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## **The Mad Mina's, a victory, or a failure?**

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Universiteit  
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The Netherlands

*MA History: Politics, Cultural and National Identities*

*The Mad Mina's, a victory, or a failure?*

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*Dr. Anne Heyer*

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## Introduction

*“Ik denk dat Dolle Mina’s impact vooral het wakker schudden is geweest”<sup>1</sup>*

In an interview, Dr Petra de Vries, a former member of Mad Mina’s, indicates this to the interviewer when discussing the organization’s success. De Vries joined Mad Mina in the early days of the organization, in 1970. As a former member, she views the organization’s success as being largely due to the social consciousness it created at the time. De Vries asserts that the Mad Minas influenced others through their playful actions. She posits that while it is possible to document the shortcomings of the society, it is essential to engage with people to achieve something. She believes that this is the reason she was invited to give an interview as a former Mad Mina in 2024 and that the Mad Minas are still an important subject in the history books.<sup>2</sup> But do they see this as the only impact they have made? Do they see themselves as successful because they made people socially aware? Do they see themselves as successful?

When looking at how successful a social movement is or was, you can see that the outside world measures success in different ways. It is first necessary to define what is meant by the term ‘social movement’. Social movements represent a significant social phenomenon, enabling individuals or groups to express their concerns to the public and politicians. Social movements provide a forum for individuals and groups to express their concerns and well-being, as well as that of others they care about. In democratic societies, there are several other institutions through which individuals and groups can express their concerns. However, social movements represent the most public form of expression. Social movements facilitate collective action, such as protests, the dissemination of pamphlets, and other forms of political expression. However, these movements can also give rise to violence and even revolution. It is possible for social movements to be highly influential and successful.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen Hensbergen, ‘In gesprek met 2 Dolle Mina’s: ‘‘Ook nu moeten wij ons beseffen dat onze rechten echt bedreigd kunnen worden’’, *Linda* (21 juni 2024) <https://www.linda.nl/lifestyle/cultuur-media/dolle-mina-interview/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> D.A. Snow, S.A. Soule, H. Kriesi and H. J. McCammon, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to social movement* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Oxford 2019) 3.

It is difficult to determine whether a social movement was successful or not. One of the foundational texts in the field of social movement studies about the success of social movements is Gamson's book in 1975. Gamson posited that the success of a social movement can be gauged by the outcomes it has achieved.<sup>4</sup> Schumaker considered this to be an inadequate indicator of success. In accordance with Gamson's definition, success is to be gauged by symbolic success, with no consideration of whether tangible societal change is occurring. When success is defined in this manner, certain problems and circumstances are simply accepted without any attempt to effect change. Schumaker proposed the inclusion of several additional metrics to assess the success of a social movement. He posits that it is also necessary to examine the way the prevailing order regards novel ideas, whether they are accepted. Furthermore, it is necessary to ascertain whether the issues that social movements are campaigning for are included on the political agenda, whether legislation is subsequently drafted in relation to the issues, and whether there is ultimately real change within society. Schumaker thus offers a more nuanced and conceptualized definition of success. He sees success as how responsive the political society is for the grievances of the social movement.<sup>5</sup>

Gamson's book is also consistent with the existing literature which indicates that the success of a social movement is linked to the political success achieved by the movement. According to McAdams, for example, this is one of the three factors that lead to a successful social movement. McAdams posits that the political model is not a fixed entity. At times, it is more amenable to divergent viewpoints, creating an environment where those who oppose the status quo and were until then typically marginalized, are more likely to be heard. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of social movements succeeding. He also states that there are two other factors for success. Internal organization and the political awareness that may or may not be present in the movement. The emergence of a social movement can be considered a success according to Mc Adams when these three conditions are met.<sup>6</sup>

Porta and Diani measure the success of social movements primarily in terms of policy-level outcomes. This analysis examines whether the goals set by the social movements are reflected in policy or legislation.<sup>7</sup> This aligns with the perspectives of Burstein, Einwohner

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<sup>4</sup> W. A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Illinois 1975) 40-41.

<sup>5</sup> Paul D. Schumaker, 'Policy Responsiveness to Protest-Group Demands', *Journal of Politics* 37 (1975) 488-521.

<sup>6</sup> Gamson, *The strategy of social protest*, 48-49.

<sup>7</sup> D. Porta and M. Diani, *Social Movements* (Oxford 1999).

and Hollander. Furthermore, they assess success in terms of the achievement of goals. However, the analysis does not merely consider the extent to which policy and legislation have been achieved; it also assesses the extent to which the goals of social movements have been articulated to the public by their leaders, the way the media have described these goals, or the definitions of these goals that have been provided by other bystanders.<sup>8</sup>

So, many studies of whether a social movement has been successful are based on external factors.<sup>9</sup> But a focus on the external perception of the social movement, may not fully capture the complexity of its success. This is because it does not consider whether the supporters or members of the social movement found the movement successful. It may be that the external perception of success differs from the internal organization's interpretation. Therefore, it would be beneficial to also delve deeper into whether a movement was successful by focusing research on the inner world of a movement. In this way, it possible to offer a more historical perspective on the measurement of the success of social movements. Indeed, in my research, I provide a voice for members of the social movement who are overlooked when only a sociological or political science perspective is considered. Consequently, my research contributes a historical perspective to the ongoing debate within the scientific and political science communities.

One of the most notable and influential social movements was the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>10</sup> This era of the women's rights movement was also called the second feminist wave. The first wave of feminism had fought for formal suffrage, but the second wave of feminists wanted more. They brought the discussion about women's rights into politics. These feminists were part of the second wave of feminism in the Netherlands. They argued that women did not only belong in the private sphere, but also in the public sphere. According to the second wave of feminists, the unequal power relations were influenced by societal norms and values and by politics. According to them, it was unfair that women were allowed to take care of male offspring but were not allowed to enjoy all civil rights. The second-wave feminists challenged the idea that women were voiceless and useful only as

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<sup>8</sup> P. Burstein, R. L. Einwohner and J. A. Hollander, 'The Success of Political Movements. A Bargaining Perspective': in John Christopher Jenkins and Bert Klandermans eds. *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements* (London 1995) 275-295, aldaar 281-282.

<sup>9</sup> J. Outshoorn, 'Policy -making on Abortion. Arenas, Actors and Arguments in the Netherlands' in: Dorothy McBride Stetson ed., *Abortion Politics, Women's Movements, and the Democratic state: A Comparative study of State Feminism* (2001) 205-228.

<sup>10</sup> Snow, Soule, Kriesi and McCammon, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movement*, 576.

visual objects in the public sphere. This could change by critically examining society, the church, the class system, and so on.<sup>11</sup> One of the most significant challenges confronted by the second feminist wave was the relationship between women and politics. The nascent women's movements perceived it as crucial to address the underrepresentation of women in representative political bodies, including the government and advisory bodies to the government. Given this substantial underrepresentation, the second feminist wave had to incorporate sitting in politics in their action points.<sup>12</sup>

A review of the Dutch context and the activities of the second wave of feminists reveals that the women's movement was constrained by the persistence of pillarization in Dutch society. The Roman Catholic and Protestant churches exerted considerable influence at the time. The Church was notably reluctant to embrace the advancement of women's rights, as women who pursued this path often entered the workforce and did not align with the traditional gender roles espoused by the Church. In particular, the Church regarded a woman's primary role as the caretaker of her husband and children. Historically, both Roman Catholic and Protestant political parties have placed a high value on the role of women as homemakers within religious society, emphasizing this role as important to maintaining social and political stability.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the influence of religion and the church on the position of women in Dutch society, women's movements also emerged in the Netherlands. One women's rights action group that attracted considerable attention in the Dutch society was the Dutch Mad Mina. The group was named after the first feminist, Wilhelmina Drucker. One of the Mad Minas' first actions was to burn bras in front of Drucker's statue in Amsterdam as a tribute to the first-wave feminists who had burned their corsets. Many famous actions were related to abortion rights, as abortion was only legalized in the Netherlands in 1984. The Mad Mina disrupted a conference of gynecologists by appearing with the phrase 'Boss in own belly' written on their bellies to draw attention.<sup>14</sup> The organization was founded in 1969, and the first actions of this women's movement began in 1970. In the Mad Mina's early years, their actions were received with enthusiasm by the media. The movement consisted of young, uninhibited, and

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<sup>11</sup> R. Buikema, 'Women's and Feminist Activism in Western Europe', in: Nancy A. Naples ed., *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (2016) 1-5, aldaar 1-3.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce Outshoorn, Women and Politics, *European Journal of Political Research* 21:4 (1992) 333-481.

<sup>13</sup> Petra de Vries, 'Feminisme in the Netherlands', *Women's Studies International Quarterly* 4:4 (1981) 389-407, aldaar 390.

<sup>14</sup> Outshoorn, 'Women and Politics', 333-481.

progressive women. The founders of the organization were mostly young socialists who belonged to student movements. The organization got a lot of attention at the beginning and thousands of men and women became members. Members of the group were enthusiastic and began establishing local chapters in their towns and villages. These groups carried out their own actions with the goal of addressing the issue of male dominance in society.<sup>15</sup> However, several divisions emerged within the party. During the Mad Mina's national congresses, several political discussions and theoretical debates arose among the party's members. Clashes occurred between the various factions within the Mad Mina's. For example, there were disagreements regarding the position of men within the Mad Minas, the question of whether the Mad Minas had a party preference, and the issue of whether they should adopt an anti-militarist stance in principle. Consequently, the image of the Mad Minas was largely shaped by the Amsterdam section, while local sections did not always align with the primary objectives set by that section.<sup>16</sup> The emergence of fissures within the party gave rise to a multitude of divisions within the movement. The most significant division within the movement occurred because of the formation of discussion groups. These groups placed an emphasis on the experiences of women and the value of personal contact between women. Because of these developments, new groups and movements emerged, which in turn led to the dissolution of the Mad Minas and other women's action groups.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, it can be observed that from 1973 onwards, the activities of the Mad Minas declined, with members working less and less collectively towards a specific objective. Nevertheless, abortion was legalized in the Netherlands in 1984, which was one of the Mad Mina's stated aims from the outset. So, despite the Mad Minas' apparent cessation of activity in the public sphere around 1975, abortion was legalized.

In the Netherlands, the bill about the legalization of abortion that was successful, was introduced in December 1980 by Leendert Ginjaar, a member of the VVD, and by Job de Ruiter, a member of the CDA. This bill was eventually passed by the first and second chamber. The bill proposed that abortion remain in the Penal Code, but that those who obtained it in a licensed hospital or clinic would not be prosecuted. It also introduced the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> B. Buis, D. Greshof and N. de Jong, 'Dolle mina, 1970-1972' in: Tjiske Akkerman and Siep Stuurman, eds., *De zondige riviera van het katholicisme. Een lokale studie over feminisme en ontzuiling 1950-1975* (Amsterdam 1985) 150- 187, aldaar 184-185.

