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Transforming space for reproductive rights

Unequally supported action and resistance in everyday
space for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland

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Abstract

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The thesis explores the transformation of everyday spaces into spaces of resistance through “supported action”. It is based on semi-structured interviews with eight organisations fighting for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland. A diffractive analytical method is employed to identify intra-actions of space, bodies and objects in the transformation of politically produced and capitalist spaces into spaces of resistance. The organisations adapt to existing and lacking forms of human and non-human support when they organise and mobilise political support for their struggle. The organisations make use of ‘everyday spaces’ where they initiate conversations about reproductive rights and thereby transform the space of a pub, outside a school or someone’s home into a space of resistance. However, bodies’ unequal support in space and access to ‘the political’ also give rise to tensions regarding which political subjects and claims take central stage in the struggle. The diversity of organisations participating and collaborating in the movement nevertheless provides a hopeful ground for a movement which continues to struggle for radical inclusion, and reproductive rights and justice for ‘all’.

Key words: Space, resistance, supported action, vulnerability, reproductive rights and justice

Word count: 19 420

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Malmö, May 18th, 2018

Sarah Bodelsson

¹ See website <https://sites.google.com/view/spacesofresistance/home>, retrieved on May 16, 2018.

Abbreviations

ES	Everyday Stories
HI	The Hunreal Issues
L-I ARC	London –Irish Abortion Rights Campaign
MERJ	Migrant and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice
MfC	Midwives for Choice
PfC	Parents for Choice (currently Parents Together for Yes)
SfR	Sew for Repeal
‘The movement’	refers to all organisations, activists and organisers fighting for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland.
‘The Coalition’	refers to The Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment whose members are listed on the Coalition’s website.
‘The Campaign’	refers to the national civil society campaign “Together for Yes” launched by the Coalition, ARC and National Women’s Council of Ireland to mobilise for the referendum on May 25 th , 2018.
‘The organisations’	refers to both organisations and projects in the Coalition.

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1. Introduction and Aim

‘Public’ space has been prioritised within literature exploring how resistance movements are simultaneously dependent on, restricted by and producing political space (e.g. Lefebvre 1974; Harvey 2000; Soja 1996; Butler 2015). Although feminist theory has challenged the private/public dichotomy (see Bondi 1998; Rose 1990), this dichotomisation continues to influence how large transversal movements such as Occupy, which spread to squares and streets across continents, are studied (e.g. Szolucha 2017; Dhaliwal 2012; Butler 2015). Some have pointed to the intersectional character of space in resistance struggles beyond binary divisions (see Baydar 2015). However, the public/private divide continues to prevail, influencing which forms of movements and protests are prioritised in studies on how space is ‘differentiated’ or transformed through resistance. Studying a matter which has long been confined to the ‘private’, criminalised and silenced, namely reproductive rights, the violent effects of the dichotomy are made bare. The topic of abortion, freight with shame and taboo, has after a long and persistent struggle entered the so-called ‘public’ debate in Ireland, and has been given space in ‘the political sphere’. The struggle transcends constructed divides of the public and private and political and non-political spaces.

While the movement for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland² uses streets and squares for the annual March for Choice³ and various other manifestations, vigils and protests, the ‘everyday’ spaces of pubs, churches, schools and ‘homes’ are of equal importance to mobilise support and increase political involvement. Drawing from theory on the political and capitalist production of space causing the hierarchizing and ‘social emptiness’ of the urban (Lefebvre 1974; Soja 1996; Massey 2005 inter alia), the thesis explores how the movement uses and transforms ‘everyday’ spaces in the struggle.

This thesis builds on interviews with five organisations and three projects⁴ part of the movement in Ireland fighting for a repeal of the eighth amendment. Article

² Intermittently, the movement for reproductive rights and justice is referred to simply as ‘the movement’.

³ The sixth annual March for Choice was held in September 2017. It is a demonstration arranged by the organisation ARC, joined by everyone supporting the movement in Ireland to repeal the eighth amendment to the Constitution.

⁴ In the following text, I refer to all participants including projects as ‘organisations’.

40.3.3 of the eighth amendment has since 1983, given the foetus equal rights to life as the pregnant person, criminalising abortion and removing consent in maternal health care. On May 25th this year (2018), a referendum is held to vote on the eighth amendment. In mobilising for the referendum, the organisations for repeal employ a diversity of strategies, moving across spaces, to increase political involvement and votes. Interviewing the eight organisations, I sought to understand the forms of support which they depend on, how they adapt to barriers in space and in turn transform ‘everyday’ spaces into spaces of resistance.

Drawing from Judith Butler’s (2015:72) claim that political action is “supported action”, and that bodies are inherently vulnerable and dependent on one another and on space for support, I explore what this means in this movement. With the help of postmodernist and politically hopeful theorisations of space (Lefebvre 1974; Soja 1996 inter alia), I see how the space in which they operate, affect their possibilities for political action and resistance. I argue that the organisations’ creative and diverse strategies, using art, mobile workshops, everyday conversations and more, are adaptations to barriers but equally transform spaces into spaces of resistance. The initiative Everyday Stories⁵, interviewed for this thesis, can be seen as an example of these forms of adaptation to lacking and existing forms of bodily and infrastructural support. I argue that the following statement sheds light on this process:

When we started to hit walls in the exhibition, in that we couldn’t get it into places, we needed to rethink how we brought these stories everywhere. And that is where the smaller events came from. [...] It can pop up here in this café, it can pop up in a local pub. You can also have it in your living room, or you know in your youth sector, your parish hall, it can be anywhere. It doesn’t require anything but a mobile phone, to play the audio. (Everyday Stories, lines 75-83).

However, interviewing the organisations, there are also tensions regarding access to spaces. Regimes of power such as racism and patriarchal divisions in space, give bodies unequal access to ‘spaces of appearance’ and to appear as political subjects

⁵ An online initiative to share personal stories of the consequences of the eighth amendment, retrieved on March 27, 2018 from: <http://everydaystories.org>.

in struggle (Butler 2015). This in turn produces tensions between the organisations, which fight alongside for reproductive rights and justice. The group Migrant and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice (MERJ) formed in response to lacking ‘faces like their faces’ in the movement’s spaces for organisation and mobilisation. They expressed that,

...we couldn’t see faces as our faces, like talking, but maybe some few among the public, maybe they were telling things eh, and people who were talking they were always Irish. And almost always white Irish. [...] We cannot say only things for Irish people, because actually 17 per cent of Irish population are migrants. So, hello, we are here. (MERJ, lines 18-26).

Here, they can be seen as creating spaces to bring subjectivities previously invisible into the movement for repeal. In order to reach and involve this 17 per cent of the population more broadly, MERJ are invited to speak about the marginalisation and discrimination of migrants and ethnic minorities during Coalition meetings and workshops. The group also moves beyond the city centre of Dublin where most meetings are held to involve people with less access to these spaces. Being interested in exploring how certain constructs of political subjectivities and womanhood affect whose bodies and lives are made visible in the struggle, the thesis discusses the effects of the historical and geopolitical context. While a diversity of different voices strengthens the movements’ transversal struggle, regimes of power give rise to so-called “equality splits” in the movement (Liinason 2018).

In brief, this thesis builds on and contributes to postmodern and poststructuralist geographical and feminist theory on resistance and space. It further emanates from a feminist vision of “politics of engagement” (Mohanty 2003:122-123). In other words, it aims to contribute through a feminist scholarship of ‘politics of location’, engagement and transnational solidarity (*Ibid.*). Outlining the forms of support required for action, I explore how the movement both adapts to and transforms ‘everyday’ spaces in the mobilising for reproductive rights, and how difference in access to political space give rise to tensions. The two research questions I seek to answer are,

How do the organisations' access to support influence their transformation of 'everyday' spaces into spaces of resistance?

How do tensions arise in these spaces as the movement struggles for 'all' women's equal access to reproductive rights?

1.1. Outline

Section 2.1. provides a background on Ireland as a nation-state producing spatial inequalities in terms of ethnicity, 'race' and gender, and hence, influencing access to reproductive rights and 'the political' sphere. Section 2.2. sketches the development of the movement from the 1970s, through the 1983 referendum up until the referendum set for May 25th, 2018. Chapter 3, locates the thesis within previous literature on the production of social space, politics of space and social movements' use of space. Chapter 4, outlines the methods employed in collecting and analysing the material for the thesis. Chapter 5, includes the methodology and theoretical framework, and presents the central concepts of the thesis, including space and resistance. Chapter 6, presents both the material and analyses of the findings. Finally, chapter 7 concludes the findings and analysis, suggests further research and looks ahead at the struggle which awaits following the referendum.

2. Background

2.1. *The Republic of Ireland: A geopolitical and historical context*

Before moving on to the reproductive rights movement in Ireland, the geopolitical and historical context in which it has emerged and operates should be presented. Ruth Fletcher (2005:382) describes how a combination of Roman Catholicism, Irish nationalism and so-called “pro-life” politics positioned abortion “antithetical to Irishness”.

Ireland won sovereignty as the Irish Free State in 1922, following the War of Independence⁶. Irishness was constructed in response to British colonial rule, and was to signify “purity, chastity and virtue” (Fischer 2016:822). Womanhood was thus constructed as motherhood and sexual purity (Fischer 2016). Recent scholars have shown the significance of ‘race’ to Ireland and Irish identity (McVeigh 1992; Garner 2009). Ronit Lentin (2001, paragraph 2.6.) and Eithne Luibhéid (2004:343) traces ‘rigid gender roles’ and ethnicisation of Irish national identity, as White and settled, to the struggle for independence.

Pregnant women of colour, Traveller women and refugee women have been vulnerable to attacks and discrimination in Ireland (Fletcher 2005; Lentin 2001). During the 1990s *jus soli* debate⁷, minority women’s bodies became a space onto which Ireland asserted its sovereignty, demarcating borders of legible and illegible citizens. Following independence, citizenship was based on the *jus soli* principle, granted to anyone born in Ireland and its islands, including Northern Ireland. Pregnant minority women increasingly suffered violent racist attacks from politicians, in the media and on the street (see Luibhéid 2004 and García-del Moral and Korteweg 2012; Garner 2007). The Progressive Democrats’ Party President Michael McDowell was especially criticised for his claim that maternity health

⁶ The Republic of Ireland was formed in 1948.

⁷ In the 1990s, the *jus soli* debate called the *jus soli* citizenship principle into question. In the 2004 citizenship referendum, the *jus soli* policy was removed, and Irish-born children born to immigrant parents were no longer granted citizenship automatically. The removal of the *jus soli* citizenship was one among a series of changes to non-citizen migrant “domiciliary entitlements” (Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007:453). It increased the gap between citizens of EU member states enjoying “reciprocal rights”, and “other immigrants” coming from for example Africa (*ibid.*).

services were being exploited by heavily pregnant non-nationals ‘flooding into the country’ (Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007:447; Lentin 2013). The women who were attacked for being ‘baby tourists’ were on the contrary “dispersed asylum-seekers coming up from rural areas to Dublin maternity hospitals” (Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007:447).

Women of colour continue to be discriminated within Irish maternal health care and are over-represented in maternal deaths (Sparking Change with Dill, 2018). Miss O and Savita Halappanavar are two famous cases which have shown that Ireland not only controls reproduction, but also discriminates against some mothers based on ‘race’ (see Luibhéid 2004; Lentin 2013; Garner 2007; Smyth 1998). While Miss O was deported despite seeking refuge in Ireland to safely deliver her Baby O, Savita Halappanavar died from sepsis after being denied abortion despite the critical development of her pregnancy.

Women living in Direct Provision in Ireland suffer especially. The system of Direct Provision is a dispersal program, which was introduced in 2000 to place asylum-seekers in accommodation across Ireland. Detention centres like Direct Provision play a central role in nation-states’ “assertions of nationality and belonging” (Tyler 2013:71-72). Fanning et al (2001) show how asylum-seekers and their children suffer severely from social exclusion, describing their lives in Ireland as living ‘beyond the pale’ (Fanning et al 2001:4). Mothers in Direct Provision are deprived of nutritious food and malnutrition is reported acutely among expectant mothers and their babies (Fanning et al 2001). They equally lack basic amenities such as “baby formula, nappies, clothes and non-prescription medicines” (Fanning et al 2001:4). Kennedy and Murphy-Lawless (2003:45) also report what they call “absolutely unacceptable” conditions with overcrowding, women lacking privacy and basic amenities for themselves and their children. To access maternal health care such as antenatal care was reported difficult due to difficulty and cost of travelling, lacking childcare, no one to accompany, poor health and language difficulties (Kennedy and Murphy-Lawless 2003:46).

Hence, ethnic minority and migrant women’s motherhood can be considered less ‘desired’ in the context of Ireland (Lentin 2013). The common discourse of women’s ‘right to choose’ within reproductive rights struggles needs to be problematized to account for how women of colour’s reproduction often are “mediated by a coercive, racist state” (Mohanty 2003:54). Vital to this is an

understanding of the broader political-historical context in which the movement is operating to understand differences in subjects' vulnerability and exposure to discrimination, ill-health and at worst death. It is also relevant to understand how regimes of power enable and disable political involvement and access to reproductive rights and justice in Ireland.

