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April 2009

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History, Politics and Social Studies

In 2000 the Irish government received a report on the dangers of Environmental Tobacco Smoke to non-smokers. Acting on this advice the Irish government set about implementing policies that would see the elimination of cigarette smoking in all work places in Ireland. This paper contends that the acceptance of the resultant government legislation by the general public has been reflective of changing norms in contemporary Irish society. However, it is argued that legislative change was driven not by widespread public opinion but by what Becker (1963) referred to as 'moral entrepreneurs' in the form of health promotion interest groups. It is argued that these groups saw legislative change, not just as an opportunity to enforce behavioural change but also as part of a larger process of denormalising smoking in Irish society. Efforts to change social norms relative to smoking continue today. More recently, the Office of Tobacco control has moved to continue this transformation of what is acceptable in society by making a targeted effort to stem the recruitment of young smokers by tobacco companies. This paper will explore these recent smoking-related developments in Ireland as part of ongoing interest group involvement on the creation of new norms.

Introduction

The 1960s saw tobacco smoking become officially recognised as a causal factor in disease in the United States of America (Warner 1984, p.28). In 2000, the *Towards a Tobacco Free Society Work Group* (2000) in Ireland published proposals for new regulations to curb the negative health impact of Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) the aim of which was to give non smokers the right to breathe smoke-free air (Office of Tobacco Control 2000, p.13). This paper contends that the eventual imposition of legislation supporting the work group's proposals was not just an adjustment to the changing norms of society, but moreover a product of the government and relevant interest groups,

who it is argued were the vital catalysts of this change. This position will be supported through a sociological analysis of the role of interests in the implementation of this legislative change, supported by various statistics and commentary disseminated prior to the implementation of Irelands 'smoking ban' and afterwards. The confrontations between differently positioned interest groups can be viewed as a battle for the social construction of smoking. To conclude, the ongoing role of anti-smoking moral entrepreneurs in shaping societal norms surrounding smoking and the socialisation of the younger members of the Irish population is discussed.

Norms

The manner in which the members of a society are expected to behave is encapsulated in the norms associated with their society. These norms may be proscriptive (specifying what we ought to avoid) or prescriptive (specifying what we ought to do) each instructing us as to how we should behave socially (Macionis & Plummer 2005, p.113). As such, whether smoking is regarded as an acceptable or unacceptable behaviour is dependent on smoking related norms of the society in question. People learn their society's particular norms from parents and peers through the processes of primary and secondary socialisation. Primary socialisation takes place during the early years of life and is most influenced by parents and family. The process of secondary socialisation begins at school going age and continues for an individual over her or his lifetime. It is during these stages of socialisation that a society's norms are internalised, guiding the behaviour of individuals (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.118).

Norms have variously been depicted as very fixed and determining of people's behaviour or as more flexible. Structural functionalists, for example, proffer the theory of role learning. This is a process whereby the actor essentially internalises the norms as demonstrated by those around them in the stages of

socialisation mentioned above and comes to view these normative standards as obligatory (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.125). This approach has been criticised for its "programmed" perspective on socialisation, with individuals envisaged as unable to develop or change their internalised norms despite various experiences and time. Symbolic interaction theorists posit that norms are not just immutable facets of an individual's personality but can and indeed do change over time and context (Fulcher and Scott 2007, p.126). One of the key actors in the introduction of the smoke free legislation was the interest group known as ASH (Anti-Smoking and Health). ASH was formed in 1992 to campaign against tobacco smoking with one of its key foci being the protection of children from smoking and its related hazards (Irish Cancer Society 2009). This theme of protecting the youth and changing the image of smoking for minors has more recently been to the fore of the OTCs' objectives (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.22). The tobacco industry in Ireland annually loses circa fourteen-thousand smokers due to death and 'quitting' and as such needs to recruit replacement customers from the Irish youth (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.12).

Thus to maintain its current business levels, cigarette firms must entice approximately fifty new smokers per day (ibid). Dr. Michael Boland, the outgoing chairman of the OTC made reference to the influence of primary and secondary socialisation in the annual report for 2007, citing the effects that parents and peers play in the normalisation of cigarette consumption in society (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.3). The OTC recognised that the normalisation of cigarette smoking had been enhanced in the past by the availability of products such as candy 'cigarettes' which promote smoking habits in later life (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.4). Nonetheless, the

dominant norms of a society may not always be adhered to, regardless of socialisation

