

Thirty-Three Years of Debate – Have Opinions Changed?

**A study of the Irish debate on abortion, examining opinion and editorial articles
from *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*, from 1983 to 2016.**

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the
programme of study leading to the award of

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ABSTRACT

Thirty-Three Years of Debate – Have Opinions Changed?

A study of the Irish debate on abortion, examining opinion and editorial articles from *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*, from 1983 to 2016.

Mary Kate Hickey

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the Irish media's opinion and editorial coverage of the abortion debate in Ireland. This will be done by looking at key events in the debate, from the 1983 referendum, up until the 2016 March for Choice.

This study focuses on opinion and editorial articles published by Irish broadsheets – *The Irish Times*, and the *Irish Independent* – at certain points of interest during the abortion debate. These points of interest include, but are not limited to the 1983 referendum, the 1992 referendum, the 1992 X case, and the 2016 March for Choice. This study pursues to determine whether opinion and editorial articles have become more liberal or conservative, or if they have stayed the same over the course of 33 years.

By firstly looking at literature written on abortion a sense of how abortion is written about in non-media publications can be found. This literature will give background information on abortion in Ireland, including the legislation and cases that have created debate on the topic. It will also give context to what liberal and conservative opinions are in relation to abortion. Then an analysis was carried out through the content analysis and discourse analysis of various opinion and editorial articles at the times of interest aforementioned.

This research will add to research both on public opinion of abortion as well as research on media coverage of the abortion debate in modern day Ireland.

This research found that while the levels of liberalism and conservatism have not appeared to have changed, the spectrum of what can be said has changed.

ABBREVIATIONS:

1. AAC – Anti Amendment Campaign
2. DA – Discourse Analysis
3. ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights
4. HSE – Health Service Executive
5. PLAC – Pro-Life Amendment Campaign
6. SPUC – The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 marks 34 years since the introduction of Article 40.3.3 into the Irish Constitution, also known as the Eighth Amendment. This amendment gave equal Constitutional protection to the life of the unborn child and the mother, effectively outlawing abortion in Ireland. Much debate surrounding abortion, and the right to life of both mother and child has occurred in the years since the amendment's passing.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the debate around abortion as written in opinion and editorial articles from Irish broadsheets *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* from 1983 to 2016 (33 years). It will add to the body of research done on the coverage of abortion cases in Irish media, as well as research on public and professional opinions on abortion in Ireland.

Abortion can be defined as the removal of the foetus from the uterus in order to end a pregnancy. (Dictionary.com, 2017) It has been a criminal offence in Ireland since 1861 under the Offences Against the Person Act, sections 58 and 59. The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution was introduced in 1983 and states "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right." (The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution Act, 1983) Because of the ambiguity of the wording of this amendment, many were divided on its inclusion in the Constitution, sparking a debate surrounding abortion and the amendment.

Throughout the years since the introduction of the Eighth Amendment, many cases calling into question the equal right to life of the mother and unborn child have arisen. In 1992 the first case to call the Eighth Amendment into question went before the courts. Since then many more cases have come before both the Irish and European courts, calling Ireland's abortion laws into question. Numerous referendums have also been held on the topic of abortion and its legality in the Irish state. This dissertation will examine the opinion and editorial articles written around the times of these cases and referendums to determine if opinions have changed.

The scope of this research does not lend itself to a consideration of all opinion and editorial articles written on the topic of abortion in Ireland because of time constraints. For the purpose of this dissertation nine time periods around high profile cases and referendums that sparked debate on abortion will be examined to determine if opinions

have changed. This will further be explained in Chapter 2. This research also only allowed for two of the three national broadsheets to be examined, as there was not enough opinion and editorial articles from the *Irish Examiner* to choose from, this will also be further explained in Chapter 2.

For the purpose of this dissertation the author will use the terms ‘pro-abortion rights’ and ‘anti-abortion’ when discussing both sides of the debate, except where directly quoting others. The reasoning for this is that the author feels ‘pro-choice’ can appear to be ambiguous, as it doesn’t define what the choice is. Similarly ‘pro-life’ can also be considered ambiguous as it appears to say those who are anti-abortion are pro all life, yet some who disagree with abortion may agree with the death penalty. The terms pro-life and pro-choice are loaded with meanings given to them by those who use those terms to define their stance on abortion, and in the interest of fairness the author feels these terms should not be used. The author thinks that the terms ‘pro-abortion rights’ and ‘anti-abortion’ fairly depict both sides of the debate accurately as they simply define both sides of the debate. Those who are ‘pro-abortion rights’, may not necessarily agree with abortion, but believe in a woman’s right to have one if she chooses. ‘Anti-abortion’ straightforwardly explains the other side of the debate as just that – those who are against abortion.

The above will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter, by examining the available literature to give further context to the debate on abortion in Ireland.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE **REVIEW**

This chapter will assess the literature on abortion in Ireland to give an understanding of high profile abortion cases and key events in the debate surrounding abortion. The literature mentioned will give context to the debate surrounding the topic of abortion in Ireland. Through examining these texts an insight can be found as to how key events in the abortion debate – such as the various referendums, the X case, and the death of Savita Halappanavar – were discussed in non-news publications. It will also provide background information to the events that the opinion pieces studied are based on. This will aid with the examination of how these events and cases have been covered in Irish print media’s opinion pieces, and allow for effective commentary on the discourse around these events published by the Irish print media. This chapter will also give context as to what is defined as liberal and conservative thinking, in relation to political thought. These definitions will help with understanding the language of the opinion pieces written in Irish newspapers and therefore help with labelling them as from a liberal or conservative standpoint. Looking at texts from outside of Ireland will give a general overview of abortion, before looking at the topic in an Irish context.

ABORTION: GENDER, POWER AND RELIGION

“For of course, women have been signally absent from a debate which concerns them in the most immediate, intimate and serious ways possible.” (Smyth, 1992: 8)

Abortion is primarily a women’s issue, only women – or transgender males – can need, and have abortions. However access to legal abortion is mostly regulated by men, with a majority of men in government, a majority of male gynaecologists performing these procedures, and a majority of male general practitioners advising women on their options. (Boyle, 1997: 6-7) Women currently make up 22.2% of deputies in the 32nd Dáil Éireann. However this is the highest this figure has ever been, at the time of the 1983 referendum banning abortion in Ireland only about 8% of the Dáil was comprised of women deputies. (MacGuill, 2016) This means that very few women TDs were involved in the process of passing the Bill to allow for a constitutional referendum on abortion in 1983.

According to Michael Solomons, while ‘induced abortion’ has been illegal in Ireland since 1861, there was no real interest shown in the issue until the early 1980s. When fears arose that abortion, similar to that in the UK and the US may be introduced in

Ireland, a small group of anti-abortion activists began lobbying party leaders in the run up to an upcoming general election. These lobbyists stated that an amendment to the constitution would prevent abortion becoming available to women within Ireland. The then Taoiseach and the leader of the opposition party accepted the proposal to seek an amendment as it would look bad on them to be seen as supporters of abortion. (Solomons, 1992: 52-53) This group of activists became the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC). An opposition movement to the proposed amendment began in early 1982, they called themselves the Anti-Amendment Campaign (AAC)

Ireland has largely been described as a Catholic country for many years. The Catholic Church has had a stance of a total ban on abortion, choosing to believe that God creates all life, and that all life begins at conception. This belief was expressed many times throughout the Irish debate on abortion. The Catholic teachings used arguments of biology and theology to argue foetal life is equal to human life. (Hesketh, 1990: 47)

Thirteen organisations were represented at the inaugural meeting of the PLAC called by John O'Reilly on the 24th of January 1981. John O'Reilly was a member of the Knights of Saint Columbanus, who had previously campaigned against contraception use in Ireland. The other groups who attended the meeting were members of various Catholic and anti-abortion groups. A week after this meeting a committee was formed for the running of PLAC chaired by Dr Julia Vaughan, a gynaecologist and former nun. (Hesketh, 1990: 12) A great deal of the support for this referendum came from a religious stance and from men; priests – from St Joseph's Young Priest Society; young men from the Catholic Young Men's Society; and doctors from the Irish Catholic Doctors' Guild. However women were also involved in the movement, such as Dr Julia Vaughan, who was the Chairwoman for PLAC.

While it can be said that a lot of the support for the anti-abortion amendment came from those from a religious background, people opposed abortion for other reasons. It can also be said that not all those from a religious background wholeheartedly supported the anti-abortion amendment. Victor Griffin, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, referred to the wording of the amendment as ambiguous, and that other issues were being ignored that deserved priority in his eyes. He said in a statement that 'Abortion should be allowed as a last resort in certain unfortunate circumstances.' (Solomons, 1992: 61)

INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SOCIETAL CHANGE

Ireland has often been referred to as a Catholic country, and according to the 2011 census¹ 85.5 percent of the population identified as Roman Catholic². The Catholic Church has had a great influence on how Irish people viewed the world. In *Moral Monopoly* Tom Inglis explains that in the nineteenth century the Catholic Church held a moral monopoly among Irish people. Having religious capital was an important thing to have in defining ones social position in society, which meant attending Sunday Mass and following Catholic teachings. (Inglis, 1998: 66-67) This need to fulfil ones social and cultural capital by following the ways of the Catholic Church, came from the expectation on people to engage in the rites and practices of the church so to be accepted in society. After Ireland gained independence in 1922 Inglis explains that the institutions holding the most power in Irish society were the Catholic Church and the state itself. “However, whereas the state exercises its power in a wide number of social fields, the Church has exercised its power mainly in those social fields relating to education, care and morality.” (Inglis, 1998: 77) In 1946 Pope Paul VI said that Ireland was the most Catholic country in the world. (Kennedy, 2015) This shows the level of devotion Irish people had to the Catholic religion, again feeding into the power the church had in the state.

According to Inglis this power was evident in the 1983 abortion referendum, showing that when it came to a health issue like abortion the Catholic Church had the power to push through a referendum to outlaw it. (1998, 83) 53.6 percent of the Irish Electorate turned out for the referendum to Constitutionally ban abortion with a 67 percent majority voting yes, meaning that 37.5 percent of the overall electorate voted to ban abortion. The results of the referendum, Inglis argues show how the Catholic Church lost its ability to influence social policy so it used the Constitution as a way to protect Catholic moral principles in the Irish state. Three years later a referendum was held by the Fine Gael government to remove the constitutional ban on divorce. While opinion polls were originally showing a majority in favour of removing the ban on divorce, 63 percent of voters voted no in the referendum. This shows that throughout the 1980s Irish voters made decisions according to Catholic moral principles.

¹ Figures for the 2016 census have not been released at time of writing this dissertation.

² This figure was arrived at by getting the average of the percentages of the population of urban and rural areas who identified as Roman Catholic – these figures were 81.9% and 89.2% respectively.

In 1990 85 percent of Irish Catholics attended Sunday mass, making this the highest percentage of Catholic Mass attendees in the world at the time. However a poll conducted in 1995 showed that weekly mass attendance had fallen to 64 percent, and was at 66 percent in 1996 in another poll. In 1995 another referendum was held to remove the ban on divorce in Ireland. This time Irish Catholics did not follow the moral principles of the church. The result was very close with 50.3 percent in favour and 49.7 percent against, from a 62.15 percent turnout of registered voters. Two years previous in 1993 legislation was passed to legalise homosexuality in Ireland. The introduction of these laws show the decline in Irish people basing their morals on Catholic teachings. (Inglis, 1998: 220-221) These aspects of societal change can be considered as an equal marking point in the debate between conservative and liberal views of the Irish electorate. As the opinions voiced here were of a similar strength – there only being about half a percentage point between the yes and no, or liberal and conservative views. This marking point can be used to show that the divide between liberal and conservative was about equal at this time, and thus will help in later chapters to determine if opinions became more liberal or conservative thereafter.