2.2. *From the Women's movement to "Together for Yes"*

The abortion ban is a remnant of the 1861 British colonial law The Offences Against the Person Act, criminalising women who "procure a miscarriage" and the person assisting in carrying out this offence. While Great Britain legalised abortion in 1967, contraception and abortion in Ireland remained inaccessible (García-del-Moral and Korteweg 2012:415-416).

Ailbhe Smyth (1988) identifies a number of events as catalysts to the Women's Movement and second wave feminism in the Republic of Ireland, including the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., the emergence of the Women's Movement around the world as well as the Civil Rights Movement in the North of Ireland. The Women's Movement in Ireland can be traced back to five women forming The Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) early in 1970 and the release of the at the time radical manifesto *Chains or Change? The Civil Wrongs of Irish Women* (Smyth 1988:334). Through the 1970's the movement went through phases of euphoria, direct actions with 'maximum impact', internal conflicts such as over women's right to contraception, followed by loss of strength and renewal and radicalisation during mid-1970's (Smyth 1988). A new generation of mostly younger feminists, largely coming from revolutionary and radical left groups formed the Irishwomen United (IU) (*ibid.*). Their 'charter' was more radical than the IWLM manifesto and contraception was made a central issue. However, abortion continued to be excluded due to differences within the movement (*ibid.*). The diversification and consolidation of the movement between 1977 and 1983, was met with "fundamentalist repression and the economic recession of the mid-1980s" (Smyth 1988:340). In 1983, the Republic of Ireland enforced the criminalisation of abortion in the eighth amendment to the Constitution. Article 40.3.3, which was inserted into the Constitution reads,

The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.

In practice, this article meant a removal of the pregnant person's "right to consent for any procedure during labour and birth where that is deemed to endanger the life of the foetus" (Parents for Choice 2015)⁸. Ailbhe Smyth (1988:341) presents only a fraction of the "unprecedented social, psychic, and moral battering", suffering and death of pregnant and birthing women that followed. There are known cases of women dying, being denied cancer treatment during pregnancy, such as Sheila Hodggers and her baby who died in 1983 (The Irish Times 2003). In 1992, following the case of Miss X, traveling outside of the state for abortion and the right to distribute information about abortion services abroad were legalised in the 13th and 14th amendments. Miss X was a girl of 14 who became pregnant following rape. She was denied abortion and stopped at the border from traveling to access abortion services abroad. This sparked large debates and her court case ruled in favour of the right to information and to travel. However, traveling outside of Ireland requires both the funds and the ability to travel. It hence excludes women lacking the financial means, the documents needed as an asylum-seeker, or who fear deportation. Under the 2013 Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act, abortion is legal when there is a substantial risk to the life of the pregnant woman, including by suicide⁹. However, this needs to be confirmed by three specialist doctors who "must jointly agree and certify that the termination of pregnancy is the only treatment that will save the mother's life" (Bardon, The Irish Times).

When I visited Dublin in 2014, interviewing six organisations fighting to repeal the eighth amendment, they expressed hope for the expanding support for and involvement in the movement (Bodelsson 2015). More people were marching or openly supporting the annual March for Choice (*ibid.*). Other political movements have also contributed to installing hope and increasing political activism, especially

⁸ See also AIMS Ireland's survey: "What matters to you?" 2014 Report on Consent in the Irish Maternity System. Retrieved on March 27th, 2018 from: <http://aimsireland.ie/what-matters-to-you-survey-2015/>.

⁹ See also Enright, M. et al. 2015. "Abortion Law Reform in Ireland: A Model for Change", *Feminists @ Law*, Retrieved on May 14, 2018 from <http://journals.kent.ac.uk/kent/index.php/feministsatlaw/article/view/173/631>.

among youth. These include the 2008 and 2009 anti-austerity mobilisations where 100.000 people protested against proposed withdrawal of medical cards and return of university fees among other cuts. It was reported as the largest student mobilisations “for a generation” (Wrenn 2016). It was followed by the Occupy-movement spreading across Ireland in 2011 and 2012. The legalisation of same sex marriage in 2015 and the momentary end to the water charges in 2017 (Szolucha 2017) further installed hope in the power of public protest and collective assemblies to build political change in Ireland. The revealed scandals of the Magdalen asylums and “Mother and Baby Homes” run by the Catholic church sparked outrage at the Catholic church and the Irish State’s treatment of women (Carbery 2013). In these ‘homes’, unmarried mothers were incarcerated and forced to give up their children and women could for reasons such as prostitution be referred to confinement (Fischer 2016). These scandals have contributed to a weakened position of the Catholic church in Ireland (Stack 2017).

However, the consequences of the amendment had not been brought in to the public, had it not been for the pro-choice groups organising marches, vigils and rallies. In 2012, the feminist campaigner and academic Ailbhe Smyth and researcher Sinéad Kennedy co-founded The Coalition to repeal the eighth amendment. They did so to facilitate coordination and collaboration between the many groups mobilising for a removal of the eighth amendment. Today, the number of organisations part of the Coalition are over a hundred and reflect a wide diversity in terms of geographical location and perspectives.

The conversation around abortion in Ireland dramatically changed in 2015, stated the Irish journalist Una Mullally (The Irish Times Women’s Podcast, Ep. 53). That year, several famous and not famous women went public with their experiences of having to leave Ireland to seek abortion services. One of them was the famous Irish author and comedian Róisín Ingle who released a collection of essays, in which she openly shared her experience of traveling for abortion¹⁰. Since then, several storytelling projects like the art installation ‘Not at Home’ have followed (Bodelsson 2017).

¹⁰ See Public Displays of Emotion by Róisín Ingle (2015).

In 2016, the Citizens' Assembly was formed and held its first of five meetings in November 2016 to consider the Eighth Amendment. Their recommendations were,

To remove Article 40.3.3 from the Constitution, and for the avoidance of doubt, to replace it with a provision in the Constitution, which would make it clear that termination of pregnancy, any rights of the unborn, and any rights of the pregnant woman are matters for the Oireachtas. (Citizen's Assembly 2017).

The recommendations for a new legislation were handed over to the Joint Oireachtas (The Parliament) Committee on the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. In December 2017, they released its report on the effects of the abortion ban, equally suggesting a repeal of the eighth amendment and a legalisation of 'abortion on request' up to 12 weeks. In January 2018, the Taoiseach (Prime minister) Leo Varadkar announced that a referendum would be held and gave his support to repeal¹¹ (The Irish Times 2018). The referendum will take place on May 25th, 2018.

The Coalition together with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) and Abortion Rights Campaign (ARC) launched the national civil society campaign "Together for a Yes" in mid-March 2018. The transition from the Coalition to the Campaign is a temporary reorganisation in order to repeal the eighth amendment. The changes in the organising structure from the coalition to the campaign has effects on the organisation of the movement. It is thus of relevance when discussing different access to organising spaces and supported action in the movement for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland.

¹¹ Leo Varadkar called for a change concerning the eighth amendment in the Dail (parliament) in 2014 as a Minister of Health.

3. Previous research: For a hopeful politics of space

The conceptualisation of space presented in this thesis draws from central postmodern and postcolonial theorists within geography, philosophy and feminist theory. The late 20th century spatial turn was marked by a postmodern critique and important shift in the understanding and centrality of space within social sciences and humanities (see Foucault 1986:22). The French philosopher and Marxist Henri Lefebvre was one of the central figures of the spatial turn. He rejects ‘representations’ of space, such as maps, myths and stories as the epistemological basis for studying ‘life’. The so-called ‘representationalism’ was established during Western colonialization and was further developed within Western positivist natural sciences, writes the British geographer Doreen Massey (2005). Lefebvre (1974:230) argues for studying the complex interrelations and sociality producing space. In line with his ideas, Doreen Massey argues for the multiplicity, relationality and ‘liveliness’ of space (Massey 2005:13).

Postmodern thinkers bring a political and discursive understanding of the production of space (see e.g. Lefebvre 1974; Soja 1989). They introduce a more complex, lively and hopeful epistemology of space as always ‘in process’, multiple and ‘simultaneous’ (Massey 2005:24). They seek to bring possibilities for change to space, developing ideas of how inequalities of space can be resisted and subverted through social action. By embracing this multiplicity, relationality and transformative potential of space, “a more challenging political landscape” is released (Massey 2005:13). Massey (2005:11) further argues that this epistemological openness of space serves as a premise for “a politics which can make a difference”. Postcolonial scholars provide important critique against Western modernist understandings of space and progression. For example, Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1997) argues for an understanding of “connected histories” and Arjun Appadurai (1988b) for the “fragile threads” which have produced regions and nations. Prevailing ideas of space as bounded and coherent, divided into ‘societies’ and ‘nations’ are in today’s ‘globalised’ world, nothing but a nostalgic idea and a colonial construct (Massey 2005:65).

Feminist geographers have shown how spaces are produced by and for men. In the West, space is ideologically divided into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ space,

where the first include the public and the political sphere, whereas the feminine is reduced to the private and domestic (e.g. Rose 1993; Bondi; 1998; Pain 1991; Davidson 2000). Rachel Pain (1991) argues that to spatially restrict movements, behaviours and activities of ‘subordinate groups’ (based on class, race, age, sex inter alia) is central to retaining control of space, for example through the reproduction of fear and threats of violence (Pain 1991:422-423). This distinction between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ has been critiqued and made more complex (see Bondi 1998). Nevertheless, constructed and politically produced and reproduced divisions of space affect how different people can access space. In 20th century Ireland, women were “metaphorically and corporeally” confined to the home, and unmarried mothers and other ‘sexually deviant’ women to institutions such as the Magdalen asylums (Fischer 2016:836). As women continue to be symbolically and structurally confined to care work and the space of the home, women’s access to ‘spaces of appearance’ remain delimited (Butler 2015).

Puneet Dhaliwal (2012) builds on Lefebvre’s hopeful ‘politics of space’, showing how the Indignados movement in Spain transformed public squares through occupation and establishing a participatory people’s General Assembly in Placa Catalunya in Barcelona (Dhaliwal 2012:256). Lefebvre argues that if social space is to be transformed, so must social relations (Lefebvre 1974 referenced in Dhaliwal 2012:262-263). Dhaliwal (2012) argues that both space and social relations were transformed by the Indignados, in a contestation of the hegemonic social order of space, which produced Lefebvre’s ‘differentiated’ space (Dhaliwal 2012:256). In the Irish context, Anna Szolucha (2017) studied how the Occupy-movement had indirect impacts on subsequent movements. She found that “Occupy acted as a space for political development”, as activists carried on lessons from the movement into new campaigns (Szolucha 2017:273). The sociologist Judith Taylor (1998:686) studying the pro-choice movement in Ireland, found that the movement employed creative and non-conforming modes of protest. They did so in response to ‘dodging’ what she labels ‘friendly fire’, i.e. men’s and workers’ unions dominance in the movement. Introducing forms of protest based in “women’s personal experiences with unwanted pregnancy and law evasion” prevented these ‘friendly fires’ (Taylor 1998:685). Her example of a manifestation where women and children travel across to England by boat also illustrates how central space is to which political subjects take central stage in the struggle.

The movement for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland use space differently from the Occupy-movement, as their spaces of resistance transcend the public/private divide. Barriers and lacking support force the movement to employ strategies which transform a variety of spaces beyond the most commonly researched resistance in ‘public’ space. Discussing how ‘shared vulnerabilities’ are mobilised and how existing and lack forms of support affect strategies and lead to the transformation of everyday spaces, this thesis contributes to literature on politics of space and the social production of space and resistance. It further builds on literature which shows transcendence of the public/private divide to give equal importance to ‘everyday’ spaces of struggle. Discussing how political action depends on human and non-human support (Butler 2013; 2015), the thesis seeks to shed light on how bodies inherent vulnerability and interdependency influence how spaces are transformed in political action.

4. Method

4.1. *A qualitative study*

The study is primarily based on qualitative data collected through eight semi-structured interviews with organisers and activists within the movement. Analysing the campaign, I also refer to available information on the campaign website “Together for Yes”¹². The participants are tied to or represent the organisations briefly presented below¹³.

Everyday stories (ES): An online project to share personal stories of the consequences of the eighth amendment.

The Hunreal Issues (HI): An online project to make feminism more accessible to young people.

London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign (L-I ARC): A London-based organisation mobilising the Irish diaspora and other supporters of the Irish movement.

Migrants and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice (MERJ): Representing minority women and persons in Ireland who face discrimination, racism and xenophobia in Irish society, maternal health and under the abortion ban.

Midwives for Choice (MfC): An organisation representing midwives in Ireland speaking about the consequences of the eighth amendment throughout pregnancy.

Parents for Choice (PfC): Representing parents in the movement and primarily mobilising online.

Rosa: A socialist feminist organisation fighting for reproductive rights and against austerity in Ireland.

Sew for Repeal (SfR): An arts, crafts and sewing project started in Dublin to make pro repeal-clothing and badges.

The interviews lasted between 22 minutes to an hour and followed an interview guide, which were partly adapted to fit the work and profile of the group or organisation or the participant’s role. However, all questions related to three central

¹² See togetherforyes.ie, retrieved on May 14, 2018.