<sup>17</sup> Irma Bogers, *Mannen opzij, vrouwen vooruit? De geschiedenis van de Dolle mina (1970-1980)*, (Doctoraalscriptie Economische en Sociale geschiedenis, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen 1983) 42-45.

requirement that, as a woman, one must take five days to reflect on the procedure and consult with a doctor about it. The bill was narrowly passed in the Lower House and then also in the Upper House in May 1981. Subsequently, on 1 November 1984, the legislation was enacted in full force and effect.<sup>18</sup> Prior to the enactment of this legislation, abortion was a criminal offence in the Netherlands until 1966, except for cases where the woman's life was at risk. Abortion was regarded as a criminal act against life and even against national morality. Until the early 1960s, the subject of abortion was considered a taboo, with no discussion or questioning permitted. Because of the illegality of abortion, the practice was relatively uncommon. The number of illegal abortions began to increase from the 1960s onwards, coinciding with a growing acceptance of contraception.<sup>19</sup> So, the resurgence of the abortion debate in the Netherlands occurred concurrently with the ascendance of social movements during the 1960s, particularly the women's movement. In the wake of the cultural and social transformations of the 1960s, the legalization of abortion emerged as a pivotal topic of discourse, with the women's movements propelling it to the forefront of the political agenda.<sup>20</sup>

The Mad Minas were one of the women's movements that had set the legalization of abortion as a goal to achieve as an action group, this was a significant step in the process of removing the taboo surrounding abortion. Consequently, abortion was eventually legalized only in 1984, while the Mad Minas started campaigning less publicly around 1973 and appeared to have ceased to exist by 1975. This raises the question of how successful the Mad Minas were in achieving their goal to legalize abortion. To ascertain the extent of the Mad Mina's success in legalizing abortion, my research will not focus on how successful they appeared from an external perspective. Instead, it will concentrate on how successful they considered themselves to be. To analyze the degree of self-perceived success among the members of the Mad Mina's, my research will analyze the documents that they themselves drafted. The archive on the Mad Minas of Atria, an institute dedicated to gender equality and women's history, will be utilized for this purpose. The archive runs from 1968 to 1981 and contains agendas and minutes of national meetings, correspondence, documents of the

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<sup>18</sup> Jet van Swinderen, 'Abortustijdlijn, 1972-1984, Demonstraties, informatieverstrekking en een nieuwe wet', *Atria, Kennisinstituut voor Emancipatie en Vrouwengeschiedenis* (25 mei 2024) <https://atria.nl/nieuws-publicaties/feminisme/zelfbeschikkingsrecht/tijdlijn-abortus/abortustijdlijn-1972-1984-massale-demonstraties-en-de-nieuwe-wet/>

<sup>19</sup> Evert Ketting and Paul Schnabel, 'Induced Abortion in the Netherlands: A Decade of Experience, 1970-80', *Studies in Family Planning* 11:12 (1980) 385-394, aldaar 385-386.

<sup>20</sup> Outshoorn, 'Policy-making on abortion. Arenas, Actors and Arguments in the Netherlands', 206.

coordination group, documents of the steering group, subscriber records, discussion papers and documents relating to various working and training groups.<sup>21</sup> This Mad Mina archive has been compiled from the archival documents and documentation and clippings collection of Mad Mina Amsterdam. It also includes documents and documentation originating from individual Mad Mina members. The documentation and clippings collection were arranged in a systematic manner, comprising numerical and alphabetical folders with clearly defined inscriptions. The folders were left intact, but additional documentation from various individuals was incorporated into the collection. In 2010, the collection was augmented by the incorporation of materials from Mad Mina branches in Den Bosch and Utrecht.<sup>22</sup>

Despite Atria's efforts to establish a system within the archive, the structure remains challenging to navigate. This can be explained by the numerous breakoffs and groups that the Mad Mina's had, which also meant that different meetings were held and that minutes were taken by different groups about actions they had taken or were going to take. Consequently, it is also sometimes challenging to ascertain the precise date on which the minutes or letters were drafted. In one document, the date and year are indicated, whereas in another, they are absent. Furthermore, a considerable number of documents are represented in the archive on more than one occasion, which can lead to confusion regarding the precise temporal location of the meeting or event in question. In conducting my own archival research, I have consulted a range of historical sources, from one to thirty-six, to develop my own system for analyzing and interpreting the material I have uncovered. The general minutes of the national meetings and the minutes of the steering committee, which were established at one point, are both valuable sources of information on this topic. Additionally, personal letters from members of the Mad Minas were sent during the early years of its formation. The period of focus was the early years of the organization, from 1969 to 1973. The archive material available from these years is comprehensive, which allows me to assume that the findings I draw from the archive material from these years can be taken with greater certainty. The archival material from the early years is primarily located in archives one to four. Consequently, this study will focus on these four archives.

To ascertain whether the Mad Mina's considered themselves to have been successful in achieving their goal of legalizing abortion, it is necessary to examine the way the Mad Mina's

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<sup>21</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1-134, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

themselves discussed the actions they had carried out at the time. The written documents from the archive in the period 1969-1973 will be analyzed in terms of their tone. Was the tone of the discourse neutral or did it convey a sense of frustration? It is also necessary to ascertain whether the actions were viewed as positive or negative. In addition, the frequency with which certain actions were discussed and the context in which they were mentioned must be considered. It would be of interest to determine whether members were repeatedly exhorted to participate in the action, or whether the action was mentioned only once and then not referenced again. This would indicate whether the action was considered successful or important. The research will address these questions and answer them in accordance with the following research question: How successful did the Mad Mina's consider themselves in achieving their goal of having abortion legalized?

In the initial chapter, an account will be provided of the early years of Mad Mina. By describing the actions that were undertaken by the Mad Minas and the way the outside world saw those actions. This context will be established initially to ultimately ascertain whether the Mad Mina's considered themselves to have been successful. The second chapter will examine the challenges that the Mad Mina's encountered during the period of organizational formation. The success of the Mad Mina's will be evaluated in this chapter according to the criteria typically associated with a successful social movement, as outlined in the relevant literature. It becomes evident that the Mad Mina's encountered not only organizational and identity issues, but also ideological challenges. The third chapter examines the description of actions about the legalization of abortion by the Mad Mina's. By examining the way, the Mad Mina's described their actions, it is possible to ascertain whether they considered themselves to have been successful in this regard.

## Chapter 1: The history of the Mad Mina's

To ascertain whether the Mad Mina's considered themselves a success, it is also necessary to examine the circumstances surrounding the organization's formation in greater detail. Furthermore, it is essential to investigate the circumstances surrounding the Mad Mina's reemergence from the public sphere. It is evident that the organization commenced its activities in 1969. However, by 1974-1975, the actions undertaken by the organization and its visibility within the public sphere had diminished considerably. This chapter will describe this process, after which the following two chapters will link certain phenomena to archival material. This will enable us a conclusion at the end whether the Mad Minas were a success based on the context.

### *1.1 The beginning*

The history of the Mad Mina's began in May 1969 when a group of students stormed Amsterdam's Maagdenhuis, the symbol of power of the university. The students believed that the governance of the university should be more democratically divided. Eventually, the students who took part in the action were arrested and brought to court. During the trial, the female students received a lower sentence than the male students, highlighting gender inequality in the justice system. The female and male students were equally involved in the action. The reason for the difference in jail sentences was related to gender. Gender differences were also evident within the university, with a clear division of roles between men and women. Male students took the stage for speeches, while women were relegated to serving food during meetings. Despite being labelled as progressive, the university was, in fact, quite conservative.<sup>23</sup> In late 1969, a group of students formed with the aim of challenging traditional gender roles. Their goal was to promote greater equality between men and women, like the Man Woman Society (MVM). However, unlike the MVM, this new group was focused on acting rather than simply holding meetings. The 'Maagdenhuis' occupation highlighted the need for attention-grabbing action. This attention enabled the group to make concrete demands on the board. The group named themselves after the first Dutch feminist, Wilhelmina Drucker (1847-1925), and became known as the Mad Mina's.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> V. van der Loo, *De tweede feministische golf in Nederland. De vrouw beslist* (Wormer 2005), 80-82.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

The Mad Mina's began their campaign by focusing on generating publicity. Their initial demands included free shelter, equal pay for men and women, the abolition of the double sexual standard, legal free abortion, and a revision of the division of roles between men and women in society.<sup>25</sup> Liesbeth van Zoonen, professor of Sociology, argues that the Dolle Mina's garnered significant media attention due to their focus on women's sexual freedom, which was pursued by attractive, young women. However, she notes that this attention was also necessarily due to the avoiding strategy about socialist ideology. This facilitated comprehension for individuals in society and invigorated the campaign group within the community.<sup>26</sup> However, it is evident that the initial impetus for the first Mad Minas was the considerable following they had gained and the extensive media coverage. However, they lacked a clear understanding of the most effective approach to take. Should they focus on addressing the division within the household, the lack of education, or the socio-economic status of women? They also considered whether men were also oppressed in society at the time and whether they should prioritize addressing this issue before focusing on women's rights. It is important to note that one reason for women's oppression could also be men's oppression. If this oppression were to cease, the oppression of women would also cease. At the outset, there were only hastily formulated goals, with personal grievances and random ideas serving as the inspiration.<sup>27</sup>

### *1.2 Mad mina's action orientated*

The first real action taken by the Mad Mina's was the occupation of the 'Nijenrode' training institute. This institute only allowed men on the course and admitted only men to their parties. The action was successful, gaining press attention for the Mad Mina's. From then on, they became known to the Dutch public. At the statue of Wilhelmina Drucker, which the group had named themselves after, they symbolically burned a corset to represent the oppression of women. Additionally, they hung pink ribbons in front of public toilets that were exclusively accessible to men. The group also distributed signs to newlywed brides that read 'Who will take the hair out of the sink?'. They also took to the streets to whistle at men, to make them

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<sup>25</sup> M. van Soest, „Meid, wat ben ik bewust geworden” *Vijf jaar Dolle Mina* (Den Haag 1975) 10.

<sup>26</sup> L. Van Zoonen, 'Moeten strijdende vrouwen zo grof zijn?' *De vrouwenbeweging en de media* (Amsterdam 1991) 177-178, 180.

<sup>27</sup> Van Soest, „Meid, wat ben ik bewust geworden”, 5.

experience what it feels like for once.<sup>28</sup> The Mad Mina's also proceeded to the town hall with the intention of inquiring as to whether every bride in Amsterdam was also a white slave and, if so, whether they wished to remain in that condition. A crèche was established on the 'Beursplein', the Miss Holland elections were disrupted by the Mad Mina's, and a crèche was also established outside in Utrecht. Furthermore, condoms were distributed to secretaries and to students enrolled in domestic schools.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, the Mad Mina's were responsible for the occupation of the women's weekly magazine 'Margriet' on 20 February 1970. During the period of occupation, the Mad Mina's proceeded to clean the entire building with great haste, with the intention of removing what they perceived to be malevolent influences and thereby purifying the weekly publication. To address their perception of a "smell" associated with women's magazines, the editors' offices were treated with deodorant. The stencils that were distributed read as follows: 'U met uw suikerzoete (ouwe) hoernalistiek bedwelmt het Nederlandse huisvrouwenproletariaat' en uw knusse rubriekjes en artikeltjes, uw verrukkelijke reportages over ons geliefd koningshuis zijn juist wat de huisvrouw nodig heeft, niet waar.'<sup>30</sup> The Mad Mina's are clear in their accusation that the so-called women's magazines of the time were keeping women's minds small – exactly what men wanted at the time. They are unequivocal in their assertion that the women's magazines collaborated in the oppression of women with what they published. The stencil then states: 'U probeert haar dagen te vullen met recepten, knip- en breipatronen en romantische vervolgverhalen. U leert de vrouw haar plaats: thuis en dienstbaar aan man en kinderen. De vervulling van het vrouw-zijn, het produceren en opkweken van ene nageslacht, vergeet u ook al niet. Kortom, er zit een luchtje aan damesbladen.'<sup>31</sup> The Mad Mina's make their point loud and clear: if women's magazines only write about certain topics, women will start to believe that they should only deal with them. Women's magazines wrote about household stuff and children. This made women in those days think that this was what they were supposed to deal with.

The Mad Mina's initiated a series of actions with great intensity, rapidly disseminating their activities throughout the Netherlands. The actions of the Mad Mina's have given new

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<sup>28</sup> Van der Loo, *De tweede feministische golf in Nederland*, 85.

<sup>29</sup> I. C. Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek. Feministische bewustwording in Nederland 1965-1980* (Amsterdam 1996) 99-100.