More recently in 2015 the Irish electorate voted in a referendum to legalise same-sex marriage. While The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 introduced civil partnerships into Irish law, there was a call for legalising marriage among same-sex couples. The referendum had the support of the Dáil, and the Yes Equality Movement – an umbrella movement under the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, and Marriage Equality. While it was opposed by those who believed the institution of marriage should be solely between a man and a woman. This was a stance which the Irish Catholic Church followed as well as many other religious bodies, however the Church of Ireland stated they would not take a stance on the matter. The referendum was held on May 22nd of 2015 and had a 60.52 percentage turnout of registered voters, with 62.07 percent voting yes and 37.93 percent voting no. (Healy, Sheehan and Whelan, 2015) This significant difference between the two indicates that the influence the Catholic Church once had over the people of Ireland when voting on issues which oppose Catholic teachings has diminished. The number of people who voted without following the morals of the Catholic Church was far greater than the number of people doing the same in the divorce referendum twenty years prior.

LEGISLATION AND REFERENDUMS

Abortion in Ireland was made illegal under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, this law governs both the Republic and Northern Ireland as it was passed before the division of Ireland. (Boyle, 1997: 18) This act stated that if women were found to take drugs or use instruments to induce a miscarriage, or abortion, on themselves they can receive a maximum life sentence imprisonment, and anyone who tries to help them do so, can also be imprisoned. (Morriss, 2008: 277)

After the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act in the United Kingdom, numbers of Irish women began to travel to Britain to make use of their abortion services. Fears arose among those who were anti-abortion that a similar law may be introduced in Ireland. After lobbying from the PLAC in the early eighties, a referendum to introduce the Eighth Amendment into the Irish Constitution was held on September 7th 1983. This amendment was passed by a 67% majority, and was signed into law in October of the same year. (O' Carroll, 2013)

Only 54.6 per cent of the electorate voted in the Referendum, and the high abstention rate naturally fuelled speculation as to the "true" level of support for the amendment in the population as a whole. (Walsh, 2012: 227)

After the X case controversies in 1992³, the Government proposed three possible amendments with regards to abortion to be introduced into the Constitution. The three amendments included the freedom to travel outside of Ireland for an abortion and the freedom of information on abortion services outside of Ireland, both of which were passed. A third proposed amendment which would remove suicide as a grounds for abortion in Ireland was rejected. Three years later The Regulation of Information (Services outside the State for the Termination of Pregnancies) Act 1995 was passed. This allowed for doctors and counsellors in Ireland to provide information on abortion services outside of Ireland should a woman wish to know. It required all information on abortion to be provided along with information about parenting and adoption, and prohibits doctors booking an appointment for an abortion in another state on behalf of the patient. The X case ruling allowed for abortions in Ireland to be legalised where there was a "real and substantial" threat to the life of the mother, this included if she

³ The X case will be discussed further in part 2.4 on page 10

was suicidal. However the wording of this amendment continues to cause confusion among Irish medical staff as to when an abortion can be legally performed. A second referendum proposing to remove suicide as grounds for an abortion in Ireland was rejected in 2002. This referendum would have also increased the penalties for helping a woman procure an abortion. (Irish Family Planning Association, 2013)

The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act was signed into law on July 30th 2013 by President Michael D. Higgins. The law was intended to provide for legal access to abortion in Ireland where the mother's life is at risk. This law commenced on January 1st of 2014, over two years after the death of Savita Halappanavar, who was denied a life-saving termination in Galway University Hospital. (Irish Times, 2013) Savita's case is one of the most highly covered abortion cases in Irish media, in the following section this case and other highly covered cases will be discussed.

ABORTION CASES, MEDIA ATTENTION AND PUBLIC DEBATE

In the years since the 1983 Referendum outlawing abortion in Ireland, there were a number of cases of women in Ireland seeking abortions for various reasons. Many of these cases garnered a lot of media attention as they were going through the Irish judicial system and beyond while awaiting a ruling. There was also a lot of public attention and debate surrounding these cases as they unfolded.

In February of 1992 a High Court ruling prevented a fourteen year old Irish rape victim from travelling outside of the state for an abortion. This was the first high profile abortion case to capture the attention of the state since the 1983 Referendum and was referred to as the X Case. "For several weeks, the Irish national media focused on the case to the near-total exclusion of other news items." (Smyth, 1992: 12) After the Government applying pressure on the young girl's family to appeal the ruling, an appeal was heard on the 24th, 25th and 26th of February. The five judges of the Supreme Court publically stated that they were lifting the injunction and the girl was free to travel outside of the Irish state for an abortion. (Smyth, 1992: 5-13) Ruling that the 'real and substantial threat' to the girl's life – who had repeatedly threatened suicide – was reason enough to allow a termination. (Solomons, 1992: 81)

Five years later in November 1997 another case involving a young suicidal rape victim emerges. This case involving a thirteen year old girl became better known as the C case. After the young girl had been raped and put into foster care, she was found to be pregnant. The Eastern Health Board sought permission to take the girl, who was under their care, to England for an abortion. Under the claim to ‘real and substantial’ threat to her life as the girl was described as suicidal the High Court consented for her to travel because of this risk to her life, which had been previously allowed for with the X case. (McAvoy, 2008: 36) As was previously stated in part 2.2, the wording of the legislation that came about because of the X case still causes confusion in Ireland as to when an abortion can be legally performed within the Irish State.

In 2007, a seventeen year old girl in the temporary care of the state seeks an abortion as she was carrying an anencephalic foetus, which would not survive outside of the womb. The woman known as Miss D sought to terminate her ‘much wanted’ pregnancy due to this diagnosis. The public debate surrounding abortion was refuelled as discourse about abortion access within the state launched again. The Health Service Executive (HSE) which was temporarily responsible for Miss D sought to prevent her from traveling to obtain a termination after discovering her intentions to travel to Britain. Miss D then applied to the high court to contest the HSE from doing so and refused to say she was suicidal to avail of abortion under the X case ruling. “A key tension to this case was the apparent conflict presented by Article 40.3.3° between the state’s duties to defend both the right to life of the “unborn”, and the right to bodily integrity of minors in its care.” (Smyth, 2008: 48) In an article published in the Irish Independent on May 12th 2007, Miss D was reported to have said that “she will be medically induced rather than having a surgical abortion. This means she will give birth to her baby - even though she knows it will die within days.” (McDonald, 2007)

The A, B, C vs Ireland case in 2010 saw three Irish women challenged the State’s restrictive abortion laws in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Miss A already had four children in foster care as a result of personal problems and believed having another child would prevent her progress in becoming fit to have her children returned to her. Miss B was not prepared to become a parent. Miss C had become pregnant when in remission from cancer, she claimed she could not get clear medical advice about the risks to her health and life and to the foetus if she continued with the pregnancy. The women felt their rights given to them under the European Convention

of Human rights were violated by Ireland's restrictive abortion legislation. However a majority decision found that Miss A and B's rights had not been violated under Article 8. In contrast they found that the Irish state failed to fulfil its obligations to Miss C and had violated her rights under Article 8.

(ABC v Ireland at the European Court of Human Rights Briefing Note, 2011)

One of the most recent, and one of the most well-known cases, that sparked debate surrounding abortion in Ireland was the death of Savita Halappanavar. On the 21st of October 2012 Savita Halappanavar went to Galway University Hospital suffering from back pain, which was later confirmed as contractions prior to miscarriage. Two days later, aware that her baby will not survive she asked for a termination. At that time, as there was no reason to presume her life was at risk and a foetal heartbeat was still present, she was refused this request. The following day after her health had been deteriorating rapidly, she delivered a dead baby girl. She was then moved to intensive care as she suffered from septic shock. On the 28th of October, a week after coming to the hospital, Savita Halappanavar passed away as a result of the sepsis that occurred during her miscarriage. (RTÉ, 2013)

WHAT IS LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE?

This dissertation is looking at the debate surrounding abortion in Ireland and whether it is from a mostly conservative or liberal standpoint. It will also examine whether the debate has shifted to become more liberal or more conservative in the years since the 1983 referendum. This section will take a look at what it is to be conservative or liberal, and what conservative and liberal opinions are in relation to abortion.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines conservative as “averse to change or innovation and holding traditional values... in a political context favouring free enterprise, private ownership, and socially conservative ideas.” (Oxford, 2017) Noel O’ Sullivan suggests that conservative ideology is not solely self-interested and afraid of change, yet maintains an optimistic belief in the ability of political action to transform society in a way that power is only an instrument for enabling sought out end goals. He explains conservatism is divided into four separate “schools” the reactionary, the radical and the moderate schools are the oldest, while the New Right School was established more recently. The reactionary school represents the most

uncompromising conservative rejection of modern radical thought. It rejects the abilities of political action at the cost of abandoning religion, and that where this occurs there is a spiritual void in modern democracy. Reactionary conservatives think that the democratic egalitarian ideal dumbs down educational standards and are committed to their own unchanging social ideal. On the opposite end of the conservative spectrum lies the radical conservative school. They believe entirely the opposite of reactionary conservatives, and believe in embracing democratic modernity in a positive manner through mobilizing the public into action behind political leaders who reject the liberal and socialist ideologies. The moderate school believes in a limited state with laws, representative institutions and a constitution that allows checks to be made on executive power. Moderate conservatives reject the abstract concepts liberals use to theorise. There are a couple of versions of New Right conservatives; one which thinks defending the free market is most important and another which is based on the commitment to a collective national cultural identity. (O' Sullivan, 2015: 293-302) In summary, conservatives believe historical institutions and modes of government that work well have been established and should be upheld and that any change should be organic. Conservatives tend to be anti-abortion and generally disagree with abortion, believing that human life begins at conception and abortion is the murder of a baby. They tend to disagree with taxpayer funded abortions and are against partial birth abortions⁴. (Student News Daily, 2010)

The Oxford English Dictionary defines liberal as “willing to respect or accept behaviour or opinions different from one's own; open to new ideas... in a political context favouring individual liberty, free trade, and moderate political and social reform” (Oxford, 2017) Liberalism is an ideology that rejects and criticises social and economic inequality, and liberals regard equality of opportunity as a fundamental need. They believe it is the government's duty to make sure all citizens have access to affordable health care, good education and a clean safe environment. (Shoop, 2012) It is a distinctive political culture with a universal claim of the protection that every person requires regardless of where they live or how they understood the world around them. Modern liberalism embraced the growing importance in multiple cultural

⁴ Partial birth abortion - the termination of a foetus of at least 20 weeks by removing it from the birth canal with forceps, but leaving the head inside. An incision is made in the back of the neck and the brain tissue is suctioned out. The head is then removed from the uterus.

identities. Liberals have a desire to supplement their respect for the singularity of individuals with the uniqueness of cultural groups which has led to zero sum clashes between liberals and their values. This, Freedman and Stearns argue, is what has disabled liberals from offering workable political policies that can satisfy both pro-abortion rights and anti-abortion groups in the USA. (2015, 338) Liberals tend to be pro-abortion rights and they believe that a woman has the right to decide what to do with her own body. They do not consider a foetus to be a human life and therefore it does not have its own individual rights. They think that taxes should pay for abortions for women who cannot afford them and that abortion is the personal choice of the woman who should have the right to affordable, safe and legal abortion services. (Student News Daily, 2010)

CONCLUSION AND HYPOTHESIS

From examination of the above literature, a few questions arise:

Were newspaper opinions and editorials mostly liberal or conservative (as defined earlier in this chapter) at the time of the first referendum? Has that changed up to now, and if so, how?

Do the newspapers examined give more coverage to liberal or conservative opinion and editorial articles?

Which paper, *The Irish Times* or the *Irish Independent* is the more liberal paper, and which is more conservative, or are both neutral?