¹³ These are my descriptions based on the interviews with the participants.

themes; (1) *organisation's strategies*, (2) *spaces of resistance* and (3) *belonging and representation*¹⁴. As enabled by the semi-structured interview, there is nevertheless room for the participants to guide the conversation, based on their interests and knowledge.

I approached a diverse set of organisations from the list of members on the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment's website¹⁵ about two months before my visit. I approached organisations which I had interviewed for my undergraduate thesis in 2014 (Bodelsson 2015), and organisations which have formed since then. I wished to speak to representatives reflecting the diversity of organisations currently active in the movement. As my visit coincided with the Irish government announcing a referendum to be held in May, organisers were overloaded with media requests and were busy with increasing their mobilising efforts. Despite the general interest among these organisations to reach out as well as to help students with research on the topic, the work load of juggling a paid job, political activism and in many cases family and care work meant a constant lack of time. The choice of organisations is thus a result of seeking a diverse representation of the movement as well as inevitable 'availability sampling'.

4.2. *Is there 'a field' in fieldwork?*

Conducting fieldwork, however briefly during one week in Dublin, I wish to reflect upon the meaning of 'the field'. Within anthropology, 'proper' fieldwork has meant to, "travel away, preferably to a distant locale where the ethnographer will immerse him/herself in personal face-to-face relationships with a variety of natives over an extended period of time" (Amit 2000:2). However, there has been a significant shift away from this idea of the 'locality' as a site for cultural production with distinct boundaries (Amit 2000:13). Amit (2000) therefore argues that this methodological shift from the 'bounded' to several sites and activities, calls the "extended presence in one locale" into question (Amit 2000:13). For me, following the news and social media accounts of the organisations, emailing with friends that I have got to know

¹⁴ See Appendix B for Interview Guide.

¹⁵ See www.repealeight.ie, retrieved on May 14, 2018.

in Ireland, representatives and activists of the organisations, has been a vital part of doing fieldwork. Especially since the ‘field’ of the movement cannot be reduced to Dublin, but extends across regional and national borders. Hence, fieldwork cannot be reduced to a ‘geographical area’, but involves being simultaneously connected to a number of places, stretching across cities, towns, countries, and social media feeds (see Capuco 2000). This, if anything, contrasts with the idea of ethnography being “the circumstantial encounter of the voluntarily displaced anthropologist and the involuntarily localized “other”” (Appadurai 1988a:16).

Nevertheless, being physically present in the field has many benefits. Conducting face-to-face interviews meant the interview overflowed into more informal and spontaneous conversation, starkly contrasting with interviews conducted over conference calls. This is the “‘messy’, qualitative experience” of fieldwork, occurring as the personal and professional roles overlap (Marcus and Fischer 1986:22 cited in Amit 2000:7). For example, unexpected emotional reactions to topics discussed occurred or were noticed more clearly face-to-face than over conference calls. Some reactions were in response to the space of the interview such as lowering the voice or expressing discomfort about speaking about certain topics publicly. Speaking about the use of abortion pills¹⁶ in Ireland involved caution from the participant, since it is penalised with 14 years under the current abortion law. Moreover, staying with friends outside of Dublin meant having conversations about the topic over dinners and coffee. Both what was said and kept unsaid contributed to my understanding of the continued sensitivity, yet changing attitudes and increased openness towards talking about abortion in Ireland. One woman in her 60s shared her own experience of ‘being lucky’ living abroad when she needed an abortion. Another shared her experiences of the debate in the 1980s and was clearly uncertain about her own position on abortion. The days spent in their house was a telling example of the ‘informal conversations’, which most organisations encourage people to have around dinner tables or over a cup of tea with family, relatives, neighbours and friends.

¹⁶ The pills mifepristone and misoprostol are used for the common non-surgical medication abortion up to 10 weeks.

4.3. *Reflexivity, the 'micropolitics' of interviewing and delimitations*

I wish to reflect upon the 'micropolitics' of the interview situation, the relations of subordination and domination, and their effects on knowledge production (Bhavnani 1993:98). Intersectionality, which was introduced by Kimberly Crenshaw in 1994, forms a basis for understanding these power relations through the intersecting axes of race, gender, class and more, shaping subjects' 'lived experiences'. While some scholars have shown how *difference* in terms of class can influence the encounter and interaction in the interview situation (see Skeggs et al 2008), Lundström (2010) calls for a deepened understanding of how *sameness* in the researcher-participant relation can work to reproduce power asymmetries. Lundström (2010) found herself performing *sameness* by reproducing a particular and 'desired' white and middle-class femininity. Conducting interviews with persons who are politically active in the movement, means solely interviewing persons who have access to 'the political' sphere. This may inevitably affect research, knowledge production and the reproduction of a hegemonic political subjectivity constituted by whiteness, *mostly* 'Irishness', and a middle-class identity. Considering that I 'share privileges' with the participants, I thus need to be cautious not to reproduce privileged subjectivities, while silencing the ones not represented in the study (Lundström 2010:84).

Conducting fieldwork in central Dublin and interviewing eight out of approximately a hundred organisations affect the representability of my study. Although referring to 'the movement' as a whole, I acknowledge that this study only reflects a small portion of the organisations active across geographical locations and with different knowledge and perspectives. While the thesis risks concealing some voices based on 'availability sampling' and reproducing hegemonic constructions of political subjectivities by not reflecting the full diversity of the struggle, bringing out some of the voices remains important. I nonetheless wish to acknowledge the numerous active organisations, both part of the Coalition and not, which represent important voices in the movement. I need to consider which knowledge I (re)produce through the participants' accounts and my reading of the material and what is possibly lacking from the stories told (Lundström 2010:75). The issues brought up by the organisations nevertheless reflect some of the diversity in the movement's priorities and perspectives.

4.4. *Thematic and diffractive analysis*

Following transcribing and multiple re-readings of the material, I used coding to find themes present in the material (O'Reilly 2009:35). Seeking to find an analytic method that allows for analysing both text and accounts of intra-action between space and bodies in the struggle for reproductive rights and justice, I stumbled upon two texts by Hillevi Lenz Taguchi (2012) and Lisa A. Mazzei (2014). Their approaches draw from Karen Barad's (2007) concept of diffraction. Diffraction is an analytical concept where something new is created in an obstruction or a joining of differences – think of an ocean wave as it diffracts in collusion with another surface (Barad 2007:74 cited in Mazzei 2014:742 and Taguchi 2012:268). Both Taguchi's (2012) and Mazzei's (2014) methods are based in an understanding of discourse and matter as mutually constituted. This approach goes in line with my methodological approach and hence, provide a way of making sense of the interviews. It gave me a possibility to consider the agency and the intra-action of objects, space and bodies in how the organisations transform spaces into spaces of resistance. While Taguchi (2012:267) seeks to *become-with* the interview and consider “the agency of the material in the production of knowledge”, Mazzei (2014:743) reads the data together *with* theoretical concepts to allow for the two to “make themselves intelligible to one another”. While I find Taguchi (2012) useful in giving agency to the production of space mentioned in the interview, such as exhibitions or various informal conversations in everyday spaces, Mazzei (2014) provides the tools for using the theoretical framework on space and supported action to analyse the interviews. Central to a diffractive reading is to ask questions to the material. I thus asked the following questions,

1. What kinds of spaces of resistance do I find and who is present or reached here?
2. How and where do the spaces of resistance form as adaptations to existing/lacking human and non-human support?
3. How does unequal support (human and non-human) give rise to equality splits in the movement?

I identified everyday spaces for organising and resistance and paid attention to where (e.g. pub, hotel lobby), how (exhibition, sewing, having coffee and talking),

by and for whom the spaces were constructed (who co-constructs the space). I identified dependency and support, and the lack of the same, and how organisations have adapted their spaces to lacking and/or existing support. The final question relates to the tensions produced by the context in which the movement operates and how it affects the relations between organisations, giving rise to Liinason's (2018) concept of "equality splits". To exemplify how I employ this method, The Hunreal Issues spoke about the so-called "Repeal-jumpers" (jumpers with the word "Repeal") and a mural with the word "Repeal" saying,

I think the repeal-jumpers and our mural and all those kinds of things created a vision, not a vision, an image or whatever, it created stuff that made us, that made it so you could state your thoughts without having to be like nah, let's not have the conversation, so it made it a lot easier to lay your thoughts on the table [...] and I think everyone then who is doing that they're wearing it to their family events and then that is when the conversation starts. (The Hunreal Issues, lines 214-220).

Here, the participant does not mention space explicitly, yet speaks of how the mural and the jumpers enabled to 'lay your thoughts on the table' for example during family events. Hence, spaces and objects (the mural and the jumpers with the word "Repeal") construct spaces for conversation and resist the silence and shame which surround the subject of abortion and reproductive rights in Ireland. A diffractive reading allows for seeing these intra-actions of space and bodies, which co-construct spaces of resistance to enable conversations of resistance. This form of reading the material allows for moving away from understanding body, matter or space as distinct and separate, but rather as constituted in "processes of entanglements and interdependences" (Alaimo 2010 and Barad 2007 referenced in Taguchi 2012:271). Hence, to think 'diffractively' allows for thinking about processes of mutual becoming of ideas and materialities (Barad 2007:74 cited in Mazzei 2014:271).

4.5. *Ethical considerations*

I keep Nina Lykke's (2010:159) words in mind throughout the research process, that "[s]cientific research produces realities and worlds, and precisely because research, for good and for bad, is never without real effects, the researcher cannot allow herself or himself to avoid taking moral co-responsibility for the consequences". They act as a reminder of my ethical responsibility in conducting interviews with activists and organisers who devote their time and energy and emotionally invest in a cause for social justice and for people's right to life and to thriving regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, 'race' and physical abilities. The words are a reminder as I write about the movement and the collaboration between organisations fighting for the same cause, while bringing differing views and perspectives to the struggle.

Involving and interviewing participants, I use the guidelines of Good Research Practice 2017, published by the Swedish Research Council. Prior to each interview, I handed over a presentation of the research and the terms and guarantees of participation¹⁷. While these guarantees included anonymization of the participant, a central ethical consideration has been regarding the use of the organisations' names. I have considered whether it is ethically justifiable to disclose the names and whether I am somehow putting them at risk doing so. I came to the conclusion that the organisations' perspectives and focus is of central importance to the analysis. If I would have chosen an anonymization, yet described each organisation's perspective or political affiliation, they would no longer be anonymous in the context they are operating. I wish to also stress that none of the participants raised this as an issue or worry. Hence, the organisations' names are used in the essay. However, no possibly sensitive information is disclosed such as specific locations for meetings that could put them in a vulnerable position. Where these are mentioned in the interviews, they have been erased in the transcripts.

Finally, I strive to do the organisations' commitment justice by staying reflexive of my own positionality as a student researcher spending only a limited time in Ireland, and within intersecting regimes of power. Conducting research on a political and social justice movement presupposes a commitment to the struggle

¹⁷ See Appendix A for project presentation.

and cause. Nevertheless, being positioned as a researcher requires being in simultaneous dialogue with and keeping a critical theoretical and methodological viewpoint towards the data.

5. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

In the first part of this chapter (5.1.), I outline how space can be understood as politically produced, drawing from Henri Lefebvre (1974; 2009a; 2009b) and relate it to the concepts of support, vulnerability and relationality (Butler 2015) in section 5.2. In section 5.3., I present how resistance relates to space and how resisting bodies' 'supported action' can work to transform spaces. In the final section, 5.4., I return to the concepts of vulnerability and support to problematize how the unequal distribution of vulnerability and access to support can affect who remains most visible, and is thus viewed as legitimate political subjectivities.

5.1. *Space as political and strategic*

Having positioned this thesis within literature on space and politics of space, I now elaborate on Lefebvre's understanding of space as produced, "political and strategic" (2009a [1970]:170). In Lefebvre's writings, the state is "the guiding hand", which establishes the economic, social and political order of space (Lefebvre 2009b:228). This is however too simplistic and thus problematized by other scholars discussed within the frame of this thesis. The production of capitalist space leads to a fracturing, hierarchizing and homogenisation of qualitative space (Lefebvre 2009b). Within capitalist spaces, exchange, meaning buying and selling, is prioritised (Lefebvre 2009b:233-234). This means that both space and objects in/of space must be interchangeable and exchangeable (*ibid.*). This further leads to a hierarchical structuring of people across space according to social class, from 'centers of domination' to the peripheries (Lefebvre 2009b:243-244). The market actively exacerbates vulnerability for particularly disadvantaged groups, based on class, 'race' and ethnicity (Saatcioglu and Corus 2016:233). However, these spatial and economic social relations and the political negotiations produced in space are obscured by an unpolitical epistemology (Jones and Popke 2010:116). The neoliberal discourse of freedom and self-realization have in particular obscured the

inequality, poverty and ‘social disenfranchisement’ of the city (Jones and Popke 2010:116).

