic character in which all ideas and principles will be respected and envisioned a role for women in a new Italian State” (Pojmann 1998: 12). The UDI included Communist, Socialist, Liberal and Action Party women. Women’s associations such as the UDI were able to form in part because of other political organizations in Italy.

The *Union of Italian Women* emerged out of the Christian Democrats during the Resistance and became Italy’s largest women’s organization. The UDI was a non-partisan women’s organization dominated by Communist women. Slaughter explains that women in the PCI were encouraged to build a national women’s organization that could pull together all the existing women’s groups and continue to mobilize women after the war was over (98). The UDI contained local chapters, committees and elected officers. The main goal of the UDI was women’s suffrage. They also helped to free prisoners of the war. Their stance included the notion that Italy could not be democratic without female participation in politics.

Jane Slaughter provides demographical information of the women who belonged to the GDD and later the UDI. Women came from regions all over Italy, with 11,402 members from Emilia Romagna, 4,520 from Piedmont, 4,758 from Lombardy and 1,340 from Liguria (98). Demographic characteristics included women who were factory workers, clerks, professionals and students. In one city, Ravenna, statistics show that 32 city groups existed, including 2 factory worker groups, eight groups of students, clerks, teachers and intellectuals, five groups of housewives, nine of agricultural workers, eight mixed groups and thirteen in the surrounding countryside (Slaughter 100). Additionally, a sample of 136 members was taken in 1945, which showed characteristics of female

membership. There were 45 industrial workers, six housewives, seventeen agricultural workers, thirteen students, eleven teachers, seventeen women in the commercial industry and twelve in other professions (101). Fifteen had no known occupation (101). Most of the women came from Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy and Emilia Romagna and were between the age of twenty and forty (101). It is not clear as to the religions of the women who belonged to the UDI. The demographic information provided displays the membership of the UDI and demonstrates that women who belonged to the movement had a variety of backgrounds and their common unity during this time period led them to participation in the movement.

Another leading group, the Catholic *Center of Italian Women* (CIF) was also founded during the Resistance in October of 1944 to promote the interests of Catholic women and to include them in the rebuilding of a new Italy. It brought together twenty-six different women's groups of Christian inspiration, who sought to help restructure order and Christian peace after fascism (Pojmann 1998: 12). Membership was similar to the UDI as women were generally between twenty and forty years old and were students, factory workers, teachers, professionals, or agricultural workers. The CIF was more religiously organized than the UDI, with its goal of enabling women to assume more responsibility in civic life (Slaughter 91). Both organizations claimed to be mass organizations opened to all women regardless of political affiliation.

In particular, the origins of the CIF were Catholic, as many of the groups that joined were Catholic women's associations. The organization emphasized the role of Catholic women as a moral force in Italian society. Both organizations served various political agendas according to Slaughter as well as women's political consciousness (95). Slaughter quotes former president of the CIF, Amalia di Valmarana, who stated that the

goals of the CIF were to allow women to participate in the reconstruction of Italy as well as defense of maternal, family and women's rights (91). The CIF supported issues such as child and health care, education and improved working conditions for women. These issues would continue well beyond the Resistance and throughout the 1950s. As Adele Bei explains, "The mass which we directed and organized was made up of Catholic women, women of the people, who opposed the war and fascism" (Slaughter 99). Moreover, it sought to support women's traditional political roles in Italian society. The organizations wanted to use the strength of the masses of Italian women, a key component of social movements and their success. Pojmann concurs with this view, arguing that the story of women in postwar Italy stemmed from the UDI and CIF (1998: 7). Thus, many Italian women were seeking to have a place in having a voice for women in a new democracy.

It is also important to understand the Catholic Church's support of the CIF during the period. This is quite different from the UDI, whose assistance mostly came from political parties. In a document entitled, "The Activities and the Congress of the CIF," the Church stated its support of the activities of the organization and participation in the war. Pius XII expressed his pleasure at the results women had achieved in activities in the fields of social assistance, women workers, of mothers and families through the distribution of periodicals and pamphlets. The Pope acknowledged that women had been called from the home to become more active in public life and claimed that the CIF had been successful in promoting the social advancement of women. Pope Pius XII expressed his support of the powerful concentration of women involved in movements directly related to the Church and in defense of the moral and religious traditions of the Italian

People. The Pope's support of women in this context was an important aspect of the Catholic tradition as well as to women's emancipation during the war.

### Goals and Objectives

Women's associations in the women's movement sought a number of different goals and objectives. The first of these was women's suffrage. Both the UDI and CIF tried to convince men of the importance of the female vote. They believed that women's participation during the war should be continued afterwards. They argued that the vote for women in Italy would improve the quality of life for everyone and guarantee that women and motherhood would be respected in a new Italian State (Pojmann 1998: 13). At the same time, the push for the vote for women advanced the cause of democracy as well, in the transition from fascism in post World War II. The alliance of women's groups with political parties helped to make visible their beliefs in women's suffrage. Women also campaigned politically for the vote, attended rallies and meetings, and addressed this in their publications. This goal helped the mobilization of the movement.

In addition to women's suffrage, the objectives of women's groups in the Italian Women's Movement included greater representation in politics, women's rights, divorce and abortion legislation, gender roles, programs for children, maternity rights and above all, the advancement of Italian women in a democratic state. Among the central goals of the movement was women's complete political, social and cultural participation in the nation of Italy (Pojmann 2005: 83). The goals of women helped to advance the goals of democracy as well, for the actions of women's associations, such as the campaign and success of suffrage, contributed to the principles of democracy in Italy. In the end,

women did achieve many of these goals, which are articulated in Italy's postwar constitution.

Another major goal of the movement sought to raise women's consciousness and help them to rediscover themselves and find a new concept of femininity. Italian feminism was a forum where women could collectively seek social change and provide a voice for women after the war. As Nancy Whittier explains, collective identity involves feeling a part of a broader group with distinctive problems and interests and provides a major incentive for collective action (103). Identities can be consciously created or can be based on participation in a movement. In the case of the women's movement in Italy, the collective identity of women as women became the backbone of the movement's success. The identity of Italian women in postwar Italy was a major incentive for the creation, growth and feminist consciousness of those in the movement. As Joni Lovenduski explains, the methods of consciousness raising and small group structure served the Italian women's movement well and generated close-knit women's networks (90-91). Thus, the goal of consciousness raising in the women's movement attributed to the success of mobilization.