The author of this dissertation has come up with the hypothesis that the Irish print media has become more liberal in opinion pieces on the abortion debate. This hypothesis will be the foundation for this study of the Irish print media's coverage of the debate surrounding abortion in Ireland. This dissertation will also seek to answer the above asked research questions to aid the answering of the hypothesis. These questions and hypothesis will further be addressed in the following methodology chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will address the research questions and hypothesis made in the previous chapter. After coming to the hypothesis that Irish media's opinion articles on abortion have become more liberal in the years since the 1983 referendum this chapter seeks to address how liberal and conservative articles will be categorised. It will also address the use of content analysis and discourse analysis to be used to examine the abortion debate in opinion and editorial pieces. From this information it can be concluded whether the coverage was more liberal or conservative. It will be decided if the articles are more liberal or conservative based on the definitions of liberal and conservative from the previous chapter, and whether the opinions expressed in the articles are pro-abortion rights or anti-abortion.

Choice of Papers

The analysis will be carried out on two national broadsheet newspapers *The Irish Times*, and the *Irish Independent*. It will be carried on the print edition as well as online from recent years, as many of the opinion articles in recent years have appeared solely online. These newspapers were chosen as they are the national broadsheets and they have a name for having more serious content including opinion and editorial articles. There is not enough relevant data to be found from the *Irish Examiner* and in order for consistency in comparisons only the aforementioned two of the three newspapers which could be considered the national broadsheets will be analysed.

The articles will be picked from a time period of 15 days surrounding key events of abortion discourse in Ireland. The key events and periods to be looked at are the 1983 Abortion Referendum, the 1992 X Case, the 1992 Abortion Referendums, the 1997 C Case, the 2002 Abortion Referendum, the 2007 D Case, the 2010 A, B and C vs. Ireland Case, the death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012, and the fifth annual March for Choice and anti-abortion movement counter protests in 2016.

Content Analysis

According to Walizer and Wienir writing in 1978 as quoted in Wimmer and Dominick (2013: 156) content analysis can be defined "as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information". While another definition explains

content analysis to be “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use.” (Krippendorf, 2004: 18)

This definition of content analysis will need to be kept in mind throughout the study of the opinion articles so as to keep an un-biased categorisation of the articles as liberal or conservative.

“Quantitative newspaper analysis seemingly provided the needed scientific ground for journalistic arguments. The respect for numbers had a long history, and facts that could be quantified were considered irrefutable.” (Krippendorf, 2004: 5)

I will use quantitative newspaper analysis to examine the coverage of the Irish abortion debate in the major Irish newspapers to use numbers to quantify facts. The number of opinion and editorial articles published by each newspaper, the word counts of each article, and the average and overall word counts for each newspaper will be collected and examined. This will help to determine which newspaper gave prominence in opinion pieces to the debate.

I will also analyse the headlines of each article and categorise them as being pro-abortion rights, anti-abortion or neutral to determine the number of each throughout the years. Due to time restraints it is not possible to analyse the full texts of all the articles, so this will help determine the percentage of liberal and conservative articles.

Discourse Analysis

“Discourse analysis (DA) examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used.” (Paltridge, 2012: 2) According to Paltridge DA also considers the way language can present different views and understandings of the world and how views of the world and identities are constructed through the use of discourse.

I plan to examine the language used to analyse the opinion articles written on the debate on abortion in Ireland. I plan to examine the words used and if they are used in a liberal or conservative manner based on the definitions of conservative and liberal discussed in the previous chapter. I also will consider the differing views and

understandings the authors have on abortion and how these are constructed through their use of language to determine if they are liberal or conservative.

Using and adapting the ‘ground truth’ method outlined by Zhou (2013) I plan to categorise the articles into categories of liberal, or conservative on a scale system.

“The "ground truth" theme argues for the use of distributions (e.g., 0.6 conservative, 0.4 liberal) instead of labels (e.g., conservative, liberal) as the underlying ground truth of items' political leaning, where disagreements among labelers are not human errors but rather useful information reflecting the distribution of people's subjective opinions. Empirical data demonstrate that distributions are dispersed: there are many items upon which labelers simply do not agree.” (Zhou, 2013: xii)

Rather than labelling an article as simply liberal or conservative, this scale allows for the distribution of how liberal or conservative an article is. As some articles may be harder to define as solely liberal or solely conservative, this allowance for levels of liberal and conservative, along with both and neither as ‘grey’ areas, will allow for a more truthful categorisation of the opinion articles. On my scale, liberal will be considered to equal pro-abortion rights and conservative will be anti-abortion. The distributions will then be similar to Zhou for example an article which is against the abortion amendment, but does not explicitly say it is in favour of abortion, or is only in favour of abortion under certain circumstances will be 0.4 conservative and 0.6 liberal. If it is in favour of abortion in all circumstances it will be 0 conservative and 1 liberal, and vice versa if they are against abortion in all circumstances. If the author is completely neutral on the topic it will be labelled as 0.5 conservative and 0.5 liberal.

Because of the volume of material to be covered it will be necessary to number every article from each time period and then use a random number generator – <https://www.random.org/> – to select the articles to examine in full detail. I will be examining two articles from each publication from the 1983 referendum and from the March for Choice 2016 as this will give the greatest indication of a change of opinion. I will also analyse two articles from each publication from two of the most high profile cases that brought the discussion of abortion to public attention, the 1992 X case, and the death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012.

CHAPTER 4

EXAMINING THE **ABORTION** **DEBATE**

CONTENT ANALYSIS

As can be seen in Figure 1 below, the total number of opinion and editorial articles written during all the time periods analysed, was 107 articles in *The Irish Times* and 81 in the *Irish Independent*. The average (mean) word count per article in *The Irish Times* was 912 words and 782 words in the *Irish Independent*. However the majority of articles published by both publications fell into the 800-899 word count category⁵. In general *The Irish Times* wrote more opinion articles on abortion in the time periods analysed, with more articles written in six out of nine time periods. The *Irish Independent* had more opinion articles in three out of the nine time periods. The *Irish Independent* had the both the largest and smallest amount of opinion articles written in any of the time periods with 21 articles written in the 2012 period and only four in the 1992 and 2010 periods. However in the time periods analysed *The Irish Times* gave more prominence to the abortion debate coverage than the *Irish Independent* did. The overall word count of all opinion articles written during these time periods was 97,531 word in *The Irish Times* and 63,360 words in the *Irish Independent*.⁶

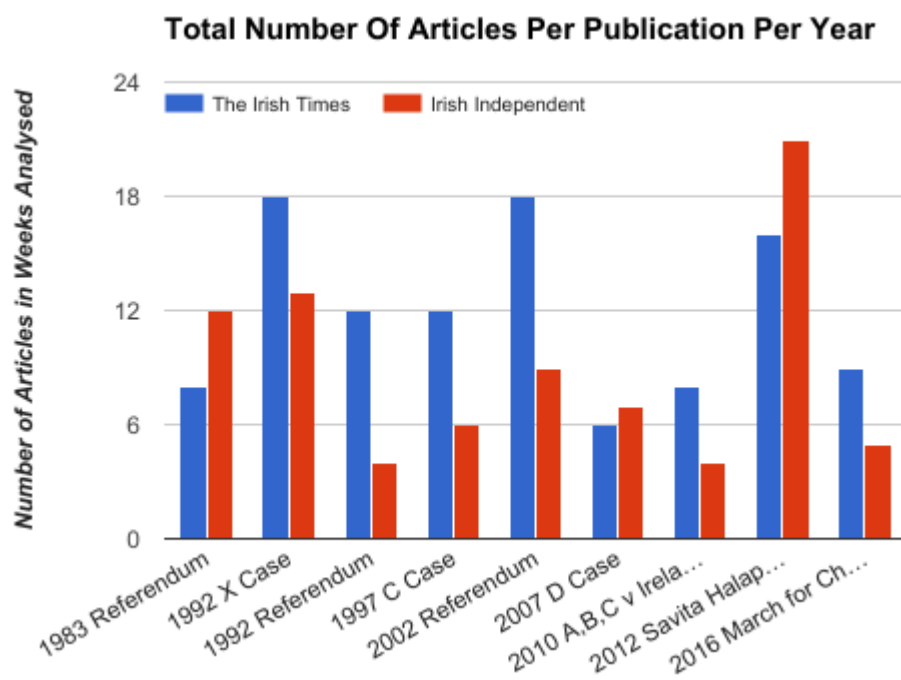


Figure 1: Number of Opinion/Editorial Articles per Publication per Year.

⁵ As can be found in the word count table in appendix.

⁶ All research information for graphs and above text in appendix.

Headline Analysis:

Due to time restraints it was not possible to analyse the full texts of 188 articles. A headline analysis was done to roughly find the number of liberal and conservative articles. Each headline from each time period was analysed and labelled as pro-abortion rights (liberal), neutral or anti-abortion (conservative). An “indefinite” category was used to label articles that didn’t fit either of the aforementioned definitions.