Although modernist epistemologies of space have obscured the political production of space (Lefebvre 1974:73), groups experience and resist the sexist, racist or ableist regimes of power materialised in space. Lefebvre makes a distinction between ‘absolute’ and ‘abstract’ space, although neither can be understood as fixed or existing ‘a priori’. While ‘absolute’ space refers to the ‘lived’ space affecting the body “by threats, by sanctions, by a continual putting-to-the-test of the emotions”, ‘abstract’ space is where politics is located (Lefebvre 1974:235-236). ‘Abstract’ space is the ‘space of power’ where power is symbolically present through practices, symbols, buildings and social relationships (Lefebvre 1974:245). It is both where power is represented and reproduced, and where the possibilities for change through resistance lie.

According to Lefebvre (2009b:234), space is produced as phallic with “arrogant” towers. The ideology of ‘public’ space as ‘masculine’ was established in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the West, constructing it as a space of “rationality, individuality [and] self-control” (Rose 1993:35). These forms of control over and construction of space continue to affect movements’ possibilities for mobilising resistance. I now move on to elaborate on ‘social space’, and how it is produced by actions and operations of objects and subjects, “in their coexistence and simultaneity” (Lefebvre 1974:73). I link the understanding of relations-between the non-human and human in the production of space to Judith Butler’s (2015) idea of “supported action”. This post-humanist perspective to space gives agency to the non-human including “technology, things, infrastructure”, in the production of the urban ‘social’ (Amin 2008:8). The human and the non-human and their intra-action matter to the movement’s use and transformation of space.

5.2. *Supported and unsupported action*

...my body does not act alone when it acts politically. (Butler 2015:77)

Bodies and space are equally dependent on one another. Judith Butler (2015) discusses how bodies assembling in space simultaneously depend on and call for

infrastructural needs and conditions for human action. In other words, what you fight for is what is required for the fight itself. She writes that to appear in the public as a subject of resistance cannot be “ever fully separable from questions of infrastructure and architecture” (*ibid.*:127). For example, the pavement and the street are requirements for and central to human and political action (*ibid.*:128). Hence, any action is always ‘supported action’. In order for subjects to revolt and produce what Lefebvre calls ‘counter-spaces’ (Lefebvre 2009b:234), they are dependent on other human and non-human bodies for support (Butler 2015).

Further, bodies’ relationality and dependency ontologically removes the distinct demarcation between bodies (*ibid.*:129-130). Bodies are dependent from the moment they enter into life, relying on infrastructural, human and technical conditions of support (*ibid.*:131). This is why it is ontologically impossible not to be vulnerable to spatial, human and non-human support (*ibid.*:130). However, the vulnerability is not the same for everyone, but differently distributed across bodies under different regimes of power. People are unequally targeted or exposed to violence, poverty or other threats, which is why Butler also uses the term exposure (*ibid.*:139-140). Vulnerability should not be understood deterministically, as a ‘gender-defining attribute’, but in relation to the regimes of power in a specific context (*ibid.*:142-143). A common effect of such an understanding of vulnerability has been to give “the state or other paternal powers to provide that protection” (*ibid.*:140-141). Hence, the state is also given the “obligation to facilitate the achievement of feminist goals” (*ibid.*)

Bodies’ unequal exposure means they have unequal access to mobilise visibly. Because spaces are never neutral but produced and reproduced, space actively dominates and subordinates all bodies, yet excludes and exposes them unequally. For example, the state is embodied in space through the law and police (-violence). It can threaten political action and assemblies in public spaces (Butler 2013; Baydar 2015). The ‘radical exposure’ of some bodies, to violence and no protection, in no way deprives them of the ‘political’ or of agency (Butler 2015:79). Instead, political agency emerging in spaces or domains outside of “the sphere of appearance” need to be accounted for (Butler 2015:78). It is necessary to break with any understanding of some acts as political, and some as unpolitical, or the idea of bodies being inside or outside of ‘the political’. Mia Liinason (2018:48) argues for including “all spheres of society where relations of rule are enacted or resisted” to

account for the less visible or obvious forms of resistance. This is in line with James C. Scott's (1989) theorisation of 'everyday resistance' which he argues has been overseen in favour of organised political action. His understanding of 'everyday resistance' interestingly takes into account resistance performed under threat and exposure, which is often "intended to be ambiguous, to have a double meaning" to prevent direct open retaliation (Scott 1989:55).

Moreover, to view political agency as a shared vulnerability opens up for theorising 'concerted resistance' more broadly (Butler 2015:139). 'Concerted resistance' is the coming together of bodies to pose resistance. It is not limited to visible forms of protest, but can be enacted through forms of solidarity. Resistance is hence the mobilising of the 'social body's' shared vulnerability, offering a broad and inclusive definition (Butler 2015). Although Butler's (2015) examples of 'concerted resistance' centres on visible forms of protest, taking place in what is understood as 'the public', her understanding moves beyond this. Forms of solidarity can take place online or with/between subjects who are confined to a space such as a prison, being excluded from public space (Butler 2015:135). During the Gezi protests in Turkey, forms of solidarity and support occurred across the constructed spatial divide of private and public (Baydar 2015:14). Residents in the urban neighbourhood provided protesters on the street with food and medical care and solidarity protest was enacted through 'flickering lights' and the pounding of pots and pans from apartments (*ibid.*).

This is equally why I prefer to speak of the 'everyday' spaces rather than the so-called 'public spaces', which call to mind squares and streets. 'Everyday' spaces, such as the body, "kitchens and bedrooms – and streets and workplaces and neighbourhoods – is the geography of many women's spatiality, and of feminism too" writes Gillian Rose (1993:142). Speaking of the 'everyday' challenges the public/private divide. The 'everyday' has also been important within feminist theory building, as a space of oppression, fear and threats alongside agency and resistance (and much more).

Regimes of power thus enable or disable 'public' or visible forms of resistance. As earlier mentioned, Lefebvre makes a distinction between 'abstract' and 'absolute' space. In 'abstract' space, spatial processes, such as economic, political and social inequality, are obscured, producing an *apolitical* epistemology of space. For example, capitalism produces a fractured space of the city when the building of

highways and airports are prioritised by the state (Lefebvre 2009b:238), producing a space where “the body no longer has a presence” (Lefebvre 2009b:234). Harvey (2000) agrees that the commercialisation of city spaces, “[t]he multiple degenerate utopias that now surround us – the shopping malls and the ‘bourgeois’ commercialized utopias [...]” actively produce political indifference (Harvey 2000:168). Social and urban life need spaces of ‘centrality’, outside of the ‘commercial’, and any dislocation of central social spaces threatens the ‘multifunctionality’ of the city (Lefebvre 2009a [1970]:176).

However, in uncovering the violation of space, individuals can resist and perform an “emancipatory spatial politics” (Jones and Popke 2010:121). In other words, concerted and supported resistance can work to uncover how space is politically produced and thereby open up for challenging the political indifference produced through capitalist fragmentation of space. Considering Butler’s (2015) claim that inequality in distribution of bodies’ exposure and access to support restrict some bodies’ access to ‘spaces of appearance’, we need to understand the forms and distribution of support needed for political action. While Butler’s (2015) ideas of differences in vulnerability and its effects on movements are presented and discussed in section 5.4., the next section explores spaces of resistance.

5.3. *Spaces of resistance as radical positioning on the margin*

Thirdspace is a conceptualisation of lived social space as a space of resistance. Edward Soja (1996) has developed Thirdspace, which builds on Henri Lefebvre’s (1974) conceptualisation of space. However, Soja (1996) also draws extensively from postmodern, poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial scholars. Thirdspace, according to Soja (1996) is the third epistemological position on space following Firstspace and Secondspace. First- and Secondspace, very simplistically put, reflect modernist understandings of space. A modernist epistemology of space centres on vision and what is seen is accepted as ‘reality’ (Jones and Popke 2010:119). ‘Reality’ thus remains fixed and unchanging (*ibid.*). However, Thirdspace which builds on Lefebvre’s ideas of ‘lived’ social space, is a space where history, sociality and spatiality are intertwined. Lefebvre (1974) understands social space as a triad of ‘perceived’ space which is the “practice” and materiality of space, ‘conceived’

space which is the socially constructed discourses of space and finally, ‘lived’ space, which encompasses both the ‘conceived’ and ‘perceived’ (Martin and Miller 2003:146). In ‘lived’ social space, there is possibility for producing ‘counterspaces’ “where alternative orders of material and symbolic space are imagined and struggled over” (*ibid.*). Soja (1996:68) writes that ‘lived’ space is where everything exists simultaneously, and is hence a “space of radical openness” and social struggle.

This is a response from the radical space of my marginality. It is a space of resistance. It is a space I choose. (hooks 1990:208)

Thirdspace as a space of ‘radical openness’ takes inspiration from the feminist postmodern anti-racist and political scholar bell hooks (1990). In *Yearning* (1990:152), hooks argues that being ‘on the margin’ is a radical positioning, and hence “marginality is the space of resistance”. Both bell hooks and Cornel West are central to Soja’s understanding of Thirdspace as a political space on the ‘margin’. hooks and West reconceptualise, Soja (1996:84) writes, “radical African-American subjectivity in a way that retains and enhances the emancipatory power of blackness”. In doing that, they ‘innovatively’ show how ‘multiple communities of resistance’ and ‘polyvocal political movements’ can construct spaces for multiple ‘radical subjectivities’ to meet and create “real-and-imagined ‘spaces’ for diverse oppositional practices” (*ibid.*). Choosing this space is to take a counter-hegemonic positioning, moving ‘the political’ to the margin and hence challenges dualist oppositions of coloniser and colonised, periphery and centre. To displace and disorder, one confronts ideas of ‘master territories’ and of binaries (Trinh T. Minh-ha cited in Soja 1996:118). However, in order to position oneself ‘on the margin’ as argued for by hooks and others, one has also to be partly on the inside (Soja 1996:118).

What is also of central importance, is that the ‘radical positioning’ on the margin should also be a space “where one’s radical subjectivity can be activated and practiced in conjunction with the radical subjectivities of others” (hooks 1990:99). Here, we see the ‘relationality’ equally advocated for by Judith Butler (2013; 2015). In other words, spaces ‘on the margin’ should be spaces of radical inclusion rather than exclusion. Hence, fragmentation, in the sense of diverse

positions in the margin, should not be seen as a weakness, but a political strength (*ibid.*). bell hooks advocates for the ‘multiplicity of spaces’ to account for the diversity of issues to resist and fight against, such as class, race, gender, sexual orientation and more (Soja 1996:86). This is also about decentring knowledge production, I would like to add. Adrienne Rich (1984) writes that Black feminism cannot be reduced to “simply a response to white feminist racism or an augmentation of white feminism” (Rich 1984:41). The same could be understood with activist, political or theoretical positionings on the ‘margin’, as they exist on their own, not simply in relation to an oppressor, hegemony or centre, but rather resisting the boundaries and demarcations of centre/margin, white/Black and more.

Spaces of resistance can thus be conceptualised as radical positionings ‘on the margin’, and linking it to Butler’s (2015) “supported action”, where bodily, spatial, infrastructural and emotional support exists. Nevertheless, what hooks (1990) speaks of is a political positioning and hence, it is necessary to problematize positions on the margin, such as the space ‘beyond the pale’ in section 2.1. Direct Provision is the materialisation of regimes of power, placing bodies ‘on the margin’ in total exposure. bell hooks (1990:206) argues that the space at the margin “is not a ‘safe’ place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance”. I would thus like to argue that inclusive spaces of resistance need to be built on support and solidarity across political and materialised ‘margins’. To enable ‘concerted resistance’, politics of solidarity and support need to be built across bodies in spaces of destitution and spaces of appearance and relative influence. Doing so, centres of power and domination can be challenged. Thus, spaces of resistance in the centre need to build connections with the involuntary margins of marginalisation. This is the only way for a truly transversal and coalitional politics for reproductive justice.

5.4. *Mobilising vulnerability and interdependency in/on/of space*

...we are vulnerable to forms of destitution that follow from the destruction of the infrastructural conditions of life, social goods or social institutions. So, in the same way that no one can live without the infrastructural conditions of life, nobody can act without dependency on others or on larger social institutions. Both dependency and vulnerability are conditions of action, but they also inform action,

which is why I am not sure we can logically or sequentially separate them from one another. (Butler 2013:22)

I now return to Judith Butler's discussion on bodies' vulnerability and interdependency, by looking at the mobilisation of vulnerability in space and for the reclaiming of space. In an interview with Judith Butler (2013), the meaning of vulnerability in social struggle is discussed and parallels are drawn to the Gezi Movement, which emerged through public assembly in a central park in Taksim, Istanbul. As earlier stated, no one can ever claim not to be vulnerable or to be independent of support (Butler 2015). Instead, "...we are always vulnerable to something", connecting us to the world in relationality and interdependency and co-constitution with the world (Butler 2013:21). I wish to once again emphasise that vulnerability is thus a 'relation', not a 'disposition' or an inherent quality of some bodies (*ibid.*).

When vulnerability is mobilised to claim rights to space, health or a 'liveable life', vulnerability and agency or activity cannot be separated (Butler 2013:22). Vulnerability and exposure inform which forms of action are taken in any movement. Mobilising vulnerability from a position of power or privilege, may work to marginalise or silence the bodies that are more exposed to violence and threats (*ibid.*). Therefore, argues Butler (2013:24) actions must always call attention to 'precarity' and the multiple forms of exposure. It calls for a movement which mobilises the 'interdependent sociality' of bodies, taking into account that some bodies are more exposed and lack necessary forms of support.

