

Bridging the Local and Global: Archiving Women's Collectives in Spaces of Action/Reflection

Literature Review by Ruth Houghton

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Please cite this document as: Ruth Houghton, ‘Literature Review for *Bridging the Local and Global, Archiving Women’s Collectives in Spaces of Action/Reflection*’ (Report for British Academy Virtual Sandpits Follow-On Funding VSFoFGD\100020, May 2022)

1. Introduction

Bridging the Local and the Global: Archiving Women's Collectives in Spaces of Action/Reflection is an interdisciplinary project funded by the British Academy Virtual Sandpits Follow-On Funding (March 2021-March 2022).

Scholarship on global governance often struggles to engage with locally generated knowledge. As a result, the work of marginalised groups – and in particular the work of women's collectives – is overlooked in global governance literature. Women have organised in 'collectives' in formal and informal spaces to achieve shared goals for centuries. These collectives are often side-lined and overlooked as a result of structural and systemic patriarchy.

This project attempts to bridge the gap between the global and local by exploring the formation of women's collectives and studying the modalities involved in the creation of 'collective spaces' (where 'space' includes physical, social, cyber and/or communal). Space and spatial politics is a key part of unpacking the relationship between the global and the local.¹ The project aims to examine how private and public spaces and the creation of alternative spaces of activism outside formal institutions of governance, contribute to the creation and functioning of women's collectives.

In bringing together law, archives and interviews, reproductive healthcare and education, this project explores how collective responses to local/global challenges occur, how we can better record these so as to bridge the local and the global, and how order/disorder is (and can be) understood.

For this we pose the question: How do women, including women from the South, create, develop, sustain and use 'collective spaces of action'/reflection in the UK and Ireland?

In trying to answer this question our sub-questions are:

- How is knowledge of women's collectives produced (historically and currently) and how should alternative spaces be taken into account when producing/recording these knowledge(s)?
- What can we learn from the creation of women collectives, their aspirations and materialisation of aspirations?
- How can global governance begin to unlearn and relearn the ideas about women's collectivism based on local knowledge?

¹ Daniel Lambach, 'Space, scale, and global politics: Towards a critical approach to space in international relations' (2022) 48(2) *Review of International Studies* 282-300

2. Spaces

Feminist geographers remind us that ‘we need to consider space as fluid, practised, and affective rather than conceived and fixed’.² This means that space is related to concepts of time and power.³ Henri Lefebvre distinguished between three ideas of “space”; space as conceived, space as perceived, and lived space.⁴ Conceived space is how space is constructed by planners, for example. Perceived space is how people experience the spaces through daily practices. Lived space relates to how ‘[s]paces exist in time and in representation’, such that they are ‘lived through historical and affective imaginaries’.⁵ For Massey, ‘[t]hinking about space requires looking at the set of interrelations that construct it, and to recognise power as produced and reproduced by both micro-politics and structural inequalities’.⁶ This project takes its starting point from Massey’s conceptualisation of space to consider spaces of action and spaces of reflection.

Spaces of Action. If spaces are constructed (and deconstructed) through sets of interrelations and power dynamics, Massey argues that we need to think about spaces as being ‘continually’ (re)made.⁷ There are multiple and different sources of power that work to construct the spaces we live in.⁸ For Massey, we should think about ‘power in terms of both possibilities and responsibilities’.⁹ Rather than seeing ‘spaces’ through a binary lens of spaces of domination and spaces of resistance, Massey calls for a reflection on the ‘active spaces of action’ where space is remade.¹⁰

Spaces of Reflection. Reflection is used in this project to facilitate discussions of women’s collective work that would fall outside definitions of activism or resistance of the state. Reflection also captures how the project facilitates a reflection on historical activism, work, and collectivising; to consider how women’s collectives learn from the work done in the past. Through narrative interviews the project creates a space for the

² Maud Ceuterick, *Affirmative Aesthetics and Wilful Women: Gender, Space and Mobility in Contemporary Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) 5

³ Doreen Massey, ‘Entanglements of Power: Reflections’ in Joanne P Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (Routledge 2000)

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l’espace* (Anthropos 1974) 49-52, cited in Maud Ceuterick, *Affirmative Aesthetics and Wilful Women: Gender, Space and Mobility in Contemporary Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) 5

⁵ Maud Ceuterick, *Affirmative Aesthetics and Wilful Women: Gender, Space and Mobility in Contemporary Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) 5

⁶ Doreen Massey, ‘Entanglements of Power: Reflections’ in Joanne P Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (Routledge 2000) cited in Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896, 897-898

⁷ Doreen Massey, ‘Entanglements of Power: Reflections’ in Joanne P Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (Routledge 2000) cited in Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896, 897-898

⁸ Doreen Massey, ‘Politicising space and place’ (1996) 112(2) *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 117

⁹ Doreen Massey, ‘Entanglements of Power: Reflections’ in Joanne P Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (Routledge 2000) cited in Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896, 897-898

¹⁰ Doreen Massey, ‘Entanglements of Power: Reflections’ in Joanne P Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (Routledge 2000) cited in Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896, 897-898

participants to reflect on their histories, experiences, their work, and the role of collectives.¹¹

When we think about spaces of action and reflection, there are a number of spaces we should consider: the home, online social media (Twitter and Facebook), the streets and public squares, courtrooms and public buildings. These types of spaces can be categorised into public or private spaces, physical or digital spaces.

One focus of this project is the role of legal spaces; the role of political and legal spaces in constructing women's lives, women's disruption or use of these legal spaces, and how the law creates spaces. As Massey argues 'the boundaries which we draw in space, the 'places' we define [...] about how open, or how closed, our places are to be [...] are in fact expressions of, and exercises in, social power,'¹² and the law and legal institutions are part of that process of exercising social power. The Houses of Parliament plays an important role across the two cases studies: with respect to Reproductive Health Care in Northern Ireland, colonialist legislation was imposed in 1861, and then legislative debates in the House of Commons were key to reform processes to decriminalise abortion; with respect to education during the Covid-19 pandemic, legislative changes imposed restrictions on people, and constructed the spaces women had to work within (namely the idea of "bubbles"), and the debates within the Houses of Commons and House of Lords act as a specific archive of the time (see Hansard).

In online spaces, specifically on social media, there is a construction and negation of spaces brought about through the use of hashtags, followers, lists and algorithms. Willis has shown how hashtags work to facilitate 'online community formation'.¹³ Willis argues that 'many women feel that social media allow them to voice opinions and experiences in ways that face to face, physical spaces could not'.¹⁴ Social media allows women to 'connect to other women with similar experiences'.¹⁵ Through ideas of counter-publics, echo chambers, and filter bubbles, activists can create and disrupt online spaces. For example, 'hashtag hijacking' is where individuals or groups can co-opt a hashtag so as to draw attention away from the original meaning of the hashtag and its community and to focus attention on these new arguments.¹⁶ Groups can use 'hashtag hijacking' to disrupt dominant discourses.¹⁷ Feminists have also highlighted the abuse women receive online.

¹¹ For a discussion on the role of narrative interviews in creating spaces of reflection see, Francis Guenette and Anne Marshall, 'Time Line Drawings: Enhancing Participant Voice in Narrative Interviews on Sensitive Topics' (2009) 8(1) *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 85-92

¹² Doreen Massey, 'Politicising space and place' (1996) 112(2) *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 117

¹³ Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, 'Habermasian utopia or Sunstein's echo chamber? The "dark side" of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism' (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507. See also, C A Rentschler, 'Bystander intervention, feminist hashtags activism, and the anti-caceral politics of care' (2017) 17 *Feminist Media Studies* 565; C A Rentschler and SC Thrift, 'Doing feminism: event, archive, techné' (2015) 16 *Feminist Theory* 239

¹⁴ CA Rentschler, '#MeToo and student activism against sexual violence' (2018) 11 *Communication Culture & Critique* 503 cited in Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, 'Habermasian utopia or Sunstein's echo chamber? The "dark side" of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism' (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 515

¹⁵ A Travers, 'Parallel subaltern feminist counterpublics in cyberspace' (2003) 46 *Sociological Perspectives* 223 cited in Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, 'Habermasian utopia or Sunstein's echo chamber? The "dark side" of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism' (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 515

¹⁶ Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, 'Habermasian utopia or Sunstein's echo chamber? The "dark side" of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism' (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 507-508

¹⁷ Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, 'Habermasian utopia or Sunstein's echo chamber? The "dark side" of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism' (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 512

Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, are conceptualised as public spaces. Scholars have commented on the ‘dialogue and debate’ that take place in these ‘open [public] spaces’,¹⁸ noting the ‘democratizing potential’ of such sites.¹⁹ Feminist scholar, Nancy Fraser, demonstrates how power dynamics and ‘[s]tructural, political, economic, and social inequalities’ are present in these online public spaces, weakening the democratic potential.²⁰ Willis notes that online spaces can reflect ‘offline structures’ that work to ‘silence minority or marginalised voices’.²¹

Feminist approaches to space have discussed the role of the public/private divide in constructing spaces. For the most part, feminists call for the dismantling of the public/private divide. However, Buss has cautioned that focusing on the public/private divide can work to essentialize ‘women’s experience along Western lines’, if attempts to discuss the public/private divide do not take into account the ‘colonialized or racialized context’.²² Buss warns against using such ‘Western analytic categories and Western ways of knowing’ which can work to impose a structure on women’s experiences.²³ Feminist theorists have explored the construction of “the home” as a space.²⁴ Ceuterick argues that ‘, the domestic space (just as any spatial environment) is constituted of power-geometries, which constantly evolve through political, historical, and cultural dimensions, and how bodies affect and are affected by others.’²⁵ The case studies in this project raise questions about the public/private divide. In the case study on education, we can explore the relationship between home (private) and school (public). Firstly, we can consider the effects of the public infusing with the private in home-schooling, as schoolteachers used Zoom/Teams to speak to children in their homes. Secondly, we can consider the extent to which the construction and use of private spaces of education within the home can inform the public spaces of learning (e.g. the classroom).