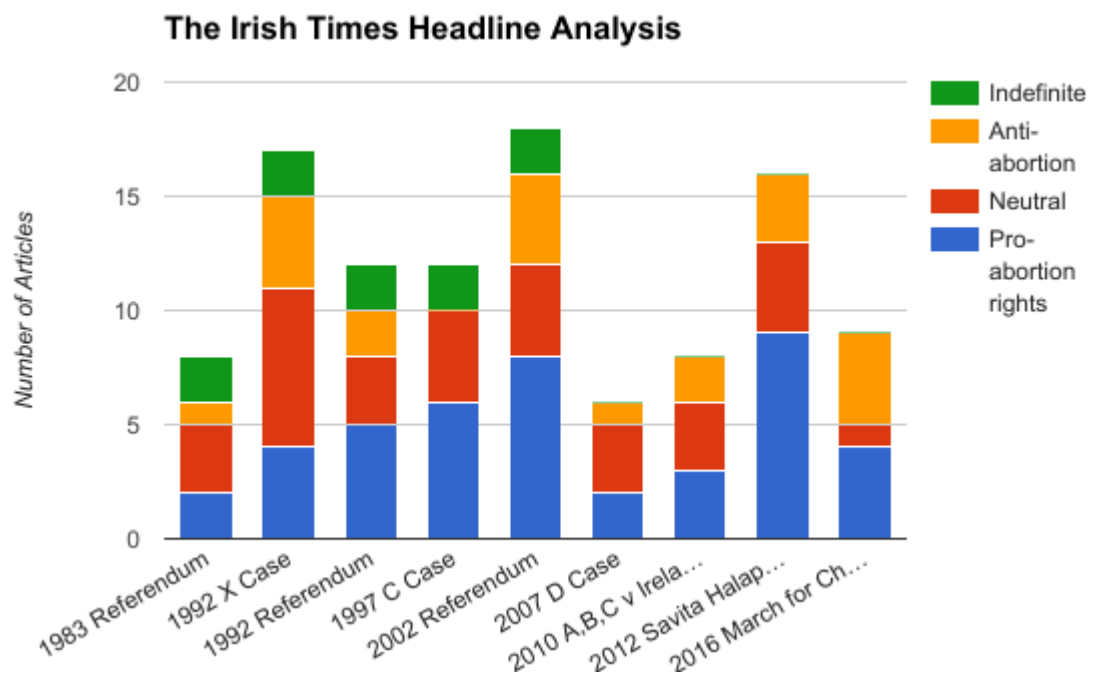


Figure 2: Headline analysis - The Irish Times

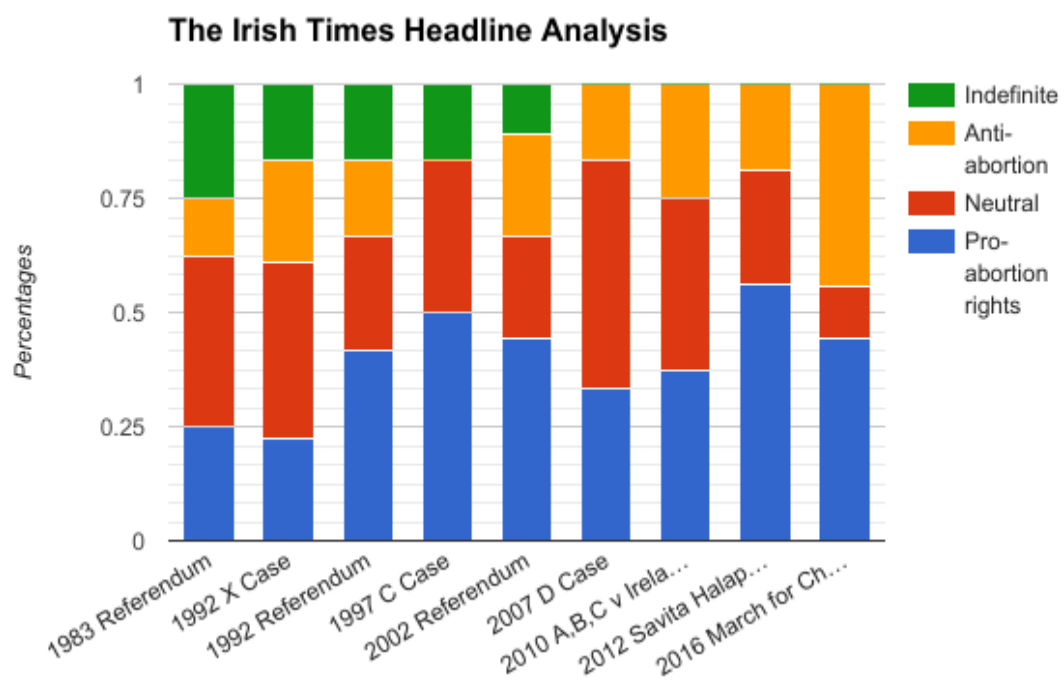


Figure 3: Percentage headline analysis - The Irish Times

The number of articles gradually increased up until 2002, going from eight in 1983 to 18 in 2002. In 1983 two pro-abortion rights, three neutral and one anti-abortion headline were used. In 2002 eight pro-abortion rights, four neutral and four anti-abortion headlines were used. Much fewer articles were written in 2007 and 2010. This gradual increase picked up again in 2012 after the death of Savita Halappanavar with 16 articles written with four anti-abortion, three neutral and nine pro-abortion rights being published. In 2016 nine articles were written, with four each conservative and liberal, and one neutral.

The Irish Times Headline Analysis 1983-2016

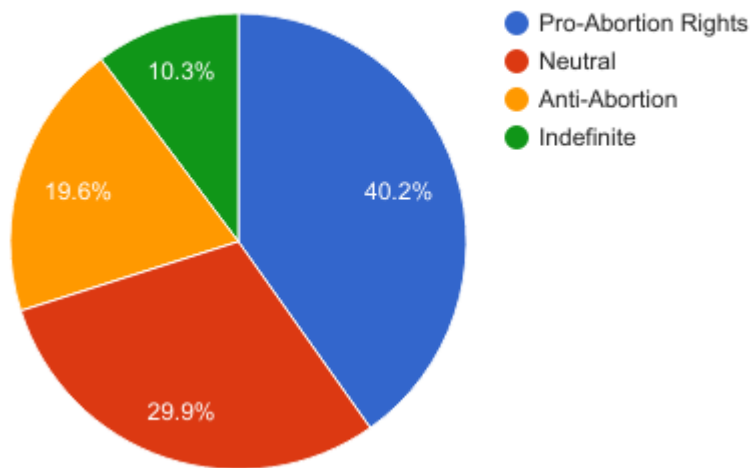


Figure 4: Percentages of labels given to headlines - The Irish Times

Overall 43 articles (40.2%) from *The Irish Times* were labelled as liberal or pro-abortion rights, almost 20 percent more than anti-abortion or conservative with 21 articles (19.6%). Neutral and indefinite together made up the remaining 40.2 percent. With 32 neutral articles and 11 indefinite.

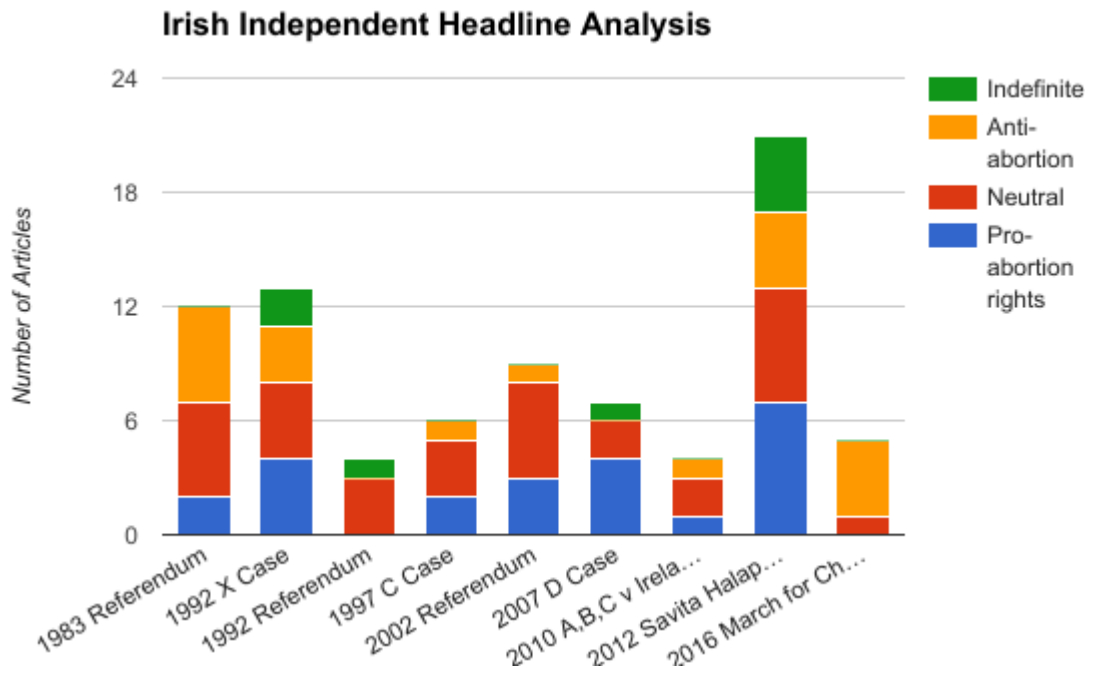


Figure 5: Headline analysis - Irish Independent

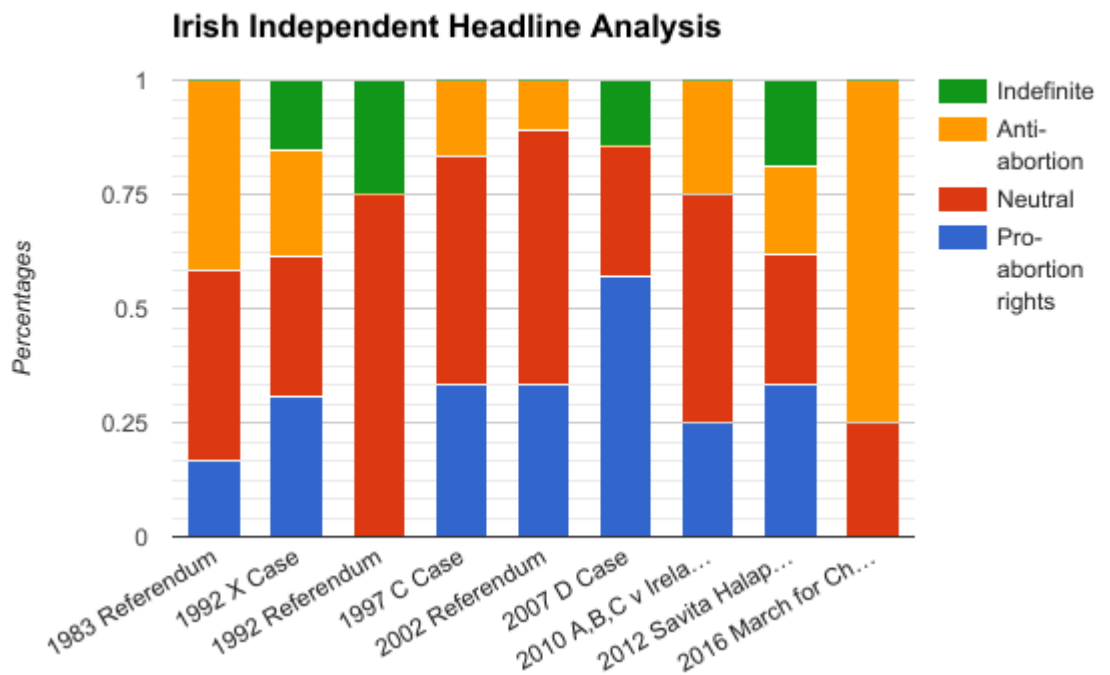


Figure 6: Percentage headline analysis - Irish Independent

The number of articles written in the *Irish Independent* varied greatly over the years, with six time periods having less than ten articles. In 1983 five anti-abortion, five neutral and two pro-abortion rights articles were written. In 2016 four anti-abortion, one neutral and zero pro-abortion rights headlines were used. During the 1992 X case there was four pro-abortion rights, four neutral and three anti-abortion articles. Later

that year during the referendum, three neutral and one indefinite headline were used, possibly as to not sway public opinion before the referendum. The most articles were written in 2012, with four anti-abortion, six neutral and seven pro-abortion rights articles written after Savita Halappanavar's death.

Irish Independent Headline Analysis 1983-2016

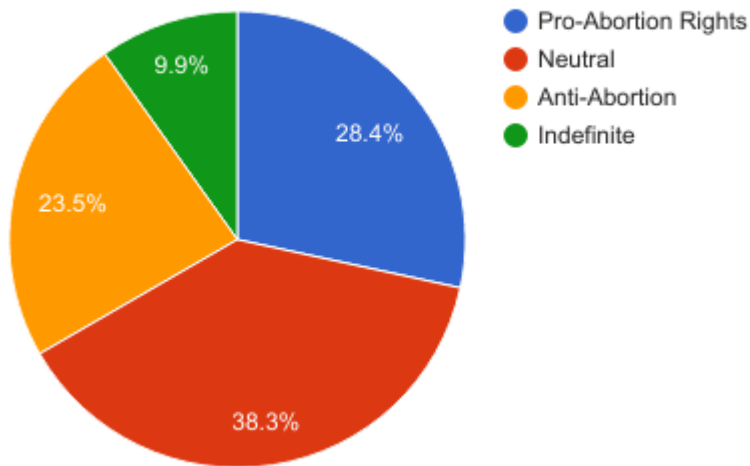


Figure 7: Percentages of labels given to headlines - Irish Independent

The majority of articles in the *Irish Independent* were labelled with neutral headlines (38.3%). Overall 28.4 percent of headlines were pro-abortion rights, and 23.5 percent were anti-abortion. The remaining 9.9 percent were labelled indefinite.

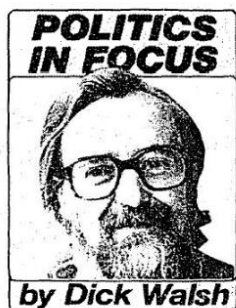
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS:

For this section two articles from both *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* will be examined from the time periods of the 1983 referendum, the 1992 X case, the 2012 Savita Halappanavar case,⁷ and the 2016 March for Choice. Each article from these time periods has been numbered and a random number generator <https://www.random.org/> was used to pick two random articles to analyse.