<sup>30</sup> Van Soest, „Meid wat ben ik bewust geworden”, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

meaning to the term 'women's emancipation'. They sought confrontation rather than attempting to engage in reasonable consultations. They were more closely aligned with the sensationalism of the media than with the meetings of ministries and political parties.<sup>32</sup>

### *1.3 How the Mad Mina's were perceived*

The name 'Mad Mina' stood for a resolute, bold, and free woman. She went against bourgeois morals and tried to change the social order. Many women identified with the Mad Mina's and formed local chapters in various cities. These chapters attempted to coordinate with the Amsterdam chapter, but this proved challenging due to the Mad Minas' rebellious nature and their reluctance to comply with the Amsterdam chapter's directives.<sup>33</sup> Determining Mad Mina's autonomous feeling became increasingly difficult. In Utrecht, the Mad Mina's launched the slogan 'Boss in your own belly'. In Maastricht, they followed the Amsterdam line, except for their position in favor of legal abortion. Contraceptives were still seen as a sin there, which was a problem in the more conservative southern regions. These examples demonstrate the challenges faced by Mad Mina in establishing a national organization.<sup>34</sup>

The Mad Mina's immediately resonated with Dutch audiences. They were not perceived as old spinsters who racially and whinily attempt to prove themselves right, nor were they elitist women who only present facts and figures to demonstrate inequalities. The Mad Mina's were comprised of sophisticated women who campaigned through pamphlets and street actions, employing a novel political style and tone. The Mad Mina's were not perceived as obtrusive feminists; rather, they were regarded as sophisticated and suave women who sought to capture the public's attention through their playful actions.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the Mad Mina's employed a strategy that had been eschewed by the feminists for an extended period. The strategy is elucidated by Rita Hendriks, a 23-year-old Mad Mina and first-year psychology major in 1970, as follows: 'We waren er op voorbereid dat we zouden worden weggeschreven als manwijven, kenus en lesbiennes. Dat ze het penisnijd en castratiedwang zouden noemen en dat soort dingen. Daar hebben we allemaal rekening mee gehouden. We

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<sup>32</sup> Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek*, 99-100.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, 86.

<sup>34</sup> Van Soest, „Meid wat ben ik bewust geworden”, 10-11.

<sup>35</sup> Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek*, 99-101.

hebben er daarom voor gezorgd dat we er goed uitzagen.<sup>36</sup> This demonstrates that the Mad Mina's actively sought to exploit the prejudices and stereotypes about women in their favour. Consequently, when women were evaluated exclusively based on their physical appearance, the Mad Mina's ensured that they appeared attractive precisely to ultimately achieve the objective that women would no longer be evaluated exclusively based on their physical appearance: "Pep je een beetje op" is bij de eerste actie gezegd. Dat is misschien wel een beetje oneerlijk, omdat we er juist tegen vechten dat vrouwen alleen maar worden gezien als lustobject. Maar in strijd is alles geoorloofd.<sup>37</sup> The Mad minas proceeded to utilize their feminine allure to advocate for more rights for women. They were not interested in being perceived as objects of lust; however, given the fact that they were already regarded as such by men and society at large, they were going to utilize this perception to their advantage.

Consequently, they anticipated a more favorable reception and the potential for more effective achievement of their objectives. The Mad Mina's strategy was to utilize simple words to broaden the scope of their movement, thereby appealing to a wider demographic of women. This approach enabled the Mad Mina's to gain the support of house mothers, a group that had previously been overlooked. In fact, the Mad Mina's were able to garner more publicity in a single week than the MVM and other associations had managed to achieve throughout their entire existence.<sup>38</sup> The distinctions between MVM and the Mad Mina's, while primarily strategic in nature, are nevertheless of considerable consequence. The Mad Mina's emotional and direct approach stood in stark contrast to the MVM's rational approach, which involved a greater focus on consulting with officials, political parties, and parliament. Another distinction could be observed between the Mad Mina's and the MVM. The MVM comprised an elite group of intellectual women, whereas the Mad Minas were more associated with the term "blanke slavinnen," the house mothers.<sup>39</sup> The Mad Mina's were advocating for the interests of housewives, rather than those of the intellectual upper class. They did not advocate for themselves, but rather for other women. Consequently, they were similarly unconcerned with their own interests, in contrast to the MVM. Consequently, the appeal of the Mad Mina's was not solely attributable to their playful and alluring conduct; rather, they

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<sup>36</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 3, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Krantenartikel Nieuwe maatschappij, Dolle mina, portret van de beweging*.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek*, 100-101.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, 102.

were perceived as a collective that transcended the narrow confines of self-interest. The actions of the Mad Mina's were intended to liberate young women from the constraining sexual morality that surrounded them. Additionally, the Mad Mina's joined the left flank in a manner that was distinct from the others. The rhetoric employed by the Mad Mina's was that of the left, yet their focus was on the pragmatic improvement of the position of women in society. The Mad Mina's protests were focused on the socio-economic position of women, with a particular emphasis on the position of housewives. The Mad Minas sought to convey this message, to other women, with the objective of ensuring that every woman was aware of the position of the housewife. The Mad Minas did not belong to the group of housewives, nor were they part of the proletariat. They presented themselves to the public as young, confident, and sexually appealing women. They presented themselves as the epitome of a liberated woman, a figure that every woman should aspire to emulate. The Mad Minas were thus primarily advocating for the rights of other women.<sup>40</sup>

#### *1.4 The Mad Mina's and the Left Wing*

In the early days of the Mad Mina's history, the primary indicator of success was the achievement of goals. Since the establishment of the Mad Mina, women's emancipation had been a matter of serious concern in Dutch society and beyond. Nevertheless, there were certain conditions attached to this success. Indeed, women's emancipation was linked to the left flank in politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Consequently, women's emancipation had to satisfy several conditions. The Mad Mina's endeavors were not permitted to align with their self-interest, which was incompatible with the tenets of left-wing politics. To gain acceptance, they were obliged to present themselves as a liberated, politically conscious vanguard working for the housewife proletariat. But you could see a change within the Mad Mina's after that. Not all the members were ready to align themselves fully with the left-wing message; they felt more related to the women's alliance that Joke Kool-Smit had introduced into society, where all the women had their own interests in women's emancipation and were linked to each other precisely for that reason. At some point, there was also no longer a harmonious relationship between the Mad Minas and the left-wing parties within Dutch politics.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek*, 104-106.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, 106.

Nevertheless, a reversal in fortunes was imminent. The Mad Mina's espoused the view that equality between individuals was a fundamental tenet of society. They aligned themselves with the progressive movements of the 1970s, yet this association rendered their narrative about the differences between the two sexes increasingly implausible. Indeed, the Mad Mina's initially highlighted gender inequality in their actions. The alliance with the left wing confused the Mad Mina's message. Furthermore, their popularity was also beginning to wane. It was posited that a group that gained so much following could not be critical. The critical ability, according to people in the late 1970s, was lacking in the Mad Mina's, and as a result, people did not believe that they could really bring about change. It was precisely the playful actions that contributed to their considerable following, yet these actions lacked a robust message and critical analysis of society. The lack of clarity surrounding the Mad Mina's actions meant that they were perceived as acceptable, as they did not appear as harsh as they could have been. The initial publicity that the organization received, which established it as a prominent figure in the women's movement, subsequently led to the perception that it was ineffective. The image of the Mad Mina's as a man-friendly organization, coupled with its reputation for playfulness, meant that by 1970, the organization was no longer perceived by many as a viable vehicle for social change.<sup>42</sup> A shift in the party's political direction was initiated by the Amsterdam branch of the Mad Minas. The Amsterdam branch perceived the decline in popularity of the Mad Mina's as a rational reason for changing the direction. The Amsterdam branch sought to eliminate the perception of sensation and entertainment and instead wanted to portray themselves as a more serious political movement. The Amsterdam branch of the Mad Minas sought to adopt a more fundamentalist approach, aiming to be taken seriously and espousing a socialist perspective on the woman-man relationship.<sup>43</sup>

### *1.5 First congress: One message or divers*

The inaugural congress, held on 5 and 6 April 1970, was held to establish the new political direction. A total of 450 Mad Minas were in attendance of the congress. One quarter of the attendees were male. The congress was held in Arnhem, but attendees hailed from all corners of the country. The discussions encompassed 35 topics, including parenting, education, the relationship to men, motherhood, job opportunities for women, and the distinction between

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<sup>42</sup> Meijer, *Het persoonlijke wordt politiek*, 113-114.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, 115.

married and unmarried mothers. As the discussions progressed, two distinct groups began to emerge. One group was in favor of a binding program for all the Mad Minas, while the other was against a binding program to which all members had to adhere. The prevailing sentiment among those in attendance was that a binding program was unnecessary and that an overarching objective would be more beneficial. Furthermore, the Mad Mina's did not require the formation of a highly structured organization; rather, they sought to establish a minimalist structure. However, even about the general objective, there was no consensus at the outset. For most attendees, the Mad Mina's struggle did not fall under the category of class struggle. However, a minority of attendees did perceive it to be a form of class struggle. A significant proportion of attendees expressed the view that the transition from a more playful and informal approach to a more socialist and fundamental one was too radical. It was evident that further consultation and discussion were required before the Mad Mina's would adopt a political stance.

It is evident that the Amsterdam-based Mad Mina group concurred on the direction in which the movement should proceed. It is evident that they believed that capitalist society should be abolished before women could be equalized with men.<sup>44</sup> The views of those members of the Mad Mina who were in favor of the Mad Mina adhering to a fixed program of activities, were largely consistent with those expressed in the Mad Mina's first brochure: 'Dolle Mina, Een rebelse meid is een parel in de klassenstrijd'.<sup>45</sup> In this document, they articulated their positions and views in a clear and unambiguous manner. The Amsterdam branch of Mad Mina has adopted the views expressed in the brochure as the foundation for its new objective. The objective was described as follows: 'Ervan uitgaande dat een rolverdeling tussen man en vrouw niet te verdedigen is op de grond van biologisch onderscheid, stelt Dolle Mina zich een maatschappij-verandering ten doel, die gelijke ontplooiingskansen voor iedereen en onafhankelijk van sekse mogelijk maakt. Dit kan worden verwezenlijkt door middel van sociale strijd, bewustwording en mentaliteitsverandering en daardoor beëindiging van de sociaal-economische ondergeschiktheid zowel van man als van vrouw'.<sup>46</sup> Eventually, this objective was also adopted by the Mad Mina. The Mad Mina's statement of principles

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<sup>44</sup> Van Soest, „*Meid, wat ben ik bewust geworden*”, 29-33.

<sup>45</sup> Collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, vindplaats: NED 1H 1970 – B, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis Dolle mina, *Een rebelse meid is een parel in de klassenstrijd* (Amsterdam 1970).

<sup>46</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Eerste congres op 5 en 6 april 1970*.

also stipulates that they will act in accordance with their program points. Nevertheless, it is evident that at the congress, it was resolved that local chapters would retain the autonomy to determine the manner and subject matter of their respective campaigns. In response to the question, "Are the playful actions of Mad Mina now over?" an Amsterdam member of Mad Mina offered the following reply: 'Niet helemaal natuurlijk. Er zijn plaatsen waar Dolle Mina zich nog niet helemaal heeft gemanifesteerd. Daar kunnen ze gewoon beginnen met ludieke acties. In de provincie bijvoorbeeld is er nog een hoop te doen. In de grote steden, daar komt het allemaal wel op gang, maar op het land, in de dorpjes daar ligt nog een groot terrein braak. Daar moet het gewoon nog vanaf het begin worden opgebouwd.'<sup>47</sup> It can be seen that although a program of principles was finally drawn up at the inaugural congress by the Mad Mina's present, this program did not necessarily have to be implemented in the local branches. Consequently, the Mad Minas continued to lack a structured presence throughout the country. The local branches remained unaligned with the main branch in Amsterdam. Those present concurred that there was no necessity for them to engage in further discussion to reach a mutually acceptable compromise.