Deviance from Society's Norms

What is defined as deviant in any society is the result of what that society labels as unacceptable behaviour (Macionis & Plummer 2005, p.428). Deviance is not inherent in the act, but is constructed by how we interpret and respond to the act. Indeed, what constitutes deviant behaviour in one social group may be entirely acceptable in another. Furthermore, deviance may also change over time, being acceptable in one era and deplored in the next (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.236). An example of this can be seen in the practice of driving under the influence of alcohol. In years past this behaviour was acceptable to society whereas today it is viewed as highly irresponsible and is a criminal offence. Longitudinal research on the acceptability of drinking and driving in Ireland between the years 2000 and 2006 demonstrated an increase of almost two thirds in the number of people that believed drinking and driving was unacceptable (European Transport Safety Council 2007). In the same way, cultural perspectives on whether smoking is acceptable, by whom, and in what contexts differ across place and time. Kuhling argues that the recent change in perceptions on smoking by the public in Ireland may indeed be a result of a change in culture, possibly a result of increased prosperity (Kuhling 2004, p.214).

Deviance Control: Sanctions

Society enforces its norms through the process of social control (Scott & Marshall 2005, p.608). Sanctions are specifically a means of encouraging conformity to social norms and can be positive, i.e. a reward for conformity, or negative, i.e. a punishment for deviance. They can also be informal or formal. For example, fining someone for smoking in a public place is a formal sanction.

However, in countries where smoking in public places is legal, but regarded as unacceptable, the sanction might be informal, e.g. a form of shaming, such as 'tut-tutting' or exaggerated coughing. Many forms of deviance are responded to only (but frequently quite effectively) through informal means. However, some deviant acts are sanctioned specifically through the law. How to explain which acts are sanctioned legally and which are sanctioned informally has been the subject of debate within sociology. When deviant behaviour is defined as illegal it may be classed as either a criminal or civil offence. Civil laws most often involve restitution as a form of sanction while, the violation of criminal laws is subject to the criminal justice system with penalties varying (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.242). The smoking ban implemented in 2004 carried with it restitutive sanctions in the form of heavy fines for those found in violation (Gilmore 2005, p.151) The mere knowledge of sanctions, may act as a deterrent to deviant behaviour (Macionis & Plummer 2005, p.442). Furthermore, positive sanctions may also be applied as demonstrated below in the case of the Tom Power medal[1] rewarding those supporting anti-smoking measures (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.34).

A key debate exists between functionalists and conflict theorists as to how to explain which deviant acts are criminalized and which are just informally sanctioned. Functionalists suggest that the key issue is how deeply the act offends the collective conscience of the people. They have argued that it is those acts which we, as a collective, find most reprehensible that are criminalized such that our legal system can formally respond to the form of deviance in question. Conflict theorists argue that we need to take into account the power of

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[1] This annual prize established by the Office of Tobacco Control in 2007, is presented to the individual or group which demonstrates innovation and leadership in the fight against cigarette smoking (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.34)

interest groups to define some acts are crimes and others as not deserving of a legal response (Macionis and Plummer 2005).

Interests and Interest Group Conflict

While functionalists see society as coalescing around shared norms, conflict theorists see them as divided by varying interests. A group or individual's interests are those particular ends or goals that are most beneficial to them (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.57). Conflict theorists hold that people can have different interests on the basis of their class, their age, their sexuality and so on. In some cases, people organise themselves around interests and form what are termed interest groups. Some such groups, for example trade unions and business associations seek to represent the interests of a specific segment of the population. Other groups come together to promote particular values, for example pro-democracy organisations. Moral crusades refer to social movements which form around the promotion of particular values, which they often regard as in the interest of all (Scott and Marshall 2005).

Carson (1974, p.70) claimed that the law of a society is formed to benefit one group's interests over another. Marxists, for example, hold that the coercive power of the state, for example the criminal justice system, can be a tool for the powerful dominant class to protect their own position (Fulcher & Scott 2007, p.820). Some conflict theorists have been criticised for asserting that the laws of society are produced to serve the interests of the powerful yet these same laws may also serve to protect the 'powerless' (Macionis & Plummer 2005, pp.452:453). Interest groups have an important role in society, often representing more vulnerable groups and those otherwise without a voice. One in Four is an example of just such a group acting to represent victims of sexual abuse providing a forum for the victims to present their concerns (One in Four 2009).

Interest Groups and the Introduction of the Smoke Free Policy

Interest groups promote their own agenda and this is demonstrated in the introduction of the Smoke-Free Policy (Wallace & Wolf 2006, p.129). It will be argued that the pro-ban interest group comprised of various moral entrepreneurs. Howard Becker in his work *Outsiders* (1963) introduced the concept of a moral enterprise. Becker describes, from a labelling theory perspective, how moral entrepreneurs seek to promote a particular moral issue until it becomes bound by state laws. It will be argued that anti-smoking groups were engaged in a moral crusade, a campaign centred on a moral issue, to change the norms of society towards smoking and its acceptability (Scott & Marshall 2005, pp.425- 426).