“The Bubble” was a metaphor that dominated the zeitgeist of the early lockdowns in England. During Covid-19 restrictions, secondary legislation (ie regulations) were used to construct bubbles. There were ‘support bubbles’ and ‘childcare bubbles’ (introduced in subsequent

¹⁸ Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, ‘Habermasian utopia or Sunstein’s echo chamber? The “dark side” of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism’ (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 513

¹⁹ SJ Jackson and B Foucault Welles, ‘Hijacking #myNYPD: social media dissent and networked counterpublics’ (2015) 65 *Journal of Communication* 932, 933 cited in Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, ‘Habermasian utopia or Sunstein’s echo chamber? The “dark side” of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism’ (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 512

²⁰ Nancy Fraser ‘Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy’ (1990) *Social Text* 56 cited in Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, ‘Habermasian utopia or Sunstein’s echo chamber? The “dark side” of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism’ (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 513

²¹ Reilly Anne Dempsey Willis, ‘Habermasian utopia or Sunstein’s echo chamber? The “dark side” of hashtag hijacking and feminist activism’ (2020) 40 *Legal Studies* 507, 513

²² Doris Elisabeth Buss, ‘Going Global: Feminist Theory, International Law, and the Public/Private Divide’ in Susan B Boyd (ed), *Challenging the Public/Private Divide: Feminism, Law and Public Policy* (University of Toronto Press, 1997) 360-384, 361-362

²³ Doris Elisabeth Buss, ‘Going Global: Feminist Theory, International Law, and the Public/Private Divide’ in Susan B Boyd (ed), *Challenging the Public/Private Divide: Feminism, Law and Public Policy* (University of Toronto Press, 1997) 360-384, 366

²⁴ Linda McDowell, ‘Spaces of the Home: Absence, Presence, New Connections and New Anxieties’ (2007) 4(2) *Home Cultures* 129; Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896; Linda McDowell, ‘Place and Space’ in Mary Eagleton (ed), *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory* (Blackwell Publishing 2003)

²⁵ Maud Ceuterick, ‘An affirmative look at a domesticity in crisis: Women, Humour and Domestic Labour during the Covid-19 Pandemic’ (2020) 20(6) *Feminist Media Studies* 896, 897-898

lockdown periods).²⁶ Explanatory memorandum states that ‘A support bubble is a targeted policy intervention to support those most at risk of becoming isolated’.²⁷ In the Explanatory Memorandum from June 2020, emphasis is on the formation of a ‘bubble’: ‘to enable those who have formed a bubble with a linked household to stay overnight’.²⁸ For example, ‘Regulation 7A is inserted to make provision setting out the circumstances in which linked households may form a bubble’.²⁹ By November 2020, the ‘support bubble’ is synonymous with the idea of ‘linked household’.³⁰ Regulation 3 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 (November 2020) sets out ‘how these can be formed and changed’.³¹ Regulation 5 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 (November 2020) sets out the ‘linked childcare household’ or ‘childcare bubble’.³² The explanatory memorandum states that the ‘childcare bubble’ ‘permit[s] informal childcare’.³³

Filter bubbles are a metaphor used to describe the way algorithms can shape the content that people see online (especially on social media). This idea of the “bubble” as a space, demarcated by the thin translucent outer coating; working to protect those inside the bubble from social, political, and environmental factors. Whilst these examples of bubbles were constructed by external factors (the legislation with respect to Covid, and algorithms in social media), what is interesting is how women through their actions and reflections use these bubbles/spaces to disrupt and to construct their own spaces.

This raises the following questions for the research project:

- To what extent are private platforms important for fulfilling aspirations (telephone conversations, text messages, informal meetings, email threads)?
- Which types of public spaces are instrumental in fulfilling aspirations of women collectives: use of formal public institutions including courts, executive, parliament³⁴ or online (social media including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)?

²⁶ For a discussion on the introduction of ‘childcare bubbles’ see Baroness Penn, ‘Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Working Parents and School Closures’ (18 January 2021) Volume 809: ‘we have put in place far more support to parents during the current lockdown compared with when schools were previously closed; for example, they have the right to form a childcare bubble to help with their childcare demands’

²⁷ Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020, (30 November 2020, in force 2 December 2020) No. 1374 [7.10]

²⁸ Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No.4) Regulations 2020 (June 2020) No. 588 [3.1]

²⁹ Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No.4) Regulations 2020 (June 2020) No. 588 [6.15]

³⁰ Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020, (30 November 2020, in force 2 December 2020) No. 1374 [6.11]

³¹ The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020, (30 November 2020, in force 2 December 2020) regulation 3

³² The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020, (30 November 2020, in force 2 December 2020) regulation 5

³³ Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020, (30 November 2020, in force 2 December 2020) No. 1374 [6.13]

³⁴ See Sydney Calkin, Fiona de Londras and Gina Heathcote, ‘abortion in Ireland: introduction to the themed issue’ (2020) 124 feminist review 1-14; Máiréad Enright, ‘four pieces on Repeal: notes on art, aesthetics and the struggle against Ireland’s abortion law’ (2020) 124 feminist review 104-123; Máiréad Enright, Kathryn McNeilly and Fiona de Londras, ‘Abortion activism, legal change, and taking feminist law work seriously’ (2020) 71(3) NILQ

- What are the access restrictions or requirements for public spaces: physical (accessing country sides;³⁵ permission to demonstrate/march in key locations in major cities³⁶?

3. Archiving

Archiving can be understood as a process, rather than a place.³⁷ As process, archiving is about bringing materials into relationships. Mawani argues that an archive is not a ‘repository’, but ‘a dynamic, incomplete, and fiercely disputed site of knowledge production’.³⁸ Archiving can be understood as a method, as a way of organising research data.³⁹ Feminist archiving theory builds on this idea of archive as a process or a method to consider the emotional impacts and labour of archiving.⁴⁰ Feminist archiving practices and theory highlight the need to consider ‘alternative methods for reading the archive, through a reorganisation and re-selection of knowledge’.⁴¹ We also need to consider the range of formal and informal archives.

The concepts of archiving and space overlap in two distinct ways: (1) with respect to the archiving of the creation and use of spaces (public, private, and online), (2) with respect to the archive as a space. Feminist archivist theorist, Jenna Ashton, reminds us that we need to consider where these archives are and who has access to them.⁴² Building on the question of ‘access’, Ashton reflects on how access to archives is often a ‘pre-structured’ experience.⁴³ Instead, she calls for a more ‘active relationship with the archive’.⁴⁴ Reflecting on archives as ‘spaces’, Ashton shows how archives are often built in physical sites (which in and of itself can restrict access) that can shift the focus onto preservation. Adopting Massey’s approach to space-time, where space is continually being re-made, an archive that seeks to preserve (or to lock down time) ‘contradicts flow and movement and interrelations of the archive’.⁴⁵ Rachel

³⁵ Ruth Fletcher, ‘#RepealedThe8th: Translating Travesty, Global Conversation, and the Irish Abortion Referendum’ (2018) 26 *Feminist Legal Studies* 233-259; Ruth Fletcher, ‘cheeky witnessing’ (2020) 124 *feminist review* 124-141

³⁶ Ruth Fletcher, ‘#RepealedThe8th: Translating Travesty, Global Conversation, and the Irish Abortion Referendum’ (2018) 26 *Feminist Legal Studies* 233-259; Ruth Fletcher, ‘cheeky witnessing’ (2020) 124 *feminist review* 124-141

³⁷ Conversation between Professor Jane Kamensky (#metoo Digital Collection, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University), Dr Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository Ireland) who will discuss their experience archiving social movements and working with communities, feminist participatory approaches, and histories of protest. (25th May 2021)

³⁸ Renisa Mawani, ‘Law’s Archive’ (2012) 8 *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 337, 339

³⁹ Conversation between Professor Jane Kamensky (#metoo Digital Collection, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University), Dr Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository Ireland) who will discuss their experience archiving social movements and working with communities, feminist participatory approaches, and histories of protest. (25th May 2021)

⁴⁰ Conversation between Professor Jane Kamensky (#metoo Digital Collection, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University), Dr Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository Ireland) who will discuss their experience archiving social movements and working with communities, feminist participatory approaches, and histories of protest. (25th May 2021)

⁴¹ Digital Women’s Archive North, ‘The Feminist are Cackling in the Archive...’ (2017) 115 *feminist review* 155-164

⁴² Jenna Ashton, ‘Feminist Archiving [a manifesto continued]: Skilling for Activism and Organising (2017) 32(91-92) *Australian Feminist Studies* 126-149

⁴³ Jenna Ashton, ‘Feminist Archiving [a manifesto continued]: Skilling for Activism and Organising (2017) 32(91-92) *Australian Feminist Studies* 126, 139

⁴⁴ Jenna Ashton, ‘Feminist Archiving [a manifesto continued]: Skilling for Activism and Organising (2017) 32(91-92) *Australian Feminist Studies* 126, 127

⁴⁵ Jenna Ashton, ‘Feminist Archiving [a manifesto continued]: Skilling for Activism and Organising (2017) 32(91-92) *Australian Feminist Studies* 126, 134

Brady, when discussing the Linen Hall Library in Northern Ireland, highlights the importance of the library, archive and museum as being a safe space that women and minority groups can access and feel comfortable accessing.⁴⁶ This is particularly important in the context of the cases for this project - Northern/Ireland and England - where state national archives hold the “official histories of the state”, such archives are often privileged by researchers as ‘the only authorized sources of historical knowledge’,⁴⁷ but which have often failed to archive the histories of women, minority groups.⁴⁸

With respect to the archiving of the creation and use of space, there are particular challenges around archiving social media. This is because there are questions about whether it is a public or private space,⁴⁹ how to protect privacy, and how to ensure continued access to the materials.⁵⁰ social media played an important role in the case studies in this project. With respect to reproductive health, there were Facebook (e.g. ‘InHerShoes’ and Twitter campaigns (including the use of hashtags). With respect to home education during the pandemic, people shared resources via social media (e.g. Whatsapp, Facebook, and Instagram).⁵¹

Thinking of archiving alongside women’s action and reflection, raises questions about the role of the archive and the role of the archivist. There is work on ‘archival activism’, which highlights how archival activism works to challenge what an archive is and who can be an archivist.⁵² It also raises questions about how women want their stories to be documented; or, about how they want to be represented within an archive.⁵³

This raises the following questions for the research project:

⁴⁶ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

⁴⁷ Renisa Mawani, ‘Law’s Archive’ (2012) 8 Annual Review of Law and Social Science 337, 240

⁴⁸ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021). See also Helen Berry, ‘Gertrude Bell and the ‘Woman Question’ by Helen Berry’ (INSIGHTS Public Lectures, 21 July 2020)

⁴⁹ Conversation between Dr Barry Houlihan (National University of Ireland, Galway), Orla Egan (Cork LGBT Archive), Paul Dudman (University of East London) and Dr Aileen O’Carroll (Digital Repository of Ireland) who will discuss how we can preserve health and cultural debates as well as develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of minority communities in archives. (8th June 2021)

⁵⁰ Conversation between Professor Jane Kamensky (#metoo Digital Collection, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University), Dr Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository Ireland) who will discuss their experience archiving social movements and working with communities, feminist participatory approaches, and histories of protest. (25th May 2021)

⁵¹ Indeed, the World Bank developed a toolkit that suggested people use these social media platforms to share resources: World Bank Group, ‘Remote Learning response to Covid-19 Knowledge Pack’ (October 2020). There are studies that have looked at how primary teachers made use of social media for knowledge exchange; John Parkin and Sara Spear, ‘Staying connected: The informal learning of primary teachers during the COVID-19 lockdown to meet the challenges of emergency remote learning’ (September 2021)

⁵² Conversation between Dr Barry Houlihan (National University of Ireland, Galway), Orla Egan (Cork LGBT Archive), Paul Dudman (University of East London) and Dr Aileen O’Carroll (Digital Repository of Ireland) who will discuss how we can preserve health and cultural debates as well as develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of minority communities in archives. (8th June 2021)

⁵³ Conversation between Dr Barry Houlihan (National University of Ireland, Galway), Orla Egan (Cork LGBT Archive), Paul Dudman (University of East London) and Dr Aileen O’Carroll (Digital Repository of Ireland) who will discuss how we can preserve health and cultural debates as well as develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of minority communities in archives. (8th June 2021)

- What is an archive? Where are the archives located and who has access to these archives?
- What does it mean to do archival work?
- Who is an archivist?
- What is the role of academia and research in archiving women's collectives?⁵⁴
- What is the role of law in archiving women's collectives?