In addition, Wendy Pojmann provides a detailed explanation of the objectives and priorities of women's groups that emerged during the Italian Resistance. She explains that the UDI and CIF should be seen as central forces in a continuous women's movement (2005: 75). She also explains that the women of the UDI and the CIF provided the women of feminist groups in Italy an example of how to interact with Italy's political parties, trade unions, the Catholic Church as well as other women's groups (Pojmann 2005: 75). This was partly because of their communication and political strategies. The women in these groups also organized and mobilized well because of their goals and

strategies as well. The two organizations also set agendas as to which issues to approach, such as suffrage, family and marriage issues, women's rights and equality in wages as well as how to appeal to the largest number of women possible (Pojmann 2005: 75).

### Political Party Affiliation

Political parties were central to the success and mobilization of the women's mass movement in Italy. According to Pasquino, one of the most important aspects of the post-1943 situation in Italy was the mobilization of large popular sectors into politics (57). Two new parties mobilized large masses of Italians, the Communist Party (PCI) and the Christian Democrats (DC). Pasquino notes that because the Communists perceived political competition in postwar Italy to entail struggle among organized groups, their attention was addressed to the Christian Democrats (57). But at the center of the organization of women's groups during the Resistance was the Communist Party (PCI).

The party was effective in mobilizing and structuring support for the Resistance, with women being central targets for recruitment to mass organizations and public politics (Slaughter 74-75). Communist Party leaders recognized that youth and women would be "the party of the future" and consequently effectively mobilized women to groups against the Resistance. Slaughter explains that women were incorporated in the party's mass base and by late 1945 there were between 250,000 and 280,000 female members in Italy, comprising 14% of total membership (75). Female party members came from industrialized and urbanized areas and were employed in a variety of sectors, including commercial industry, education, and agriculture. In recruiting females to organize, the PCI had a number of goals and organizational strategies.

One of the central goals of the Communist Party was to educate females on political issues and to create a place for women within the party. PCI created separate women's cells for members to work on solutions to their problems and to allow for women to have autonomy and leadership (Slaughter 78). The party also allowed experienced political women to do the organizing and educating for the other women.

Another main goal of the Party was "the emancipation and incorporation of women into public life" as well as "equal participation in politics, equal treatment before the law, access to education and equal pay for equal work" (Slaughter 79). The Party insisted that all citizens had certain basic rights that should be guaranteed by law. Slaughter explains, "The right to vote was of paramount importance to the emerging democratic state and party positions on issues such as education, equality and political rights were reflected in a new national constitution in an emerging democracy" (81). The constitution declared Italy to be a democratic republic, guaranteeing women the same rights as men. As Slaughter summarizes, emancipation through work, equal opportunity in the material world and equality before the law had been Communist principles for many decades and were adopted as fundamental laws of postwar Italy" (81).

Similar to the PCI, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) was a central force in the organization and recruitment of women during the Resistance. Headed by Alcide de Gasperi, the Party was a revival of the Italian People's Party (*Partito Popolare Italiano*) created in 1919. In the later years of the war, the Christian Democrats began organizing post fascist Italy, and had their greatest electoral and democratic success with the elections of 1948. The DC had a primary role with the organization and mobilization of Catholic women's lay organizations. As Ruth and Simon Henig explain, "In Italy, women's preference for the Christian Democrats was linked to the traditional support of

women for the Catholic Church and its organizations” (16). Two of the major women’s groups associated with the DC were the *Union of Catholic Action Women* (UDACI) and the *Young Women of Catholic Action* (GF). These organizations allied with the DC and became the vehicles through which women participated in Resistance activities (Slaughter 81). Groups such as these attracted women through their autonomy and appealed to women from diverse backgrounds. Eventually, the DC, along with the Communist Party, created two national mass-based women’s organizations, known as the Center of Italian Women (CIF) and the Union of Italian Women (UDI). These two organizations served as the umbrella organizations for all the other women’s groups in Italy.

The DC developed a program for women’s rights and supported various women’s causes such as women’s suffrage, abortion rights, family and marriage rights and better representation in politics. The DC called on women to assume a number of responsibilities in the creation of a new Italy. They campaigned for women’s suffrage and the need for women to insert their private values into the public world. After the war, they opposed divorce and birth control and insisted that women should enjoy equality in public rights and equal treatment. The DC also believed in the importance of traditional roles for women and recruited women through their stance on these issues as well as through the existing Resistance organizations. It drew most of its membership from the existing Catholic women’s organizations. The DC also appealed to women through its political values, allowing women to run for political office in the last years of the war. This allowed for new women’s activism and leadership. The ideals and beliefs of the DC both attracted and appealed to Italian women and demonstrate how the alliance between

civil organizations and political parties helped to advance the cause of democracy in Italy.

Wendy Pojmann details the importance of the relationship between women's associations and political parties in the Italian Women's Movement in achieving their goals and objectives. She explains that the alliance between both the UDI and CIF with Italian political parties was instrumental in winning women the right to vote and greater representation in politics (Pojmann 2005: 78). She affirms that this issue was the first time that the UDI and the CIF worked with the parties and the Church and made an appeal on behalf of women (Pojmann 2005: 78). Pojmann argues that the UDI and CIF had to maintain alliances with key organizations such as political parties, the Catholic Church and other groups to promote their causes because these groups had significant influence in the political sphere. This component of the movement was necessary to promoting legislation and other programs for women as well. Pojmann also makes a critical point about the need for autonomy of Italian women's associations. She contends that the alliance with political parties often threatened the autonomy of women's groups but many women believed it was critical to work with them for greater success.

According to Pojmann, the party was seen as the leading element of power within the State, and despite challenges to its primary, was likely to retain its position (2005: 88). Thus, it was necessary to seek agreement with parties rather than to provoke discord. The collaboration with political parties is one of the underlying reasons for the success of the women's movement in the early years following the war.