Hence, power dynamics are central to which tactics and strategies are employed and which claims and subjectivities are prioritised in a coalitional movement. For example, different organisations within a coalition can have more or less strategic positioning in relation to the state, placing them in different relations of power and possibility to influence the state. Mia Liinason (2018) has studied how 'universalistic women's organisations' are simultaneously in opposition to and have an active presence 'within' the state. This means that while working to "expand the rights of women", their position 'within' state simultaneously reinforces hegemonic ideas of womanhood to reproduce social hierarchies between women (Liinason 2018:45). Liinason (2018:44) calls the splits arising between what is deemed legitimate and illegitimate subjects and positions in a struggle, "equality splits". She

identifies the two central tactics of the “tactic of collectivity” and the “tactic of opposition”. The first involves a group’s claim to be representing ‘all’ women and referring to (all) ‘women’s’ “position in the dominant ideology”, and the second involves the ‘split’ of illegitimate and legitimate subjects of resistance (*ibid.*).

White feminist movements and scholars have repeatedly fallen into the trap of the “tactic of collectivity”, by speaking on behalf of ‘all women’, as pointed out by anti-racist and postcolonial scholars (see Mohanty 2003). “Equality splits” produce a hierarchizing of identities which reinforce the domination and subordination of groups in terms of ‘race’, sexuality, class and more. This inevitably has effects on which forms of vulnerabilities are legitimate to mobilise in struggle. Considering the ‘elasticity’ of categories such as ‘women’, it can be tactically used to make claims in struggles (Liinason 2018:51). In order to come to terms with the reproduction of dominant social norms and values in organisations or coalitions, attention should be given to “the wider social, economic and political conditions within which their [the organisations’] struggles are located”, Liinason (2018:49) argues. In the Scandinavian context, “feminist grassroots and minority women’s organisations point to the lack of intersectional perspectives in the mainstream feminist movement”, which produce exclusions and reproduce racism, heteronormativity, transphobia and classism (Liinason 2018:61). While I identify similar tensions in the relation between organisations in the movement in Ireland, a difference is that the smaller organisations do not position themselves as ‘outside the struggle’, but collaborate in the same coalition and campaign. Nevertheless, “equality splits” remains an interesting lens through which to study how regimes of power influence, circumscribe and enable organisations’ and political subjects’ political actions, access to space and constructions of legitimate political subject in the joint struggle.

Butler comes back to the question “Who are the people?” (2015) or “Who are we?” (2013) in her discussions on public assembly, arguing that these assemblies never represent ‘the people’. While forms of ‘unexpected’ assembly or assemblies out of solidarity are important, any idea of full representation should be problematized. Liinason (2018:46) equally argues that collective interests framed as ‘women’s interests’ or linked to an identity category, need to be critically understood by asking questions of where and how these interests have been framed as “collective”. It demands enquiring into “the nature and context of politics and

what kind of agents carry out political actions” (*ibid.*). In other words, both the space allowed for counter-narratives (and radicality) and how hegemonic “collective interests” potentially retain a dominant position need to be given attention. Nevertheless, assembling as “the people” gives legitimacy and strength to protest in that they confront state power and ideas promoted in the name of a country or a state (Butler 2013:32). Even within communities built on political radical positionings on ‘the margin’, socio-historical dialectics of space are likely to reproduce hegemonic constructions of ‘who we are’ working to exclude and silence. hooks (1990) argues that violent binaries should be overcome in these spaces through a ‘radical openness’. Nevertheless, collaboration between organisations simultaneously involve support, strength, and possible tensions and “equality splits”. In order to prevent a homogenisation of the ‘we’ of a struggle, multiple radical and marginal positionings must be allowed in order to decentre both the hegemony and ‘the oppressive other’ (hooks 1990:22 cited in Soja 1996:102). Thus, a movement may be both stronger and more inclusive through an awareness of the historical and geopolitical context in which it is operating and by allowing diversity and providing a solidarity of support to adversaries.

I will now present and analyse the various spaces of resistance mentioned in the interviews, happening across organisations and spaces. Some of them exercise their plural and ‘performative right to appear’ (Butler 2015) in spaces not built for the purpose of political action and resistance, while others start conversations in spaces more out of sight.

6. Findings and Analysis

This chapter seeks to answer the two research questions; *How do the organisations' access to support influence their transformation of 'everyday' spaces into spaces of resistance?* and *How do tensions arise in these spaces as the movement struggles for 'all' women's access to reproductive rights?* My analytical method is diffractive to identify the intra-actions of space and objects and human bodies and actions in the transformation of 'everyday' spaces into spaces of resistance. In a diffractive mode, I have asked questions to the material. The three questions relate to the *spaces* present in the material, the forms of *human and non-human support* the organisations depend on and adapt to. Finally, I have also asked a question about differences in bodies' vulnerabilities and support and how this gives rise to *tensions* in the movement. I move methodically through the sections, from barriers and support to the transformation of 'everyday' spaces into spaces of resistance. The final section, which explores the second research question is less concluding and more forward-looking, exploring the implications of the inequalities identified for the challenges waiting after the referendum.

6.1. *Unequally supported action*

In the following chapter, I analyse how existing and lacking support affect political organisation. I further problematize different bodies' access to spaces for organising in the movement, linking the findings to the geopolitical and historical context and the politically produced spaces in which the movement is operating. I seek to show how bodies depend on each other and on space for support, and that support thus differently enable bodies' political participation.

All participants experience that their organisations' face barriers to their political organising. The barriers include care work, precarious employment, shift work, infrastructure, language used within movement and absence of suitable meeting venues. Rosa expressed a lot of frustration at the situation as shown in the quote below:

Yeah, you keep having venues cancelled, cause they just get bullied by pro-life campaigners, and [...] in the middle of town we want a venue to hold about a hundred people for a big meeting and we can't find anything! Like, because the community centres are owned by the church, the pubs and stuff, they want to make a lot of money, the hotels have a real stuffy atmosphere and they want to make a lot of money! (Rosa, lines 399-404).

Several of the organisations express that it is difficult to find suitable venues to host meetings. It is hence common to host meetings in pubs and bars. As discussed by two participants, pubs and bars are not optimal considering the *loud* atmosphere, pressure to *buy* and *drink* alcoholic beverages and that some, because of age or various other reasons cannot access these spaces (Rosa, lines 371-375). When I met the representative of Rosa, they were looking for a venue to hold 100 people in Dublin. However, all they could find to rent were hotel venues which does not suit “a campaigning group, for ordinary people, for young people, for women” (Rosa, lines 408-409). Hotels are expensive to rent, have a general “stuffy atmosphere” and are located in “expensive” areas (Rosa, lines 403-404). Midwives for Choice equally have meetings in what they describe as “this really fancy hotel!” (lines 251). When organisations do find other venues, they can be cancelled as the owners are being “bullied by pro-life¹⁸ campaigners” (Rosa, lines 399-400). Everyday Stories tried to host their exhibition with stories highlighting the consequences of the eighth amendment in spaces across Ireland. This proved to be difficult since,

You generally don't want people to be upset in your business, so it's completely understanding (ES, lines 74-75).

In other words, exhibiting contentious topics in a pub or bar may harm the business. These accounts reflect a city produced for commercial purposes, rather than a social space for political or ‘social’ activity. The participant from Rosa mentioned that the routes of demonstrations are commonly changed by the police, and they are redirected out of the central parts of the city. Here, the production of the urban is

¹⁸ ‘Pro-life’ refers to the oppositional movement fighting to keep a ban on abortion in Ireland.

characterised by a ‘social (and I add, political) emptiness’ and a fracturing and hierarchizing of space (Lefebvre 2009b). In light of MERJ arguing that meetings can make you feel “really different”, as a “middle-class average” is reflected in clothing (MERJ, line 222), ‘fancy’ hotel venues will work to further exclude anyone who is financially constrained from participation in and exposed to the ‘homogenous’ urban (Lefebvre 2009b). Hence, organisations express a general frustration at the lack of spaces free from commercialisation, ‘pro-life-bullying’ or church-control, as community centres are mostly religious centres owned by the church. The removal of the ‘Repeal-mural’, which is analysed in section 6.2. also illustrates the effects of the urban as a ‘commercial’ space.

The architecture of the city is not welcoming for people to meet, they have no squares, they have no public spaces, the transport is crap... (MERJ, lines 168-169).

MERJ argues that the architecture of the city hinders people to meet as it lacks ‘public’ spaces for socialising. This is especially detrimental to people living in over-crowded apartments and in “very bad conditions” (MERJ, lines 174-176). Migrants are overrepresented since they “always” share apartments (*ibid*). Hence, the spatial ‘hierarchies’ produced in the urban (Lefebvre 2009b; Saatcioglu and Corus 2016) are made worse by the current housing situation in Dublin. The lack of spaces to meet outside of capitalist production thus exacerbate vulnerabilities (Saatcioglu and Corus 2016:233). To make matters worse, expensive transportation means people are hindered from reaching the central parts of the city, which is also where most meetings are held. Hence, the production of the urban as ‘fractured’, hierarchized and ‘homogenous’ influence different bodies’ access to spaces for organising (Jones and Popke 2010; Lefebvre 2009b). Persons confined to Direct Provision centres are reportedly living ‘beyond the pale’ and mothers and their babies suffer from poor health (Fanning et al 2001). They are also most affected by the eighth amendment (see section 2.1.). However, this group lacks most non-human support, and are hence hindered from participation in the movement.

‘Abstract’ space is where politics is located, obscuring the political processes, which produce the city as a hierarchized, fractured and homogenous space (Lefebvre 1974:235-236, 245). The consequences are nevertheless felt in ‘absolute’

space (*ibid.*), forcing people to stay at home in overcrowded apartments (if they have a home). Others, who can afford and have access, meet in pubs and bars where they need to deal with loud music and an unsuitable atmosphere. Finally, those who can afford a quieter setting and feel relatively comfortable in “stuffy atmospheres” (Rosa, lines 403-404) meet in hotel lobbies. However, ‘abstract’ space is also where the politics of resistance is located, enabling the transformation of the social ‘lived’ spaces (Lefebvre 1974), which is analysed further in section 6.2.

Care work is just a HUGE barrier to be politically active! (Rosa, lines 127-128).

Unpaid work, precarious working conditions and shift work heavily restrict and affect organising in the movement. Considering that the movement largely relies on women, the gendered division of labour affect which women and how women are able to be politically involved. For example, attending meetings in evenings, showing up for protests and other events is difficult and sometimes impossible, as care work continues to be carried out by mothers. Everyday Stories says, “...if [women] need to do anything, they need to find someone to mind their kids” (lines 188-198). Midwives for Choice (MfC) raise that a combination of full time work and having kids means attending meetings “is just not feasible” for all (line 230). Moreover, participants speak of how the intersections of class, relations of power within partner relationships, social network and family, geographical location in relation to the urban, further influence who can be involved. Parents for choice (PfC) argue that organisations where women are generally from middle-class background with a supporting social network have been less progressive when it comes to providing child care during meetings (lines 326-332). While for larger meetings, arranged by the coalition or campaign, travel costs and lunch are paid for, child care remains under-prioritised. The participant explains this with the organisers having access to a social network of support, and hence do not recognise it as an issue. One of the central reasons for PfC forming was to enable political participation for parents. They have thus adapted to the conditions of care work by running all political organising from home using online tools:

...since there are many who pretty much cannot leave home at all because they have babies, some [are] single parents and after bed time you are pretty much stuck (PfC, lines 26-27).

This reflects an interesting tension produced by the public-private divide constructed by a Western modernist, and inherently patriarchal, discourse of space. The divide is constructed and upheld by politics, and hence affects and influences the strategies employed by organisations in the movement. While women with children are restricted from political participation, they equally find strategies to work around the control of space. This is another example of how the movement for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland, like the Gezi-movement in Turkey, construct “new intersectional spaces” (Baydar 2015:14). Their use of space undermines and transcends “the private/public duality and their gendered associations” (*ibid.*) of private/public, political/unpolitical. As shown below, to politicise issues and the politics of space, including care work and precarious working conditions is a strategy in itself to encourage and increase political involvement,

So, it’s a challenge, but how we do it is with politics! Because people don’t accept this society that we live in, the way it treats women in particular, and other things. [...] so political discussions about fighting for a different kind of society, and about how protest can work, that I think has a big impact... (Rosa, lines 129-134).

The control of space and lack of non-human support restrict and sometimes hinder political action. Therefore, activists, organisers and organisations in the movement depend even more on each other as a network of human and non-human support. The Coalition provides a supporting network of organisations and persons. The Coalition is occasionally able to provide venues to host meetings and workshops and pay for transport and lunch during larger meetings. This support is also vital when arranging large protests as pointed out by Rosa,

It’s very difficult for us, for any individual group to do, to organise a big protest by itself, you need a lot of things, you need resources, you need money,

but you need like... you need a lot of people building for a protest to make it a success (Rosa, lines 227-230).