The next two sub-sections will explore how women's experiences of Reproductive Health in Northern/Ireland and Education during Covid-19 in England have been documented and archived.

3.1 Archiving and Case Study 1: Reproductive Health

There is already academic work on the processes of archiving the campaigns for abortion reform in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Kath Browne and Sydney Calkin edited a collection *After Repeal: Rethinking Abortion Politics* (Bloomsbury 2020) which explores the work of the campaigns around the referendum in Ireland in 2018 on abortion as well as the implications of the referendum result. Chapters in *After Repeal* reflect on 'campaigning for repeal in rural Ireland',⁵⁵ as well as canvassing in Dublin Bay North,⁵⁶ and the role of public art.⁵⁷ Fiona Bloomer and Emma Campbell have edited two anthologies on the reform process in Northern Ireland. The first anthology is entitled, *Decriminalizing Abortion in Northern Ireland: Legislation and Protest* (Bloomsbury 2022). This book aims to document how the change in abortion law was achieved, with a particular focus on the legislative processes and legal activism, and the chapters are written by people directly involved in the processes. The second anthology is entitled, *Decriminalizing Abortion in Northern Ireland: Allies and Abortion Provision* (Bloomsbury 2022). This book focuses on abortion provision, looking at 'how the movement has relied upon an intersectional network of social movement actors'. As these academic edited collections and anthologies include work by those directly involved in the protests, reform processes, and legislative changes, these academic texts act as an archive.

In Ireland, there is further academic work on archiving "Repeal the 8th" campaign. For example, the 'Digital Preservation of Reproductive Health Resources: Archiving the 8th', which is funded by the Wellcome Trust. On 8th March 2022, a series of pilot collections were published:

- **Abortion Rights Campaign – Marches for Choice.** The collection includes photographs and videos from the three Marches for Choice, organised by the Abortion Rights Campaign, and held in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The collection also includes posters, flyers and leaflets. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.m9012j507>
- **Together for Yes – Publicity Materials.** The collection includes posters, logos and flyers. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.nv93js94h>

⁵⁴ For a discussion on the role of oral history projects in archiving see, Margaretta Jolly, 'Conclusion. Archiving Hope: The Future of Feminist Memory' in *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of the UK Women's Liberation Movement, 1968-present* (OUP 2019)

⁵⁵ Mary McGill, '“Enough judgement“: reflections on campaigning for repeal in rural Ireland' in Kath Browne and Sydney Calkin (eds), *After Repeal: Rethinking Abortion Politics* (Bloomsbury 2020) 109-123

⁵⁶ Niamh McDonald, Kate Antosik-Parsons, Karen E Till, Gerry Kearns, and Jack Callan, 'Campaigning for choice: canvassing as feminist pedagogy in Dublin Bay North' in Kath Browne and Sydney Calkin (eds), *After Repeal: Rethinking Abortion Politics* (Bloomsbury 2020) 124-143

⁵⁷ Lorna O'Hara, 'Maser's "Repeal the 8th" mural: the power of public art in the age of social media' in Kath Browne and Sydney Calkin (eds), *After Repeal: Rethinking Abortion Politics* (Bloomsbury 2020) 159-173

- **Coalition to Repeal the Eighth – Publicity Materials.** This collection includes publicity materials including logos, images of merchandise and posters used by the Coalition between 2015-2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.nz80kp78c>.
- **Terminations for Medical Reasons – Publicity Materials.** This collection contains publicity materials, including online banners, logos and press releases from 2015-2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.ns06hx10g>.
- **In Her Shoes: Women of the Eighth – Facebook Posts.** This collection archives the Facebook page where women shared their experiences of being denied access to healthcare and travelling abroad for healthcare. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.wm11nd02p>.
- **Posters and City Streets: The Linguistic Landscape of the Eighth Amendment Referendum Campaign – Photos.** This collection contains images of signage used in the 2018 Referendum (432 images). The images were collected in the week before the vote in May 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.ww72r301c>.
- **Physician Advocacy and Reproductive Rights in Ireland: Doctors for Choice – Oral history interviews.** The interviews were conducted in 2019 with current and former committee members of Doctors for Choice. Doctors for Choice are an Irish pro-choice physician advocacy group. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.z3173r875-1>.
- **Re(al) Productive Justice Project: Gender and Disabilities – Oral history interviews.** DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.ws85q6171>.
- **RetweetThe8th: Twitter dataset from the 2018 Referendum.** This dataset contains the IDs of 2,108,782 tweets collected between 9th March 2018 and 30th May 2018.

Another such project, which is also funded by the Wellcome Foundation, is called ‘Archiving the 8th’.⁵⁸ Taking the form of a series of online conversations, this work was important to shaping our ideas about archiving reproductive health campaigns in Northern/Ireland. This work highlighted the locations of archiving practices on the campaigns for abortion reform in Northern/Ireland, and shared lessons from previous archiving processes. Lessons were shared about the importance of actively archiving campaigns during the campaign. For example, in relation to previous activism in Ireland on Marriage Equality, Tonie Walsh – Director of Irish Queer Archive – shared the lesson of keeping three copies of everything.⁵⁹ Reflections on the Marriage Equality campaign highlighted how archiving practices can give rise to a narrow version of the campaign, which can become centred on major cities (in this instance, Dublin) and focus on the activities of a small group of people.⁶⁰ This highlights the importance of collecting rural and urban experiences.

Archives of political campaigns can give the impression of a snap-shot of time, focused on the ephemera of the final stages of the campaign, and obscure the decades of activism that went uncollected.⁶¹ For this reason, ‘Archiving the 8th’ supported efforts across Ireland to archive women’s reproductive rights ‘spanning the two abortion referenda in Ireland (1983-2018)’.⁶²

⁵⁸ <https://archivingthe8th.ucd.ie/about/>

⁵⁹ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

⁶⁰ Conversation between Dr Barry Houlihan (National University of Ireland, Galway), Orla Egan (Cork LGBT Archive), Paul Dudman (University of East London) and Dr Aileen O’Carroll (Digital Repository of Ireland) who will discuss how we can preserve health and cultural debates as well as develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of minority communities in archives. (8th June 2021)

⁶¹ Conversation between Dr Barry Houlihan (National University of Ireland, Galway), Orla Egan (Cork LGBT Archive), Paul Dudman (University of East London) and Dr Aileen O’Carroll (Digital Repository of Ireland) who will discuss how we can preserve health and cultural debates as well as develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of minority communities in archives. (8th June 2021)

⁶² <https://archivingthe8th.ucd.ie/about/>

3D materials, (especially large items) for example banners and backdrops, are difficult to store. The scale of these materials reflects the creation/use of public space by the activist. For example, the 8ft high panels that were used as backdrops for the “Repeal the 8th” meetings in public spaces.⁶³ Karl Hayden recommends photographing these large-scale items in situ,⁶⁴ this works to capture the very creation and use of space by the activists.

There is a concern about the archiving of digital materials. There is no international standard for digital materials, and yet campaigns such as “Repeal the 8th”, and related campaigns, were focused on Twitter and Facebook.⁶⁵ There is a need to think about the creation and use of these online spaces and how these are archived. One example, is the archiving of the ‘In Her Shoes’ Facebook page. This Facebook page is being preserved as part of the ‘Digital Preservation of Health Resources: Archiving Reproductive Health’ project and will be archived at the Digital Repository of Ireland. This project was funded by The Wellcome Trust to archive the digital footprint of the Repeal Campaign. The ‘Statement on Archiving In Her Shoes collection’ highlights some of the challenges of archiving social media (public, online, digital) posts. Firstly, there is a question of access: ‘[a]ccess to the majority of individual abortion stories will be restricted to people engaged in teaching and research’.⁶⁶ Access will be granted on a case by case basis and can only be used for educational purposes.⁶⁷ Such access restrictions are the result of legislation around Copyright and GDPR. The project has chosen not to archive the comments, likes, or other engagements with the posts.

Another example of an archive of social media campaigns is the Schlesinger Library in the US, which holds an archive of the #MeToo movement. At the Schlesinger Library archive, tweets by supporters and critics of the movement are collected. This is to ensure ideological neutrality, which is a form of archival activism given the historical use of archives to construct particular versions of a state’s and people’s histories. Yet, archiving both sides of a debate is still a stance and not neutrality. Rather, than seeking neutrality (as all archives are dependent on choices), there is an importance of ensuring multiplicity.⁶⁸

Users of twitter engage with topics through ‘likes’, ‘retweets’, and replies. The ‘dynamism’ of these engagements and interactions, which give rise to a network of accounts, raises a challenge for the archiving process. Studies into mis- and dis-information highlight the difficulty of identifying whether a tweet is ironic or sarcastic outside of its context,⁶⁹ and that raises a challenge for the archive.