#### Recruitment and Publications

In her discussion of the origins of both of the UDI and CIF and the beginnings of the Italian Women's Movement, Pojmann provides an overview as to how the women's movement grew and how members were recruited. According to Slaughter, convincing women that they should be politically active required developing a number of strategies to achieve these goals (104). Pojmann explains that both organizations took a grassroots approach to recruit members and sent their leaders into individual communities to speak to women face to face (2005: 76-77). This type of communication was a very successful strategy in recruiting members to the movement. Women also recruited and gained members and visibility through their extensive network of publications. A wide variety of newspapers and pamphlets were used to recruit and educate the masses of Italian women (Slaughter 104).

The most important publication of the UDI was *Noi Donne* (Our Women), was said to be a political instrument for both activists and leaders. The first issue of *Noi Donne*, published in Naples in July 1944, noted that fascism has interrupted their roles as mother and wives and announced that the publication would offer women the possibility to discuss the problems which are of particular interest to women" (Slaughter 111). According to a statement from *Noi Donne*, "In fighting for the independence of Italy we are also fighting for our freedom as women and as workers" (Slaughter 104). This was the basis of their publication.

*Noi Donne* appeared throughout Italy with over 10,000 copies being published and was followed by similar publications in Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria and Tuscany. It stated continuously that equality and emancipation were women's goals (Slaughter 105). In 1944, *Noi Donne* in Liguria specifically referred to the "struggle for liberty and women's emancipation" (Slaughter 105). In August of that year, the publication

announced that Italian women wanted to understand political life and the ability to express their opinions. They asked the government to accord them with civil, social and human rights afforded to all human beings (Slaughter 106). *Noi Donne* was instrumental in raising women's concerns and attracting members to the movement.

Other publications had similar effects. *La Voce delle Donne* (Women's Voice), based in Bologna, also addressed women's rights. In 1944, it stated that "women showed by their actions that they were not second to anyone, but they have properly redeemed their rights and conquered the place that belongs to us in the future society of popular democracy" (Slaughter 105). It affirmed that women belonged in political life and in the reconstruction of Italy. *Il Bollettino* (Bulletin), published for the CIF, was first written to chronicle "their work and activities and the peaceful victories they would win with the help of the Lord" (Pojmann 1998: 14). Wendy Pojmann argues that these publications were key tactics in the success of both organizations in spreading their message and helping to increase membership in the years following the war. The issue of women's status in a new democratic Italy was a consistent theme in the publications.

### Membership and Visibility

Although many of the members of the UDI and CIF and other associations in Italy were housewives and working women, according to Pojmann, the women of both the UDI and CIF came from every social class, region and educational background, united in their goal to defeat the Nazis and fascism guarantee women a voice in post-Fascist Italy (2005: 77, 93). Men were not allowed to join these organizations. Pojmann explains that Italian women saw themselves as having a public role in bringing the war to an end and that even after the war; these new women's groups continued their work, which grew into

the Italian Women's Movement. The women's associations envisioned their role and wished to participate in the construction of a new Italian State. Both the UDI and the CIF and other women's associations expanded their roles after fascism and played a significant role in the transition in Italian democracy.

Similarly, both organizations gained political visibility through speeches and writings on the role of political women by Pope Pius XII. In his encyclical *Woman's Duties In Social and Political Life* he acknowledged women's participation in the statement "You, therefore, disregarding high-sounding and empty slogans with which some people would qualify the movement for women's rights, have laudably organized and united as Catholic women and girls to meet in a becoming manner the natural needs and true interests of your sex" (4). Pope Pius also acknowledged women's dignity in the eyes of God and expressed that "as children of God a man and woman are absolutely equal" (4). Although Pope Pius stated that women's duty and mission was in the home and as a mother, he also acknowledged in this encyclical the duty of a woman to take part in public life. He stated that it would be difficult to convince women to return to the home when conditions prevail her to stay away from it. Despite the fact that a woman's supreme place was in the home, modern conditions called for woman's participation in public, social and political life" (Marchione 28). Margherita Marchione explains that Pius XII's pronouncements on the subject of womanhood are unprecedented. Because of the war's end and the nearing of the establishment of the New Republic, on October 21, 1945, his call was for Catholic women to enter public life. He explained "She must compete with man for the good of civic life, in which she is, in dignity, equal to him" (Marchione 28). According to these arguments, it was "the duty in conscience for the

Catholic woman to take an active part in the political and social movements of the day and to collaborate with men for the good of the State” (Marchione 28).

Both the UDI and CIF enjoyed tremendous success measured by increased membership, activities and widespread activism during the later years of the war and into the postwar period. By 1948, the CIF claimed their organization had a membership of six million Italian women and in 1949; the UDI had reached a membership of one million. The memberships of both the UDI and CIF continued to expand throughout the postwar period, having direct roles in all aspects of Italian life (Pojmann 1998: 7). These organizations were pivotal in achieving political, social and maternal rights for Italian women throughout the 1940s.

It is now necessary to define three specific political goals that women sought and then look at the definition of success in social movements and analyze the success and failure of both the UDI and CIF in achieving these goals. The variables necessary for successful social movements will also be analyzed to explain whether or not these characteristics were displayed within the groups and helped them to achieve political success within the movement.

## **V. Political Goals: Women's Suffrage, New Constitution, Greater Representation in Politics**

Among the goals and objectives that the UDI and CIF sought, political equality was in the forefront of their objectives. Three main goals of the UDI and CIF were achieving women's suffrage, providing a voice for women in the new constitution promoting political and social equality, and greater representation in politics. This only represents the surface of what women achieved and will be useful in analyzing social movement success.

### **Women's Suffrage**

On the issue of suffrage, Donald Sassoon explains that all of the major political parties in Italy agreed to suffrage for women, supporting it for ideological reasons (117). Wendy Pojmann explains that both the *Union of Italian Women* and the *Center of Italian Women* worked for women's suffrage in the years following World War II. The UDI used women's roles as workers as justification for the vote while the CIF emphasized a woman's role as a moral force within society (Pojmann 2005: 77). To acquire the vote, women's organizations turned to political parties. According to Pojmann, in 1944 women's groups asked the government to guarantee them the right to vote in a multiparty motion presented to the National Liberation Committee (2005: 77). Officially, the extension of voting rights to women was granted on February 1, 1945.