The Coalition is also a space for knowledge-sharing between organisations with different expertise, experiences and perspectives on reproductive rights and justice. The monthly “steering committee” arranged by the Coalition, is prioritised by most organisations as a way of staying connected to the larger movement. These meetings provide a space to get one’s voice across and for accessing different types of support. During workshops arranged by the Coalition or by organisations, knowledge-sharing or a group’s ‘expertise’ is at the centre. For example, Migrant and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice (MERJ) participated in a workshop hosted by a larger established organisation to share their expertise on inclusivity. Similarly, HI acknowledges that their existence has been enabled by organisations before them,

...for repeal [we] just came in at the end when all the hard work had been done essentially. [...] So, because we are not experts in law, we are not experts in whatever. What we are experts on is communicating a message... (HI, lines 143-146).

The Coalition also gave a sense of being “part of something bigger” (MfC, lines 89-91). Everyday Stories spoke of the importance of a network of support considering the exposure to media and journalist coverage leading up to the referendum, as “horrible things!” could be said for example about women who have accessed abortion services abroad (lines 181-183). The participant from ES has largely gained their support network through being politically active. While they previous to involvement had a partner and possibly a friend to speak to, they now have “a much wider support network” (ES, lines 204-209). The participant thus argues for the importance of support groups and counselling services, which is reflected in the increasing usage of the services during the intensified debates in the media in the months before the referendum. However, ES equally problematizes that access to crisis pregnancy counselling services are “largely available in the cities” (lines 187-190).

These accounts show how lacking support in infrastructure and accessibility of ‘public’ space, makes political action dependent on human and non-human support. The sense of being “part of something bigger” and offering support is thus a form of ‘concerted resistance’ (Butler 2015). Bodies come together to pose resistance, both visibly and through forms of solidarity. The support includes other organisations’ expertise and perspectives, resources such as venues, online spaces and emotional support. However, not everyone has access to these human and non-human forms of support provided through the Coalition. Spaces for organising in the Coalition were described by one group as mostly ‘white’, Irish and ‘middle-class’, making some ‘feel different’. To understand this, it helps to contextualise the movement and its use of strategies geopolitically and historically as called for by Liinason (2018). This makes visible the obstacles produced by a racially structured state continuing to discriminate against migrant and ethnic minorities, which inevitably has effects on the movement. Connecting tensions in the material with the context, tendencies to “equality splits” are discussed (Liinason 2018) and ‘shared vulnerabilities’ (Butler 2015) problematized in section 6.3.

6.2. *Transforming ‘everyday’ spaces into spaces of resistance*

The existing forms of support analysed in the previous section influence how and where spaces of resistance are constructed by organisations. Politically produced spaces and the prevailing construction of public and private influence who is able to participate where. However, the dichotomy is simultaneously transcended through their use of ‘everyday’ spaces. While ES enable conversations through workshops and exhibitions, London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign (L-I ARC) host an art installation in London and PfC provide tools to initiate conversations with family or acquaintances. The Hunreal Issue’s use of “visuals” such as the Repeal-jumpers and the contentious ‘repeal-mural’ (McConville 2018) are also central to initiating conversations in ‘everyday’ spaces. ES locates these conversational strategies in a historical context in Ireland, where ‘women talking’ as resistance is central,

So, there is this long history of women talking in groups together in Ireland,

and they talk about sex, they talk about contraception, and all sorts of things that effect women really. So, if we can get them to talk about Everyday Stories, then they will go and take that information and spread it out. It's like a spider web! And champions! (ES, lines 147-151)

'Women talking' has thus been a strategy throughout a history where the state and the church has exercised patriarchal control over women and female sexuality, as illustrated by women's confinement to the 'home', to motherhood and some women's forced confinement (Fischer 2016; Rose 1993). The participants' accounts show how patriarchal control of space continues to influence women's lives and political involvement. Women with children often struggle to make time for meetings and rely on a supporting family, which is why the 'home' and other 'everyday' spaces play a central role to organising.

Having conversations in spaces which transcend the private/public divide is thus central to all organisations. Parents for Choice largely organise online, but they also arrange 'coffee mornings', which happen in the space of the 'home'. They were initiated to provide a space to people who were new to thinking they were 'pro-choice', to become more comfortable and knowledgeable on the subject of abortion and reproductive rights. However, they have found that it can be difficult to reach beyond what PfC and ES call the 'pro-choice bubble'. Those who are reached are in other words already supporting the struggle. At the time of the interview, PfC is in the process of trying to reach those who are "on the verge between being curious, yet pretty conservative and who might not meet anyone who is 'pro-choice' ever" (PfC, lines 212-214). They do so by bringing relatives, friends, and people who are undecided to the coffee mornings. However, Parents for Choice also encourage "speaking to other parents in school when you pick up your kids [...] That is what becomes important" (lines 216-217). The majority of schools in Ireland are Catholic, 97 per cent according to one figure (Dalby 2016), hence activists and organisers of PfC wear badges to subtly invite the 'curious' parents in these schools to ask questions about the referendum. However, speaking to one's family can be the hardest of all, which is why "many [...] are trying to gather courage to speak to one's parents" (PfC, lines 228-230). Most organisations encourage 'having conversations' in all spaces of one's everyday life. Online spaces are equally important argues PfC for providing the tools for conversations,

It becomes almost like an army of ordinary ‘deadly’ people who think this is important. And who talk about it when they are out and about, not only in Dublin or in those spheres where you talk about these things a lot, but where it can be pretty difficult to talk about these things. But you are visible there and you are wearing your t-shirt, so it is obvious that you are willing to talk about these things. (PFC, lines 57-61).

The Hunreal Issues (HI) started from a conversation in a nail bar in Dublin, where a politician came in to fix her nails with her ‘wife-to-be’ following the same sex marriage referendum in 2015. HI describes how, following the politician’s visit to the nail salon and being ‘all upset’ about various political issues such as the eighth amendment, “the tone of our [the workplace’s] Whatsapp group completely changed” and the co-workers became more concerned about political issues (HI, lines 27-33). Following this event, the ideas of HI materialised into a website¹⁹. They strive to make feminism and the movement for the repeal of the eighth amendment more accessible to young people. HI speaks to young people who find the language of feminism ‘academic’ and inaccessible. They seek to “throw glitter” on feminism and communicate it the way their audience speaks, using colloquial language (line 144). Later they have found that using social media accounts of famous people is more successful to reach, initiate conversations and engage their audience politically.

Everyday Stories (ES) also started as a website. They publish women’s stories of having had an abortion abroad or using pills ordered online for a medical abortion²⁰. The initiator explains the “organic” process from running the website to launching it with an exhibition (line 35). Following the successful exhibition of stories and drawings in Dublin, the ES team wished to show it across Ireland. When running into the problem of not finding as many venues as they hoped to host the exhibition, ES put together a ‘tool box’ for workshops. The workshops allow for people to get together and listen to and discuss the recorded stories anywhere anytime as they,

¹⁹ The online initiative The Hunreal Issues, retrieved on May 14, 2018 from: <http://thehunrealissues.com/>.

²⁰ Each story can be read and listened to on everydaystories.org

...can pop up here in this café, it can pop up in a local pub. You can also have it in your living room, or you know in your youth sector, your parish hall, it can be anywhere! (ES, lines 80-82).

Making the workshops smaller and more mobile, they could get around the lack of support produced by ‘capitalist’ and ‘socially (politically) empty’ urban space, to instead find support in organisers and persons ‘getting together’. The workshops thus facilitate conversations and resistance in everyday spaces. They give space to stories previously carried around in silence by people in Ireland affected by the eighth amendment, of which approximately 170,000 have travelled abroad for abortion services since 1980. They initiate conversations in a nation where, “...we love gossip, we love telling stories [...]” (ES, lines 8-9) and where women have always got together in ‘knitting groups’ to talk about sex and contraception and more (ES). Spreading these stories through workshop facilitation, providing a group with three audio files and conversational questions, the intention is to initiate ‘non-judgemental’ conversations across everyday spaces.

As Lefebvre (1974:73) argues, social space is produced by actions and operations of objects and subjects. Social space contains conceived, perceived and lived space, and hence includes both ‘social practice’ and discourse (Lefebvre in Martin and Miller 2003:146). By bringing ‘everyday stories’ into a pub or a parish hall, these lived spaces can be seen to transform into spaces of resistance and organising. It resists the possibly masculine, most certainly ‘leisurely’ space of a pub or bar, and thus resist both the social practice of the pub and the homogeneity of the ‘urban’. Although the urban provides little support for and even limits possibilities for political action, organisations meet and organise and have conversations previously confined to the ‘private’ sphere, here. While a pub might not provide support for hosting ‘public’ exhibitions on politically ‘sensitive’ topics, people meet to listen to and discuss these stories nevertheless. The intra-action of women’s recorded stories, the pub and subjects willing to listen to these stories provide a ‘social’ space for resistance and political change. The initiative depends on support from technology and social media, friends, contacts and the broader movement, on a place to meet, however it equally adapts to barriers in politically produced and capitalist space.

Sometimes ‘commercial’ and homogenous spaces like pubs, bars or shops deliberately make space for these conversations and for political organising to be held. In the absence of non-religious community centres or spaces designed for political mobilisation, owners make space for organisations. Sew for Repeal meet in a vegan bar to make pro-repeal arts and crafts and have conversations about the eighth amendment. Hence, the commercialisation of space is more than what Harvey (2000:68) names a space of “political indifference”. There are simultaneously commercialised spaces that enable political mobilisation, and spaces which are perhaps by the owners unknowingly turned into spaces of resistance.

The backdrop of constructing spaces of resistance in a capitalist homogenous space is unequal access. The capitalist urban centre does not facilitate participation for people who experience the discrimination in ‘absolute’ spaces, the ones positioned on ‘the margin’ by the politics of space. Understanding spaces of resistance as Soja’s (1996) Thirdspace rely on hooks’ (1990) ‘radical inclusion’ and a radical positioning ‘on the margin’. Spaces used and transformed by the organisations provide more or less possibilities for constructing radically inclusive spaces. These are reflected in expensive transportation, Direct Provision and the housing crisis, combined with capitalist and homogenous urban centres. MERJ argues that the movement needs to increasingly work for those really positioned ‘on the margin’. The migrant and ethnic minority women who are largely excluded from the struggle through language, and racism and xenophobia in society. Considering that society and the state equally hierarchizes people across space according to social class, the movement need to transcend the spaces located in the ‘centers of domination’ with ‘the peripheries’ (Lefebvre 2009b:243-244). This affects which vulnerabilities are mobilised in these spaces and whether spaces of resistance become Thirdspaces of ‘radical inclusion’. Upon asking a participant whether people attending an event taking place in a bar would need to buy something, they respond,

No, they wouldn’t necessarily. They would be encouraged because the bar gave us the space for free, but they wouldn’t have to buy something. No one is being forced... [laughter] (SfR, lines 78-79).

This shows the ambiguity of having meetings or workshops in a commercial space. In order to transform capitalist space into a radically inclusive and differentiated space, the hegemonic social order would need to be contested, and the social relations produced by the politics of the space, transformed (Lefebvre 1974 in Dhaliwal 2012).

Conversation and stories are used to reach out to the undecided among ‘the public’ and politicians, to mobilise votes, support and increase political involvement in the movement. The ‘supposedly’ non-political ‘private’ spheres are highly political through storytelling and conversations about sex, contraception or abortion. As Scott (1989:55) writes, ‘everyday resistance’ is often ambiguous and up for interpretation in order to prevent “open retaliation”. Most organisations speak of the necessity to ‘not tell anyone what to think’ in conversations with people who are undecided. Conversations about reproductive health and abortion can thus be had in ‘everyday’ spaces to address a political issue.

Moving away from bodies being at the centre of spaces for conversation, objects are also of importance. In central Dublin, there is a wall owned by the charity and art space Project Art Centre. The Hunreal Issues and Project Art Centre collaborated with the well-known street artist Maser. Twice, Maser has painted a large red heart that reads “Repeal the 8th”²¹. Both times, it has been removed shortly after. The second time the mural was removed was on April 23rd 2018, one month and 2 days before the referendum. The Dublin City Council argues that it breaches the 2009 Charities Act, which forbids charities ‘political activity’. Project Art Centre, which has been a central support to the movement as they host events and exhibitions on the consequences of the eighth amendment²², made the decision to paint over the Repeal-mural. They were afraid to lose its charity status and hence funding. The act of painting over the mural, done by the Project Art Centre’s artistic director, became a political activity in itself²³. Before covering the word “Repeal” with blue paint, the artistic director reads:

²¹ See Appendix C, Image 1.

²² Two of these include the Everyday Stories exhibition and “Women to Blame” hosted in 2014 during my first fieldwork in Dublin.

²³ See Appendix C, Image 2.

I am calling this action today ‘defiance, compliance’ [...]. Through its absence, this political art work lives on in the thousands of people who have taken its art into theirs. You can paint over a mural, but you can’t paint over an issue! (Holland 2018).