These groups included ASH (Action on Smoking and Health), the Irish Cancer Society (ICS), the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF), government agencies, and hospitality sector employee trade unions (Gilmore 2005, pp.21&22). Their stated interests in this particular issue were based on protecting the health of workers from ETS (Howell 2004, p.847). The Pro-ban lobby had highlighted the dangers of ETS for many years, eventually winning sufficient governmental support through lobbying to officially confirm the associated risks of ETS (Allwright 2004, p.811). ASH vociferously supported Minister Martin's policy, acclaiming the announcement of the smoking ban (ASH 2009).

The ban was opposed by various business interests including the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI), Irish Cigarette Machine Operators Association and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) under the umbrella group known as the Irish Hospitality Industry Association (IHIA) (Gilmore 2005, pp.21-22). The hospitality sector held that restrictions on smoking would lead to reduced sales of alcohol and food on their premises with a detrimental

effect on their businesses (Office of Tobacco Control 2004, p.10). Furthermore, hospitality interests criticised the lack of strong research on the benefits of a smoke free policy and referred to jurisdictions where similar bans had failed with dire economic consequences for the hospitality business (Vintners Federation of Ireland 2004). Indeed, the tobacco industry was avid that there were no proven links between ETS and health risks for non-smokers (Howell 2004, p.847). Moreover, the VFI stated that the ban was not implementable and that bar owners should not be expected to police it (Vintners Federation of Ireland 2003). The above demonstrates the polarised views of each of the interest groups involved. On the one hand the health promotion lobby was seeking to protect the public from the dangers of ETS and on the other the competing business interests of the hospitality and tobacco industries fought to maintain their profitability.

Public Reaction to the introduction of Smoke Free Workplace Legislation

In 2000, the Tobacco Free Society Workgroup stated that there were differing opinions about smoking's social acceptability in Ireland. Moreover, radical changes were needed in society's attitudes as to where smoking should be tolerated. Furthermore, the report emphasised the need to break the effect of smoking on youth socialisation and that support from the public was also necessary if smoking was to be eliminated (The Tobacco Free Policy Review Group 2000, pp.3-11). In other words, the norms of society needed to alter. The Tobacco Free Policy Review Group stated that forty-five per cent of Irish adults smoked in the 1970s, falling to twenty-eight per cent in the 1990s but at the time of publication smoking was on the rise again. There were also a high percentage of smokers in the eighteen to thirty-four years age group with the average figure at thirty-eight per cent demonstrating a youth bias (The Tobacco Free Policy Review Group 2000, p.7).

The OTC was established in May 2002 to implement the recommendations of the government funded *Towards a Tobacco Free Society Work* report (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, Towards a Tobacco Free Society 2000). Shortly after its inception, the OTC commissioned market research to gauge public attitudes towards smoking and in particular its restriction in workplaces including the hospitality sector (Office of Tobacco Control 2004, p.5). The National Survey of Attitudes and Opinions revealed that there was large support for smoking restrictions in a variety of public places with the lowest approval rate of groups surveyed at eighty-four per cent (Office of Tobacco Control 2004, p.7). The OTC national telephone survey emphasised pubs and the attitude towards smoking therein; revealing that both smokers and non-smokers preferred the option of smoke-free public places. Furthermore, projected numbers of visitors to bars would not be negatively impacted as a result of restrictions (ibid). The 2002 National Survey of Attitudes and Opinions stated that the negative health impacts and the unacceptable nature of smoking socially were recognised by smokers and non-smokers alike. Furthermore, the report cited the approval rate of eighty-four per cent for the implementation of smoking restrictions as proof positive that the public at large was in favour of a smoke free policy. However, there is no evidence that the public were actively promoting this initiative (Office of Tobacco Control 2004, p.7).