Anna Rossi-Doria explains that women's suffrage was a direct result of action taken by a cross-party group of women activists during the Resistance. The initiative was launched by the UDI and a Pro-Suffrage Committee had been established in October 1944. It published a pamphlet on women's right to vote, sent memoranda to the

government and organized a petition on the same issue which had been signed by thousands of women (Rossi-Doria 95). As a woman partisan expressed, women felt that the vote was self-evident after the war” (Rossi-Doria 96). At first women’s suffrage was received with indifference but later thought to be necessary in the new democracy (Rossi-Doria 95). Many were also concerned about the threat of women’s suffrage to family unity. However, Pope Pius XII described women’s suffrage in 1945 as a legitimate duty. He declared, “Your honor has struck, Catholic women and girls. Public life needs you. To everyone, we can say: this concerns you” (96). As Christian Democratic Leader Maria Federici recalled, “Women experienced the vote as payment of all of the human suffering of the war” (Rossi-Doria 96). For many women, the right and duty to vote made explicit the existence of the Italian women’s individuality and drew attention to a woman’s independence and autonomy of action, in clear opposition to her traditionally defined roles’ (Rossi-Doria 96).

Another example of how women achieved the right to vote is demonstrated in their participation in political committees. The women’s committee within the PCI explained that obtaining the women’s vote was lagging and inadequate (Ventresca 171). The committee proposed a range of initiatives to promote the organization and mobilization of women in the home and workplace (Ventresca 172). The goal was to encourage women’s participation and leadership in work, established organizations such as the UDI and CIF and politics. Ventresca explains that the UDI established the *Alleanza Femminile* (Feminist Alliance), an organization whose purpose was to coordinate the activities of the various women’s organizations adherent to the Communist and Socialist Parties (172). The organization also promoted women’s participation in electoral rallies, protest marches and other activities to mobilize women’s support. The mobilization of

women in the political arena after the war was very important to keeping women active in the public sphere as well as to continue the activities they had undertaken during the Resistance. Women's activities in this organization were very successful, in part because they boosted women's visibility in the campaign for suffrage. These activities were beneficial to the political parties, because they showed their support of women's rights. The organization helped demonstrate women's commitment to the campaign and was also important to helping women achieve better representation in politics, largely due to political affiliation.

#### Greater Representation in Politics

Both the UDI and CIF were successful in increasing women's participation in political life after the end of the war as well. On the issue of political representation in public office, Anna Rossi-Doria explains that women in both organizations had continued political representation in the years following the war. Many Italian women did better in first postwar elections. By 1945, 7% of those holding party or government office were women (Slaughter 126). In spring of 1946, over 2000 women in Italy (not all were part of women's organizations) were elected to local councils (Slaughter 126). The elections of 1948 were the first elections with democratic suffrage in a new democratic state for Italy. In 1948, the Christian Democrats held 48.5% of the vote (Slaughter 126). In 1948, 5.2% of the DC were women while they represented 14.5% of members for the Communist Party (126). Italy had 7.8% female representation in parliament by 1945 although this number declined in the later years after the war (126). These new standings for women were a direct result of women's activism on political committees as well as their affiliation with the Communist Party.

The parties also saw a wave of women being elected and continuing their role after the war. Parties such as the Christian Democrats, supported women's participation in politics. They also supported the mobilization of women who voted. As Robert A. Ventresca notes, close to a quarter of membership were women and represented the majority of voters (171). In order to win, the DC would have to work hard at winning the vote of women. However, Rossi-Doria points out that a main problem of women's representation was the question of whether women were elected to represent women or their party affiliation. Women had been more successful in 'small-time politics' (local committees and people's councils) than they had been in government representation.

The Christian Democrats supported women's issues and supported women in the Italian Electorate, although the number declined throughout the reconstruction of Italy in the 1950s (Luvendoski 144). The PCI continued to recruit women after the war and by 1954 women constituted 36% of PCI membership. Additionally, the rate of women being elected to the national government fluctuated during the postwar years, with women representing only 7% of those elected by 1958 (124). Slaughter attributes the success of women in politics after the war to the momentum of the Resistance, which helped propel women into public office, representing a victory of civil equality in Italy's changing political culture (124). However, despite the advances women made, she notes that women's representation in politics often conflicted with their roles as wives and mothers. Women had to choose between being involved in the political world or continuing to operate in the private sphere. For many, the latter provided the female identity after the war. It is also important to note that although women did achieve significant progress in expanding women's political participation, many women did not participate because of these roles as wives and mothers and not all women had the same views as those in the

movement. These reasons prevented some women from taking part in politics, although their role was critical after the war's end in expanding women's rights in Italy.

Martin Conway also points out the importance of women in politics after the war. He explains that women were an important element of the DC coalition. Throughout the war, the DC had supported universal suffrage in the new democratic state in Italy. They continued to win support through their stance on issue after the war. They constituted the majority of the electorate by 1946. He also explains that women voters had to be appealed to in order to exercise their new voting rights. He points to the restructuring of family life in the postwar period. The Christian Democrats supported the value of family virtues rooted in Catholic tradition as well as other social welfare interests that women favored (Conway 57). This helped women to want to be involved in politics and voting, through the support of the DC. This argument illustrates how support of the UDI and CIF by political parties helped to influence their participation in politics.

#### New Constitution of 1948

The UDI and CIF also played a major role in developing the new Italian Constitution and women were important to getting the provisions of the constitution solidified. As Slaughter points out, the UDI included a variety of recommendations for the new constitution. In addition to work for all men and women, the UDI called for the “dignified tenor of life for workers, a healthy home for every family, adequate support for maternity, the protection of the physical and moral health of children, the right to assistance for the aged and the distribution of primary goods on the basis of need” (Slaughter 112). The UDI termed these proposals “The Defense of the Family.” The issues of equality, family life, and maternity were particularly important issues for the

UDI and then new constitution in Italy. As further evidence of women's influence, several from the UDI met with the Democratic Minister of Justice in May 1945 to discuss possible reforms in marriage and family laws. When the new constitution was approved 3 years later, women had achieved certain provisions that led to better laws and rights for them in politics, family life, marriage and education. Thus the recommendations of the UDI were enacted to some extent in 1948, although it would not be until the 1960s and 1970s that women achieved better rights for abortion, divorce and other issues.