### *1.6 Second congress: Organization*

The second congress of the Mad Mina's in 1971 was not concerned with the overall objective, but rather with the organizational form. In the months before the congress there were different concerns among the members of the Mad Mina. A faction of the Mad Mina's wished a more flexible organizational structure, with a coordination council comprising of delegates from various action groups and other interested parties. Another faction of the Mad Minas advocated for a more structured organizational framework. The Amsterdam general assembly was to elect a steering committee that would implement the coordination group's decisions, would be responsible for everything and be marketable. This divergence of opinion ultimately prompted some members to initiate their own discussion groups, enabling them to pursue their objectives independently while also allowing them to vent their frustrations and express their ideas. This was not the intention of the Mad Minas at all; rather, it was the result of disorder in the organization itself and the distrust of members that resulted. Indeed, the members of the Mad Mina's perceived a lack of engagement within the organization, coupled with a dearth of personal contact with one another. Ultimately, the members had joined the

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<sup>47</sup> Van Soest,, Meid, *wat ben ik bewust geworden*'' , 33.

organization to find like-minded individuals engaged in the struggle for women's emancipation. When the members perceived a discrepancy between their expectations and the actual functioning of the organization, a significant number of members resigned. This also resulted in the remaining members becoming overworked, as they were unable to cope with the workload.<sup>48</sup> The plan to work in smaller groups was not universally effective. The organizational form and the lack of clarity regarding the overall objective were still perceived as problematic by some members. Furthermore, a small proportion of female members also expressed concerns regarding the increasing tendency of male members to assert themselves. Nevertheless, this group was not sufficiently large to garner significant support from local groups. Nevertheless, this criticism did not prompt a reversal of the organization's approach. It was acknowledged that men were still welcome as members.<sup>49</sup>

The second congress of the Mad Mina's was held in Vught in 1971. Instead of fostering greater unity, the second congress resulted in the emergence of new internal contradictions. The focus had shifted from organizational matters to the formation of a unified identity and the implementation of a set of policies. The congress was to determine the identity and policies of the Mad Mina's, while the national coordination meeting was responsible for addressing matters of national importance and for implementing the congress's policies. Each section was represented by two delegates at the national assembly, with each delegate serving for a six-month term. This rotation ensured that all members of the department were involved in the decision-making process and that power relations within the local departments were not unduly influenced. Finally, there was a steering committee, which dealt with ongoing issues. This committee was answerable to both the national assembly and the congress.<sup>50</sup> The second congress was devoted to the ideology and objectives of the Mad Mina's. It seems reasonable to posit that a significant proportion of the Mad Minas were motivated to shed their playful identity in 1971. The Mad Minas were no longer content to be regarded as a frivolous and immature organization. The group's objective was to effect social change, was perceived to be incompatible with the existing identity. Once more, a schism emerged within the membership. Some members sought to abandon the feminist agenda and instead connected with leftist political parties by focusing on class difference. The other faction of members was committed to disseminating feminist ideology. However, they

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<sup>48</sup> Van Soest,, Meid, *wat ben ik bewust geworden*'' , 63-64.

<sup>49</sup>Ibidem, 65.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

believed that there was a need to raise awareness among female members and male members alike about their privileged position.<sup>51</sup>

### *1.7 Third congress: strategic decisions*

The third congress of the Mad Mins took place in 'Oldenbroek' on 30 and 31 October 1971. The primary focus of this congress was the formulation of strategic decisions pertaining to training, actions, and collaboration with external parties. About the domain of education, the congress concluded that each local branch should assume responsibility for organizing training programmes for their respective members. Consequently, the training of the Mad Mins was not centralized, but rather distributed across multiple locations. Furthermore, it was agreed that the actions of national and local sections should always be related to concrete issues. The congress defined concrete issues as those that benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups, with a particular focus on women from these groups. Furthermore, it was also agreed that general actions should be continued. General actions included initiatives designed to enhance political awareness. Consequently, it was imperative that any action be preceded by an explicit explanation of its purpose and objective. Furthermore, the Congress determined that the Mad Mina's was merely one of the leftist-oriented action group prevalent in the Netherlands at the time. Accordingly, the congress attendees asserted the necessity of collaboration with leftist parties and other progressive groups. Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to pursue greater collaboration with other local groups.<sup>52</sup>

### *1.8 The end of the Mad Mina's?*

From 1971 onwards, the popularity of the Mad Minas did indeed decline. Various records show that things were going badly for the local branches and that it was becoming difficult to mobilize members. By the end of 1971, there were few actions that really stood out in the media.<sup>53</sup> In 1972 there was still the covered wagon action for the legalization of abortion, which attracted attention, but in 1973 you can really see that the organization is slowly

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<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Van Soest, „Meid, wat ben ik bewust geworden'', 138.

<sup>53</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1-36, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis.

emptying out. In 1970, Mad Mina's had 35 chapters and 5,000 members; in 1973, the same organization had only 10 chapters and 521 members, not all of whom were active.<sup>54</sup> But what is caused the Mad Mina's to fall apart is that other groups were taking over. Through the various action groups that have emerged from other women's movements and even from the Mad Mina's, such as the Action Group: 'Wij vrouwen eisen', the organization is no longer needed. This is reflected in a saying by a member of the Mad Mina: 'Niet omdat we er geen zin meer in hadden, want je bent een dolle mina en je blijft het (...) maar ondertussen hadden een aantal vrouwengroeperingen de fakkel overgenomen.'<sup>55</sup> The Mad Mina's gradually declined, leading to a reduction in collective organization and a subsequent absence from the media. While the organization never formally disbanded, the 1973 period marked the final year of Mad Mina's media visibility, particularly when compared to their early years (1969-1971).

### *1.9 Conclusion*

A review of the history of the Mad Mina's reveals a pattern of initial success followed by a decline in public support. The public responded favorably to the Mad Mina's due to their light-hearted actions. Furthermore, this is evidenced by the growth in membership and the establishment of local chapters in 1970. In the early years of its existence, the Mad Mina's undertook a multitude of actions in various locations throughout the country. While the actions were unified in their advocacy for women's emancipation, they were otherwise disparate in their objectives and methods. This is evidenced by the national congresses held from 1971 onwards, which demonstrate the considerable organizational effort required to maintain the Mad Mina's. This ultimately resulted in the Mad Minas's disappearance from the public eye by 1973. The early years are therefore also known as the success years, as the Mad Mina's attracted considerable media attention and were able to undertake a significant amount of campaigning. The historiography of the history of the Mad Mina's thus considers success to be the extent to which the Mad Mina's appeared in the media and thus the amount of public attention they received. This, in turn, depended on the actions they took. Consequently, the measure of success was determined by the extent of external attention they received.

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<sup>54</sup> Bogers, 'Mannen opzij, vrouwen vooruit?', 107.

<sup>55</sup> Geciteerd uit I. Bogers, *Mannen opzij, vrouwen vooruit? De geschiedenis van Dolle mina 1970-1980* (Doctoraalscriptie Economische en Sociale geschiedenis, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen 1983) 140.

## Chapter 2: Internal struggles

This chapter will examine whether the movement, the Mad Mina's were perceived as a success, considering the factors identified in the literature as conducive to success. The following section will examine the internal organization, identity formation and shared ideology of the entity. The aforementioned factors are reflected and discussed in the minutes of the movement, which allows for a comprehensive assessment of their success in this chapter. Upon examination of these factors, it becomes evident that they collectively engender internal challenges.

### *2.1 Structure organization*

There was considerable debate regarding the optimal structure for the Mad Mina's as an organization. Unlike an association, which is governed by a board and bylaws, the Mad Mina's lacked a clear organizational framework in their early years. This is evident in the minutes of their meetings, which document the evolution of their structure and the delineation of responsibilities across various groups. At each national meeting, the structure, and the distribution of tasks among different groups are deliberated. The Mad Mina's held a national meeting every month, but the structure of this meeting was not yet entirely clear. In March 1970, it was suggested that a person from the local chapters be sent to the national meetings each time to influence the decisions made there. These people represented the whole local ward and voted for the local ward.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, it was proposed that a congress be held for all members to democratically set a common course of action. Thus, the purpose of the congress would be for all members and sections to come to a unified position, which could then be disseminated as a collective message. At the national meeting on 20 March 1970, it became evident that there was a debate surrounding the potential organization of a congress as proposed by Mad Mina. It became apparent that not all local chapters agreed regarding the possibility of collectively reaching a unified stance. A few local chapters expressed reservations about the congress's capacity to represent the collective voice of all Mad Mina

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<sup>56</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Verslag landelijke coordinatie van zaterdag 20 maart te Utrecht*'.

chapters. They emphasized the importance of first establishing the congress's position before agreeing to this proposal. It is evident that even before the discussion became thematic, there was a lack of consensus among members regarding the organizational structure.<sup>57</sup>

In March, the meeting had also addressed the responsibilities of the national coordination group. However, it appeared that no resolution had been reached, prompting further discussion at the April meeting. No decisions had yet been reached. Consequently, proposals were put forth by local chapters regarding the organizational structure of local chapters, such as the Rotterdam local chapter. They articulated their expectations regarding the tasks they believed the national coordination group should assume. It was proposed that the national coordination should assume responsibility for facilitating communication between the chapters. It was also suggested that the national coordination should assume responsibility for coordinating national actions and ensuring that all relevant documentation was submitted to the information center. The Information center was responsible for maintaining a comprehensive archive of the minutes of various committees and groups within Mad Mina. Its objective was to consolidate all the resolutions and decisions reached by Mad Mina in a single repository.<sup>58</sup> As example to show how the discussion around the organization went, we take Rotterdam as example. The general tasks that the Rotterdam section assigned to the national section in Amsterdam are twofold. Firstly, they support the smaller regional sections, and secondly, they support not only Amsterdam but also the other major sections in the Randstad, such as The Hague and Rotterdam. Furthermore, Rotterdam desired that if a regional section requested it, they would appoint two coordination group members to maintain contact with the national section and participate in the coordination group. The coordination group will convene monthly to exchange recent information and coordinate national actions.<sup>59</sup> In this manner, local chapters sought to gain greater insight into the structure of the Mad Minas. They provided examples of the structure they envisioned. These suggestions indicate that the structure of the organization was not yet sufficiently clear to all local chapters and members. Otherwise, a proposal for a structure for the organization would not be discussed on a regular basis. It can thus be observed that there was still confusion within the Mad Mina's as

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<sup>57</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Verslag landelijke coordinatie van zaterdag 20 maart te Utrecht*'.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, *Notulen van de bijeenkomst van de landelijke coordinatiegroep gehouden in de Kargadoor, Utrecht, 18 april 1970*.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

to how exactly the organization was regulated and where to go within the organization with problems or questions.