⁶³ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

⁶⁴ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

⁶⁵ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

⁶⁶ [Digital Preservation of Reproductive Health Resources: Archiving the 8th | Digital Repository Ireland \(dri.ie\)](https://dri.ie/digital-preservation-of-reproductive-health-resources-archiving-the-8th)

⁶⁷ [Digital Preservation of Reproductive Health Resources: Archiving the 8th | Digital Repository Ireland \(dri.ie\)](https://dri.ie/digital-preservation-of-reproductive-health-resources-archiving-the-8th)

⁶⁸ Conversation between Professor Jane Kamensky (#metoo Digital Collection, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University), Dr Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Natalie Harrower (Digital Repository Ireland) who will discuss their experience archiving social movements and working with communities, feminist participatory approaches, and histories of protest. (25th May 2021)

⁶⁹ See, Sara K Yep and Meghan McKasy, ‘Emotion and humor as misinformation antidotes’ (2021) 118(15) Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; Victoria L Rubin, Niall J Conroy, Yimin Chen, and Sarah

Additional examples of archiving initiatives in Northern Ireland:

- **Linen Hall Library (Northern Ireland)**

The Linen Hall Library was established in 1788 and situated in Belfast. The extraORDINARYwomen collection is a ‘collections-based community drive heritage project’.⁷⁰ The exhibition retells the experience of women in Northern Ireland from 1965 onwards. Within the online collections at Linen Hall for “abortion”, there are documents from 1980s, as well as modern leaflets from 2019. This includes a copy of the House of Commons Official Report: Parliamentary Debates from 16th October 2019.⁷¹ There are examples of t-shirts, such as the Alliance for Choice #AbortionRightsNI t-shirt.⁷² There are photographs, including of an Alliance for Choice rally,⁷³ and stickers from the Alliance for Choice.⁷⁴

- **2021 Turner Prize for the Array Collective**

The Array Collective artists are 11 artists from Northern Ireland. They were awarded the Turner Prize for their abortion themed work. The winning piece of artwork is called *The Druithaib’s Ball*, which is a shebeen [an illicit drinking den] adorned in banners advocating reproductive rights.⁷⁵

Additional examples of archiving initiatives in Ireland:

- **National Museum of Ireland**

The National Museum of Ireland aims to capture the “instant history” of [the] abortion referendum’.⁷⁶ Museum curators have collected posters, and issued calls for flags, banners and signs as well as airline boarding passes of the women who flew back to Ireland to vote in the referendum.

- **The National Gallery of Ireland**

The National Gallery of Ireland issues calls for people to send in materials that were of “artistic intent and merit” and tied to the referendum.⁷⁷

- **Dublin City Council Library**

Cornwell, ‘Fake News or Truth? Using Satirical Cues to Detect Potentially Misleading News’ (2016) Proceedings of NAACL-HLT 7-17

⁷⁰ <https://linenhall.com/about-us/extraordinarywomen/>

⁷¹ House of Commons Official Report: Parliamentary Debates from 16th October 2019. NIPC/SAN/BOX1(1)

⁷² Linen Hall Library NIPC/CON/BOX1(19)

⁷³ Linen Hall Library NIPC/CON/BOX1(26); Linen Hall Library NIPC/CON/BOX1(22)

⁷⁴ Linen Hall Library NIPC/CON/BOX1(8)

⁷⁵ <http://www.arraystudiosbelfast.com/array-collective.html>

⁷⁶ Alex Marshall, ‘How the National Museum is capturing “instant history” of abortion referendum’ (*The Irish Times*, 21 June 2018) <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/how-the-national-museum-is-capturing-instant-history-of-abortion-referendum-1.3537495>

⁷⁷ Alex Marshall, ‘How the National Museum is capturing “instant history” of abortion referendum’ (*The Irish Times*, 21 June 2018) <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/how-the-national-museum-is-capturing-instant-history-of-abortion-referendum-1.3537495>

Dublin City Council Library announced that it was looking for ephemera related to the referendum.⁷⁸ It created a ‘digital archive of hundreds of memorial cards and mementos left at a mural in the city dedicated to Savita Halappanavar’.⁷⁹

- **The National Library of Ireland**

The National Library of Ireland assembled a ‘web archive of websites, social media content and YouTube clips’.⁸⁰

- ***The 8th* (film 2020)**

The 8th (2020) is a documentary film that tells the story of the campaign to repeal the 36th amendment of the Irish Constitution. The film was directed by Aideen Kane, Lucy Kennedy, and Maeve O’Boyle. The film is described as telling a story of ‘grassroots activism engineering change’.⁸¹ The film includes voices from both sides of the debate on repeal. It focuses, however, on the leaders of the pro-choice campaign.

Legal and political documents also act as archives. For example, the House of Commons debates on decriminalising abortion is held in an archive, and it acts as an archive of the debates, positions, choices, and voices that were part of the political processes of reform. Legal academics have shown the incomplete archive of a legal text (such as a judgment or set of court documents). These texts often exclude the voices and experiences of activists working behind the scenes to bring about reform. For example, the House of Commons Research Briefing on ‘Abortion in Northern Ireland: recent changes to the legal framework’ (27 April 2022) is a record of the changes to the law on abortion in Northern Ireland, where some recognition is given to the role played by Stella Creasy MP and Baroness Barker in tabling amendments.⁸²

⁷⁸ Alex Marshall, ‘How the National Museum is capturing “instant history” of abortion referendum’ (*The Irish Times*, 21 June 2018) <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/how-the-national-museum-is-capturing-instant-history-of-abortion-referendum-1.3537495>

⁷⁹ Museums Association, ‘Collecting drive gets underway after Irish abortion referendum’ (30 May 2018) <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2018/05/30052018-collecting-underway-after-irish-referendum/#>

⁸⁰ Museums Association, ‘Collecting drive gets underway after Irish abortion referendum’ (30 May 2018) <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2018/05/30052018-collecting-underway-after-irish-referendum/#>

⁸¹ <https://the8thfilm.com/>

⁸² Elizabeth Rough, House of Commons Research Briefing on ‘Abortion in Northern Ireland: recent changes to the legal framework’ (27 April 2022) 11-12

3.2 Archiving and Case Study 2: Education

Early on in the pandemic, there were initiatives established to record and to collect peoples' experiences of such an historical, traumatic health event such as Covid-19.⁸³ The Appendix documents the archival projects that have arisen in England as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. What this appendix shows is that there is limited explicit focus on collecting the experiences of home-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic; this highlights the possibility of losing the voices of children, parents, and carers from the archives. There was an increased emphasis on social media during the pandemic, as people were forced to find ways to connect from their homes, and women and carers set up WhatsApp groups and Facebook chat groups to share ideas of learning activities. Given that these groups were private digital spaces, there are challenges around how to archive these forms of women's collectivity. One way in which the Covid-19 pandemic (and specifically) the impact on education is recorded is through the legal and political responses to education during lockdowns, and reports on the impact on education. This section will explore these sources as archives.

Legal sources, such as case law and legislative history, act as archives.⁸⁴ The law stores, cancels, and manipulates historical evidence; it 'conceives of, appropriates, and assimilates some knowledges as pertinent to legality while dismissing others as extraneous and non-existent'.⁸⁵ Legal scholars have investigated the archival role of case law and testimonies.⁸⁶ Another example of a source of law-making is Hansard. Hansard is the official report of all Parliamentary debates in the Westminster; this includes debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Hansard can be understood as an archive of UK political debates and legislative-drafting history. It offers a record of the debates on political and legislative responses to Covid-19.

Hansard shows how the experiences of home-schooling during Covid-19 has been archived, but Hansard's archive is limited to two specific ways: (1) the archive is limited as parliamentary debates obscure the experiences of the families involved and instead represent the response of politicians and members of the House of Lords; (2) much of the Covid-19 legislation was secondary legislation (i.e. regulations) and there is less parliamentary scrutiny of secondary legislation, and as a result there are fewer parliamentary debates on the matter.⁸⁷ What follows is a survey of the debates on the provision of education during school closures as a result of Covid-19. For this, the search was set at 1st January 2020 to capture what is discussed with respect to home schooling before the pandemic occurs in England and Wales, and the end date was 19th July 2021, which is the end of all restrictions on social gathering in England and Wales. The following search terms were used 'home schooling', 'home education', 'remote education', 'remote learning', and 'remote teaching'.⁸⁸ For each search term, a visual breakdown of how often the terms were used is given, indicating where there was a peak in the usage of the term, and key examples are highlighted.

⁸³ One such as example took place at Newcastle University, where Sue Farran collected examples of rainbow graffiti. See Sue Farran and Rhona Smith, 'Graffiti in a Time of Covid-19: Spray Paint and the Law' (2021) 32 *King's Law Journal* 84-95

⁸⁴ Renisa Mawani, 'Law's Archive' (2012) 8 *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 337, 354

⁸⁵ Renisa Mawani, 'Law's Archive' (2012) 8 *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 337, 340

⁸⁶ See for example, Marina Velickovic, 'The riddle of history solved: how the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia narrated Bosnia's history' (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2021)

⁸⁷ For a discussion on this point see, Katie Lines, '18 Months of Covid-19 Legislation in England: A Rule of Law Analysis' (Bingham Centre for The Rule of Law, 16th October 2021)

⁸⁸ A search for "remote schooling" (the language used by the Office for National Statistics) brings up only one reference from Wes Streeting on 2nd November at the 'School Attendance: Covid-19' debate.

Many of the debates in Hansard focus on the education that children have missed as a result of the pandemic, with remote learning seen as a poor substitute for in-person teaching in schools; ‘No matter how good remote learning is, it is a poor substitute’.⁸⁹ In contrast to the ‘deficit model’ that focuses on how much education students have missed, and which usually informs the approach taken to home learning during the pandemic,⁹⁰ Selaine Saxby noted the ‘life skills’ children might have learnt during the periods of remote learning:

“I also thank all the parents who have been home-educating, which will have ensured this generation of schoolchildren have learnt many more life skills than perhaps previous generations, given the very difficult year we have all endured.”⁹¹

In the same debate, and reflecting on positive developments, Jim Shannon notes the ways parents and teachers developed networks of communication during periods of school closures:

“I am given to understand that parents have been given access to teaching staff during the pandemic, allowing greater communication. It has been wonderful to build up relationships. That, I believe, should continue when we get out of the pandemic” (Jim Shannon)⁹²

A search for ‘home schooling’ shows:

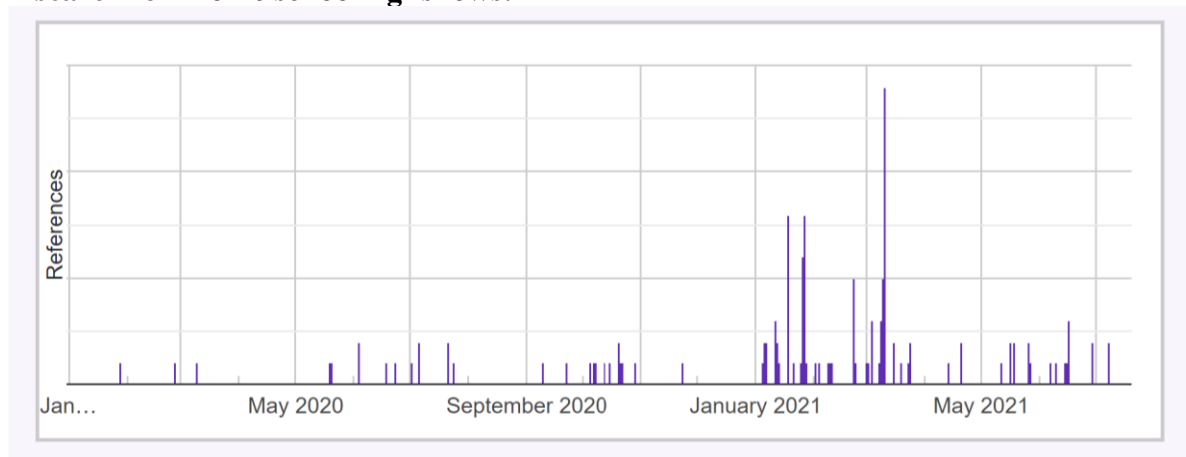


Figure 1 shows number of references to 'home schooling' in Hansard from 1st January 2020 to 19th July 2021. Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Figure 1 shows that there is a peak on 11th March 2021, which refers to 16 references to ‘home schooling’