As such, Italy's new constitution contained provisions for equality among all citizens. This included an equal rights clause, the extension of suffrage and a limited concept of a woman's right to work (Slaughter 123). Additionally, the new constitution in Italy made way for women to be involved in politics and the labor force, and gave them new rights in the home and for their families. Women Deputies in the Constituent Assembly worked together to insert women's rights into the Constitution. This established principles which women further obtained civil rights in the decades following the war, such as divorce, abortion and family laws (Rossi-Doria 98).

Several articles from the constitution point to the equality and social rights women had received. These had not been previously included. The success of these provisions can be attributed to lobbying activities of women as well as political backing by the main political parties. In particular, women campaigned for better family and marriage rights which were supported by the Christian Democrats. The most successful provision was the right to vote, which not only had political backing, but support from the Catholic Church as well. Following is a list of the particular articles in the constitution that were applicable to women and demonstrate the success of women in achieving better rights in the new constitution.

First, Article 1 explains that Italy is a democratic republic based on labor while Article 2 guarantees human rights for all. Article 3 addresses equality and states that all citizens have equal social status before the law, regardless of differences of sex, race, language, religion and political opinion. Article 4 recognizes the right of all citizens to work. On marriage, Article 29 recognized it as a natural association founded on marriage, entailing moral and legal equality of the spouses within legally defined limits to protect the unity of the family. Article 31 protects maternity, infancy, and youth and supports and encourages institutions needed for this purpose. Article 48 established the provision for all men and women in Italy to vote, and defined voting as free, personal, equal and a civic duty. Article 51 recognized that all citizens, regardless of sex, were eligible for public office and specific measures should be adopted to promote equal chances for men and women. These particular articles were significant for Italian women, in that they established many of the rights that women had campaigned for during the Resistance. They also show that the success of the UDI and to a lesser extent the CIF to establish better rights for women.

## **VI. Success in Social Movements and Analysis of Variables**

### What is Success?

William Gamson approaches success as a set of outcomes, recognizing that a given challenging group may receive different scores on equally valid, different measures of outcome (350). The issues in clusters of success focus on the acceptance of a challenging group by its antagonists as well as whether or not the group's beneficiary gains new advantages during the challenge (Gamson 350). Most movements have a range of both small and large goals (Gamson 347). In the end, why will this movement, or any other social movement matter? Gamson cites two aspects of success: the acceptance of a challenging group by its antagonists as a valid representative for a legitimate set of interests, and the winning of new advantages (282). Women were successful as a commanding force against fascism who advocated for a set of common goals and beliefs which included political and social gains for women. If the winning of new advantages is a condition to be met for success, then both the UDI and CIF had a direct successful impact in achieving specific political goals for women in Italy. It is imperative to look at the variables necessary for successful social movements and assess whether or not these variables were present in the UDI and CIF in their quest for specific political gains in Italy.

### Analysis of Variables

In the end, women in the Italian organizations UDI and CIF were successful in establishing all three goals they sought to achieve: women's suffrage, the new constitution and greater representation in politics. It is important to assess whether the variables necessary for social movements were involved in these undertakings. It is

necessary to analyze the key variables in successful social movements, to see if they were present in the women's groups of the Italian Resistance. Then I will look specifically at whether these variables were present in women's success at attaining these three political goals.

In the literature on Italian women's groups, characteristics of worthiness are not addressed individually. It can be argued that women's emancipation grew out of the Resistance because women believed that deserved more than what they had. Women in the UDI and CIF wanted to end fascism, achieve women's suffrage and gain better representation in politics. Their need for more equality fueled their displays of worthiness. This was present in participation in marches, protests and demonstrations as well as the mobilization of women. As Tilly argues, the presence of women with children was a sign of worthiness. Women who belonged to the two organizations often brought their children into the movement culture. They found themselves deserving to be awarded equal rights of men. In this vein, it can be argued that many Italian women displayed Tilly's characteristic of worthiness, which constituted a small part of what made their goals a reality.

In the arguments of both Tilly and Rustow, national unity is a necessary and important variable in successful social movements. Women in these social groups did have a sense of national unity and pride. This sense began in their participation in the Resistance and the defeat of fascism, through their mobilization into women's organizations. Women who joined the movement displayed their sense of unity in several different ways; by joining the movement, through participation in marches during the Resistance, chants, demonstrations, through communication network, by aligning with political parties, etc. Women also displayed this in their common goals and priorities,

particularly in achieving the right to vote. They became united through their common goals. This was arguably one of the most important and present characteristics in both groups. Without this common force, nothing else would have been possible.

The mobilization and growing number of women being recruited from around Italy played a huge role in women's success. Besides affiliation with political parties, this was one of the most important components of the movement. It was a more pivotal force in the successful actions of the UDI than the CIF. As scholars such as Jane Slaughter have argued, women leaders traveled around Italy, mostly in the northern regions, spreading their message about uniting women during the Resistance. Women in the UDI wrote publications and pamphleteered throughout the regions in order to mobilize women. The growing numbers of women helped to make the movement stronger and well established throughout the country. The more women the movement attracted, the more soldiers they helped provide protection, the more food and clothing they passed out, the more lives they saved. Tilly's arguments that numbers are a key aspect of social movements was indeed a defining factor for social movement success in Italy.

Although not all Italian women during this period had the same views, many Italian women were committed to the cause of Resistance activities and to the goals they sought which further led to their commitment to women's associations. Though the exact percentage of women who joined the cause is not known, the majority of women participated in one way or another. Commitment was displayed in their numerous activities and actions during the Resistance as well as their continuance after the war. As the movement continued throughout the last years of the war, the two women's groups grew stronger, engaged in more activities, and continued to fight for their cause. This occurred because the women were so committed. In contrast, there were shorter lived

university groups such as the University Federation of Italian Catholics and the PCI's Youth Front which emerged in the early 1940s. These organizations were not as politically active as the UDI and CIF, and consequently women in these groups joined one of the other organizations in order to be more active in women's causes. In order to be active in the movement, they changed their lifestyles from typical homemakers and wives and mothers to participants in a greater movement in society. Their commitment was demonstrated in their actions, voices and in the longevity of the movement.