## *2.2 Trying to find an identity*

One of the other initial problems with the creation of the Mad Mina's was that it was not clear for themselves in which ways they differ from other women empowerment movements. One of these women empowerment movements at the same time was the Man Woman Society (MVM). In the existing literature, we encounter some information regarding the actual differences between the Mad Minas and the Man-Woman Movement, as well as the issues surrounding the separation between these two organizations. Both organizations were part of the second feminist wave. It is therefore logical that they have established a mutual relationship with each other, since they were born from the same principle, namely changing the position of women in society. In the 1970s, several action committees were established. This form of organization was more straightforward than setting up an association, as it did not require the establishment of a board or the adoption of statutes. However, this also led to significant uncertainty regarding the appropriate leadership structure and the optimal organizational structure. This can be observed in both organizations. Furthermore, the MVM and Mad Mina shared other characteristics, as they both constituted part of the nascent women's movements and identified as action groups. Both had a middle-class following, a novel style of campaigning, were concerned with defining their outward identity, and had a mutual kinship with other women's movements. MVM, like the Mad Mina's, emerged at a time when some observers believed that the existing organizations were not sufficiently action oriented. The 'women's interests' association was not deemed sufficient by the baby boom generation, who sought to engage in direct action on the streets. They demanded not just discussion of the issues, but tangible outcomes. Nevertheless, MVM positioned itself as an action group not primarily due to its high level of activism, but rather through the establishment of working groups and committees tasked with implementing specific action points. In this regard, the Mad Mina's diverged from MVM, as they actively sought media attention through their demonstrations and public actions. However, it is evident that MVM also organized large-scale national initiatives, aiming to collaborate with other organizations

and the media to amplify their message. The distinction between the two groups lies primarily in the way they presented themselves to the public.<sup>60</sup>

So, the organization of the Mad Mina's itself was uncertain as to the most appropriate manner of relating to other organizations. Should they act together? Should they go together? They found it challenging to adopt a unified stance as an organization. The comparison of MVM and Mad Mina reveals that both organizations were engaged in a similar set of activities, collectively referred to as the 'on the woman' action. These activities included advocating for childcare, women's employment, the abolition of traditional gender roles in education, and the restructuring of domestic schooling. Additionally, both organizations emphasized the importance of sexuality and abortion education. Despite sharing similar goals, the MVM and Mad Mina adopted different approaches to achieving these goals, which distinguishes them as two distinct entities.<sup>61</sup> Both similarities and differences further complicated the distinction between the two organizations for the public and for the organizations themselves. The confusion over their association with MVM also made it harder for the Mad Minas to raise their own profile and create their own internal structure. This made it difficult for national groups and local groups to draw a line in the sand when it comes to working with MVM and made it even harder for the public to make this distinction. This is evident in the minutes of the meetings. It is evident, for instance, in a letter sent to all departments in 1970 in which they mentioned the points they were going to discuss at the next national meeting. The letter included the following queries about the Mad Mina's and de MVM: 'Is there any difference at all? Is this reflected in the cooperation during the Action? Is there a difference between MvM and DM in terms of their attitude towards other protest/action groups? Does MvM "politically" take a different position from DM? The minutes also indicate that the purpose of these questions and their answers is to reach a

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<sup>60</sup> Joyce Outshoorn, 'Half werk. Vrouwenbeweging, emancipatie en politiek, 1950-1990', *Leidschrift: Nederlanders En Hun Gezagsdragers. Politieke Cultuur In Nederland 1950-1990*, 17 (2002), 35-52, aldaar 40-42; A.P.W. van Steen, *Van liefdadigheid naar abortusstrijd: Leidse vrouwen en de Nederlandse vrouwenbeweging van 1860 tot 1990* (Proefschrift Geschiedenis, Universiteit Leiden, Leiden 2023) 221-223.

<sup>61</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Brief van de MVM aan Dolle mina's, Amsterdam 2 september 1970*.

consensus on the specific characteristics that will define the Mad Mina movement.<sup>62</sup> In this manner, they might differentiate themselves from other movements and, through this differentiation, could also define their own identity. The actions and inactions of the Mad Mina's and other movements can also be seen as a form of identity formation.

Furthermore, within the Mad Mina organization, discussions were held regarding the prevailing dominance of men within the organization. The Mad Minas campaigned for women's emancipation, yet within the organization, the roles between men and women were not equally distributed. Consequently, the question arose as to whether men should lead the Mad Minas or be members of the organization at all. Some women sought to discuss their sexuality, relationships, appearance, and awareness in a manner that was separate from that of men. This was done in what was referred to as discussion groups. Therefore, they proceeded to disband, leaving the Mad Minas to contend with further divisions and a smaller membership.<sup>63</sup> The primary source material contains Personal letters sent to the Mad Mina's, making the point that some women who have joined the Mad Mina's no longer wanted an organization that is also staffed by men. They wanted to continue with women only. Henry Swaan, Member of the MVM and member of the Mad Mina's, wrote a letter about this topic on 13 October 1971. In that letter she has been much concerned with the form and way they should all work on the desirable content of Mad Mina. She feels that because of all that is going on abroad concerning women's emancipation and the many discussions around her, we as Mad Mina should ask ourselves whether we do not want to continue the struggle with women alone. She does not want to eliminate men, but she does want to do the job alone as much as possible.<sup>64</sup> She presents this as follows: 'De laatste tijd houd ik mij veel bezig met de vorm en wijze waarop wij allen aan de wenselijke inhoud van Dolle Mina moeten werken.' As can be observed, the matter of how the Mad Mina's should act was a source of ongoing debate among members. The issue remained unresolved, leaving room for further consideration by members. Subsequently, the Dolle Mina member presented her own conceptualisation of the identity in question, elucidating the rationale behind her reconsideration: 'Mede door alles wat zich in het buitenland omtrent de vrouwenemancipatie

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<sup>62</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, 'Aan alle afdelingen van Dolle mina Den Bosch December '70'.

<sup>63</sup> Outshoorn, 'Half werk. Vrouwenbeweging, emancipatie en politiek, 1950-1990', 35-52, 40-42.

<sup>64</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Brief Henry Swaan 13 oktober 1971*.

afspeelt en de vele discussies om mij heen ben ik mij gaan afvragen of het niet beter zou zijn om onze strijd alleen met vrouwen voort te zetten. Niet de mannen uitschakelen, maar toch wel het werk zoveel mogelijk alleen doen.’<sup>65</sup> The internal discussions about identity formation and the international attention the women's movement were receiving prompted the mad mina member to consider whether it would be more beneficial to continue without men. The objective was to achieve greater emancipation of women through the involvement of only women. In this context, it is evident that there is a recognition that men and women must collaborate in order to achieve collective goals: ‘Ik ben mij geheel bewust en zou ook niet anders willen, dat wij mannen en vrouwen samen moeten werken aan een betere en voor ieder mens leefbare maatschappij. Maar tot dusverre is de vrouw achtergebleven bij de man, in zeer veel opzichten (bekijk het gering aantal vrouwen in de Kamer etc.).’ Nevertheless, she desired for the Mad Mina to establish a distinct identity apart from the man. The Mad Mina sought to demonstrate that women are capable of functioning independently of men. It was similarly important that the Mad Minas reflect this message, demonstrating that women are capable of functioning independently of men. This is particularly evident in the concluding section of Mad Mina's personal letter: ‘En gelijkwaardigheid, alsmede onze ontwikkeling en zelfbewustzijn sneller gaan. Je kunt het vergelijken met een kind, dat in een goed, vrij gezin wordt opgevoed en die toch op een gegeven leeftijd (17-19) jaar het huis uit wil. Om zichzelf te bewijzen het alleen te kunnen.’<sup>66</sup> This indicates that as a member of the Mad Mina's, it would be beneficial to consider a change in composition and identity as an organization. It can be surmised that there remained some uncertainty among the members regarding the composition and objective of the organization. This uncertainty therefore indicates that there is not yet a complete sense of unity within the Mad Mina's, particularly in relation to the relationship between men and women. The lack of unity within the Mad Minas results in disparate goals among its members.

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<sup>65</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Brief Henry Swaan 13 oktober 1971*.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

### 2.3 National and local differences

The minutes demonstrate that each local group had a distinct focus within their respective city, region, or village. This is exemplified by the minutes of the last national coordination meeting in 1970, during which each local group representative provided an update. It is evident that some sections are unable to engage in a specific goal due to the overwhelming demands of maintaining their operational capacity. For example, the minutes indicate that Leeuwarden is attempting to recover from a period of decline, Castricum is prioritizing the renewal of educational initiatives, Eindhoven is addressing the issue of free shelter, Amersfoort is focusing on professional military matters, Utrecht is addressing the army and minimum wage, Amsterdam is re-engaging with issues surrounding abortion, The Hague is addressing the issue of rent increases, Den Bosch is addressing educational opportunities for women, and Purmerend is addressing the issue of homelessness.<sup>67</sup> There were also significant religious differences between the northern and central regions of the Netherlands and the southern regions. In the southern region of the Netherlands, the Mad Mina's achieved a somewhat less substantial foothold. The image of Mad Mina was primarily shaped by the Amsterdam local chapter. Not all local sections concurred with the playful actions and distanced themselves from them. For instance, the playful approach was similarly unsuccessful in Arnhem: 'Arnhem was gewoon was wat serieuzer dan elders in het land, wat bekrompender en benauwder (...) Dat ludieke, en die naam "dol" sloeg in die stad gewoon niet zo aan.'<sup>68</sup> The central themes of the Mad Mina's were contraception, abortion, and better sex education. In doing so, the Mad Mina's typically held a negative view of 'motherhood', viewing it as a state that women should be liberated from and encouraged to develop themselves. They did not regard motherhood as a freely chosen state. Not all members of the Mad Mina's held this view; those in the southern sections did not. In Maastricht, the question of whether to legalize abortion remained a matter of contention within the local community, with differing opinions on the merits of such a move.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the social composition of residents in cities and in provinces was different. In university towns, the Mad Mina's

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<sup>67</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, 'Aan alle afdelingen van Dolle mina Den Bosch December '70'.

<sup>68</sup> Geciteerd uit A. Holtrop, 'Dames wilt u hier uw spandoeken neerzetten'. Tien jaar Dolle mina (Amsterdam 1980) 6.

<sup>69</sup> Van Soest, ,,Meid, wat ben ik bewust geworden'', 14.

following probably consisted mainly of unmarried and childless women, while provincial ones probably had more mothers living there.<sup>70</sup> This phenomenon can also be observed in some of the women who were quoted in a newspaper article, hailing from provinces outside of the capital. A Mad Mina from Tilburg said: “Ja, ook met een abortusactie moet je hier niet aankomen. De vrouwen hier begrijpen het verband niet tussen het streven naar legale abortus en hun positie als vrouw. Wat we gaan doen? Nou we gaan bewust maken.”<sup>71</sup> The Mad Minas department in Tilburg observed that the provinces would have to take another step back with their actions to truly reach the public. Prior to the implementation of any further measures, it was necessary to raise awareness of the actions in question. Furthermore, social consciousness in Maastricht differed from that in Amsterdam. Bertine Vroome, a member of the Mad Mina's, stated: ‘Natuurlijk houdt het katholicisme hier de emancipatie van de vrouw op, maar dat doet het calvinisme in andere regio’s.’<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, she acknowledged that faith can impede certain actions of the Mad Mina. She offered Maastricht, her own hometown, as an illustrative example: Abortus kan je hier geen actiepunt maken. Wij kennen hier zeker een stuk of 6 artsen, die weigeren de pil voor te schrijven hier in de omgeving.<sup>73</sup> The documents reveal that the local groups were not always willing to disseminate the pro-abortion message that the Mad Minas wished to convey and found it premature to commence distributing condoms to the public. This illustrates the difficulty encountered in maintaining a unified focus on a few general objectives. Especially on abortion: ‘Groningen heeft voorgesteld om een landelijke actie te houden voor legalisering van abortus. Een tegenvoorstel, om in de verschillende afdelingen eigen acties te voeren onder het motto ‘hoe vrij zijn wij’ heeft meer aanhang gekregen.’<sup>74</sup>

This shows us that local groups, in their efforts to connect with the local community, sought to identify a goal that would resonate most strongly in their respective locations. Consequently, rather than becoming a significant national action on a specific issue, they

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<sup>70</sup> B. Buis, D. Greshof and N. de Jong, ‘Dolle mina, 1970-1972’, 151.