On the 10th March 2021 there is a debate in the House of Lords on ‘Covid-19: Women’.⁹³ During this debate, Baroness Berridge (Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Education) 13 February 2020 to 17 September 2020) notes ‘recognise that women have taken on more responsibility in the home in terms of childcare and home-schooling’.⁹⁴ On 11th March 2021 the debates in the House of Lords and House of Commons coincide with ‘International Women's Day’. Politicians note that ‘[w]omen have faced pressures in balancing work with

⁸⁹ House of Commons, ‘Remote Education and Free School Meals’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687 (Jack Brereton)

⁹⁰ Matt Bromley, ‘Lost learning? Why we must avoid a deficit teaching model post-lockdown – and how we can do it’ (SecEd, 23 September 2020) <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/lost-learning-why-we-must-avoid-a-deficit-teaching-model-post-lockdown-and-how-we-can-do-it-pedagogy-catch-up-coronavirus/>

⁹¹ House of Commons, ‘Education After Covid-19’ (23rd March 2021) Volume 691

⁹² House of Commons, ‘Education After Covid-19’ (23rd March 2021) Volume 691

⁹³ House of Lords, ‘Covid-19: Women’ (10th March 2021) Volume 810

⁹⁴ House of Lords, ‘Covid-19: Women’ (10th March 2021) Volume 810 (Baroness Berridge)

home schooling and childcare’,⁹⁵ ‘[w]omen have spent more time home schooling and are more likely to have been furloughed and to have experienced anxiety and loneliness’,⁹⁶ and ‘mothers have picked up more of the unpaid care work and more of the home schooling’.⁹⁷

In January 2021, Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe notes the specific pressures on working mothers undertaking home schooling during the pandemic:

“My Lords, will the Minister acknowledge the huge pressure on families, particularly working mums, of prolonged home schooling, made worse by the uncertainty of when schools will reopen?”(Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe)⁹⁸

A search for ‘home education’ shows:

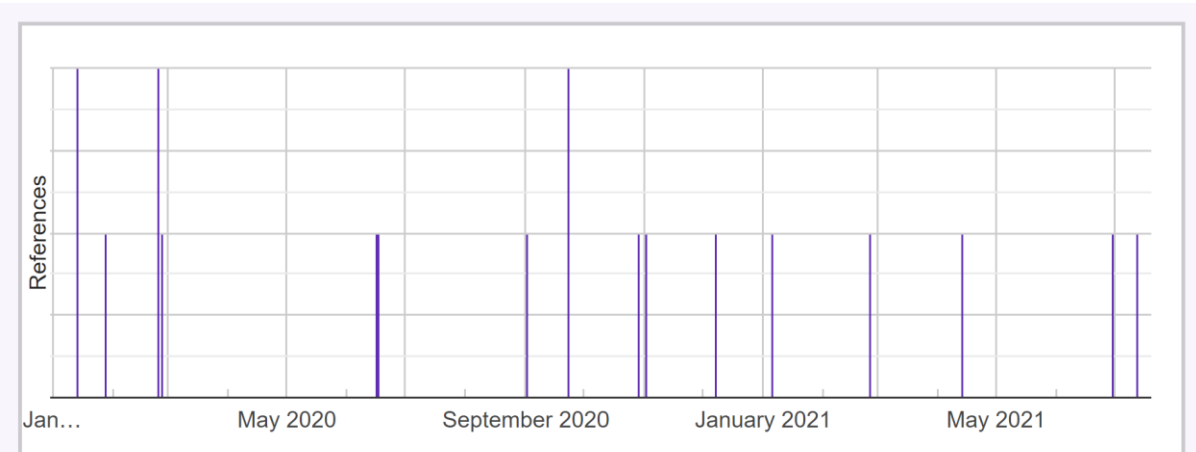


Figure 2 shows number of references to 'home education' in Hansard from 1st January 2020 to 19th July 2021. Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Figure 2 shows that there are peaks on 14th January 2020, 25th February 2020, and 23rd September 2020 with two references each.

In the ‘Education and Local Government’ debate on 14th January 2020, Angela Rayner asks the Government ‘what has happened to their legislation to regulate home education’. This is prescient given that many school children across England and Wales will be home educated from March 2020 during the lockdowns. However, in the debates ‘home education’ often refers to the situation where parents opt to educate their children at home. In the ‘Schools: Spending per Pupil’ debate on 23rd September 2020, the distinction is drawn between ‘delivering home education’ and supervising the curriculum at home. In the ‘Schools and Colleges: Qualification Results and Full Opening’ debate on 2nd September 2020, the discussion concerns the impact on exams. Throughout these debates the view is promulgated that home education is lacking: ‘Some who are in home education are potentially not getting the education they deserve, but we do not have the data’ (Baroness Berridge, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade).

The more relevant search terms used to describe the situation during Covid-19 is “remote” learning/education/teaching. Across the debates, the focus is on the role of schools and teachers in providing and facilitating remote learning as well as a focus on government financial support

⁹⁵ House of Commons, ‘International Women’s Day’ (11th March 2021) Volume 690 (Mrs Maria Miller)

⁹⁶ House of Commons, ‘International Women’s Day’ (11th March 2021) Volume 690 (Ruth Edwards)

⁹⁷ House of Commons, ‘International Women’s Day’ (11th March 2021) Volume (Marsha De Cordova)

⁹⁸ House of Lords, ‘Education Settings: Reopening’ (27th January 2021) Volume 809

to support remote learning such as through the provision of IT support (such as laptops⁹⁹) to vulnerable and disadvantaged students.¹⁰⁰

A search for ‘remote education’ shows:

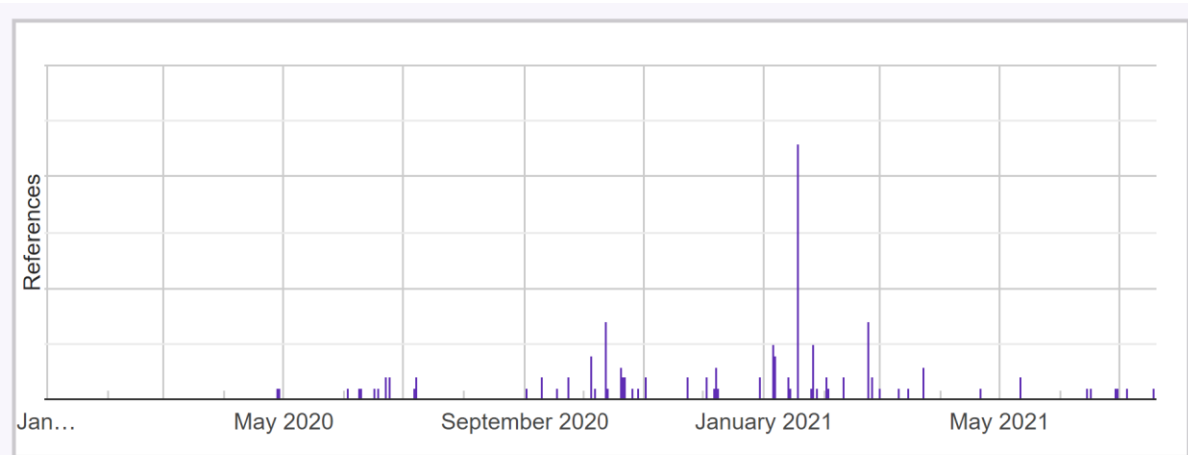


Figure 3 shows number of references to ‘remote education’ in Hansard from 1st January 2020 to 19th July 2021. Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Figure 3 shows a peak in references to ‘remote education’ on 18th January 2021 with 23 references. There are specific debates dedicated to the topic of ‘Remote Education’.¹⁰¹

Across the debates, politicians and members of the House of Lords note the work of teachers and schools in delivering remote education. For example,

“We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the teachers and support staff who have worked so hard in preparing schools, as well as in providing remote education while most pupils were at home.” (Nick Gibb, Minister for School Standards).¹⁰²

Emphasis is placed on guidance and funding provided by the UK government to schools. For example:

“we have updated the remote education guidance for schools to clarify and strengthen expectations, drawing on our evolving understanding of best practice in remote education. The Government are spending £400 million on remote education to help schools and colleges meet those expectations.” ((Nick Gibb, Minister for School Standards).¹⁰³

By December 2020, it is noted that ‘Primary schools need to provide an absolute bare minimum of three hours a day on average of remote education’.¹⁰⁴ Through The Coronavirus Act 2020 Provision of Remote Education (England) Temporary Continuity (No.2) Direction (given by

⁹⁹ See for example, House of Commons, ‘Education: Return in January’ (30 December 2020) Volume 686; House of Commons, ‘Education Route Map: Covid-19’ (25th February 2021) Volume 689

¹⁰⁰ See for example, House of Commons, ‘Equality Act 2010: Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds’ (13th October 2020) Volume 682

¹⁰¹ For example, House of Commons, ‘Remote Education: Covid-19’ (22 June 2020) Volume 677; House of Commons, ‘Remote Education and Free School Meals’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687

¹⁰² House of Commons, ‘Covid-19: Impact on Education’ (15th March 2021) Volume 691

¹⁰³ House of Commons, ‘Covid-19: Schools’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687

¹⁰⁴ House of Lords, ‘Exams and Accountability in 2021’ (8th December 2020) Volume 808

the Secretary of State for Education) there were ‘legally binding requirements for schools to provide high-quality remote education’.¹⁰⁵

A search for ‘remote learning’ shows:

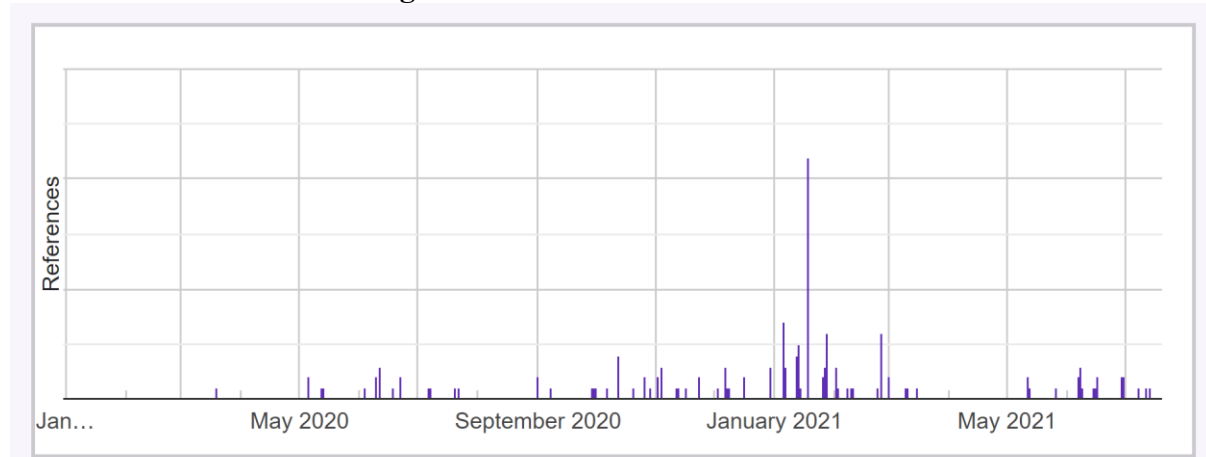


Figure 4 shows number of references to ‘remote learning’ in Hansard from 1st January 2020 to 19th July 2021. Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Figure 4 shows a peak in references to ‘remote learning’ on 18th January with 22 references.