A large part of the success of both the UDI and CIF can be attributed to its affiliation and support with political parties. Although usually the social movements and the state are seen as separate entities, scholars have argued that they are overlapping. In the case of Italy, political parties such as the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats were necessary for their success in achieving the goals of suffrage and equality. They were the driving force behind many of their actions during the Resistance and were primarily responsible for women's representation in politics after war's end. In particular, the Christian Democrats campaigned for women's suffrage and put this on their agenda. It brought women to the political arena and allowed the DC to gain more support simultaneously. Political parties were one of the most important aspects of women's political success during the movement.

Collective identity was another important aspect in analyzing the success of the women's movement. Although women had different reasons for being in the movement, they all had a single identity, that of being an Italian woman. This was the driving force behind their actions and political movements. They believed that they should be afforded the same rights as men and greater representation in politics. Their identity as women oppressed by fascism was a pivotal force in their success. Women in both the UDI and

CIF had common goals and aspirations. Women collectively fought to change society and did so by aligning themselves with political parties and communicating their message to the media.

Additionally, women belonging to the UDI and CIF were extremely effective in communicating their message. They did this with passion and vigor and indeed communication was an essential part of their success. Active Italian women in this movement had a strong and expansive communication network, from pamphleteering to communicating through peer, friends and political parties to publication of their news magazines. The UDI had a more visible role in communicating than the CIF as they publicized more frequently but both were made visible because of their alliances with the Christian Democrats and Communist Party. These parties helped women to communicate their messages. Communication was a very important component of the movement, and helped to make their goals a reality.

#### Analysis of Political Goals and Success

In the end, women who organized and mobilized collectively were successful in achieving three goals essential to the establishment of the Italian Republic. As to women's suffrage and political representation, both the UDI and to a lesser extent the CIF were successful in achieving this for women. Women of the UDI and CIF believed that they deserved the same political rights as men and were worthy of the vote, stood united in order to achieve this for women, had a significant amount of women who wanted the vote and women's representation in politics and were committed to achieving this for women. However, the literature shows that women in the UDI were more visible than women in the CIF, attended more functions and rallies and were more politically

active. This was largely due to the fact that the CIF was a religious organization and smaller than the UDI. However, women in both groups campaigned for political rights and remained committed to their cause. Their struggle for political rights helped their representation in politics and in achieving certain articles of the constitution that guaranteed equality. Tilly's WUNC displays were evident in both the UDI and CIF in Italy.

Political affiliation was a key aspect to women's success in earning the vote, enshrining rights in Italy's constitution and achieving greater representation in politics. Italian women in the UDI and CIF were conscious of the support that political parties could give them while political parties often needed the support of women to further their causes. Women from both parties, but to a greater extent the UDI, were integral to both the Christian Democratic Party (DC) and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and vice versa. Political backing of both the UDI and CIF was fundamental to achieving women's goals. The Communist Party wanted to create a place for women in politics, equality for women and the Christian Democrats were strong supporters of women's rights. They campaigned for women's suffrage which brought more women to join the movement. The UDI was an instrument for the Italian Communist Party, becoming an organization of women (Pojmann 2005: 74). Sassoon notes that women of the movement who were also members of the DC in postwar Italy, influenced by a feminist orientation and responding to changes occurring in Italian society (120). These women were in favor of a compromise between the role of housewife and wage-earner and demanded equality between men and women (Sassoon 120). The alliance of the movement with Italian political parties aided its success in achieving many of its goals and priorities. Without

the political support of parties in the war, women would not have achieved the vote as early as they did or had success in other political issues.

On the success of challenging groups gaining entry into the political system, William Gamson has argued that “only those groups which use institutionally provided means, including political pressure, will be successful” (12). Gamson believes that a successful social group must lobby the political system. Both organizations did this although the UDI were more active and successful in gaining entry into the political system to lobby for change. The UDI actually gained access to committees, mostly male dominated, in order to request political changes for women. The two groups would have not achieved the rights that were included in the constitution, such as equality before the law, the vote, and additional family and maternal rights without political lobbying and support. Women also would not have had the success they did in the elections after the war. Therefore, the variable of political affiliation was present and significant in the women’s movement.

Both the UDI and the CIF had a common collective identity during the movement on several issues. Although this has not been addressed specifically by scholars of this time period, it can be seen through the actions and common goals of women in the organizations. Collective identity involves members feeling part of a larger group, through organizations or other established forces. Resource mobilization during the movement was an important indicator of the collective identity for women; they joined these groups because of their shared goals and values. Probably the most important of these was women’s suffrage and equality. The women who mobilized in this effort desired the right to vote and to be equal to men in politics. They wanted to play a larger role in society. It can be argued than women joined these groups because of this common

goal to achieve suffrage and equality, and in so doing cultivated a shared collective identity for most Italian women during this time.

Effective communication was a strong force in achieving both the vote for women and greater representation for women in politics. Although the UDI had more publications and engaged in more pamphleteering activities, both organizations communicated their message to win the vote for women and to achieve equality in politics. This was done through word of mouth, messages, writings, publications, media and through political affiliation. Communication networks were also a source of mobilization and this was more successful in the UDI. The communication of the CIF was not as widespread as the UDI, as the CIF was a Catholic based organization while the UDI appealed to women from every background. Effective communication was necessary to their success as a social movement and to their larger goals of women’s suffrage and political representation.

**Table 1: Comparison of Success Variables for UDI and CIF**

<i>Variables for Success</i>	<i>UDI</i>	<i>CIF</i>	<b>Notes</b>
WUNC Displays (Tilly)	Strongly Present	Somewhat Present	WUNC present more in UDI than CIF due to the larger number of women and resource mobilization in the organization
Political Affiliation (Jenkins, Klandermans, Kurzman, Goldstone)	Strongly Present	Strongly Present	Both organizations had strong political affiliation; UDI more successful with reforms because of ties to Communist Party while CIF was tied to Catholic Church
Collective Identity (Whittier,	Strongly Present	Strongly Present	Collective identity present in both; demonstrated through common goals, associations,

Gamson, McHale)			networks and campaigns
Communication Networks (McHale, Alinsky)	Strongly Present	Somewhat Present	UDI maintained a better and more extensive communication network than CDF (more publications, editions, magazines, etc)

Table 1 shows each variable and the extent it was present in the UDI and CIF. For the purpose of this table, a Likert scale will be used to analyze the degree to which the variable was or was not present. There are five possible degrees for which the variable can be present: not present, somewhat present, mostly present, strongly present, and not applicable.