Who drove Change: Interest Groups or the general public?
The Towards a Tobacco Free Society Work Group report in 2000 (p.11) emphasised the need for measures to break the social acceptability of smoking. Under a section titled "Changing Ambivalent Attitudes", the report proposed that for attitudes to change on where smoking is socially acceptable, people needed to be better informed and educated about the hazards of tobacco smoking. In the immediate years prior to the ban the Irish government engaged

in a process of encouraging smokers to 'quit' (Allwright 2004, p.811). Indeed, health advertising had become increasingly hard hitting in an effort to change norms (Irish Times 2006). It is arguable that these measures were taking effect if one compares the Tobacco Free Society Review Group report of 2000 with the research of 2002. Fulcher and Scott (2007, p.236) illustrated earlier the possibility of norms changing overtime and this may be evident here. Indeed, the Slán report 2002 (Department of Health and Children 2009 b), described how the levels of smoking among young people had declined from a figure of twenty-one per cent in 1998 to nineteen per cent in 2002. Furthermore, the 2007 Slán report (Department of Health and Children 2009 a, p.7), in Lifestyle and attitudes in Ireland, also described that overall rates of smoking in Ireland were falling from 1998. Indeed, the largest decline of smoking in Ireland actually occurred between the years of 1998 and 2002 dropping from thirty-three per cent to twenty-seven per cent. Interestingly, the decline in smoking between 2002 and 2007 has only been an additional two per cent despite the introduction of the smoking ban. This evidence potentially demonstrates that there was a shift in public acceptance of smoking. The OTC (2005, p.7) detailed how over two thirds of the population supported the ban prior to its introduction, possibly resultant of the efforts to change society's perspectives.

Public Compliance

The OTC published a report in 2005 on compliance levels to the smoking ban capturing the immediate nine months post the introduction of restrictions (Office of Tobacco Control 2005). High levels of compliance were reported. The National Tobacco Control Inspection Programme stated ninety four per cent of all workplaces were compliant (Office of Tobacco Control 2005, p.4). Furthermore, the Health and Safety Authority reported a maximum of ninety-two per cent compliance (Office of Tobacco Control 2005, p.6). The OTC also commissioned TNS/MRBI to survey attitudes on compliance to the new

legislation and found that ninety-three per cent of respondents felt the ban was a good idea, including eighty per cent of smokers (Office of Tobacco Control 2005, p.7). Moreover, ninety-six per cent felt the law was a success, including eighty-nine per cent of smokers. In addition, ninety-eight per cent of non smokers felt their work place was now healthier, compared with ninety-four per cent of smokers (ibid). Further reports into support for smoking restrictions in bars found that eighty-two per cent of Irish respondents supported the ban (Eurobarometer 2006, p.29). Thus, it is arguable that the imposition of anti-smoking legislation was enabling the construction of new norms in Ireland toward cigarette smoking and the ambivalence towards it's acceptability as called for by the Towards a Tobacco Free Society above (Towards a Tobacco Free Society 2000 p.11).

This denormalisation of smoking was further evidenced by the OTCs annual report for 2007 which detailed how six-hundred and seventy-six telephone calls were made by the public to the Smoke Free Compliance line in the said period with ninety-five per cent of these being complaints of non-compliance (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.15). Moreover, 2007 saw a rate of ninety-five per cent compliance to the prohibition of smoking in the workplace (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.5). Furthermore, in the Irish hospitality sector in 2007 the lowest compliance rate to the smoke free legislation was still very high at eighty-nine per cent (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.15). These data demonstrate the willingness of the public to comply with the new legislation and the norms it constructed.

Public Opinion

Despite changing social norms, it was not the public that delivered the Smoke Free Policy but the anti-smoking lobby working in conjunction with the

government they instigated the smoking ban, forcing through and formalising the change in norms (Howell 2004, p.847). The Towards a Tobacco Free Society Work Group (2000, pp.9-13) argued that measures needed to be taken on tobacco smoking and recommended a workplace ban. Indeed, it considered recommending a complete prohibition on tobacco products but decided that this was not viable. Indeed, Kuhling (2004) argues that although the public did support the health lobby they did not form part of the consultative process leading up to the implementation of legislation.

The debate prior to the implementation of the anti-smoking legislation did not include the general public but was instead dialectic between the opposing interest groups. The voice of the public, of whom thirty per cent were smokers, was seemingly ignored (Kuhling 2004, pp.211-212). The Tobacco Free Policy Review Group (2000, p.11) argued that interest groups be recruited to help change the norms around smoking's social acceptability in Ireland. Prior to the implementation of the smoking ban, it was suggested that a public relations campaign enlisting the support of key figures in society should be embarked upon funded by the state. Furthermore, a resource for people researching the negative effects of tobacco smoking should also be established and run in conjunction with the anti-smoking charity and lobby group ASH. These measures were suggested to change the public's acceptability of smoking and change the norms surrounding it.

Conclusion: A Tobacco Free Society?