<sup>71</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 3, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, Geciteerd uit *Krantenartikel Nieuwe maatschappij, Dolle mina, portret van de beweging*.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 3, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis *Notulen van de bijeenkomst van de landelijke coördinatiegroep gehouden in de Kargadoor, Utrecht, 18 april 1970*.

remained local actions despite Mad Mina's status as a national organization. This diminished the efficacy of a national organization, which was that with greater manpower, it was possible to present one's case more effectively and to compel the government to respond.

#### *2.4 Conclusion*

The Mad Mina movement encountered several internal challenges during its inception and as it attempted to establish itself. It was evident that they lacked an organizational structure at the outset. At each national meeting, the organization's structure and internal functioning were discussed at length. Local sections attempt to establish a structure, as exemplified by the national section in Amsterdam. However, it is evident that the Mad Mina's have been unable to achieve unity as an organization. In this regard, the Mad Mina's were unsuccessful.

Additionally, they were attempting to establish their identity as an organization. The group encountered difficulties in determining their relationship with other women's movements. Nevertheless, they succeeded in distinguishing themselves through their initially playful actions, which were designed to attract media attention. Furthermore, internal discussions were held regarding the potential inclusion of male members and the establishment of a leadership position within the Mad Mina collective. These discussions were prompted by the absence of a clear directive to which all members of the Mad Mina's were expected to adhere. This had never been formulated prior to the emergence of the movement. In addition to these challenges, it is evident that the ideological differences within the organization impeded the formation of a unified front, a phenomenon that is commonly referred to as "successful" in contemporary literature. Indeed, about ideology, the national section and the local sections were also not in agreement. A review of these three factors: the internal structure, the identity of the organization and the ideology, leads to the conclusion that the Mad Mina movement cannot be considered a successful one.

## **Chapter 3: Abortion**

One of the principal concerns of the Mad Mina organization was the issue of abortion. The actions surrounding abortion were organized by the Abortion Action Group, which was a subgroup of Mad Mina. However, the group's primary focus was on the abortion issue. This chapter will present a comprehensive analysis of all correspondence and documents related to the abortion actions. The question thus arises as to what the Mad Mina's themselves thought of these actions. One might inquire as to whether they considered themselves to have been successful in this field.

### *3.1 Principal program abortion group*

To know whether the abortion group was ultimately a success, the first thing to consider is what specific goals and views had the Mad Mina's in mind. In the early years of the Mad Mina's and the abortion group, a program of principles was drafted in 1970. The document can be found in the archives and includes the following. The document comprises three propositions. The first proposition asserted that the right to abortion provocatus was an integral aspect of women's overall development and that this right would facilitate women's full emancipation. The second thesis posited that abortion should not be regarded as a contraceptive method, but rather as an emergency measure. The third position asserted that the appropriate time for abortion provocatus should be determined by medical professionals, rather than by ethical considerations. These three propositions were subsequently subjected to five requirements. The initial demand was that all legislation pertaining to abortion provocatus should be revoked. Provocative abortion stands for deliberate termination of pregnancy. The articles of law resulted in women being subjected to harsh penalties for performing abortions in an illicit manner. The second demand was that the state should implement a more extensive distribution of contraceptives. At that time, municipalities were permitted to decide whether to install condom vending machines, for example, within their jurisdictions. The third claim was that the Mad Mina's stood for the right of the child to be wanted. They argued that studies showed that children who were unwanted generally had a worse childhood. This was because the woman did not want the child in the first place. The fourth demand was that Mad Mina wanted to change attitudes. To achieve this change of attitude, they wanted to change the attitudes of doctors, psychiatrists, gynecologists and

eventually all political parties. To achieve this change in attitudes, the Mad Mina's believed that abortion must first be de-tabooed.

Finally, the fifth demand covered all the practicalities: that the costs of abortion should be covered by the National Health Service and private insurance companies; that decent clinics should have the facilities to carry out abortion safely; that the treatment should be as painless as possible and should be carried out using modern techniques; that there should be proper counselling for women who have unwanted pregnancies; that all women should be informed about the possibility of abortion and what exactly the procedure entails; and that if a doctor refuses, they should be referred to another doctor.<sup>75</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, Article 251 was still in force in Dutch law. This meant that anyone who assisted in or underwent an abortion was liable to three years' imprisonment or a fine of up to six thousand guilders. In addition, the penalty could be increased if the person had acted for profit or if the abortion was carried out systematically for professional reasons. If found guilty, the doctor, midwife or physician could also be struck off from the profession. These laws originated in 1911 when the judiciary was looking for ways to prosecute women and doctors. According to the law, a provocative abortion could only be performed if the woman's life was in danger. As a result, many doctors refused to perform abortions and women had to find another doctor.<sup>76</sup>

This chapter will examine the strategies employed by the Mad Mina's in their efforts to achieve the fourth demand of the principal programme: the removal of abortion from the taboo sphere. The Mad Mina's attempted to influence public opinion through various channels, including medical professionals, religious leaders, and eventually, politicians. However, the removal of abortion from the taboo was also contingent upon the legalization of the procedure, which had been decriminalized, but not yet decriminalized for the sole purpose of saving a woman's life. This would render the act no longer a criminal offence and no longer a taboo.

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<sup>75</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 3, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Beginselprogramma Abortusgroep, 1-2*.

<sup>76</sup> J. Outshoorn en M. van Soest, *Lijfsbehoud. Tien jaar abortusstrijd in Nederland* (Den Haag 1977) 8-9.

### 3.2 Convincing doctors

Prior to the advent of the right to abortion in the political sphere, the issue was readily dismissed by politicians to the medical profession. The prevailing view was that doctors should be permitted to make the decision, given their expertise in the field. Mad Mina's initial objective was to disseminate social awareness about abortion among doctors and other medical personnel. Above all, they sought to encourage doctors to engage with the topic and form their own opinions on the matter. In March 1970, they proceeded to the residences of numerous physicians in Amsterdam with the intention of affixing a stencil bearing the Mad Mina's principles to the envelopes. During these activities, posters were also affixed to the doors, stating: 'de dokter wikt, de vrouw beschikt'. The brevity of the slogan allows the Mad Mina's to convey their wishes in a clear and concise manner. By stating that the decision was ultimately up to the woman, rather than the doctors, the Mad Mina's aimed to emphasize to the doctors that the woman's autonomy should be respected. The distribution of flyers to the homes of medical professionals with the stated message forced the recipients to consider the subject matter. The flyers were designed to be both persuasive and confrontational.

In this context, the working group of the Mad Mina, which was responsible for addressing the issue of abortion, had previously circulated an open letter to the committee of the Dutch Society for Psychology and Neurology in February. The open letter stated as follows: 'Vanmorgen hebben jullie over het rapport van de commissie met zeven mannelijke psychiaters over abortus gediscussieerd. Wij hopen natuurlijk dat jullie het er allemaal mee eens zijn, maar waarom bepraten jullie dat alles achter onze rug om? The Mad Mina's were attempting to convey that the discussion of abortion is beneficial, yet they assert that women must be included in this debate. The following sentence serves to reinforce this point: 'Zijn wij er niet nog veel meer bij betrokken dan jullie?'<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, they highlighted to psychiatrists that they considered it implausible that psychiatrists were awaiting legislative change and were unable to form their own opinions on abortion. Consequently, they were attempting to inform psychiatrists of their stance on the abortion debate and to highlight the extent of their influence on the abortion debate: 'Waarom wachten jullie op een wetswijziging en gaan jullie niet direct, waar je toch zo'n grote stem in het kapittel hebt, volgens je eigen

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<sup>77</sup> Geciteerd uit Van Soest, „Meid wat ben ik bewust geworden”, 11.

overtuiging te werk?’<sup>78</sup> The Mad Mina's concluded their statement against the psychiatrists by asserting that it was illogical that only men discuss abortion legislation. The women indicated to the psychiatrists that only men made decisions regarding women, and that it was difficult for women to achieve emancipation if they were not even allowed to decide over their own bodies: ‘En dan nog nu door zeven mannelijke psychiaters een voorstel dat tot een wetswijziging moet leiden die door wie weet hoeveel mannelijke ministers, parlementsleden en wat dies meer zij goedgekeurd moet worden. Moeten wij ons zo emanciperen of hebben wij zelf ook nog iets te vertellen’.<sup>79</sup>

Another method to foster social awareness among medical professionals was the distribution of the so-called "Black Book." In this manner, they sought to facilitate the dissemination of the adverse experiences associated with abortion among women to medical professionals, with the objective of encouraging them to read them. The distribution of the Black Book to doctors is frequently referenced in the minutes. You can read in the minutes, for example, that the Mad Mina's are really urging members to come and collect and distribute the books: ‘De afdelingen die in het zwartboek ‘‘Dolle mina klaagt aan’’ niet besteld hebben, worden dringend verzocht na te gaan hoeveel artsen, vroedvrouwscholen, verpleegstershuizen, vrouwenartsen enz. zij willen verrassen met dit voortreffelijke boek.’<sup>80</sup> The tone in the minutes is compelling, indicating that they considered the action to be of significant importance. It was therefore deemed important by the Mad Mina's to disseminate this book as widely as possible amongst medical personnel. Consequently, it can be inferred from the text that the Mad Mina's hoped to at least influence the medical personnel.

The minutes of the meeting consistently identify the distribution of the Black Book as an action item for all departments. It is of the utmost importance that all parties involved exercise caution and ensure the proper distribution of the books. The organization’s objective was to disseminate the book as widely as possible. To this end, it provided its members with a variety of avenues for achieving this goal. As previously mentioned, they have identified another organization in Amsterdam that can assist them: ‘In Amsterdam hebben we de N.V.S.H. bereid gevonden om het rond te sturen aan artsen. Voor andere plaatsen is dit

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<sup>78</sup> Geciteerd uit Van Soest, „*Meid wat ben ik bewust geworden*”, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>80</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Aan alle Dolle mina afdelingen in Nederland en België 1970*.

misschien ook wel een mogelijkheid.’ But they also indicate that you can just put the books in the mailboxes at doctors' offices in smaller towns: In kleine plaatsen zou je het zelf kunnen afgeven of in de brievenbus doen.’ The record demonstrates that the dissemination of stories of women facing abortion was an important tool for raising awareness and potentially persuading doctors, as asserted by the Mad Mina's themselves. It can also be concluded that the action was not yet a success, given the continued insistence by the national department that the books should be ordered and distributed. The Mad Mina's asserted that the medical professionals were not yet fully cognizant of the complexities surrounding abortion. The black books remained in circulation, and the issue was a primary focus in the national meetings. This is reflected in several minutes, with the black book being casually mentioned. For example, by Purmerend in the national assembly in March 1971: ‘Enquête n.a.v. zwartboek abortus onder artsen’<sup>81</sup> or in Leiden: Zwartboek uitdelen in Academisch Ziekenhuis’.<sup>82</sup> So, it remained a point mentioned in several national meetings.

But the Mad Mina's considered the opening of a discussion among doctors about abortion to be a success. The doctors were now required to determine their stance on the legalization of abortion. They were obliged to adopt a stance and to consider the implications of that stance. This is corroborated by the subsequent minutes, which state: ‘Abortusboeken zijn rondgestuurd, artsen voelen zich in hun beroepssector aangetast, dit wordt met de artsen uitgepraat, hun onderlinge discussie komt ook op gang.’<sup>83</sup> The objective of the health sector's willingness to perform abortions has not yet been fully achieved, but a positive step in the right direction was taken. As can be read in the minutes, a discussion is emerging between doctors. The minutes indicate that the Mad Mina's view this as a positive development. Nevertheless, doctors continue to react negatively to the black book, perceiving that their professional sphere has been affected. However, they were now engaged in discussions about the issue of abortion. Previously, there was a prevailing assumption that doctors should be opposed to abortion, as it was perceived as the termination of life, whereas their role was to preserve life. The Mad Mina's opened the discussion and made it no longer a given for doctors to be against abortion. The Mad Mina's saw this as successful. Indeed, they achieved

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<sup>81</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Notulen landelijke coördinatievergadering van 20 maart 1971*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, *Notulen landelijke coördinatievergadering van 16 januari 1971*.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*.

that the subject of abortion fell out of the taboo. This was because doctors started talking to each other about it and engaging in discussions instead of ignoring the subject and pretending that nothing could change the current situation.