The table analyzes the two groups as individual entities and looks at the strength of the variables present in each. These two groups constituted part of a larger social movement in Italy during the 1940s and have been discussed as belonging to one movement. However, the UDI differed from the CIF because of its secular nature while the CIF was more religiously based. Therefore, religion became a factor in the success of the CIF although it will not be included in the table. Both two groups had similar goals and activities and worked to achieve the same causes. For the purposes of an analysis of the variables, each group will be looked at individually to see if it displayed the characteristics described for effective social movements.

Beginning with WUNC displays, these were strongly present in the UDI and somewhat present in the CIF. Women in the UDI had stronger and more frequent displays of WUNC, particularly in their campaigns and protests. The UDI was also a larger organization than the CIF. Also, the literature contains a more detailed analysis about the commitment and mobilization of women in the UDI than the CIF. Although

women from both organizations were committed to the cause and developed strategies to mobilize, the UDI was a large organization and participated in more demonstrations and rallies than the CIF. Both collective identity and political affiliation were strongly present in both parties to the same degree. Collective identity was a particularly strong aspect in both organizations. This was evident through participation in meetings, campaigns and protests as well as common goals. The UDI used the affiliation with political parties to their advantage more so than the CIF, by gaining access into the political system and advocating for more reforms within it. The CIF was more affiliated with the Catholic Church which was a major factor in its success. This was lacking in the UDI. Also, the UDI was more instrumental in achieving equal rights for women in the new constitution than the CIF. Women in the UDI had a stronger communication network than the CIF according to the movement literature as well. They published more editions of women's magazines and newsletters. Overall, the evidence shows that while both organizations were successful in achieving rights for women, the UDI was a more successful part of the women's social movement in Italy.

Among the direct successful impact the two organizations had, there was also a degree of indirect success as well. Women in these organizations gained a number of advantages indirectly, that were not initial goals of the movement. First, a new feminist consciousness arose that had not existed in the beginning and this was largely due to the collective identity of women working toward similar goals. This new feminist consciousness arose as a result of women's participation in the Resistance and later in UDI and CIF and through the fact that women believed they had a greater place in Italian society.

Another measure of indirect success included the awareness of gender differences during the war, meaning that women alleged they had the same equal rights as men. As Slaughter maintains, “In the Italian case, the goal of equality was defined as participation in politics and simultaneously, gender differences were accentuated, and functions and attributes with women were acknowledged and exalted” (129). Women’s participation in the movement gave light to the fact that they were equal to men, not subordinate to them, and the movement demonstrated this through their campaigns and protests and through their direct success of winning the vote and other political measures. Finally, another measure of direct success of the movement can be seen in its effect on Italian history. Women did not know the impact they would have on this period of history and through their direct goals they achieved a place for women in the legacy of Italian social movements. Women who participated in this movement through the UDI and CIF not only achieved direct measures of success, but indirect ones as well.

## **VII. Conclusions and Implications**

By the end of World War II, Italian women who participated in both the Resistance and the movement had played a significant role in the defeat of fascism and the war's conclusion. This was due to the political and military activities of political parties, women's organizations, political activism, feminist consciousness and a strong efficacy for change. Jane Slaughter explains that both the UDI and CIF brought together women from all social groups in formal structures for the purposes of developing national solutions to their problems (125). Through these organizations, women had the opportunity to discuss their own experiences, to gain political knowledge and skills and to impact national policy (Slaughter 125). As noted by Nilde Iotti, a former partisan in the war and one of Italy's most prominent women, "During the Resistance there was the first grasp of collective consciousness by impressive new masses of women about their position and responsibilities in the life of the nation" (Slaughter 119). Another participant, Daniela Colombo, explained that "Since the end of the war, one of the most important social changes in Italy has been the increasingly widespread trend among women toward individual autonomy and social impact" (Slaughter 120). It has been argued that the activities, organizations and people of the Resistance reflected both the renewal and tradition of modern Italy. It is important to look at the meaning and results of women in the movement to explore its impact on the postwar period.

The impact of Italian women during the Resistance and World War II in achieving political rights for women was vast to say the least. Women's contributions and sacrifices were celebrated in newspapers and magazines and have longed been remembered throughout Italian history. As Perry Willson notes, "The Resistance was the first time large numbers of women were involved in an important political event and took

many women outside their traditional sphere” (187). Scholars have identified the compatibility of the Resistance and women’s emancipation. Women had won the right to equality and freedom by contributing to an essentially male activity, that of armed warfare. The Resistance, Willson argues, portrayed a benefit for all of society, an essential element of democracy and privilege (188).

Women played a significant role in advocating and receiving political changes for Italy. Throughout the Resistance, women’s activities were directly in line with the political and social participation they would continue to seek after the war. Italy had declared universal suffrage, developed a new constitution and held their first democratic elections in 1948. The Resistance was thought to be what made the Italian feminist tradition different from feminism in other countries, because women had won the vote by their participation in solidarity and co-operation with men in a movement that transcended party and class (Willson 191). As Ruth and Simon Henig point out, women’s full participation in politics directly relates in equality and justice. The strength of democratic systems would be reduced without women’s participation. According to them, it was important for women to play a role in decision making after the war. “There can be no true democracy,” they write, “if women are excluded from positions of power” (104).

With respect to women’s influence on political rights and democratic processes in Italy, women played an integral role as a part of civil society. Italy would not have had the success it did without the contributions of women, especially without the collectivity of women organized around similar goals. The case study of women demonstrates how actors within civil society can influence the attainment of democratic values. This historical case study is relevant to the new waves of democracy taking place today in regions such as Latin America as women in many countries are working toward better

representation in politics and equality before the law. It is important to understand how some collective actors such as women constitute a powerful force for change in a country's democratization process.