⁷ Background to the X case and Savita Halappanavar case further discussed in Chapter 2.4

1983 REFERENDUM: THE IRISH TIMES.

1. Dick Walsh: Time to make amends, 992 words.



Time to make amends

IT LOOKS AS though we may be about to extend the rule of wink and nod in Irish life. And if we do — by

And it completed the transformation of Fianna Fail into a middle class party, blithely ignoring its Republican pretensions, blithely appealing to the older, rural and more remote segments of the electorate while leaving Fine Gael to wrestle with its liberal conscience and the young and urban segments.

Despite the sensible decision of the Labour Party and the outrageous stands adopted by some members of Fine Gael, despite the campaign work of the Workers Party and Young Fine Gael and despite the efforts of some of the Left's minority, the referendum — and all that led up to it — has damaged once again the reputations of politicians and their esteem in the judgment of the electorate. There are still a few days in which to make amends, but a lot of damage has already been done.

However the politicians may have acted, we alone can give approval to the rule of wink and nod, the supremacy of hypocrisy. I'm voting 'no'.

passing the Constitutional Amendment next week — we will also be confirming the role of the Ancient Order of Hypocrisy and offering sorry proof that the proponents of the Two-Nations theory were right all along.

The extension of the rule of wink and nod is, in the case of the proposed amendment, especially dangerous to women; it is they who will be put at risk by rendering uncertain the legal status of operations which, in certain circumstances, could save their lives.

The proponents of the amendment claim that medical practice will remain unchanged if, as they expect, and I fear, a majority of the electorate votes "yes" on Wednesday.

It is not for them — and might not be for the doctors — to judge; legal opinion is divided, especially about the possibility of permitting some meddlesome third party to intervene to prevent an operation.

The proponents of the amendment say that no court would decide that a mother's life should be risked. But can we be sure? How can the proponents of change be sure, since they themselves already suspect that the highest court in the land might take a decision which would lead to the introduction of abortion?

The answer is that they accept the rule of wink and nod and believe that it ought to be extended. That, despite any provision of the Constitution, a blind eye would be turned to practices of doubtful constitutional or legal propriety.

We will be confirming the role of the Ancient Order of Hypocrisy by pretending that the amendment will do

tending that the amendment will do something to solve the problem of which abortion is a symptom when it really does nothing at all to solve the problems of those who at present seek abortion abroad.

And the politicians, though not all of them, must rank as leading members of the Ancient Order of Hypocrisy because it was they who placed the amendment, in its flawed form, before us, and it is they who are charged with the responsibility of looking to the interests of the citizens, of all religions and of none.

It is the politicians who, in the rhetoric of their programmes and speeches, support the notion of a unitary State while giving way to those who would have us write the doctrine of one church into our Constitution.

Allowing for honourable exceptions on both sides of the argument, the politicians have come badly out of the affair, either because of their cynical use of the issue for presumed electoral advantage, because of their cowardice in refusing to face up to the challenge which the issue presented, or the clumsiness with which they had clearly gone wrong.

Let's look again, briefly, at the sequence of events which have led to next week's vote.

Dr Garret FitzGerald and Mr Charles Haughey agreed to promote the amendment when it was proposed to them by a small but zealous group before the general election of 1981. Labour, then and later, refused to adopt a similar line and, unlike either

of the major parties, opted for a free vote in the Dail and Senate.

It was Mr Haughey who, at the opening of the last general election campaign, announced that the Amendment was an issue, and that he believed Fine Gael was not to be trusted to fulfil its promises.

A deadline

It was Dr FitzGerald who responded not only by renewing his commitment to the Amendment — as worded by Mr Haughey in the closing days of his administration — but by setting a deadline, which wasn't met, for the referendum.

No sooner had he won the election of November, 1982, than Dr FitzGerald began to doubt the wisdom of putting the Fianna Fail formula to the electorate. But he failed to hold Fine Gael together — an impossible task in the circumstances — and attempted a compromise in the Dail and Senate that gave an impression of shaky leadership and deep disunity.

If Fine Gael was as divided then as the country is now, Fianna Fail, deciding to avoid a repeat of its own disastrous internal divisions, presented a face of stubborn unity after a discussion that took all of 20 minutes and was never, thereafter, reopened in public or — as far as we know — in private.

Dr FitzGerald is much as admitted that a dreadful mistake had been made when the party leaders gave way to the proponents of change and — of his own part — when he failed to face up to their supporters in Fine Gael. Mr Haughey solemnly assumed the leadership of the Catholic nation and insisted, with episcopal authority, on having his way within Fianna Fail. His opponents remained silent.

But the referendum has highlighted the trauma accompanying Fine Gael's attempt to become a modern social democratic party, cruelly exposing Dr FitzGerald's pretension to the leadership of a reforming crusade.

Figure 8: Time to make amends by Dick Walsh 01/09/1983

Walsh appears to come from a liberal standpoint. In this article he states that the passing of the referendum would be “confirming the role of the Ancient Order of Hypocrisy”. It can be seen that Walsh is not in favour of the wording of the proposed amendment and he fears that it could do more harm than good to the women whom it will affect. He concludes in saying that it is up to the electorate to not give in to the “rule of wink and nod, the supremacy of hypocrisy. I’m voting ‘no.’” He says he is voting no, and from reading the article his reasoning appears to be because he does not agree with the wording of the amendment and the dangers it potentially poses to women in this particular wording. He uses very impartial wording to get across the argument of voting no in the referendum. While never explicitly saying he agrees with abortion, he explains why he disagrees with the amendment. This article must be labeled as liberal because he says he will be voting against the amendment and he also says that he thinks the amendment could be dangerous to women. He also never

mentions the life of foetus, which leads one to believe that he is more pro-abortion rights. However we do not know if the author is in favour of abortion in all circumstances. Therefore this article will be labelled, based on its content 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative.

2. Patrick Nolan: Why I am voting 'Yes', 602 words.


I SHARE the view of many people on both sides of the amendment debate that abortion is one of the great evils of the modern world. It has increased alarmingly in many countries. I reported the first press conference held by the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign in April 1981. At that time I was aware of how worried many people — Christian and non-Christian — were in Britain and the USA over the rapidly rising abortion rates. It appeared to me that an atmosphere was being developed in Ireland in which abortion would appear natural and necessary.

My impression of the campaign patrons — leading gynaecologists and obstetricians — was that they were idealistic and sincere. Their case for the amendment was based on human rights. Supported by influential legal opinion, they saw a case for changing the Constitution if abortion was not to be legalised, if the unborn were to be protected.

At the outset they said that they were approaching the issue on a non-denominational basis and that they would consult the Churches. One of them was a non-Roman Catholic. I honestly could not regard that conference as the start of a sectarian campaign that would seek to impose medieval authoritarianism on the country. With all necessary respect to opposing opinion, I simply do not see it in that light today.

When experts disagree, lay people are obliged to make a choice. Elected have to choose choice. Elected have to choose between, on the one hand, legal people who see the amendment wording as dangerous and the possibility of abortion being introduced as so remote that it can be ignored and, on the other hand, those who see a distinct

Why I am voting 'Yes'



**By Patrick Nolan,
Religious Affairs
Correspondent**

MacBride, an internationally distinguished jurist, indicated — albeit belatedly — that they will vote for it.

It seems that less difficulty is presented by the medical arguments against the amendment. Majority medical opinion appears to be that present medical practice will not be changed and that there will be no new risk to women's lives. This is also the view of four professors of obstetrics and gynaecology who are patrons of the amendment campaign.

The leaders of the large political parties, Dr Garret FitzGerald and Mr Charles Haughey, have been accused of hypocrisy and opportunism for committing themselves to the amendment. It becomes easy to oppose it if they are guilty, but what if they are not?

An indirect benefit of the referendum controversy may be improved services for mothers, married and unmarried. The national moral lessons learnt, even perhaps if savings have to be made in other areas of public expenditure to provide the funding.

Sadly there has been a much greater stress on the differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the other main Churches than on the common ground. All these Churches see indiscriminate abortion as a great evil. It is regrettable that the ecumenical co-operation about abortion in Northern Ireland has not been generally extended to the South. Protestants and Catholics cooperate in Life, an organisation which provides services for pregnant girls and unmarried mothers. The Southern Executive of the

Other eminent lawyers disagree with the views of the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions. I have found the legal argument for the amendment convincing. It may be significant that one of the leading constitutional lawyers of the country, Mr John Kelly, TD, and Mr Sean

Southern Executive of the Methodist Church's Social Welfare Council suggested last year that all Christians should be allies in the abortion debate and that they needed to act together to remove the reasons for abortion.

Figure 9: Why I am voting 'Yes' by Patrick Nolan 06/09/1983

As Nolan is the Religious Affairs Correspondent it can easily be assumed that he will adopt a more conservative anti-abortion view on the abortion debate. He opens the article stating “I share the view of many people on both sides of the amendment debate that abortion is one of the great evils of the modern world.” This coupled with the headline makes it clear which side of the debate Nolan stands on. He mentions how he is aware how worried people in the UK and the US are over “rapidly rising abortion rates” and that he thinks it is not necessary to introduce abortion in Ireland. He makes reference to the medical professionals who are in favour of the amendment saying that “present medical practice will not be changed and there will be no new risk to women’s lives.” Nolan appears to believe that the amendment will remove the likelihood of abortion being introduced in Ireland without changing already in place medical practices. He believes that abortion is evil and wrong, but he also thinks that an “indirect benefit of the referendum controversy may be improved services for mothers”. He also says that if everyone, regardless of faith works together to help

pregnant women it could remove the reasons for which an abortion would be needed. His views are still to be deemed conservative as he disagrees with abortion and finds it to be evil, but he makes points about co-operation and caring to help mothers that could be deemed liberal. For these reason this article is to be labelled 0.8 conservative and 0.2 liberal.

1983 REFERENDUM: IRISH INDEPENDENT.

3. Dr Louis Courtney: Yes, it was all worthwhile, 1019 words.

Yes, it was all worth while!

By Dr. Louis Courtney

WAS it all worthwhile? The arguing, the debating, the cost? This strange enigma, an island people in the north Atlantic in a world of turmoil agonising over the sacredness of life, the dignity of motherhood and the issue of abortion.

At the same time more than half of the world's energy and resources are expended yearly on methods of life destruction, military and medical, and on a neighbouring island probably the most frequently performed operation is that of life destruction, absorbing a possibly 10 per

cent of the medical resources of that country.

It was, indeed, I agree with him. It was great to have something good to work for. We must continue to work to try to protect the young women who tragically suffer in present circumstances by encouraging them to stay at home, allowing us to deliver their babies and to take care of them.

Dr. Courtney is a general obstetrician in Galway.

cent of the medical resources of that country.

My answer is an unequivocal Yes and it would still be Yes had the result been other than what it is because from time to time we must stop, think and reassess the direction in which the young population of this island is destined to move.

The case was argued well and often better. The outcome was often in doubt but the jury has spoken and the verdict is clear.

Had the further 10 per cent who voted in the last general election also voted on this occasion the outcome would have been no different. It must be said, however, that many of those who voted against the Amendment are also against abortion.

BEYOND ALL DOUBT

Ireland's position on the subject of abortion is now beyond doubt. The Amendment campaign far from being divisive as the Cavan-Monaghan constituency has shown and far from being confusing as was most instructive for the people of Ireland and for all of us involved.

The conflicting opinions between lawyers, doctors, politicians and churchmen indicate how much homework had to be done. In the 12 countries which I visited during this campaign as time went by the questions became more accurate, more penetrating and more difficult to answer.

Public awareness of the issues at stake greatly increased and, had the campaign continued for another year, the victory would have been greater.

The Amendment for me personally was a humbling experience, to work with and meet so many people of such high quality. The young men and women who took part,

from an enlightenment. Never before has such an intense debate involving so many people, so many points of view and so many organisations taken place so peacefully on this island.

Though in any electoral contest only one side can win on this occasion no one can doubt the clarity of the answer and no one should attempt to reduce its significance.