In the debates there are discussions of the role of parents in providing remote learning. For example, in December 2020, Jane Hunt MP for Loughborough highlights the role parents played in remote learning:

“I am grateful for the best efforts of teachers and parents to provide high-quality remote learning as well as in-house learning for vulnerable children and children of key workers during the previous closures earlier in the year.” (Jane Hunt)¹⁰⁶

In January 2021, the following statements were made:

“Parents, too, must be praised for rising to the challenges of combining work, home life and helping their children with virtual and remote school learning.” (Sir David Evennett)¹⁰⁷

“I also thank the many parents who are juggling working from home with helping to home school their children. I was talking to my best friend Michaela last night, and we were giggling at some of the things she was having to teach her young boys because it took us back to our school days. It is very difficult—I probably would not remember some of it myself now—but it is important that those parents are going above and beyond every day.” (Gary Sambrook)¹⁰⁸

The Hansard debates do highlight a diversity of experiences. Whilst some politicians raise the concerns of the constituents with respect to lost education, others note the ‘enhanced’ learning experience of some children. For example, see Bob Seely MP’s statement in March 2021:

“For some, it has not worked, and vulnerable children need to be in the classroom, either with in-person teaching or with tablets. For some kids, however—as far as the

¹⁰⁵ House of Commons, ‘Remote Education and Free School Meals’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687 (Gavin Williamson)

¹⁰⁶ House of Commons, ‘Covid-19: Impact on Schools and Exams’ (7th December 2020) Volume 685

¹⁰⁷ House of Commons, ‘Remote Education and Free School Meals’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687

¹⁰⁸ House of Commons, ‘Remote Education and Free School Meals’ (18th January 2021) Volume 687

teachers to whom I have spoken say—more at-home learning has actually been of real benefit, as has been more interaction with technologists. For example, I understand that some children with autism have benefited from being able to work at home with a more flexible timetable.” (Bob Seely)¹⁰⁹

A search for ‘remote teaching’ shows:

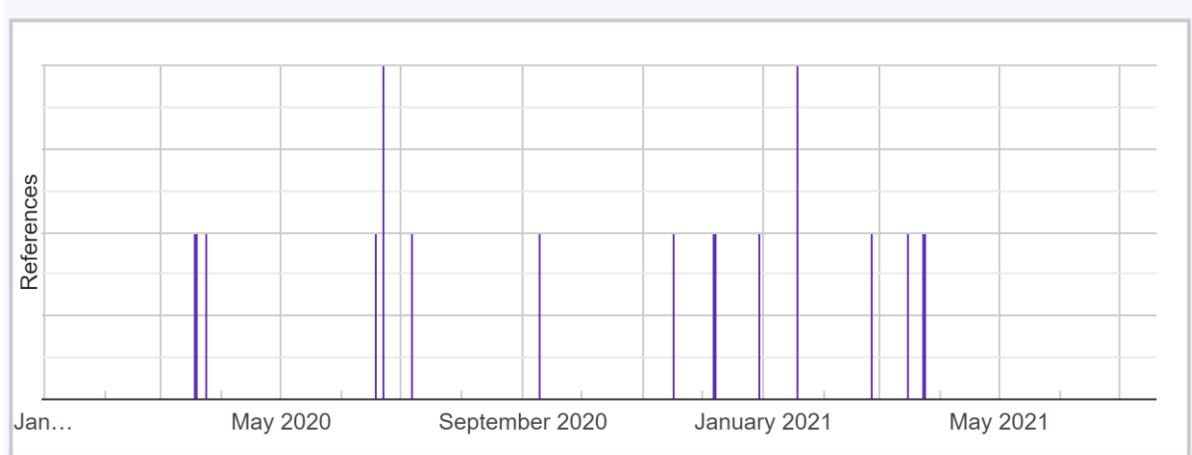


Figure 5 shows number of references to ‘remote teaching’ in Hansard from 1st January 2020 to 19th July 2021. Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Figure 5 shows that there are two peaks with references to ‘remote teaching’ on 22 June 2020 and 18th January 2021, with two references each.

At the start of the pandemic in England, there is discussion in the debates on providing teachers with guidance to support them with remote teaching:

“This is a time of national unity. Everyone is being engaged, including of course the BBC, which, along with other providers, will use its iPlayer system to broadcast educational material, enabling children to still learn while they are at home. Guidance will be going out to teachers about remote teaching” (Baroness Berridge, 19th March 2020)¹¹⁰

Danny Kruger, MP for Devizes notes the role that parents will have to take in education when he asks:

“Is there anything we can do to support schools to deliver remote teaching, and to support parents who want to help with home learning?” (Danny Kruger, 18th March 2020)¹¹¹

In June 2020, the debates are discussing what support the government has given to enable remote teaching. Nick Gibb, The Minister for School Standards, sets out what the UK Government has provided:

“The Government have provided a £100 million package of advice and support to enable remote teaching. That has included delivering laptops and tablets to vulnerable and disadvantaged children and working with the new Oak National Academy, the BBC

¹⁰⁹ House of Commons, ‘Education after Covid-19’ (23rd March 2021) Volume 691

¹¹⁰ House of Lords, ‘Educational Settings’ (19 March 2020) Volume 802

¹¹¹ House of Commons, ‘Educational Settings’ (18 March 2020) Volume 673

and others to ensure strong national availability of remote educational resources.” (Nick Gibb, 22nd June 2020)¹¹²

This survey of the Hansard records shows that there are a few recurring voices that are prominent in the discussions: Nick Gibb and Baroness Berridge. This shows the lack of representation of women’s experiences in the parliamentary debates.

The Office for National Statistics offers an additional archive of the experiences of ‘remote schooling’ during the pandemic. In their report ‘Remote schooling through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, England: April 2020 to June 2021’, it is noted that ‘pupils covered substantially less material when working from home’, with the emphasis being placed on the amount of material children covered.¹¹³ This has been referred to as a “deficit” model.¹¹⁴

4. Silences

There are different types of silences. Silences ‘can refer to being silenced, to not being allowed to speak or use one’s voice without severe consequences, or not being heard or acknowledged.’¹¹⁵

However, ‘silence may also be deliberate, a decision not to engage or an act of resistance.’¹¹⁶ As Sara Ahmed argues, there are circumstances where ‘speech might not be empowering’.¹¹⁷ When looking at silences and women’s collectives, there are many different types of silences that need to be considered: ‘one may silence or be silenced, keep silent out of respect, rage, fear or shame, or even as a mode of resistance.’¹¹⁸ Silences can be used as a tool of oppression, silence can also be used as a strategic tool against oppression.¹¹⁹ Indeed, Carter shows how ‘silence can be a strategy used by the marginalized *against* the powerful’.¹²⁰

The first thing to consider is what is meant by a silence in this project and in the specific case studies. In the Reproductive Healthcare case study, examples might include, silence protests. For example, Ruth Fletcher gives the example of the #Stand4Truth campaign that ‘in the immediate afterlife of #RepealedThe8th help us make sense of the incomplete reparations being done through repeal’, where thousands of people gathered ‘not to protest, but to use their physical presence to provide shelter for those who had suffered sexual abuse. They then walked

¹¹² House of Commons, ‘Remote Education: Covid-19’ (22 June 2020) Volume 677

¹¹³ Office for National Statistics, ‘Remote schooling through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, England: April 2020 to June 2021’ (22 September 2021)

¹¹⁴ Matt Bromley, ‘Lost learning? Why we must avoid a deficit teaching model post-lockdown – and how we can do it’ (SecEd, 23 September 2020) <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/lost-learning-why-we-must-avoid-a-deficit-teaching-model-post-lockdown-and-how-we-can-do-it-pedagogy-catch-up-coronavirus//>

¹¹⁵ Karin M Fierke and Vivienne Jabri, ‘Global conversations: Relationality, embodiment and power in the move towards a Global IR’ (2019) 8(3) *Global Constitutionalism* 506-535, 523

¹¹⁶ Karin M Fierke and Vivienne Jabri, ‘Global conversations: Relationality, embodiment and power in the move towards a Global IR’ (2019) 8(3) *Global Constitutionalism* 506-535, 523

¹¹⁷ Sara Ahmed, ‘Secrets and silence in feminist research’ in Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010) xvi

¹¹⁸ Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill, ‘Introduction’ in Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010) 1

¹¹⁹ Sara Ahmed, ‘Secrets and silence in feminist research’ in Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010) xvi

¹²⁰ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 217

silently to Sean McDermott Street, the site of the last state-owned Magdalene laundry'.¹²¹ Silence was also used by anti-abortion protesters; in September 2019, thousands of people joined a silence protest outside Stormont to oppose the legislation of abortion in Northern Ireland.¹²² In addition to silent protests, Ruth Fletcher also notes the 'silent pauses, at kitchen tables, information stalls, street platforms and media studios'.¹²³ There is also the 'silence' that is created by working out of the public sphere (out of the public eye), for example working behind the scenes to lobby for legal reform. In the Education case study, artists note the silence of the playground,¹²⁴ similarly the silence of the school yard. This shows how silence and space are interconnected and raises questions about the role of play in education.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an important theorist when exploring silence. In her influential essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' she explores the multiplicity of factors that 'obstruct the possibility of being heard for those who inhabit the periphery'.¹²⁵ For Spivak, 'subaltern' 'is the structured place from which the capacity to access power is radically obstructed'.¹²⁶ Her work investigates the factors that work to 'mute the speech of the subaltern woman, to render her speech and her speech acts illegible to those who occupy the space produced by patriarchal complicity (whether of imperialism or globalization), namely the state'.¹²⁷ Spivak's theorisation on silence has often been misunderstood. For example, there are 'those that understand the silence of the subaltern as a simple absence in the record—to be supplemented and transcended by the work of information retrieval (Spivak endorses such retrieval, but she understands it to be a matter distinct from the question of theorizing the impossibility of subaltern speech as audible and legible predication)'.¹²⁸ 'Subalternity is not that which could, if given a ventriloquist, speak the truth of its' because those 'claiming to speak for or give voice to the subaltern cannot ultimately escape the problem of translation'.¹²⁹