HI speaks of this mural and other ‘visuals’ such as the Repeal-jumpers²⁴ worn by activists and supporters of the movement around Ireland. They explain that these ‘visuals’ made it “so you could state your thoughts” (HI, lines 216). In other words, pro-repeal arguments were visualised and hence entered conversations across ‘everyday’ spaces. Murals with political messages have previously been painted over in Dublin (Mullaly 2017). The City Council has demanded planning permission of the same cost as advertisement, reaching thousands of euros, impossible sums for artists, non-profit collectives and charities (*Ibid.*). This illustrates a city politically ruled to produce spaces benefiting commercial activity over political activity. However, I think it also illustrates the discursive political space where speaking about abortion is more acceptable if voiced through stories of vulnerability than as an outright political statement: “Repeal the eighth!”. Vulnerability can be strategically mobilised as deterministically connected to ‘womanhood’, which calls the state to provide protection by realizing ‘feminist goals’ (Butler 2015:140-141). Here, vulnerability is mobilised as exposure to the constitution, displaying a politically sensitive issue and demand on a ‘public’ wall.

Ireland has a long history of crafts and textile art being performed by women within the home (Nelson et al 2005). Since female artists continue to face barriers in terms of their textile art not being taken seriously, the “situating [of] textiles as art objects” in exhibitions has played a crucial role in increasing the value of the art (Nelson et al 2005:340). The repeated use of art within the movement for reproductive rights and justice may equally be a way of ‘situating’ reproduction, which has been confined to ‘the private’ in the ‘public’ space of an art gallery or on public wall to transcend the divide and thus receive acceptance. The ‘conceived’ space of the art gallery as a discursively ‘serious’ space which contains objects of value, actively works to add value and legitimacy to the stories, which have been silenced as ‘private’ and ‘women’s’ issues. In other words, the art galleries become

²⁴ See Appendix C, Image 3.

‘counterspaces’ “where alternative orders of material and symbolic space are imagined and struggled over” (Martin and Miller 2003:146).

The Repeal-jumpers and the Repeal-mural are also described by participants as enabling the link between bodies in the struggle (SfR, HI). These objects which have come to signify the struggle for repeal, do not only make it easier to state your thoughts, but have also been central to building connections and solidarity between bodies in everyday spaces. The jumpers and the mural materialise the interdependency of bodies in struggle and the bodies exposed to the consequences of the eighth amendment. As described by a participant, by wearing the jumper “we are showing people that we support them and that we are there for them!” (SfR, lines 34-35). SfR continue to describe the ‘loneliness’ of traveling abroad for an abortion, and hence these jumpers work to bridge this perceived individual vulnerability to mobilise, what Butler (2015) calls ‘shared vulnerability’. ES also emerged out of a similar intra-action of objects and subjects and the mobilising of ‘shared vulnerability’. The Everyday Stories participant describes in a podcast how she bumped into an acquaintance in a pub who was wearing a t-shirt that says ‘Free, Safe, Legal’. She says, “*there* and *then* I just started spilling my heart out to her, telling her everything, that ‘I have had an abortion, it is horrible [...]’ and she just ‘That’s okay’” (The Irish Times Women’s Podcast Ep. 180). That meeting was the start of their joint project Everyday Stories, which they started in order to break the loneliness and isolation linked to abortion and open up for a “non-judgemental” conversation in Ireland (*ibid.*).

Butler (2015:150) argues that resistance is the mobilizing of “the public exposure of the body”. The body is mobilised in plurality in an act that is “neither my act nor yours, but something that happens by virtue of the relation between us” (Butler 2015:9). Hence, the spaces of resistance move across and are formed in a variety of spaces, constructed through the visualisation and materialisation of the reproductive rights and justice struggle or through the initiation of conversations in ‘everyday spaces’. Furthermore, while the actions depend on infrastructural conditions for support, they equally call into question the conditions for action and for ‘liveable’ lives (Butler 2015). Moreover, conversations run as a theme through the ‘everyday stories’, the repeal-jumpers, the mural and the workshops and coffee mornings. Taking all these spaces, objects and bodies into account when speaking about the location and enactment of political agency takes a radical stance against

reductive understandings of ‘the political’ or theorisations of ‘concerted resistance’, beyond the ‘public’ and ‘sphere of appearance’.

6.3. *Who’s space, who’s voice, who’s reproductive rights?*

As shown, all organisations face mutual and specific barriers and lack of support in their political organising. Moreover, they find ways to enable their political involvement and organising, through the Coalition or through the transformation of ‘everyday’ spaces into spaces of resistance. Doing so, they seek to enable political involvement for a specific group of people or make space for a ‘missing’ perspective in the movement. Despite the perceived and acknowledged differences in support and access, for example for parents who are restricted by care work, participants also express that it is “easy” to get involved in the movement. There is a tension emerging here in light of bodies’ different vulnerabilities and access to support. MERJ acknowledges this tension as they say,

...it becomes very famous this Savita-image, did you hear about that? There are no Savitas in the public, like where... how to reach them? You know, so why are they using Savita’s face if there are no Savitas in the public? (MERJ, lines 232-234)

Savita Halappanavar referred to in the quote died from a septic miscarriage, after requesting, but being denied emergency termination (O’Toole 2013). As a woman of colour, Savita was at higher risk of death considering that 40 per cent of deaths in Irish maternal health care are minority women (Sparking Change with Dill 2018, MERJ). Her death was central to sparking even more rage in Ireland at the eighth amendment. Every year, a vigil is held in her memory and as a protest against the eighth amendment. However, what MERJ points out is that despite her image becoming a signifier of the reproductive rights and justice struggle since her death in 2012, persons like her are not seen enough at the forefront of the movement.

MERJ formed in response to the lack of “faces as our faces, like talking” in the movement (line 19). During last year’s (2017) March for Choice, the initiators of

MERJ, organised themselves in a ‘bloc’. All the organisers of MERJ are themselves migrants²⁵. They create spaces where they speak *for* the most marginalised and they actively involve spaces where people lacking a voice in the movement meet to speak *with* them. For example, they hold workshops in community centres for people living in Direct Provision. This is particularly important considering the exposure of people within Direct Provision, to racism and xenophobia in Ireland and their lack of support in regard to infrastructure, language and generally ‘feeling different’ from the ‘Irish’ white majority, in the movement and society at large.

While the efforts and presence of MERJ is appreciated by the rest of the coalition, I still notice tensions in the interviews when discussing who participates in the movement. Some organisations argue that a diversity of persons *do* participate in spaces for organising, demonstrations, rallies or projects. Rosa says they have many different people involved, helped by their “political approach” and that they speak about “broader issues of women’s lives” (lines 210-212). They strive to “radicalise” young people, by which they mean involve them politically “in the fight” (lines 93-94). They speak about issues broader than abortion to build a long-term political movement beyond the referendum. Sew for Repeal find that a diversity of people participates in sewing workshops, and others argue that it is ‘easy’ to get involved in the movement. The London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign tries to enable different forms of support and activism. They found that hosting the art installation “Not at home”²⁶ in London was a successful example of attracting a ‘broad demographic’. The Hunreal Issues reaches young people through social media and using a ‘colloquial’ and less academic language. In other words, each organisation tries to reach people previously uninterested, alienated or somehow hindered from being involved. This reflects a desire for ‘radical openness’ in the movement. It is further reflected in the list of the at least 100 organisations part of the Coalition. They include grassroots organisations representing ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+-community, persons with ability

²⁵ In an email correspondence with the representative of MERJ after having sent them the final version of the thesis, they see a need to emphasise the “multicultural” representation in MERJ. They are “women of many colours and different cultural and ethnic background”. People within MERJ work both on the street and online “behind the scenes”, and are thus all important to the running of the group, yet differently visible in the struggle. (MERJ, email, June 6, 2018).

²⁶ See website notathomeireland.com, retrieved on May 16, 2018.

variations, different occupations and perspectives on the consequences of the eighth amendment.

However, as the movement mobilises for the referendum on the 25th of May, the structure is temporarily changed from the Coalition to the Campaign. When “Together for Yes” was launched in March 2018, it was formed by two large organisations and the Coalition. This changed the structure and hence, also how the movement organises and mobilises. Parents for Choice describes this change as both necessary and problematic,

We have always in Parents for Choice worked a lot with a non-hierarchical anarchist structure where you work very consciously with power structures to make sure all voices are heard and get equal space etc. While in this kind of formal organisation [the campaign], it just does not work. [...] Perhaps, you come to a meeting and someone has decided that: Well, now we have made marketing research and this is how we should talk. And then there is another group sitting there and saying: Well, we can't talk like that because it goes against everything we stand for! So, it is problematic in a lot of ways, but it is also important to do it. (PFC, lines 157-166).

Parents for Choice argue that the campaign needs to focus on having a coherent message to win votes. Hence, the campaign decides “how we should talk”, which might not be welcomed by all organisations. The campaign must also adapt to the ‘public’ for supporters and votes. Hence, receiving legitimacy as a campaign representing the advocates of repeal is central. This involves appearing ‘less radical’ explains PFC. They use the example of representing the campaign on television, which might mean, “well, perhaps one should wear a ‘sensible’ dress so you look like a ‘nice’ mother... well, it becomes a bit silly, you get a bit cynical if you see what I mean...” (lines 243-245). Visiting the official website of the campaign²⁷, one is met by a young white woman’s face with a text that reads,

²⁷ See website www.togetherforyes.ie, retrieved on May 2nd, 2018.

Together for Yes is the National Civil Society Campaign to remove the Eighth Amendment from the Constitution. Together we are campaigning for a more compassionate Ireland that allows abortion care for women who need it.

These words summarise the campaign's goal as well as reflect their "messaging strategy" and what is deemed 'legitimate' reasons for a repeal. Framing the campaign involves adapting to the dominant ideology and thus potentially ideas of desired womanhood in Irish society. For example, not being 'too radical' possibly means speaking about 'care' rather than 'rights' or 'justice'. Liinason (2018:148) has studied how 'universalistic women's organisations' in Scandinavia align to "the social norms and values of the dominant ideology" to achieve rights for 'all women'. Here, a "compassionate Ireland that allows abortion care" for women in Ireland is at the centre. The discourse reflected in the messaging strategy in turn frames ideas of 'legitimate political subjects'. For example, this is argued to require looking 'like a nice mother'. Speaking of 'women who need it', using a coherent and legitimate message however runs the risk of employing "the tactic of collectivity" (Liinason 2018). This tactic is part of the concept of "equality splits", which is employed as 'universalistic women's organisations' seek to "achieve legitimacy, authority and recognition in the struggle" (Liinason 2018:44). These tactics are simultaneously "an instrument and an effect of power" (Liinason 2018:64). In other words, they make use of and shape dominant ideologies and discourses around, in this case, womanhood and motherhood.

On the campaign-website, a press statement from MERJ and from five other organisations representing minority women, is included on "press releases" (Together for Yes 2018). Apart from that, little is said about this group in Ireland. In section 3.1. constructions of 'Irish identity' and specifically Irish 'womanhood' were outlined from a historical and geopolitical perspective. Having a pregnant body that does not fall within a 'white' Irish norm, has meant being exposed to violent attacks in the street and in the media (see Luibheid 2004 and García-del Moral and Korteweg 2012; Garner 2007). Migrant and ethnic minority women are further disproportionately affected by the eighth amendment, being overrepresented in maternal deaths and having less access to travel for abortion services abroad (Sparking Change with Dill 2018). Although, there is an awareness of difference in accessing reproductive rights, issues that disproportionately affect the most

marginalised in Ireland is mentioned less in the interviews. Perhaps, the explanation for this can also be found in the quote below,

We can speak about how unfair it is that a woman in a Direct Provision-centre unable to leave Ireland, cannot have an abortion or that a single mother cannot afford or that a woman living with a man who controls and beats her cannot leave home because he hid her passport. We can talk about that and it is really important to do it, but when there are organisations representing all these voices, then that is really important and great. (PfC, lines 120-125)

MERJ calls for “equity” in the movement, saying that: “If this people needs more to get to the same place, you should give them more” (lines 214-215). MERJ thus seek to involve migrants and ethnic minorities in the struggle, both by enabling spaces of resistance which transcend ‘the margin’ and ‘the centre’ and by encouraging larger organisations to have migrant persons on panels. MERJ are in turn invited to other organisations to speak about practical tools for ‘inclusivity’ (MERJ lines 206-210). Hence, the presence of MERJ has inevitable effects on the conversation within the movement. With slight humour, they compare the movement to a party, where simply “to know someone who is inside” can help to bridge the gap between inside/outside (lines 94-95).

To achieve a reproductive rights movement that represents ‘all’ women and persons in the struggle when operating in a hierarchized and racially structured society remains a challenge. Butler (2015), raises this tension when discussing vulnerability and ‘paternal’ protection, highlighting the need to adjust to the institutions which are necessary for human action and life itself, while resisting the ‘modes of paternalism’ which work to reproduce inequality and exposure (Butler 2015:142). The wider context in which the movement operates and the campaign’s need to adapt its “messaging strategy” to hegemonic ideas of womanhood means running the risk of reproducing ‘desired’ and legitimate political subjects in struggle. This may in turn lead to constructions of ‘shared vulnerabilities’ among women, which fail to account for different bodies’ exposure to violence, threats and discrimination.