### *3.3 Convincing the religious leaders*

Furthermore, religion represented another significant obstacle to the legalization of abortion. In accordance with religious doctrine, the sacredness of life is paramount, and thus the interruption of a life was to be avoided. Those who adhere to religious beliefs regard abortion as murder, and thus there was no social awareness among people of faith as to why legalizing abortion would apparently be for women's emancipation. So, to make society more ready for the right to abortion, the Mad Mina's also saw it as important to make religious figures more aware of abortion and why they should not see it as murder, but as a right to dispose of your own body as a woman, as a human being.

To illustrate this point, one can consider the following example. Media attention afforded to the Mad Mina movement has prompted clerics to speak out on both abortion and the Mad Mina phenomenon itself. This is exemplified by the stance taken by Bishop Bluysen at the national meeting on 19 December 1970, where he publicly opposed abortion on television. 'De bisschoppen zijn van plan rond kerst met een verklaring over dit onderwerp te komen. Aangezien Bluysen in vergelijking nogal progressief is, valt er van de rest weinig goeds te verwachten.'<sup>84</sup> Consequently, the Mad Mina's remained pessimistic about their ability to persuade the bishops to reconsider their stance. One can discern a sense of frustration in this, which suggests that if the most progressive bishop has already expressed this opinion, the last remaining hope that the religious leaders will be receptive to their demands has been extinguished. Furthermore, the minutes contain disparaging remarks about those who adhere to the church unquestioningly: 'De herders zullen hun schaaapjes bij elkaar willen houden, en we weten hoe er in katholieke streken over abortus gedacht wordt.'<sup>85</sup> The tone of Mad Mina's contribution to this debate is one of resignation, as though they have already accepted the futility of attempting to influence religious leaders and the wider religious community. It

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<sup>84</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Landelijke vergadering op 19 december in Utrecht 1970*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

appears these individuals and institutions are beyond redemption according to the Mad Mina's. Furthermore, they are disheartened to observe that even those who espouse progressive views within society appear to be unaware of their stance on abortion. To illustrate: 'Zelfs de als meer progressief omschreven voorzitter van de KRO heeft een uitzending over abortus waarin geen Dolle Mina's werden geïnterviewd, in plaats daarvan had men een studeerkamertheoloog onder het stof uit gehaald die plechtig verklaarde met christelijke termen en gebaren: abortus is moord. We weten dus wat ons te wachten staat.'<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the Mad Mina's anticipated that the religious leaders would respond with even more vehement rhetoric on the topic of abortion, which they deemed to be tantamount to murder. A review of the historical record reveals that they were convinced that religion could still be a significant impediment to the legalisation of abortion. From their tone, it is evident that they possess a fighting spirit and are not inclined to concede easily. This is also evident in the final sentence, which concerns Bishop Bluysen's message: 'Het zou misschien goed zijn als Dolle Mina op de verklaring van de Heren Bisschoppen onmiddellijk zou reageren.'<sup>87</sup>

In response to the bishop's statements, the Mad Mina's sent a letter to the bishop. The Mad Mina's did not respond to this publicly, but instead sent a letter to the bishop.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, they elected to maintain confidentiality and attempted to rebut the bishop's assertions through a personalized approach. This suggests that at that time, the Mad Mina's were still attempting to exert influence on a more limited scale. The minutes record that the Mad Mina's were displeased that they were not consulted regarding the broadcast, but a cleric was instead contacted. They considered it highly inappropriate for someone to speak on television about abortion as murder, and that the other side of the story was not presented. They considered themselves to be more qualified to discuss the topic of abortion and felt that KRO should not have consulted a cleric on this matter. One can infer from the text that the Mad Mina's perceived this as an unfair and frustrating situation.<sup>89</sup> The objective of influencing social awareness in society had not yet been achieved in this area when social

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<sup>86</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>87</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Landelijke vergadering op 19 december in Utrecht 1970*.

<sup>88</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>89</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Landelijke vergadering op 19 december in Utrecht 1970*.

programmes invited religious figures to a program on abortion. It was evident that they had not yet succeeded in making religious figures less emancipated in the social debate on abortion and had not yet succeeded in rising above faith on this topic.

But it could also be that the Mad Mina's only approached religious leaders to get publicity that way. Indeed, you can see from the record that they don't hold out much hope about the bishops when a progressive bishop is already making such statements. The Mad Mina's might therefore have approached success differently. They did not want to raise awareness among religious leaders, as with doctors, that women should be able to make their own decisions about their bodies, but they wanted to reach the rest of the people. By showing the public that they went against the message of church on abortion, they showed people that this was also a possibility for them.

### *3.4 Convincing the politicians*

Eventually, the Mad Mina's also began to focus on politics. The issue of abortion was complicated by the fact that politicians held disparate views on the matter, which led to discord among them. There were those for and against the legalization of abortion. But the issue was always undecided because it was controversial throughout the Netherlands. Politicians often used the argument that it was a decision for experts, i.e., doctors, to make. But eventually the issue of abortion also became politicized. One reason for this was the involvement of certain movements, specifically women's movements, in this issue. The Mad Minas constituted one such movement. From 1970 onwards, the movement compelled politicians to adopt a more explicit stance on the abortion issue, which subsequently became a topic of discussion in the lower house of parliament. The Mad Mina's, among others, compelled politicians to assume a more active role in the debate surrounding abortion, necessitating a reframing of the issue.

In the final months of 1970, the Mad Mina's abortion group responded to the government's proposed legislation on abortion. Indeed, the coalition agreement contains plans to, as the Mad Mina's describe it themselves, "make abortion a bargain". Although no bill had yet been approved, there appeared to be plans for it to contain many similarities with the coalition agreement. The Mad Mina's had to consider whether to await the bill's approval or to respond immediately. In making this decision, they were determining whether to remain within the social domain or to transition to the political domain surrounding abortion. They did, however, decide to make certain demands known to politicians beforehand. In essence,

they sought to convey to the government that the woman should be permitted to determine for herself whether she wishes to undergo an abortion, that abortion should be regarded and treated as a standard outpatient procedure, and that there should be no requirement for registration. Thus, they were not immediately adopting a comprehensive approach to their demands regarding abortion but were initially attempting to maintain a relatively modest stance. Subsequently, they debated potential actions that could be taken in advance of the bill's enactment: 'Alle mogelijkheden tot acties worden gezien: het aanleggen van een handtekeninglijst vanuit de afdelingen. Een open brief naar ontzettend veel instanties, waarin de situatie goed wordt uitgelegd.'<sup>90</sup> A perusal of the minutes reveals that the members of the committee considered the bill to be a matter of significant consequence. The tone is assertive and the Mad Mina's are advocating for a rapid and decisive approach. They are seeking a range of actions and are advocating for a rapid pace of implementation. A perusal of the minutes reveals a tone of optimism, suggesting that the actions in question will result in a change to the bill. Furthermore, it is evident that their objective is not merely to influence the politicians who drafted the bill, but rather to engage the broader public: 'Eventuele plaatselijke acties in overleg met 'landelijke' centrale demonstraties over het hele land tegelijk (...) Kortom: keihard landelijke actie, die geleidelijk vanuit de afdelingen wordt voorbereid.'<sup>91</sup> It is evident that the Mad Mina's used a transparent and persuasive tone when discussing the actions taken against the bill. The issue was of great personal significance to them, and they felt that they had not yet achieved their desired outcome with the abortion bill. To be successful in their efforts to influence public opinion on the abortion issue, they require a robust, nationwide campaign.

What the minutes also show is that there was a discernible tone of disapproval regarding the actions surrounding the bill. There was a notable enthusiasm for campaigning, with a plethora of ideas being immediately proposed. It can be surmised that this was an issue that was of significant personal importance to Mad Mina. The bill remained a prominent item on the agenda for Mad Mina. It was discussed at length in every meeting, with numerous items being minuted. In comparison to other topics, it is evident that this issue was significant

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<sup>90</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Notulen landelijke bijeenkomst Dolle mina in Utrecht op 18 december 1971*.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem.

to the Mad Mina.<sup>92</sup> Consequently, they have initiated a response to political matters, thereby demonstrating their active engagement in the political realm. The focus of their attention has shifted from the social domain, experts and public opinion to the individuals who will be responsible for making legal decisions. Indeed, the coalition agreement and the promise of a legal draft on abortion make this clear. Additionally, she dispatched a missive to another political entity, the Council of State, with the objective of disseminating her message to politicians. In their letter to the Council of State, the Mad Mina's were attempting to inform this political body that a bill is currently under consideration that has no bearing on the root cause of the issue, namely unwanted pregnancies. The Mad Mina's adopted a coercive tone in their letter, indicating that they wished to make it clear to this advisory body that abortion is not an issue where a political game can be played: 'Het wetsontwerp is niet tot stand gekomen omdat men zich bezorgd maakte over het probleem van ongewenste zwangerschap, maar zuiver en alleen omdat politiek bedreven moet worden, namelijk omdat de V.V.D. samen met de confessionelen moet regeren.'<sup>93</sup> The Mad Mina's then proceed to inform the members of the Council of State in a rather strident manner that the issue of abortion concerns the lives of women. The authors attempted to appeal to the emotions of the Council of State members: 'Het is een tragische zaak dat de vrouw in noord het slachtoffer wordt van het politieke spel, zoals het gespeeld is door de samenstellers van het regeerakkoord en nu weer door het kabinet. Als een vrouw ongewenst zwanger is dan is zij de aangewezen persoon om een verantwoorde beslissing te nemen. Niemand heeft het recht en zeker niet uit naam der wet de vrouw te betuttelen.'<sup>94</sup> They were trying to reach the politicians with their message, but they were also still trying with this letter to make the people who sit in that political body aware of the issues surrounding abortion in the current situation at this time. They were not just talking to politicians; they were talking to the person behind the politician.

This letter shows that the Mad Mina's wanted to get involved in the political sphere. By targeting a political body, they want to indirectly influence parliament. However, this was not the sole way the Mad Mina's responded to the bill, so, to politics. The Mad Mina's sought

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<sup>92</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Notulen landelijke bijeenkomst Dolle mina in Utrecht op 18 dec. 1971*; Ibidem *Notulen landelijke coördinatievergadering D.M. Utrecht 15-1-72*

<sup>93</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, Kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Openbrief van Dolle mina aan de Raad van State van het koninkrijk der Nederlanden te 'S-Gravenhage, 18-1-1972*.

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem.

to influence not only political bodies but also the public. It became evident in the minutes that the Mad Mina's concentrated their efforts on this aspect: Besloten werd een grote landelijke demonstratie te houden in Utrecht. Na discussies was men er min of meer over eens, dat deze demonstratie zich meer op de publieke opinie moet richten dan op de politici, waardoor plaats en dag los komen te staan van de behandeling van het wetsontwerp in de kamer.<sup>95</sup>

Nevertheless, in the National Assembly in february, prior to the commencement of the abortion campaign, it is evident that the Mad Mina's redirected their efforts again towards the political sphere. In the minutes, they adopt a robust and persuasive tone: 'Indien het wetsvoorstel toch aangenomen wordt, zijn wij bereid tot harde actie over te gaan. Aan het eind van de demonstratie zal een telegram worden gestuurd naar de regering waarin wij aankondigen dat er tegenmaatregelen genomen zullen worden, als het wetsvoorstel toch aangenomen wordt.'<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, they addressed the government directly, rather than the general public. Consequently, they also seek to persuade politicians of their stance on abortion. Upon examination of the minutes on the bill, it becomes evident that this objective has not yet been achieved. It can be seen from the minutes of the meeting that the Mad Mina's were not yet satisfied with the bill, indicating a desire to take stronger action. They repeatedly stated their intention to challenge the bill and, by extension, the underlying political process.