Silences are linked to spaces. Spaces (be it in private, public or online) have norms and conventions that can work to silence people, specifically women and minority groups. Law and performance studies have shown the role of customs, rituals, and the uses of spaces in giving authority to the law and strengthening its enforcement,¹³⁰ feminist scholars have shown how these 'performances' that accompany the law and law-making can operate to exclude and silence marginalised groups.¹³¹ Space and time are interconnected, which also means that 'silence and speech have different even contradictory effects given their timing, which is a

¹²¹ Ruth Fletcher, '#RepealedThe8th: Translating Travesty, Global Conversation, and the Irish Abortion Referendum' (2018) 26 *Feminist Legal Studies* 233-259, 249

¹²² 'Thousands take part in silence anti-abortion protest at Stormont' (*The Irish Times*, 6th September 2019) <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/thousands-take-part-in-silent-anti-abortion-protest-at-stormont-1.4010480>

¹²³ Ruth Fletcher, '#RepealedThe8th: Translating Travesty, Global Conversation, and the Irish Abortion Referendum' (2018) 26 *Feminist Legal Studies* 233-259, 254

¹²⁴ Helen Charman, 'Pandemic Objects: Playground' (3 July 2020, V&A Blog) <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/pandemic-objects-playground>

¹²⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988)

¹²⁶ Rosalind C Morris, *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Columbia University Press 2010) 8

¹²⁷ Rosalind C Morris, *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Columbia University Press 2010) 3

¹²⁸ Rosalind C Morris, *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Columbia University Press 2010) 2

¹²⁹ Rosalind C Morris, *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Columbia University Press 2010) 8

¹³⁰ Julie Stone Peters, 'Legal performance good and bad' (2008) 4 *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 179-200

¹³¹ Ruth Houghton and Aoife O'Donoghue, 'Manifestos as Constituent Power: Performing a Feminist Revolution' *Global Constitutionalism* (forthcoming)

question not simply of their time, but also of the place in which we reside at a given moment of time, the worlds we find ourselves in'.¹³²

Silence is also linked to archives. There are silences in the archive; Hannah Ishmael's research draws on Michel-Rolph Trouillot to show how silences in the archive are not created equally.¹³³ Trouillot outlines four ways that silences enter the colonial record of history: (1) the process of fact creation, (2) the process of fact assembly, (3) through narratives and 'fact retrieval', and (4) 'in the writing of history and in its retrospective significance'.¹³⁴ Carter outlines three types of archival silences: (1) where dissenting views of suppressed, specifically where the dissenting views of marginalised groups are suppressed by more powerful groups; (2) when 'an individual speaks but they have no authority behind them',¹³⁵ and so the 'speech act' is not acknowledged, and therefore silence is tied with the audience's perception of the speaker; (3) where the materials produced are not recognised as 'records by the archives', this could be because they are from oral traditions for example.¹³⁶ Carter then demonstrates how there are 'traditional, male forms of heroic resistance', which marginalised groups' acts of resistance and disruption are being measured against; those acts of resistance are not included in an archive because they have not met the "criteria of effectiveness" to merit archiving and hence, a gap/silence is created.¹³⁷

The question then becomes about how to look for these silences or absences. Hedges and Fishkin proffer one strategy of 'listening to silences'.¹³⁸ Jolly calls for 'feminist silence and deep listening'.¹³⁹ Listening is important within feminist legal methodology too; Di Otto proffers the strategy of 'responsible listening', which challenges us to 'think about our collective responsibility to find ways to act on these stories in the present and support the struggles for justice that were being related'.¹⁴⁰

The related question then becomes about how to respond to a silence in the archive. As Carter states, 'When a silence is discovered, there is the automatic desire to fill it with records'.¹⁴¹ Samuels argues that it can be the role of the archivist to fill these gaps.¹⁴² Similarly, Luciana

¹³² Sara Ahmed, 'Secrets and silence in feminist research' in Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010) xvi

¹³³ Conversation between Karl Hayden (Yes Equality), Rachel Brady (Linen Hall Library, Belfast), Dr Hannah Ishmael (University College London) and Dr Sinéad Kennedy (NUI Maynooth) who will discuss structural and institutional barriers to preserving activism and the experiences of marginalised people. (15th June 2021)

¹³⁴ MR Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon 1995) Cited in Renisa Mawani, 'Law's Archive' (2012) 8 Annual Review of Law and Social Science 337, 346

¹³⁵ Rodney G S Carter, 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence' 61 *Archivaria* 218

¹³⁶ Rodney G S Carter, 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence' 61 *Archivaria* 219

¹³⁷ Rodney G S Carter, 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence' 61 *Archivaria* 228

¹³⁸ Elaine Hedges and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, eds., *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism* (New York, 1994)

¹³⁹ Margaretta Jolly, 'Conclusion. Archiving Hope: The Future of Feminist Memory' in *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of the UK Women's Liberation Movement, 1968-present* (OUP 2019)

¹⁴⁰ Dianne Otto, 'Beyond legal justice: some personal reflections on people's tribunals, listening and responsibility' (2017) 5(2) *London Review of International Law* 225, 239

¹⁴¹ Rodney G S Carter, 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence' 61 *Archivaria* 225

¹⁴² Helen Willa Samuels, 'Who Controls the Past?' (1986) 49(2) *American Archivist* 122 cited in Rodney G S Carter, 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence' 61 *Archivaria*

Duranti and Barbara Craig argue that the archivist has a role in documenting the silences.¹⁴³ However, there is a difference between inviting marginalised groups to contribute to an archive and an archivist creating records on their behalf.¹⁴⁴ Highlighting a silence can flag where groups have been excluded from political processes and discourses and operate as ‘an indication of their presence’,¹⁴⁵ silence can also be a mobilizing force, where the silence must be broken.¹⁴⁶ However, filling the silence as a way to highlight a group’s exclusion can be problematic ‘as it can be understood as further excluding groups of people’.¹⁴⁷ Carter draws a distinction between the ‘unnatural silences’, where silence has been imposed on people, and ‘natural silences’, where the silence is a choice.¹⁴⁸ Carter argues that silences that are imposed on people must be ‘combated by the archivist’, but silences of choice ‘must be respected’.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, as Carter notes, being ‘consigned to the archive means they can/will be forgotten’.¹⁵⁰ Carter argues that ‘[b]y remaining outside the archive, the narrative must remain alive’, as groups pass on their stories and experiences through other means (such as oral traditions).¹⁵¹ Marginalised groups might have chosen *not* to have their experiences, work, and texts archived.¹⁵² This raises a further question about whether marginalised groups want to be included in an archive.

Feminist scholarship is usually attuned to breaking silences; ‘Feminist research has a tradition of demanding that the unseen and the unacknowledged be made visible and heard.’¹⁵³ This section has reflected on the different types of silences, and what the challenges that this poses for archiving practices.

This raises the following questions for the research project:

¹⁴³ Luciana Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’ (1994) 57(2) *American Archivist* 341 and Barbara L. Craig, ‘Selected Themes in the Literature on Memory and Their Pertinence to Archives’ (2002) 65(2) *American Archivist* 282 cited in Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 225

¹⁴⁴ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 226

¹⁴⁵ Sophia Dingli, ‘We Need to Talk about Silence: Re-examining Silence in International Relations theory’ (2015) 21(4) *European Journal of International Relations* 721, 724 cited in Ruth Houghton and Aoife O’Donoghue, ‘“OurWorld”: A feminist approach to global constitutionalism’ (2020) 9(1) *Global Constitutionalism* 38-75

¹⁴⁶ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press 1984) 42 cited in Ruth Houghton and Aoife O’Donoghue, ‘“OurWorld”: A feminist approach to global constitutionalism’ (2020) 9(1) *Global Constitutionalism* 38-75

¹⁴⁷ Benita Parry, ‘Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse’ (1987) 9(1/2) *Oxford Literary Review* 27, 35 (Parry is responding to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Macmillan, 1988)) cited in Ruth Houghton and Aoife O’Donoghue, ‘“OurWorld”: A feminist approach to global constitutionalism’ (2020) 9(1) *Global Constitutionalism* 38-75

¹⁴⁸ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 228

¹⁴⁹ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 228

¹⁵⁰ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 230

¹⁵¹ Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 230

¹⁵² Rodney G S Carter, ‘Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence’ 61 *Archivaria* 227

¹⁵³ Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill, ‘Introduction’ in Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010) 1

- What silences are there around women’s collectives in the archives (i.e. to what extent are the women’s collectives in these two case studies being archived)?
- How are silences used by women’s collectives?
- How are these silences archived?
 - How should silence be represented in an archive without excluding or further oppressing marginalised groups?
 - How should different silences be represented within an archive (ie the difference between being silenced and using silence strategically)?
- How are silences overlooked by scholarship?¹⁵⁴

5. Conclusions

This literature review expands on some of the core ideas that are at the heart of the *Bridging the Local and Global* project: spaces, archiving, and silences. It draws on literature across disciplines (including law, geography, archival studies, feminist theory). Spaces, silences and archiving can be used and understood differently across the two cases studies.

This literature review raises a number of questions which can be considered as the project develops:

- How are spaces of action and reflection created and used by women? Specifically, how do women activists create and use different spaces in their calls for legal reform to reproductive healthcare, and how do mothers create and use spaces for education?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of archiving women’s actions and reflections within the private sphere?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of archiving women’s actions and reflections within the public sphere?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of archiving women’s actions and reflections within the physical space?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of archiving women’s actions and reflections within the online/digital space?
- How can silences be archived?

Acknowledgments

This project is funded by the British Academy Virtual Sandpits Follow on Funding: VSFoFGD\100020.

With special thanks to the work of the ‘Archiving the 8th’ seminar series and the participants, which provided information about the archiving process for reproductive health campaigns in Northern/Ireland and highlighted the conceptual challenges of archiving these campaigns. As a feminist piece of work, I acknowledge those who have been part of the conversations that have informed this work: Jane Rooney, Aliya Khalid, Alana Farrell, Kate Spencer-Bennett, and Lavinia Kamphausen.