Following the legislative change smoking was in contravention of new proscribed norms (Macionis and Plummer 2005, p.113). Sanctions were now formal and carried with them hefty fines for both bar owners and smokers flouting the law (Gilmore 2005, p.151). Social control which had previously been ideological, informal and/or piecemeal was enforced by inspectors and

environmental health officers with the support of a hotline for the public to report non compliance (Breakingnews.ie 2004). In its 2007 annual report, the OTC (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.5) stated that forty-three cases were pursued for non-compliance, with thirty-eight of these involving licensed premises. These prosecutions raise two points of note. Firstly, was the apparent 'rebellion' against the ban here as a result of the public still accepting smoking in bars? Or was this a result of a growing lack of acceptance of smoking on the part of society? The sanctions imposed by the State in support of the smoking ban were not only negative, but also took the form of positive sanctions, i.e. rewards to promote compliance to norms. The Tom Power Medal award is a pertinent example. Both positive and negative sanctions were imposed in order to promote compliance to new norms (Scott and Marshall 2005, p.425).

At the time of the legislative change the then Health Minister Michael Martin had stated that the tobacco industry was more interested in self preservation than public health (Irishhealth.com 2004). Gouldner (1971, p.325) posits that the morals of society are displaced by the vested interests of particular groups or individuals. The smoking ban can be deemed as a successful moral crusade on the part of the health promotion lobby with benefits of healthier work environments reaching society as a whole, rather than a particular section of the population (Scott & Marshall 2005, p.425). While conflict theory's emphasis on the importance of interest groups to legislative change is found to be merited, criticism of some conflict theory approaches' view that the law is protective of selected interests comes to the fore here with the interests of both the powerful and the 'powerless' being protected by the smoking ban (Macionis and Plummer 2005, pp.452 - 453).

However, the potential for less benevolent interest groups to also influence the law is apparent in the efforts of business groups who did not give up without a struggle. Tobacco companies did continue to challenge the constitutionality of the smoke free legislation only withdrawing from this process at the end of January 2007 (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.23).

Dr. Michael Boland (OTC 2008, p.8) emphasised the success of the denormalisation of cigarette smoking abroad and also praised the role played by moral entrepreneurs such as ASH, the ICS and the IHF in their work on the implementation of the smoking ban (ibid). In words similar to those used before the implementation of the Smoke Free Workplace legislation the OTC in its annual report called for a continued multilateral approach to denormalise smoking. The call was issued for the help of community parties including educational, sports and youth groups to denormalise cigarette smoking amongst the youth (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.21). Various campaigns such as "Let's keep our children smoke free" as well as others were engaged in during 2007 to raise awareness of smoking and its effects on children and minors (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.33). These campaigns worked in tandem with measures to decrease the visibility and accessibility of tobacco products.

The seductive marketing of cigarettes to children is a challenge that the OTC is taking a multifaceted approach to tackle (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.2). In 2007 confectionary cigarette products were banned in an effort to protect the youth (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.23). In September 2008 Eamonn Rossi, the incoming chairman of the OTC, called for an increase in the price of cigarettes in an effort to discourage younger people from being able to purchase them with the higher retail price acting as a barrier (Irish Times 2008). Indeed, the end of May 2007 witnessed the end of the sale of cigarettes in packs of ten, again to decrease the ease for young people to purchase cigarettes (Office of

Tobacco Control 2008, p.7). These packs were previously easily affordable for minors as is evidenced by 2006 research which demonstrated that seventy-six per cent of those below the legal age limit purchased packs of ten (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.4). The age limit for persons wishing to purchase cigarettes was also increased in April 2007 from sixteen to eighteen years of age (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.16).

This was accompanied by the implementation of formal sanctions on retailers for sales of cigarettes to youths below this new legal age limit resulting with twenty prosecutions in 2007 (Office of Tobacco Control 2008, p.5). The goal of all of these measures was and is to decrease the availability, socialisation and normalisation of cigarette smoking for the youth of Ireland.

The drive to denormalise tobacco products being consumed is clear from the evidence above as is the requirement from groups in civil society to promote this change. As has been argued here, interest groups were fundamental to the implementation of the Smoke Free Workplace legislation and will be required to effect change in the future. The norms of Irish society around cigarette smoking have been changed radically in recent years. However, this change was not organic, but the result of the gradual process engaged in by the interest groups discussed above. The above also demonstrates that even though the public supported the legislation, the health lobby were the real force behind the introduction of legislation. The efforts of the health lobby including the government eventually won out over the business interests of the hospitality sector, delivering health benefits for all. The conflict perspective's emphasis on the role of interest groups in constructing the law was found to have merit. However, this victory was one not for a select few, but for society as a whole. The continued efforts of the OTC and its civil partners emphasise the

importance of primary and secondary socialisation and the internalisation of a society's norms. The seeds of new norms are being sewn in the young people of Ireland, making cigarette smoking a deviant practice, a practice which has been until recently socially acceptable.

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