A FEW POINTS

In the face of the power of an opposing and recently elected government and the committed opposition of most of the media, the people have given their verdict. In analysing the result there is much to be learned and a few points must be made.

• This is not a time for criticism. It is a time for constructive discussion.

• To the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists I have this to say: it is time you awakened to the terrible dilemma facing the young women of Ireland. It is almost three years since, at an annual meeting, I suggested and advised the Institute to investigate and study abortion relative to Irish women and to seek ways by which they might be protected and encouraged to have their babies in Ireland. It was my hope that systems might be set up under the guidance of the Institute to protect their dignity and confidentiality and to show the young women of Ireland as a whole that the Institute is concerned and is interested in their dilemma.

In no other way can the Institute hope to sustain a position of significance in Ireland. The Institute should be under no illusion that this challenge of abortion relating to young Irish women must be met.

• To the legal profession I have this to say: it is time the word "illegitimacy" was removed from the statute book of Irish law.

removed from the statute book of Irish law. This word is repugnant to the young generation of Irish men and women and there is no reason now not to meet their clear demand that this injustice be ended.

• To RTE I have this to say: the function of a national TV station is not to attempt to manipulate the people of this country. The function of a television station is rather to reflect the opinions of the people. In the 12 countries I visited the feeling clearly was that RTE had not been doing this and did not do this in relation to the proposed Amendment to the Constitution.

• To the Oireachtas I have this to say: The Dail cannot retain the respect of the young generation of Irish men and women, 50 per cent of whom are under 25 years of age, unless the TDs set a price upon their own words.

During an election one must not make a promise of convenience which one clearly can keep and then disregard it on achieving office. It is a different matter if economic circumstance were to make it impossible but where a promise can be fulfilled it should be fulfilled.

• To the young people of Ireland I have this to say: you should challenge the institutions of this country, within the law, until they meet the requirements of Ireland's young and vibrant population.

ABIDING MEMORY

However, I have one abiding memory of the campaign. After a difficult and acrimonious meeting in Church Street, Dublin, when the outcome of the Amendment campaign was very much in doubt, a young man, aged 18, who had made no comment during the entire meeting, on leaving the room turned to me, me far removed and faced with the

Figure 10: Yes, it was all worthwhile by Dr Louis Courtney 10/09/1983

Courtney appears to be on the conservative side of the debate. He refers to terminations in the UK being performed as operations of "destruction" and laments that "possibly 10 percent of the medical resources" of Britain are used in performing abortions. He also discusses how he feels that women going through crisis pregnancies should be supported and encouraged to not have abortions and to have their babies in Ireland. He is appealing for the support of Irish women so that they will not have the need to have abortions, he said negative thoughts and words about single mothers and "illegitimacy" should be removed from political and legal discourse. His intent appears to be for the protection of both the mother and the unborn, and he appears to firmly believe this amendment, along with giving them greater support will do so, showing he has some liberal leaning in his views. However

he still being against abortion and calling it a great evil still makes this article mostly conservative. For these reasons this article is labelled 0.8 conservative and 0.2 liberal.

4. Professor John Bonnar: Putting value on human life, 1619 words.

Putting value on human life

In the last ten years, more than fifteen million unborn children in the United States and over two million in England have had their lives terminated by legalised abortion. In many European countries as well as the United States, abortion has now become the preferred method of birth control.

For example, in Sweden, one out of every three pregnancies is terminated and in England one out of every five pregnancies is terminated. At the present time, in the Irish Republic, one out of every nineteen pregnancies is ended by referral to England for abortion.

Medical and scientific experts disagree on many things but not on the scientific evidence that the unborn child is alive, is human, and is a distinct individual. The fetus acquires the value which is to be accorded to human life at its early and vulnerable stage of existence. The real question here is not when human life begins, but what is the value of human life?

In this, the last twenty years of the 20th century, throughout the world, there is widespread social acceptance of abortion. This is something which is in complete opposition to the age-old Western sense of justice and social values of every human life, regardless of its stage of development. In any view, the Pro-Life Amendment is a gross reaffirmation of all human life has intrinsic sacred worth.

Every citizen, doctor and lawyer needs to recognise that the real issue is whether to affirm and protect the sanctity of all human life or to accept the social value which some human lives are valued and others are not. As a nation, the Irish people will be asked to choose between the sanctity of life ethic and the quality of life ethic. The latter position is not asked to do so without acknowledging the right to life of the unborn?

WARNING



By Professor John Bonnar

Amendment will mean that Ireland is not at ease with every other country. What is wrong with being out of step with every other country which is practising liberal abortion?

The mere claim which some doctors have been entrusted are, contrary to the evidence known as pre-eclampsia when the mother's blood pressure is markedly increased in the second half of pregnancy.

Cancer has also been expressed about possible effects on available methods of contraception, especially the IUD and the pill, and the treatment of victims of rape. Some of the statements made by politicians and even some doctors, would indicate

as well as the non-approval accepting that this may present some risk to the fetus. Current medical opinion is that in those rare situations, abortion does not improve the chance of one for the mother.

In severe pre-eclampsia or eclampsia, the pregnant woman suffers a complication where the blood pressure can rise to dangerously high levels. In a small number of cases where the blood pressure cannot be brought under control, early delivery is required for the safety of the mother and the unborn baby that delivery is carried out even when this is required before the 38th week of pregnancy.

When this complication arises it is usually in the last trimester of the pregnancy and the unborn baby that delivery is carried out even when this is required before the 38th week of pregnancy.

Advances in the care of the pregnant baby have meant that the age of viability (which is not legally defined in Ireland) has been steadily reduced from the traditional 28 weeks. The baby at this stage weighs usually between one and two lbs and with expert medical and nursing care has a chance of survival.

Delay in treatment on the other hand means almost certain death for the fetus in the womb. There is therefore no rational basis on which the Amendment could be used to prevent treatment of the mother.

It has been argued that the Amendment will affect the use of IUD and some forms of oral contraception. Available scientific evidence indicates that both these methods are highly effective and that they do not affect the ability of the fetus to survive. The Amendment would be unaffected by the highly effective treatments available to prevent miscarriage taking place in a woman who has been the victim of rape. The treatment is usually administered within 24 hours of the incident and is effective in preventing pregnancy and where appropriate, in preventing the woman from ovulating. The Amendment will have no effect on treatment used to prevent conception in cases of rape.

SACRIFICE

Some confusion persists concerning the implications of the wording of the proposed Constitutional Amendment to protect the right to life of the unborn. Some politicians and doctors have been concerned that the Amendment might incur qualified medical practice and endanger the life of women.

It is pointed out that these fears should be viewed and dismissed. In any view, and that of the other anti-abortion politicians in Ireland who are responsible for the teaching of obstetrics, these fears reflect an extreme and highly imprudent interpretation of the wording of the Amendment.

We have every confidence that the Amendment, if passed, will be interpreted in a manner entirely consistent with established medical practice in Ireland. To do otherwise would suggest that precedent and logic would no longer be a feature of the law.

The Amendment, far from establishing an absolute right to life of the unborn, places in the Constitution a guarantee of the right to life of the unborn in the context qualified by life or death of the equal right to life of the mother.

There can in any view be no question of women's lives being endangered, and to suggest this is offensive to the medical and nursing professions of Ireland, who have an unswerving record in the care of pregnant women.

The Amendment is designed to prevent legal abortion being introduced into Ireland within the constraints of the people and it is sufficiently flexible not to interfere with established medical practice.

It would be surprising to suggest that the focus should be expanded to grant equal rights to deal with certain exceptional medical situations. This situation has happened in other countries and has simply led to liberal abortion.

It has been suggested that the

late that they are approximately seven of the work which is aimed at establishing in Ireland a society in which abortion is not the accepted answer to unwanted pregnancy. Already, many people in Ireland are involved in often at great personal sacrifice to provide for unwanted mothers and others who are under social pressure to have abortion.

The mother with an unwanted pregnancy must be given every possible help and encouragement to keep her right to life of all human beings both hers and unborn. We cannot diminish the value of our country of human life, the unborn, without diminishing the value of all human life.

This Amendment must be followed by the establishment of effective systems of care throughout the country to help women socially, morally and financially and so remove the need for abortion. The society which adopts abortion as a solution to social problems is a dead society. In the past and caring society every child, regardless of the circumstances of its conception and birth, will be welcomed, loved and cared for.

Abortion will not concern such a society because it will not be necessary. This, then, is the message of the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign and I hope and pray that the people of Ireland will vote "yes" to this Constitutional Amendment to secure the right to life of the unborn.

To do otherwise must inevitably be interpreted that as a society we are no longer opposed to abortion.

Professor John Bonnar is Professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Trinity College, Dublin, and a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at the Mater Hospital, the Adelaide Hospital and St. James's Hospital. Before coming to Dublin in 1976 to work in the Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Fetal and Neonatal units at the Mater and Adelaide hospitals, he worked in the

in this rare situation, the treatment is identical in that of the patient who is not pregnant. The care given in pregnancy is the same as those of the non-pregnant state.

Where cancer of the cervix is discovered at 24-26 weeks of pregnancy, delay of treatment of 4-6 weeks where this meets with the wishes of the mother to improve the chances of survival of the baby is accepted international practice. Such a delay has been shown by studies in the United States to make no difference to the results of treatment.

Likewise, in the rare situation of other cancers in pregnancy, for example cancer of the breast, bowel and leukaemia, the treatment in the

SOME RISK

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ECTOPIC

In ectopic pregnancy, women normally present for treatment at or before the sixth week of pregnancy and in the vast majority of cases the fetus is already dead. In the very rare situation where the fetus is still alive, it has no real prospect of survival and there is nothing that any doctor can do to improve its prospects. In other words, it is totally impracticable to save the life of the fetus.

To argue that the treatment of women with ectopic pregnancy would be altered by the Amendment would seem a perverse and irresponsible suggestion. Where the Amendment actually states that the right to life of the unborn has to be selected and vindicated only "as far as practicable",

Cancer of the cervix is rarely found in pregnancy and it causes for around one per cent of the total number of patients with cancer of the cervix. Among the 72,000 pregnant women in the Republic of Ireland each year, there might be one, possibly two women with invasive cancer of the cervix which requires treatment.

In this rare situation, the treatment is identical in that of the patient who is not pregnant. The care given in pregnancy is the same as those of the non-pregnant state.

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Figure 11: Putting value on human life by John Bonnar 01/09/1983

Professor Bonnar comes across as very conservative. He is opposed to abortion in all circumstances, and as a doctor believes that the medical practices in place at the time will be sufficient enough that abortion will not become a necessity. He believes that women's lives will not be put in danger due to the amendment and that the electorate should have faith in medical practitioners being able to help women dealing with crises in pregnancy. He believes that there are efficient measures already in place to help unwed mothers cope, and to prevent rape victims of becoming pregnant. He says at the end that voting no would make the Irish people be construed as a society no longer opposed to abortion, in a way that suggests it's wrong to be perceived as anything other than against abortion. He expresses a very conservative view to say that in a "just society" people would be anti-abortion and every child would be loved. Someone liberal would recognise that not all rapes are reported and some women will become pregnant without ever reporting the rape, and they may feel the need to avail of abortion services. For these reasons this article should be labelled 0.9 conservative and 0.1 liberal.

1992 X CASE: THE IRISH TIMES.

5. Nuala O'Faolain: Putting reality before idealism on abortion issue, 1331 words.

Putting reality before idealism on abortion issue

NUALA O'FAOLAIN

IT WAS some years after the last abortion debate that I began writing this column. But so hard had that debate been that almost the only rule I had, when I began, was not to write about abortion. I just did not think that the subject was worth discussing in the way other subjects are. Arguments do not seem to count. I have never met a pro-lifer whose mind could be changed. I have never met someone who believed in choice who became a pro-lifer.