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion see Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (eds), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections* (Routledge 2010)

Appendix

Phase One of the project set out to map what is recorded about education in the pandemic in Birmingham, Bradford and London. The following Appendix documents the findings of archival practices that were established in Birmingham, London and then across England. Bradford was originally selected as a city of focus for the education case study because of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities living and working in Bradford. Given that the focus of Case Study 2 moved away from focusing exclusively on Birmingham and Bradford, this section will detail a range of efforts across England to archive education during Covid-19 so as to reflect on what is being collected, by whom and where. Preliminary findings show that the majority of archival initiatives are still in the process of collecting and archiving the materials, which means that the materials and stories are not available to the public yet. In addition, preliminary findings suggest that there is less of a focus on documenting the experiences of children and their experiences of learning at home.¹⁵⁵

Birmingham Archives on Education during Covid-19

The Birmingham City Council created the ‘Birmingham’s memories of Covid-19’ webpage that records peoples’ memories and stories. As of April 2022, there were 46 responses. One of the submissions is from 14-year-old Iona Mandal, who discusses school closing.¹⁵⁶

In Kidderminster, in November 2020, the town’s Heritage Opportunities Group announced plans to bury a time capsule to record memories of life during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Heritage group appealed for ‘Covid-related memorabilia, particularly photos such as neighbours clapping for the NHS or showing food deliveries for the vulnerable and other acts of kindness’.¹⁵⁷ What is interesting about their focus, is that it is on the few activities that still took place in “public” during the lockdowns. The call continues:

‘This can include the imaginative way some people put over messages relating to mask wearing, social distancing and hand-washing. Or contributors may like to write articles outlining how the pandemic caused disruption to family events such as births, marriages and funerals or to exams, concerns, the arts and sport’.¹⁵⁸

Again, even the events tied to the family are “public”-facing events (requiring public institutional intervention with respect to the recording of births, deaths and marriages). Whilst the Heritage group encourage people of all ages to get involved, and people could have chosen to write about their lives in the house in lockdown, it is important to note that home-school or remote-learning experiences are not explicitly mentioned.

Schools have their own news or blog archives, where the communications to students and parents are archived on their school websites. One such example is the Shireland Collegiate

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion see, Monica Eileen Patterson and Rebecca Friend, ‘Beyond Window Rainbows: Collecting Children’s Culture in the COVID Crisis’ (2021) 17(2) *Collections: A Journal For Museum and Archives Professionals* 167-178

¹⁵⁶ Birmingham City Council, ‘Birmingham’s memories of Covid-19’

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/blog/memories/post/440/birminghams-memories-of-covid-19/comment>

¹⁵⁷ Emily Collis, ‘Time capsule of Covid-19 memories to be buried in Kidderminster’ (Kidderminster Shuttle, 22nd November 2020) <https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/18886609.time-capsule-covid-19-memories-buried-kidderminster/>

¹⁵⁸ Emily Collis, ‘Time capsule of Covid-19 memories to be buried in Kidderminster’ (Kidderminster Shuttle, 22nd November 2020) <https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/18886609.time-capsule-covid-19-memories-buried-kidderminster/>

Academy Trust, which includes Primary Schools.¹⁵⁹ This archive provides an insight into one of the ways Schools communicated with students and parents during the pandemic, but rarely provides an insight into the parents' and students' experiences of remote learning during lockdowns.

Archives in London on Covid-19

In London, there are large exhibitions that act as archives of the pandemic. For example, the Victoria and Albert Museum have an exhibition titled, 'Pandemic Objects'.¹⁶⁰ This project 'compiles and reflects on objects that have taken on new meaning and purpose during the coronavirus outbreak'. Some of the objects (which speak more directly to children's experiences) include: rainbows, exams and exercise books, playground, laptop, and hopscotch. The V&A Museum of Childhood asked for submissions of people's rainbow creations, and they received 'over a thousand emails with images of how children from up and down the country and worldwide were interpreting the rainbow motif in diverse ways using a wide variety of materials at hand',¹⁶¹ which was exhibited from December 2020-February 2021. Helen Charman, the author of the entry on playgrounds, notes: 'One of the most poignant scenes from lockdown has been the empty playgrounds. Gates shackled, swings removed or hung high out of reach, red and white barrier tape across the seesaw or looped around the handles of the roundabouts. The silence never so loud.'¹⁶² She took photographs of the empty playgrounds to document the 'space of loss'.¹⁶³ In March 2022, the Young V&A Museum (in collaboration with UCL Institute of Education, the School of Education at the University of Sheffield, and the Bartlett Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at UCL, and supported by Great Ormond Street Hospital and the British Library) launched a research project, 'Play in the Pandemic'; '[t]he exhibition will showcase children's artworks, games and films across the UK that were submitted to the Play Observatory'.¹⁶⁴

Specific institutions and organisations have established their own archives to document the experiences of their communities. For example, The London School of Economics (LSE) has established an archive collection to document the experiences of the LSE community during the pandemic.¹⁶⁵ The archive is aiming to capture how people 'worked, studied, lived and socialised' during the pandemic. The archive will collect oral histories as well as community submissions of multimedia material, including photographs and written testimonies. Whilst the focus is not on children's experiences, the experiences of parents home-schooling during the pandemic might be captured via the experiences of the LSE community who had caring responsibilities.

There are borough specific archives being established. The Tower Hamlets Local Library and Archives established the 'Making history: documenting coronavirus in the East End' project.

¹⁵⁹ Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, <https://www.shirelandcat.org.uk/category/covid-19/>

¹⁶⁰ Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Pandemic Objects' (V&A Blog) https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/pandemic-objects?doing_wp_cron=1649172252.2166540622711181640625

¹⁶¹ Kristian Volsing, 'Pandemic Objects: Rainbows' (2 December 2020) <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/pandemic-objects-rainbows>

¹⁶² Helen Charman, 'Pandemic Objects: Playground' (3 July 2020, V&A Blog) <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/pandemic-objects-playground>

¹⁶³ Helen Charman, 'Pandemic Objects: Playground' (3 July 2020, V&A Blog) <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/pandemic-objects-playground>

¹⁶⁴ Victoria and Albert Museum, 'V&A Research Projects: Play in the Pandemic' <https://www.vam.ac.uk/research/projects/play-in-the-pandemic>

¹⁶⁵ LSE, 'LSE Covid-19 archive collection' (LSE) <https://www.lse.ac.uk/library/whats-on/lse-covid-19-archive-collection>

The call for contributions notes ‘working or studying from home’.¹⁶⁶ They encourage people to submit ‘diaries, journals, photographs, video recordings, sound recordings, poetry, prose, signs and other visual materials’. They do also note that they want to hear from younger people: ‘We want to hear from all members of the Tower Hamlets community. From younger people to those who are older, business owners and their employees, teachers, doctors, nurses, shop workers, carers, students, retirees and everyone in between.’

Archives around England on Covid-19

This section documents archiving initiatives from around England. The East Riding Archives, which are part of the Yorkshire Council, called for people to contribute their memories of life during Covid-19 to the archive. This is not a specific archive on educational experiences. The request asked for ‘digital, written and printed items such as diaries detailing life under Covid-19 restrictions; photographs of people’s daily lives; poems and stories; and any recordings of thanks for NHS and key workers’.¹⁶⁷ Digital items includes ‘video clips, photographs and sound recordings’.¹⁶⁸ The East Riding archives started to collect materials during the lockdown, encouraging people to send in digital materials as it was safe to do that during the lockdown.

The Sunderland Voices Captured group established the ‘Covid 19 Digital Memories’ project.¹⁶⁹ The project was launched in November 2020.¹⁷⁰ People can submit their stories to the website in the form of a video, audio file, or written post. The stories and tributes will be kept in the Regional Oral History Archives. There is no explicit focus on children or on the impact of Covid-19 on education.

The North Hertfordshire Museum in April 2021 started to collect objects ‘to help tell the story of the impact of Covid-19’.¹⁷¹ The North Hertfordshire Museum asks people to complete a questionnaire, which includes the following questions:

“Tell us about something you are personally proud of during the Covid pandemic and why

Tell us about something you are really looking forward to after lockdown ends and why

Tell us about something you did for the first-time during lockdown

How did you adapt to do things differently during the lockdown? (This could be something in your work or personal life)

What will you remember the most about your life during Covid?

Any other information that you think will be important for future generations to know about this period”

There is no explicit mention of children or their learning experiences during lockdown.

In Medway, in April 2020, the Council encouraged children to share their experiences of lockdown. The Council encouraged children to ‘write poems, stories, create drawings and

¹⁶⁶ Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives, ‘Making history: documenting coronavirus in the East End’ (*Tower Hamlets*) <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus-collection>

¹⁶⁷ East Riding of Yorkshire Council, ‘Contribute to East Riding History with the Covid-19 Memories Archive’ (21 January 2021) <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/say/news/?entry=600194f8af4afe5d802b5e0c>

¹⁶⁸ East Riding of Yorkshire Council, ‘Contribute to East Riding History with the Covid-19 Memories Archive’ (21 January 2021) <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/say/news/?entry=600194f8af4afe5d802b5e0c>

¹⁶⁹ Sunderland Voices Captured, ‘Covid 19 Digital Memories’ <https://www.sunderlandvoicescaptured.co.uk/>

¹⁷⁰ Chris Corder, ‘Play your part in Sunderland’s history by putting your lockdown memories on tape’ (Sunderland Echo, 8th November 2020) <https://www.sunderlandecho.com/health/coronavirus/play-your-part-in-sunderlands-history-by-putting-your-lockdown-memories-on-tape-3029136>

¹⁷¹ Matthew Platt, ‘Collecting your Covid-19 memories’ (*North Hertford Museum*, 26 April 2021) <https://northhertsmuseum.org/collecting-your-covid-19-memories/>

paintings, videos or even music sharing their experiences during this most unusual time'.¹⁷² The submissions will be stored in the Medway Archives Centre. There was a social media hashtag #MedwayTogether that the Council encourage people to use to share these stories, though it is a general hashtag used for disseminating a range of information about the area. The Medway Coronavirus (Covid-19) Community Archive is 'creating a community archive of diaries and other records about the current coronavirus pandemic'.¹⁷³ In the list of 'what to contribute' they include:

- Diaries and scrapbooks
- Ephemera like flyers, posters, neighbourhood notices and leaflets
- Photos and artwork

¹⁷² Medway Council, 'Children Encouraged to Get Creative for Medway Chronicles Project'
<https://www.medway.gov.uk/news/article/556/children-encouraged-to-get-creative-for-medway-covid-chronicles-project>

¹⁷³ Medway Council, 'Medway Coronavirus (Covid-19) Community Archive'
<https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200372/coronavirus/1121/medway-coronavirus-covid-19-community-archive>