### 3.5 Conclusion

One of the aims of the Mad Minas Abortion Action Group was to break the taboo surrounding abortion. The minutes of the Mad Minas show that this is why they started taking action to make certain people aware of the issues surrounding abortion as it was then. First, they tried to reach doctors with their message, because politicians always point to medical personnel when groups start talking about legalizing abortion. The Mad Mina's judged their actions to have been successful, as doctors have started discussing the issue with each other. With them, abortion is no longer a taboo subject. People can talk to them about abortion. In fact, when we look at the actions to convince religious leaders, the tone of the protocols is immediately striking. The tone is frustrated, and the tone suggests that they have already given up trying to

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<sup>95</sup> Collectie Dolle Mina, inv.nr 1, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IAV) in Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis, *Notulen landelijke coördinatievergadering D.M. Utrecht 15-1-72*.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, Notulen van de coördinatievergadering gehouden 5 februari 1972 te Utrecht.

convince religious leaders or religious people. It is more likely that the Mad Mina's wanted to attract the public's attention with their actions and not necessarily to win over religious figures. They were trying to make people aware that you can also take a different stance on abortion than the church. From the record, you cannot tell that they thought the actions around religion were successful. The hopeless tone and frustrated tone around these actions stands out, so from that one can conclude that they did not think these actions were successful. A review of the actions undertaken by the Mad Mina's to convince politicians reveals that their primary objective was to influence politicians. However, a closer examination of their minutes reveals that they sought to engage the wider public and raise awareness of their cause. Despite this, their actions and minutes indicate that they still considered politicians to be an important factor in the issue. When they engaged with politicians, they adopted a persuasive and combative tone, yet they did repeat discussing the bill frequently in their meetings. This indicates that the initial actions were not yet successful, but that the Mad Mina's did consider the issue to be important. They were simply not yet successful in achieving their objective, which resulted in the issue being frequently discussed on the record.

## Conclusion

In an interview with a former member of the Mad Mina's, a question was raised regarding the perceived success of the Mad Mina's. It is often the case that external observers will comment on the perceived success of a social movement. However, this assessment is often based on external factors, with little consideration of the internal opinions of those involved. Indeed, numerous methodologies exist for measuring the success of social movements. One may assess the success of a social movement by examining the achievements it has attained. However, the extent to which they have achieved their goals is not always straightforward to ascertain. According to some, it is not sufficient to consider only the symbolic achievements of a social movement; rather, one must also assess the actual change that the movement has brought about. It is necessary to examine the extent to which the movement's objectives have been incorporated into policy. The goals are linked to the way the social movement communicates them to political leaders, the media and other bystanders. This is not about the goals that an organization sets internally, but rather the goals that the outside world sets for a social movement.

Moreover, there is a further argument that the current order should be examined to ascertain how it receives the ideas of the social movement. Are they receptive to it or not at all? Furthermore, a considerable body of literature indicates that the success of a social movement is contingent upon its ability to achieve political success. To what extent is the current political order receptive to the grievances of the minority? In addition, it is also important to examine the internal organization of a social movement and consider the extent to which members are aware of the current political context and the challenges it presents. The current literature offers insights into the measurement of success. However, there is a gap in this literature because it does not include how success is defined by the social movement itself. It would be beneficial to understand how members of the movement view success and whether their views differ from those of the outside world.

To address this question, I have selected one of the most significant social movements as the subject of my research, namely the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. A perusal of the Netherlands during this period reveals a society that is markedly polarized. The Roman Catholic and Protestant churches exerted a significant influence on the organization of society and the prevailing attitudes of the period. The church regarded women as solely domestic beings, a perspective that starkly contrasted with the aspirations of the women's movement, which sought to empower women in the public sphere. In essence, women should

be free to determine their own actions and that no external authority should dictate their choices, including the church.

One women's movement that attracted considerable attention in society was the Mad Minas. At the outset, this women's movement garnered considerable media attention due to its light-hearted actions. Consequently, a considerable number of individuals joined the movement in short order and an increasing number of local action groups were established, thereby facilitating the dissemination of the Mad Minas throughout the country. After three years, cracks had begun to appear in the movement. This necessitated the movement addressing several organizational issues and ideological discrepancies within the organization. Consequently, the movement began to fracture. From 1973 onwards, the number of actions undertaken by the movement declined, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of members who withdrew from the organization. Nevertheless, one of the Mad Mina's primary objectives was achieved in 1984, namely the legalization of abortion. Despite the decline in popularity of the Mad Minas, one of the movement's goals had been achieved by the 1980s. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, abortion was prohibited unless the woman's life was at risk.

Abortion was regarded as a criminal act and a threat to the natural moral order of the state. Until the 1960s, abortion was also regarded as a taboo subject, but this perception was transformed by social movements, particularly those advocating for women's rights. They facilitated the reopening of the debate on the subject. One of the objectives of the Mad Mina campaign was to legalize abortion, which constituted a significant step towards removing the taboo surrounding the practice. The Mad Minas campaigned for this in the early 1970s, yet abortion was not legalized until 1984. This prompts the question of the extent to which the Mad Minas were successful and influential in the process of legalizing abortion. To investigate this further, my research examined how success was defined and evaluated by the Mad Mina movement. This was achieved by analyzing the documents prepared by the Mad Minas themselves. To achieve this, I utilized the Mad Minas' archive at Atria Amsterdam. To gain insight into the Mad Minas' approach to success, I focused my analysis on the first four archives of the organization. I was looking for the answer to the question: How successful did the Mad Mina's consider themselves in achieving their goal of having abortion legalized? In the initial chapter, I undertook an analysis of the circumstances that gave rise to the emergence of the Mad Mina's. To establish whether they thought themselves to be successful it is important to construct the context around this movement. This analysis revealed that the movement was most successful in the first two year, largely due to the media attention it

received at the time. It also had the largest number of members. Furthermore, the most actions were also carried out in that period, due to the enthusiasm that prevailed at the time. From 1971 onwards, there were already issues with the organization and the ideology it wished to project. From 1973 onwards, the organization was perceived as less successful due to a lack of visibility and activity.

In Chapter Two, the internal documents present several organizational issues that require attention. It is evident that the organization commenced its operations without a clear framework in place. Over the course of the first years, efforts were made to identify this framework, although these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. Additionally, the organization encountered challenges in developing its own identity. As a women's movement, it sought to convey its message to the wider society. However, the most significant challenge was the discrepancy between the national and local levels of the organization. Each local department had its own priorities, and not all local departments were willing to align with the national department in Amsterdam. For instance, the issue of abortion was a contentious topic, with some local departments opposing the legalization of abortion. To assess the degree of success that the Mad Mina's ascribe to themselves, it is worth to consider this subject on which the current literature considers them to be unsuccessful. This is because they did not form a unified entity on the topic of abortion.

In chapter three, it is evident that the objective of the abortion action group from Mad Mina was to remove abortion from the realm of taboo. They perceived this to be contingent upon the legalization of abortion, as the illegality of the practice renders it a taboo subject. In addition to the legalization of abortion, which represents one of the most significant achievements of the women's movement, the topic of abortion was chosen for this study because it is a subject worthy of further investigation. The minutes reveal that the group attempted to persuade three distinct groups: doctors, religious leaders, and politicians. It is evident that the Mad Mina's perceived themselves as having achieved success with the doctors, as evidenced by their willingness to engage in discussions about abortion. Previously, the decision to perform abortions was regarded as a foregone conclusion; however, the Mad Mina's succeeded in persuading doctors to consider the nuances of the issue. This shift in discourse was in the minutes of their meetings perceived as a significant victory. With regard to religious leaders, it is unclear whether the Mad Mina's were genuinely attempting to persuade them or if their objective was simply to garner publicity for their cause. The minutes of the meeting indicate that the religious leaders were perceived as being beyond persuasion, and the Mad Mina's adopted a frustrated tone when discussing religion

and abortion. They did not consider this to be a successful approach. They had not yet reached the public on this matter.

When examining their success in engaging with politicians, it became evident that they were uncertain about their objective. The minutes indicated that the group's objective was to influence the public, not politicians. However, they were attempting to persuade politicians to adopt a new legal framework regarding abortion. This topic was discussed at length in the minutes, and the group employed an activist tone and a convincing and combative approach. It appeared that the group did not yet perceive itself as successful in politics or in influencing the public regarding legal frameworks and political actions.

When one is seeking to respond to the question: How successful did the Mad Mina's consider themselves in achieving their goal of having abortion legalized? One must consider the matter from a different perspective than that presented in the existing literature. The Mad Mina's lacked the requisite organization and mindset to be considered a successful organization. At this juncture, it is evident that the Mad Mina's were not successful. Additionally, the legislation was only enacted in 1984, whereas the Mad Mina's had been inactive for a considerable period prior to this. During the period in which they were actively campaigning for legalization, no tangible legal progress was made. The public did not demonstrate sufficient interest or commitment to initiate a campaign for women's rights, particularly about abortion, given the lack of tangible success achieved by the organization in its mobilization efforts. Therefore, at this juncture, the Mad Mina's were not deemed to have been successful, although this was not the perception held by the organization itself. The Mad Mina's employ a distinct metric to assess their success. The Mad Mina's chose to assess whether they had succeeded in raising social awareness about abortion. The Mad Mina's sought to challenge the prevailing assumption that abortion was inherently negative and should be prohibited. They attempted to raise awareness of the fact that the circumstances surrounding the act of abortion at that time were not favorable and required reform.

This illustrates that the internal success of a movement can diverge from the public perception of the movement. It is challenging to ascertain success from the outside, as one is only able to observe the actions and goals that leaders and the media deem important. Social awareness is more difficult to determine. It is not straightforward to discern this from the outside of the organization. Through my research, I contribute to the ongoing debate about the success of social movements, with a particular focus on women's movements. I afforded the individuals from the movement a voice in determining the success of the organization. When one attempts to ascertain success through external factors alone, one risks overlooking the

historical perspective, namely the voice of the people who participated. If we are required to provide a succinct response to the question of whether the Mad Mina's were successful in reaching their objective of raising awareness about abortion, the answer is affirmative. They were successful in this endeavor because they perceived success in the creation of social awareness within society. If we consider the opinions expressed by De Vries in her interview this year, it becomes evident that her perspective aligns with that of the Mad Mina's. Their success was in prompting people to become more aware of the issue of abortion. The Mad Mina's were waking up the people who first thought that the status quo was fine about abortion.

However, there are some caveats to my research. By looking at written documents and inferring the tone on certain issues, research relies on the researcher's interpretation. As a result, one can never be entirely sure that the person who wrote it down meant it the way you interpret it. Because one doesn't ask the authors themselves, one can never be 100% sure of your results. Nevertheless, this way of doing research is important because it is one of the few ways of giving people a voice in research. As a historian, you are interested in the personal rather than the general. General patterns are usually easier to see, but you miss the details. Because of the intensive method used in this research, it is the details that stand out in the documents of Mad Mina. This method allowed me to conclude that the Mad Mina's were successful in their own eyes, whereas if you only looked at the factors given in the literature to measure success, you would conclude that the Mad Mina's were not successful.

However, because of the frustration they show when dealing with the church or with politics shows that there was something to be desired in that area. To me it seems clear that members must have realised that they lacked the unity and organization to take the next step towards an organization that could be politically influential. Non the less they considered themselves successful in achieving their main goal: raising awareness about abortion in society.

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