There are side issues in the present case that can usually be examined, such as the rights of families, freedom to travel and the difference between law and government. But the absolutely fundamental issue is where you stand on stopping conceptions becoming births. People who disagree on this issue cannot talk to each other. They want to stick at each other.

My views are based on what I think of the world. This world, not a punitive other.

But I would be a pro-lifer if I could. We all live with the intention of making things better, whether through care for our families or through political activities or through argument or through art or through trying to live.

We all have a working ideal of a world in which there is no suffering. It doesn't matter that such a thing can never be: in practice, we try for it anyway. I can just about imagine a world in which every child is wanted and every act of conception is an act of love. Who wouldn't want to live in a world like that?

However, last week this paper reported that a man pleaded guilty to raping his two-year-old niece. Someone told me they were shocked by this — as if children and old ladies aren't often raped, in circumstances which not even the greatest woman-hater could construe as "asking for it."

I wasn't shocked. I know of a health visitor who made an extra call on the home of a new-born baby, because the baby had an insupportable case of thrush in her mouth. Through the window, the health visitor saw the father crouching in a cistern with the baby.

But child rape reminds you of the evil and cruelty that stalks this real world, the one I live in. It reminds you that there is no national or worldwide drive against rape, though there are endless drives to force the victims of rape to have their babies. The world is so sick and bad that you can wonder sometimes whether life is worth it.

I cannot be a pro-lifer until there is no rape.

If a woman or a girl is raped and an egg within her is fertilised, I support with all my heart her right to decide in privacy whether to allow that egg to develop — her and those who care for her. If anyone cares for her.

District justices have repeatedly told us that there are homeless, violent, demented girls all over the country who are not cared for at all, not by anyone. Those girls have wounds, though they haven't even a roof over their heads. I don't know who would have the nerves to tell one of those girls that her foetus is of value, when the girl herself has not had one moment of being valued to her entire life.

Violence, rape, abuse and neglect are what actual girls and women are powerless to protect their wombs from. And poverty. Not just some, but millions and millions of women — women with wounds — live in poverty.

How many even of the Irishwomen — fortunate women — who go to England for abortions would keep their babies if they could afford to? The clinics there say they take them so long to get the money together. I know a woman who hitched back from London to Holyhead — bleeding — because she didn't have the fare.

Money can buy a house and childcare and medical care and domestic help and leisure and companionship and education and travel and security. But if you're poor to begin with, a child will impoverish you further.

No one offers poor women large sums of money to have their babies, as if life were too sacred to be measured in money. Yet it takes money to keep life alive, and even more to keep a decent, hopeful life alive.

I couldn't be consistent for a pro-lifer while so many women around me are so much poorer than I am. I cannot ask a pregnancy just because I believe she should — for unless she and I had equal chances at all stages of our lives.

You may say that it is impossible that everyone should have equal chances — that of course some people will always be more privileged than others. Well, while that is so, let there be no rules imposed on all women as if all women were equal.

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All of us consent to this society of achievement. And not just with respect to having an affair with a married man. She lives and her child's life will be ruined. By calling and making her life bad.

It is possible to fight against such attitudes. It is possible to try to help women in general to become powerful enough to stand against a violent conspiracy.

As for the other possible answer — that about what have the baby — some people seem confident about giving it. But how another person would know? Who would tell her what to do? I know no more about the meaning of life than anyone.

I don't know what God's plan is or even, with any certainty, whether there is a God. But you don't have to have a name bled in a God to create life.

You only have to grasp the abstract death of a grasp the present life. You only have to contemplate people — one person, a variety of persons — to be convinced that humans must be specially created — that not even nature could be so exuberant as to have invented humans for nothing. It is not just reasonable but inevitable to be impressed by what life is.

But human life is expressed through people. It wears clothes, it seeks shelter, it must eat, it needs to talk and laugh and cry.

It is entangled in the actual, and each human life makes its way through its upon in the actual, in a succession of present moments.

The actual must be respected. A woman or a girl or a family considering an abortion is doing so because of an actual situation, matter — the age of the mother, her prospects, the circumstances of her pregnancy — very difficult matter. Not compared with the right of the child to be born.

But this is an abstract, this is idealism. It is like being the music without knowing the notes. The notes are the individual people involved, caught in the intractable material of this actual life.

The respective claims of the ideal and the actual are what the present public opinion is about. We yearn for a world where we are as good as the angels. We said so, in the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution.

But then along came real life, in the shape of a raped and pregnant child. That is how we go along — in a constant interplay between what we wish would be and what actually is. About pregnancy, for one, the two things are too far apart.

I can't see that this world is becoming anything like the world informed by the sweetness of the public ideal I have hardly any hope. And I cannot see that forcing a child to have a baby offers hope. Not to me. Not to her.

Figure 12: Putting reality before idealism on abortion issue 24/02/1992

O'Faolain sets out at the start of this article stating how the topic of abortion was something she had said she would not write about, from this it is easy to believe that she is trying to stay impartial and realistic on the issue. She has a realistic outlook towards this debate, as she states "I would be a pro-lifer if I could." She then goes on to explain that it would only happen in the case if "every child is wanted and every act of conception is an act of love." She explains that this is an idealistic view and she knows that the world does not always allow for this idealism, while referring to a man pleading guilty to raping a two year old child. She explains that she cannot be pro-life until there is no rape, because there is no national drive to prevent rape, but there is one to persuade victims of rape to give birth if they become pregnant, and she doesn't see this as fair. She says it is abstract to disrespect the actual situation faced by women in crisis pregnancies for the right of the child to live. She finishes saying that forcing the 14 year old rape victim to have a child does not offer hope. O'Faolain adopts the impartial stance that she does not have the right to tell another woman what to do with her body. While she never says that she is pro-abortion rights or "pro-choice", she affirms she cannot be pro-life in the current situation. She believes women should not be forced to give birth, thus suggesting that she believes in one's right to choose what is best for them. This liberal view, though not said, is shown to be the strongest view she has. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.6 liberal and 0.4 conservative.

6. **Attracta Ingram: Assertion of equal rights for mother and foetus a sham, 965 words.**



Figure 13: Assertion of equal rights for mother and foetus a sham by Attracta Ingram 27/02/1992

Immediately from the headline it's suggested that the author is against the amendment. Ingram uses strong emotive language to get a liberal pro-abortion rights point across. In the second paragraph Ingram states that a woman forfeits her claim to be an equal citizen stating that it is the "unagreed use of her body" creating preference for the foetus over her is her reason. Ingram thinks that it is unfair to equate the life of the mother to that of the foetus. Her point that a foetus should not be given equal right to life to the mother, and how a ban on abortion should not be written into the Constitution, shows her more liberal view on abortion. She does not say that she is in favour of abortion in all circumstances, but she clearly feels strongly about the woman's life is equated to the life of a child who is not yet born. She feels this is the same as saying a woman is only good for producing children and does not agree that this should be the case, and that women should not be forced to have children against their will. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative.

1992 X CASE: IRISH INDEPENDENT.

7. Alan Duker: 'Gross intrusion' in lives of Irish women, 1096 words.



Figure 14: Gross intrusion in lives of Irish women by Alan Duker 19/02/1992

Dukes refers back to the 1983 referendum in the opening paragraph and states that many feared the consequences of the amendment back then, such as removing a woman's right to travel. However when it happened in the 1992 X case, he says that many who were okay with women travelling for abortions in 1983 are now okay with this "gross intrusion" in women's personal lives. His use of the word gross intrusion implies that he disagrees with the view that the girl should not be allowed to travel, and thinks people should not be intruding in her personal life. He suggests that the High Court's judgement implies that the State can prevent a pregnant woman from visiting any country in which she may procure an abortion, if they suspect that is her reason for travelling. He discusses the details of the trial and concludes that the court has established that the mother's right to liberty and the threat to her life is less important than the right to life of the foetus. He even suggests that from this it may occur that women might have to prove they are not pregnant. While he does not discuss if he is anti or pro-abortion rights, it is clear he is against the rulings of this case, and feels that the Eighth Amendment, and this interpretation of it is unfair to women, calling it "frightening". He concludes with saying that the amendment is

misogynistic and that the dangers of it were not correctly anticipated, and because of this “women will be the losers.” While he does not express which side of the debate he stands on, it is clear he is against the amendment, and preventing women to travel, which makes him more liberal than conservative. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative.

8. Dr Mary Lucey: Why young girl should have her baby, 639 words.

Why young girl should have her baby

I AM pleased, first of all, to see that our new Taoiseach Albert Reynolds has shown his commitment to the law and the Constitution on the question of abortion.



By Dr MARY LUCEY

It can be very difficult to uphold the law in this situation because it can be misunderstood and appear uncaring and legalistic. We are acutely aware of this in SPUC.

However, when the people voted two-to-one to add a right to life to the unborn in the 1983 referendum, it was quite clear that there were no exceptions to this amendment.

The wording includes the words “as far as practicable”. It also mentions the right to life of the mother as well as the life of the child.

In this case there is no medical threat to the mother’s life. Mr Justice Costello made it very clear in his

judgment that the fear of suicide on the part of the young girl was an inferior risk to the life of the child if it was aborted.

I am extremely and sincerely sorry for the young girl and her family that they should find themselves in these circumstances.

I don’t think, however, that killing the baby will solve the problem.

I understand that people in this type of situation may be tempted to take desperate measures.

But I believe when they reflect and

realise what abortion would mean, it would ultimately be of no help to their daughter.

What abortion would bring to her is death to her unborn child and I think there is ample evidence in our country that killing solves nothing.

It is crucial to remember that the circumstances surrounding conception have no part to play in the right to life of the unborn.

Once a new life has started that new life has a right to life.

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) knows it—scientifically — that life begins at conception.

And once that principle is acknowledged and enforced the Government and the people are committed to upholding the law.

There may be attempts to portray Ireland abroad as a backward country, I don’t agree.

In fact, I am proud of the stand the Irish people took in 1983 to show their respect for life from conception.

So what are the people who are saying this girl should have a right to kill her baby offering her?

They are offering her another violation of her body which has already been violated.

I think we should have a kind, caring and compassionate society here.

In these tragic circumstances we as a society should care for this young girl, give her every support during her pregnancy and, when her child is born, arrange to have it taken for adoption if that is her wish and if she finds it difficult to look after it.

I realise that my solution has many difficulties and requires heroic courage — dare I say virtue — on the part of the girl.

But I sincerely believe if she keeps her baby, brings it to term and has it adopted (if she so wishes) she will be a happier person than if she had terminated the life.

I believe that taking that course of action will give her a chance, at least, to lead some kind of a normal life. It may allow her to salvage something from these dark days.

I am horrified, generally at the reaction of the media.

I understand how ordinary people can be deeply moved by all this, but as of now, the law stands.

We in SPUC are democrats. We have always used the ballot box and the law courts to further the cause of unborn life.

We hope the people will continue to respect human life but no matter what happens we will always defend unborn life.

Dr Mary Lucey is President of SPUC

Figure 15: Why young girl should have her baby by Dr Mary Lucey 19/02/1992

It can be assumed from the headline of this article that Dr Lucey is anti-abortion. She discusses how when the people voted for the Eighth Amendment it was clear to the electoate that there would be no exceptions to the right to life of the unborn. She states that she feels sympathy for the young girl and her family for the situation that they are in, but she feels that a termination of the girls pregnancy will not solve their problem. She also states that the circumstances of the conception of the child should not change it’s right to life, and that life begins at conception, which is considered to be a conservative view of abortion based on the definitons discussed in Chapter 2. Dr Lucey then says that those advocating for the girl’s right to a termination are “offering her another violation of her body which has already been violated.” This again is a very conservative view to liken abortion to being as much of a violation to the girls body as the rape which caused her pregnancy was. Lucey further explains that she feels if the girl goes through with the pregnancy to full term that she would be much happier. She does sympathise with the girl, but mainly focuses on the right to life of the unborn, and not of the girl who was suicidal. Because of this and the other statements made by Lucey, and because Lucey is a member of SPUC⁸ it is clear to see

⁸ The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children

that this article and her views are anti-abortion and of a more conservative stance. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.9 conservative and 0.1 liberal.