The movement is faced with politically produced spaces, where racism and xenophobia is embedded and where accessing spaces for meetings is hindered by

the hierarchizing of social groups, a capitalist urban centre and the gendered division of labour. Tensions are thus produced in the movement, reflected in participants' accounts of coming across as a 'nice mother' and which 'living' bodies are at the forefront of the struggle. It is vital to win the public vote in the referendum, which requires coherence in organisations' messaging strategy and a 'de-radicalisation'. This might nonetheless reinforce embedded constructions of which 'women' Ireland should 'care' for.

The organisations in the movement unite perspectives and spaces of resistance which work from and transcend margin/centre and public/private divides. MfC describes the strength of the movement as "all these little different parts that make up the whole" (MfC lines 108-109). This is why the continuous knowledge-sharing happening between organisations in the Coalition is vital, enabling diversity under the blanket of coherence and 'legitimacy'. However, bell hooks' (1990) words that the space on the margin is not safe, points to the increased need for support at the margin. Coming back to Savita, and other women and mothers of colour whose lives have not mattered, building a coalition across a diversity of voices and perspectives is necessary to enable a movement for 'all'. To actively distribute human and non-human support more equally to provide access to spaces of resistance and appearance may challenge hierarchies constructed between 'all' women and persons. Therefore, the Coalitions' wide representation of perspectives and knowledge, their knowledge-sharing between organisations, and providing resources to less established organisations act as important forms of support. Mobilising the 'fractured' and diverse as a strength, provide hope for a politics of radical inclusion for reproductive rights and justice.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

I now wish to reflect upon how the three parts of the analysis tie together and inform one another to deepen the understanding of space in the movement for reproductive rights and justice in Ireland. The amendment is held in one week's time as I hand in the thesis. Putting hope to the many persons and organisations campaigning for "Together for Yes" and the antecedent struggle since the 1970s, I discuss the struggle following a repeal of the eighth amendment. Building on a feminist scholarship of politics of engagement, I conclude by suggesting further research for a hopeful politics of space.

Since the movement operates in a fragmented and hierarchized urban space where non-commercial and non-religious spaces to meet for organising is sparse, it makes use of meeting spaces within the capitalist economy such as bars, pubs, and hotel lobbies. For organised public events, some businesses are unwilling or constrained from hosting, considering the sensitivity of the subject of abortion, the eighth amendment and the influence of the opposite 'pro-life' (or 'anti-choice') side. Maser's repeal-mural, which was a collaboration with the Hunreal Issues was taken down as the Projects Arts Centre feared losing funding. Operating in spaces built for commercial purposes and where the consequences of the eighth amendment continues to be a contentious subject, pose barriers on the movement.

However, the organisations find ways to transform spaces into spaces of resistance. They initiate conversations nevertheless and find creative solutions to obstacles arising. This implies that the space in which the movement operates is not 'unpolitical' in the sense that Harvey (2000:168) suggests, producing political indifference, but rather becomes a space for reclaiming rights to space like the anti-austerity and the Occupy-movements. The story of The Hunreal Issues starting in a nail salon equally show how commercial spaces are not per se unpolitical spaces, but is a space for politics and the involvement of new groups in the struggle.

Lefebvre helps show how abstract space is a space of possibility and transformation, where social relations can be altered and the absolute and violent effects of space resisted. Lefebvre's and Butler's conceptualisations of space thus

act complementary to understand ‘the political’ beyond public/private divides, and how a movement finds supports in spaces produced for capitalist rather than social and political activity. With enough perseverance and power, we can hope to build alternative worlds, writes David Harvey (2003:939). However, the ‘capitalist’ urban provides unequal support to different bodies in struggle, as space is homogenous and hierarchized, producing inequalities in the visibility of bodies. In other words, politically produced spaces do not provide bodies with equal amount of support and power to build alternative worlds where we can live and ‘thrive’. This is why ‘concerted resistance’ need to build strong links of solidarity to transcend constructed divisions and hierarchizations between people in space. The people involuntarily positioned on the margin need more support and a ‘community of resistance’.

Hence, the movement in Ireland depends on spaces both *within* and *outside* the capitalist economy to allow for different bodies to participate. They further rely on spaces that transcend the public/private and margin/centre divides and transform ‘abstract’ space. Hence, everyday spaces such as ‘homes’, pubs, parish halls, schools, the street are all central to the resistance through the intra-action of bodies, space and objects. The diversity of organisations in the movement, which reach different audiences and have access to different spaces enable moving across the ‘everyday’ to construct “intersectional spaces” (Baydar 2015). It nevertheless remains a challenge to construct hooks’ (1990) spaces of ‘radical inclusion’. Bodies’ different exposure to threats in ‘absolute’ space means that barriers continue to circumscribe some persons’ access, lives, and ‘visible’ political involvement in the struggle.

The organisations’ “supported action” relies on persons enabling ‘concerted resistance’ in the form of contributing with skills, participation, emotional support and presence. They rely on the Coalition’s access to resources, the strength and support in ‘numbers’, and arranging meetings for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and coordination in the movement. The organisations encourage and provide tools to what Everyday Stories call “champions”, all the persons speaking about the consequences of the eighth amendment across a diversity of spaces, who resist a long history of silencing and shaming of a supposedly ‘private’ and ‘non-existent’ matter. In enabling conversations across spaces and connecting bodies,

vulnerability is mobilised in concert and bodies' dependency on one another and on space is called into question.

The movement makes use of these intra-actions of the human and non-human to form spaces of resistance and connect bodies in the struggle. They connect bodies in struggle and solidarity using jumpers, murals, exhibitions, workshops and everyday conversations to break loneliness and shame. The diffractive method is useful in identifying these links between bodies and between the human and non-human to make visible the intra-actions that construct a hopeful politics of space and spaces of resistance in the seemingly politically indifferent or 'unpolitical' spaces. I thus advocate for further research on social movements, using the diffractive method, to account for the interdependency of bodies, of bodies and space and bodies and objects in political action.

However, the dependency on the state to realise the goals of the movement and the public to vote in favour of the repeal of the eighth amendment places the movement in a challenging situation. Speaking of the care of 'all' women, while seeking coherence in the message of the campaign risks using the "tactic of collectivity". The necessity to construct legitimate political subjects to front the struggle can work to reinforce hegemonic ideas of 'desired' womanhood and motherhood in Ireland, and thus risk giving less space to bodies exposed to racism, xenophobia and other structural threats. Nevertheless, the movement represents a wide diversity of organisations in and outside Ireland, bringing different perspectives, experiences and knowledge. The organisations further aim to return to a more 'radical' approach following the referendum, which provided hope for 'radical inclusion' and to realise reproductive rights and justice for 'all'.

To repeal the eighth amendment would be a historical victory of the women's movement and the reproductive rights struggle in Ireland. It provides the possibility to finally legalise abortion, and thus put an end to the death and threats that all women face in Ireland today throughout pregnancy. Following a repeal of the eighth amendment, the struggle for reproductive rights and justice nevertheless continues as illustrated by MERJ:

So, the thing is now repeal! [...] after the referendum, we will still fight to include all these things if they are not included. And also, fight the racism, the

xenophobia and all these inequality issues that we are seeing happening right now.
(MERJ, lines 258-272)

As the amendment is erased from the Constitution, the process of writing a new law begins with a proposed legalisation of abortion up to twelve weeks on request, and later when there is ‘serious risk’ to the health of the mother or a foetal ‘life-limiting’ abnormality. Rosa explains that this could potentially be “a huge battle” when the legislation is at “the hands of the politicians” (lines 253-254). Until the new law is written, the 2013 Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act remains in place. In line with Butler’s (2015:133) question, do “we struggle as well for bodies to thrive, for lives to become liveable?”, I ask the organisations what is needed beyond a law change for all persons to access their full reproductive rights in Ireland? The list of things the participants call for include the implementation of a progressive legislation on abortion, the separation of church and state, free contraception for all, sexual education in schools, true consent in maternal health care, the end to xenophobia and racism and an end to the housing crisis. The movement’s struggle is thus transversal, aiming for diversity, ‘radical inclusion’ and for everyone to be able to live and thrive in and across the borders of Ireland.

Returning to the very beginning of the thesis, I call for continuing research which moves beyond the focus on the ‘public’ in research on space in social movements’ mobilising. Studying how divides are resisted in ‘everyday spaces’ to construct ‘intersectional’ spaces and spaces of resistance, provides a more hopeful politics of space, which resists boundaries and strives for inclusion. Considering the limited scope of this thesis, it was only possible to identify and reflect upon tensions arising between organisations as the movement strives for coherence and legitimacy to win the referendum. Further research on the use of spaces for organising and mobilising for reproductive rights and justice, and who is present and participating, would be required to draw conclusions regarding the use of “equality splits”.

The 25th of May will hopefully go to history as the day when ‘the eighth’ was repealed in Ireland. The struggle for reproductive rights and justice for ‘all’ will nonetheless continue. Research should equally continue to engage with this process and struggle following upon the referendum, based in a politics of engagement and solidarity to build concerted resistance across bodies, everyday spaces and disciplinary and national borders.

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Thesis project within Gender Studies/Human Geography

Working title:

“Spaces of resistance and politics of belonging in the Repeal-movement”

My name is Sarah Bodelsson and I am studying the master programme Social Studies of Gender at Lund University in Sweden. I am currently doing my master thesis within Gender studies and Human Geography. I kindly invite you to participate in my thesis project, which I present below.

The thesis aims to understand different spaces created for organisation, resistance and protest in the Repeal-movement. I wish to explore how spaces, ranging from spaces for sharing stories (online and face-to-face), to social media campaigns and street protests, are created by groups and organisations. I hope to understand how these spaces carry different functions in the movement to repeal the eighth amendment. I am also interested in how different groups and the Coalition as a whole enable for a diverse group of people to feel belonging to the Repeal-movement.

During the spring, I will be presenting my research during a conference in Lund. I am also actively looking for other events and conferences to present the thesis.

Following the ethics guidelines from the Swedish Research Council I assure you that:

1. All information will be treated confidentially,
2. Information will be coded and treated so that unauthorized persons have no possibility to access your personal data,
3. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. I will happily send you the full report or a summary if requested,
4. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time,
5. If you choose to participate I will ask for your permission to audio record our conversation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or wish to receive further information about the thesis project. Thank you so much for your participation!

Kindest regards,
Sarah Bodelsson

Interview guide

Thank you so much for taking your time to meet me. I am a gender studies student and I am particularly interested in reproductive rights and justice with a focus on activism and mobilisation. Having followed the movement for repeal since 2014, I have been really interested in how fast it has grown and gained momentum over the last couple of years, and the diversity of initiatives that have emerged. This has made me interested in the different spaces for resistance created by organisations and initiatives, on their own and together as a coalition. For example, how abortion which has been difficult to talk about for so long, has become such a central topic over the last couple of years, and how groups and organisations have brought in different perspectives into the movement. I see this thesis as an opportunity to write about the movement in Ireland with its long and committed struggle in order to learn from your experience and the knowledge you have with a large and diverse movement.

Give over the project presentation.

Before we start I wish to ask you for your permission to record the interview. I wish to also say that all information will be treated confidentially, and will be coded and treated so that unauthorized persons have no possibility to access any personal data. Your identity will not be revealed in the thesis. Your participation is voluntary so you can ask to withdraw at any time. Finally, I will happily send you the thesis or a summary when it is finished. And please contact me if you would have any questions or thoughts.

On the organisation

1. Why did you see a need to start [the organisation]?
2. What role do you think [the organisation] has played so far?
3. What role does the Coalition to repeal the eighth amendment play?

On space

4. Which audiences are you trying to reach with your [organisation]?
5. Which channels (website, art gallery, workshops) do you use to achieve that? Have the different ones had different functions? For example, online versus face-to-face meetings?

6. What purpose do you see with creating rooms or spaces where a specific group is invited, for example women who have travelled or have ordered abortion pills online? How would you describe a 'safe' and inclusive space?

On belonging

7. Why do you think so many different initiatives with different perspectives have emerged?
8. Do you think it is possible to create a movement where everyone feels welcome to participate?
9. Would you say that your involvement/initiative in the broader campaign has had an impact on you?
10. In which spaces/where have you found strength to do what you are doing? Do you think it is possible to find home in politics or in a community?
11. Do you think it is possible to create spaces where everyone experiences a sense of 'belonging' and feel represented?
12. What do you think will happen to these groups/initiatives if the Committees' proposal is voted through with abortion legalised in Ireland up to 12 weeks?
13. Anything else that you started thinking about in relation to what we have been talking about?

Images to complement findings and analysis

Image 1: The Repeal-mural by Maser, while being painted over. Retrieved on May 9 2018 from <https://www.joe.ie/news/protest-maser-repeal-mural-623466>.



Image 2: The Repeal-mural by Maser after being painted over. Retrieved on May 9, 2018 from <https://www.independent.ie/videos/irish-news/watch-protesters-gather-as-repeal-the-eight-mural-painted-over-you-can-paint-over-a-mural-but-you-cant-paint-over-an-issue-36834528.html>



Image 3: The Repeal-jumpers by Anna Cosgrave. Here featured in the short film “We face this land”, written by Sarah Maria Griffin and directed by Dave Tynan. Retrieved on May 9, 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=571vnkdrWC0>.