Additionally, the strength and success of the Italian's women movement in achieving their goals can be attributed to the variables which are successful to social movements. The power of the women who mobilized with a collective goal of achieving women's rights and equality after fascism was a powerful force in its success. Also, the movement's ability to maintain its autonomy and constitute a powerful force in Italian civil society was also a key ingredient to its success. The recruitment strategies of women's associations through their various publications and communication strategies were successful tactics in promoting their message and advancing their membership. All of this can be attributed to the Italian women's movement, as these tactics resulted in a successful strategy to mobilize women to their cause. In the end, the Italian women's Movement was instrumental in bringing out a number of changes in legislation and achieving many of its other goals and objectives as well.

Moreover, the success of the movement is a direct result of displaying the variables necessary to successful social movements. This was evident in women's groups and WUNC displays as well as in their relationship with other political organizations and political parties within Italy, most notably the Christian Democratic Party. The alliance of women's associations with political parties helped further their causes and proved successful in passing legislation on various issues including divorce, abortion and equal pay in employment. Although the relationship of women's groups to political parties threatened the autonomy of the associations, it nevertheless proved to be a successful tactic in changing the role of women in Italian society. The collective identity of Italian

women who participated in the movement was an integral component to the movement's success as well, as the strength of any social movements lies in numbers and the collective identity of its members. The successful strategies of mobilization and the collective consciousness of Italian women in these social groups were cornerstones in the success of the women's movement in postwar Italy. Finally, the communication networks present within the UDI and CIF were pivotal in their success as well. All of these characteristics combined helped to make women an influential and commanding force in achieving political success in World War II. The political success of women is attributed to their collective action and participation throughout the war.

Additionally, the Italian women's movement, specifically the UDI and CIF, provides a number of different lessons in the study of social movements. First, it demonstrates the importance of successful strategies in advancing a movement's causes. The thesis demonstrates how social movements comprise an integral role in civil society and how women's collective action can strengthen it. Second, it cultivated a movement culture since women in the movement were united around common goals, shared beliefs and ways of achieving success (Luker, 135). The movement also provides an important lesson in the significance of collective identity to mobilize individuals. As argued above, the collective identity of Italian women who were active in the movement, united behind goals of providing a voice for women and achieving equality and women's rights in a new Italy, became the core of the success of the movement. Mary Bernstein maintains that the creation of communities and movement solidarity is necessary for mobilization (237). The identity of those women in the movement was used for empowerment, the creation of collective identity used to create or mobilize a constituency and the feeling that political action is feasible (Bernstein 237). Moreover, the identity of Italian women

was necessary to ‘translate individual to group interests and individual to collective action’ (Bernstein 237). Such political consciousness, as Bernstein argues, is required of social movements to create and mobilize a constituency (237). This political consciousness and collective identity were key ingredients of successful mobilization many Italian women in postwar Italy.

The attempt of this thesis has been to bring together three distinct areas—that of social movements, civil society and Italian history, and demonstrate how these are inevitably linked and integrated. Women comprised a significant component of Italian civil society and the social movement that emerged during World War not only strengthened civil society, but allowed women to earn greater emancipation and significantly impact Italian society. The findings of this thesis have tested successful social movement variables and demonstrated how these were present in the UDI and CIF. Further, the case studies of these groups have proven that certain variables must be displayed in order to achieve success and new advantages must be gained as well. Women in the movement were accepted by political parties, the Catholic Church and other groups and rightfully earned their place in Italian history. They gained new advantages as a result of their collective action and mobilization and advanced the cause of women’s rights. The integrative nature of this thesis displays the importance and connectedness of women and social movements in the greater context of Italian civil society. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate this fact while adding to the literature on social movements, civil society and Italian history.

The research of this thesis has led to several important and significant findings. Probably the foremost result has been the impact of active Italian women in the Resistance and women’s associations on Italian history and society. Both World War II

and Fascism became catalysts for women's action. Those who participated in the movement took an active role in public and political life. Not only were these women wives and mothers, but part of a larger movement to end the war and gain social and political emancipation for women. Further, women's role in advancing causes of democracy and the Italian Republic is one of the most significant findings as well. When women began participating in the Resistance and joined active organizations such as the UDI and CIF, little did they know the impact they would have on achieving democratic principles. This was not their cause at the beginning of the movement, but toward the end of the 1940s they had achieved more political and social rights, suffrage and better political representation. Both the UDI and CIF continued to remain active into the 1960s and 1970s, where the organizations worked for additional rights on abortion, family and marriage. Fascism and World War II launched a movement that would span several decades and significantly impact women's rights in Italy years after the war had ended.

Overall, the Italian women's movement demonstrates the correlation between civil society, social movements and democracy. Beginning with women's participation in the Italian Resistance, Italian women and their associations had a profound impact on the end of fascism in Italy and the establishment of political and democratic values. Thus, what is most surprising about this movement is that in the course of the movement's specific goals and objectives such as women's suffrage, it also promoted many of the principles and values of democracy at the same time. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed, citizens alone lack power, but together, they can be a powerful force for political change. (Edwards, Foley and Diani 326). This is one of the most important strategies of women, in that they collectively mobilized to create political and social change in Italian society.

The UDI and the CIF were by far the two most important women's associations in Italy during World War II. As scholars have argued, internally associations instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spiritedness (Edwards, Foley and Diani 326). This was evident in the women's groups, as they worked together in united common goals and with a shared identity. Externally, associations unite the energies of divergent minds and vigorously direct them toward a clearly indicated goal, contributing to effective social collaboration (Edwards, Foley and Diani 326). Again, women achieved success as they did because of their collective action within the social groups working to achieve shared goals and objectives. As de Tocqueville once wrote "Amongst the laws which rule human nature, there is none which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized or to become more so, the art of associating together must grow and improve" (Reed, par. 4). The strength of the Italian women's movement with the organizations of UDI and CIF, demonstrates the characteristics which make social movements successful, shows the power and success of collective action and in turn exhibits how a strong civil society and associations can influence both the success and the foundations of democracy.

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