2012 SAVITA HALAPPANAVAR CASE: THE IRISH TIMES.

9. Ivana Bacik: Time for Government to stop talking and legislate, 1011 words



Figure 16: Time for Government to stop talking and legislate by Ivana Bacik 16/11/2012

Bacik opens with calling the circumstances around Savita Halappanavar's death appalling, and that it is shameful that the Irish State tragically failed her. She then says it is even sadder that these cases were easily predicatable when the Eighth Amendment gave equal right to life to the mother and the unborn. From these opening paragraphs the sense that Bacik has more liberal views towards abortion is established. She states that 20 years after the X case, the amendment on abortion does not give effective direction as to how to follow the legislation. She suggests that those who are campaigning against abortion are intimidatory and hypocritical saying "They also insist abortion is never necessary to save women's lives – and when it is, they don't call it abortion." She explains that there is still no clear legislation on the X case, despite there being two referendums to remove suicide as ground for abortion, both of which failed to be passed. She then discusses the bill to legislate for grounds for lawful abortion in Ireland which she is happy that the 2012 government will not ignore it like the six previous governments. While Bacik does not state whether she is pro-abortion rights, it is clear from her words that in cases where the life of the mother is threatened she believes it should be an option, and that women should not have to travel for this

service. It can be said that her opinion is somewhat liberal, given that she thinks abortion should be allowed in certain circumstances, but it cannot be determined if she agrees in all circumstances. She does make criticisms of the “pro-life campaign” which suggests she does not agree with what it stands for, but that cannot be confirmed further. Therefore this article should be labelled 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative.

10. Susan McKay: Abortion amendment has been disaster and must go, 802 words.



Figure 17: Abortion amendment has been a disaster and must go by Susan McKay 26/11/2012

McKay opens her article by stating that she thinks women need to be able to make informed decisions about their pregnancies, showing she has liberal opinions on abortion. She then refers back to when Sheila Hodger’s husband described her death, days before the referendum that introduced the Eighth Amendment was held. She states how those campaigning for the amendment chose to sweep aside these types of cases, backed up with claims that Ireland is a “Catholic country”. She then calls those who were anti-abortion “zealots” suggesting that she disagrees strongly with their opinions, thinking them to be extreme. She also states that those who are anti-abortion see no problems with the laws or Constitution, in a way that suggests she disagrees with this opinion. The strongest opinion McKay states is that “Article 40.3.3 has been a disaster. It has led to misery and it has failed to stop women from wanting, needing and in many cases getting abortions.” This shows her disagreement with the amendment, and suggests her liberal outlook on abortion. She further states that the government should give the electorate the chance to remove Article 40.3.3 from the Irish Constitution, and allow for women to make informed decisions on crisis pregnancies. From this article her views on the amendment and that abortion should be allowed in certain circumstances are clear, however it can not be said that she agrees

with abortion in all circumstances based on this article. For this reason this article is mostly liberal and should be labelled 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative.

2012 SAVITA HALAPPANAVAR CASE: IRISH INDEPENDENT.

11. Dearbhail McDonald: I am sickened and I am angry that for 20 years our leaders have refused to legislate, 577 words

I am sickened and I am angry that for 20 years our leaders have refused to legislate



The image shows a screenshot of a news article. On the left, there is a small portrait of Dearbhail McDonald, a woman with dark hair. To the right of the portrait is her name and title: 'Dearbhail McDonald, Legal Affairs Editor'. The main text of the article is in a serif font. The headline is 'I am sickened and I am angry that for 20 years our leaders have refused to legislate'. The first paragraph starts with 'I AM a 35-year-old woman living in Ireland, the celebrated "Catholic country" basking in global praise for its elevation, this week, to the UN Human Rights Council. Next January, Ireland, that "fearless champion" will score its score on the international stage playing an active role in promotion of human rights. Maybe Savita Halappanavar should be the first item on the country's agenda. Like many women in Ireland, I woke up yesterday to the shocking news that Savita, whose 17-week-old pregnancy was doomed, died after her medically supervised miscarriage went wrong. I do not know the full circumstances leading up to her death, but we know that in her final days, Savita (31) asked those treating her – as she endured her harrowing miscarriage – to induce her in order to accelerate and bring to an end her physical and mental agony. Savita had accepted that her pregnancy was hopeless. According to her husband, she was told that Ireland is "a Catholic country... and as long as there was a fetal heartbeat there was nothing they could do. It's hard to explain the depth of anger and sorrow Savita's death has ignited in me – a visceral rage that has reduced me, and many of my friends, to tears. One that sought to distinguish between life-saving terminations and so-called social ones. But in the 20 years since the X case, no government – not one – has given legal effect to the existing Constitutional right to abortion. I am the same age as X, and I wonder how she must have felt watching the anonymous alphabet soup of women who followed her into the courts in Ireland and elsewhere, seeking clarity of the law. I travelled to Strasbourg two years ago, to the European Court of Human Rights to hear the A, B, C cases. And I listened with amazement, then horror, as Ireland's Government – through its legal representation – told a full chamber of judges that in rare cases where there was a risk to a mother's life there was "a very clear and bright blue line" provided by Irish law that was neither difficult to understand nor apply. The European Court put a red line through that bright blue line fiction, criticising the Government for leaving our courts with a lack of clear information regarding lawful abortions. Regardless of where we each stand on this perennially divisive issue, the legal infrastructure is overwhelming. For Clár's sake, it's what this Catholic country needs.'

Figure 18: I am sickened and I am angry that for 20 years our leaders have refused to legislate by Dearbhail McDonald 15/11/2012

From the headline it is easy to assume that McDonald is going to be liberal about abortion rights in this article. She opens it discussing the details that she knows surrounding Savita Halappanavar's death, and how it angered her. She states that numerous governments have failed to legislate on the X case and that Ireland has been called a "Catholic country" to excuse the lack of abortion law. She also discusses the A, B and C case and how she was horrified that the Irish Government's legal representation at that case stated that there was a "clear blue line" in the rare cases where a mother's life was at risk during her pregnancy that was "neither difficult to understand nor apply." Which she then says the ECtHR criticised the Government saying that this was not the case. From the way she states this, it seems as though she agrees with the court, and that she feels more clarity is needed in this law. She ends with stating that there needs to be definitive legislation on abortion set out to provide this clarity. From this it is easy to see that in cases where the mother's life is at risk McDonald believes that lawful abortions should be made available to them in Ireland. However she never discusses the topic of abortion further and there is no way to tell if she agrees with abortion in other circumstances. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.7 liberal and 0.3 conservative, because she certainly believes abortion

should be legal in some instances, but it is unclear as to where she would draw the line.

12. David Quinn: Ireland is safe, despite the recent propaganda, 554 words.

Ireland is safe, despite the recent propaganda

In the debate about abortion we are constantly dealing with what can only be described as ‘asymmetrical hysteria’; that is we are only ever outraged by anti-abortion laws and their consequences and never by the consequences of pro-abortion laws.

The result of this ‘asymmetrical hysteria’ is that public opinion is constantly being pushed to favour more liberal abortion laws rather than more restrictive ones.

Indeed, we are conditioned to believe that laws against abortion are the result of irrational dogmas that are placing women’s lives at risk.

Thus we now think that, if only we were more like our more ‘rational’ next-door neighbour, Britain, Savita Halappanavar would be alive today.

In fact, it is impossible to know that, and certainly not before the completion of the investigation into her death.

In the meantime, what we do know is that the Irish maternal death rate is one of the very lowest in the world at roughly three women per 100,000. The British figure is four times higher at 12 per 100,000 and the US figure is eight times higher at 24 per 100,000.

How is it that Ireland without abortion is so much safer for pregnant women

David Quinn



than Britain and America, which both have highly liberal abortion laws?

The above data has been obtained from ‘Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008’, which has been developed by the World Health Organisation, the UN and the World Bank.

However, thanks to the highly tendentious coverage of the tragic case of Mrs Halappanavar, particularly by RTÉ, most Irish people probably believe that Ireland is a particularly dangerous place for women to have a baby.

This notion, now commonplace and gaining worldwide traction, is actually a gross calumny against our country.

Our politicians ought to defend the medical record of this country and point out that our maternal healthcare system is superb at bringing babies to full term without compromising the lives or health of their mothers.

We would also do well to point out how the dogmas behind the abortion laws of other countries cost lives.

For example, in Britain, now many babies are unnecessarily aborted

because a doctor erroneously imagines that the only way to save the mother is to abort the baby?

What dogma leads abortion clinics to think ‘gendercide’ is okay, namely the killing of an unborn child simply because it is the ‘wrong’ sex?

What kind of dogma thinks it is okay to abort a child simply because the child has Down’s Syndrome or cystic fibrosis?

None of the scandals just listed ever causes anything like the outrage generated by the hard cases: an anti-abortion law will cause from time to time.

There are two reasons for this. First, they do not attract anything like the same publicity and so most of us are completely unaware of them. The second reason is a dogmatic attachment to the ideology of choice, which causes many of us to simply turn a blind eye to the innumerable scandals caused by abortion laws.

We must not allow ourselves to be conditioned by excessive one-sided propaganda into thinking our law on abortion is inhumane and unjust.

The truth is that our law with respect both to mother and child is far more humane than in other Western countries, including Britain, and we should be very proud of that.

Figure 19: Ireland is safe, despite the recent propaganda by David Quinn 16/11/2012

Quinn opens his article discussing that “asymmetrical hysteria” is constantly being dealt with in the ongoing abortion debate, and that the result of this is a liberal view on abortion being pushed into public opinion instead of a more conservative one. He states that it is impossible to know if a less restrictive abortion law, like that in the UK, would have prevented Savita’s death. He then discusses maternal mortality rates in Ireland in comparison to the UK and the US, and states “How is it that Ireland without abortion is so much safer for pregnant women than Britain and America, which both have highly liberal abortion laws?” Quinn then says however safe Ireland is to give birth in, because of the media’s coverage of Savita’s death, many people think of Ireland as a dangerous place to give birth. He then mentions that “many babies are unnecessarily aborted” because doctors believe it to be the only way to save the mother, the child is the ‘wrong’ gender or has a disability, and how these cases do not gather the same amount of disgust from the general public. This again shows that he is against abortion opting for a more conservative opinion on it. He concludes in saying that the current abortion law in Ireland protects both the mother and the foetus and that it is more humane than in most other countries, is something that as a nation “we should be very proud of”. This reinforces his strong stance that he believes abortion is inhumane and that he is against it in all his aforementioned circumstances. He never states in this that he agrees there are any cases in which abortion should be

allowed, so based on this article it can be said that his opinion is very conservative. He calls the pro-abortion rights opinion that the Irish law is too restrictive “propaganda” and says that those who are pro-abortion rights disregard the scandals arising from abortion laws. For these reasons this article should be labelled 0.9 conservative and 0.1 liberal.

2016 MARCH FOR CHOICE: THE IRISH TIMES.

13. Fintan O’Toole: Anti-abortion ‘zygopaths’ make a mockery of equality, 871 words.



Figure 20: Anti-abortion ‘zygopaths’ make a mockery of equality by Fintan O’Toole 27/09/2016

O’Toole takes a liberal stance on the abortion debate and is quite clearly pro-abortion rights, as can be deduced from the strong language he uses. He uses a play on words to liken the thought that “woman equals zygote” to psychopathic, coining the term “zygopathic”. This strong use of language and wordplay show that O’Toole has a very liberal view on abortion. The view that a woman be equal to a “group of cells” is something he clearly disagrees with. This can also be seen when he says “The actual lives of women are not mere details, merely distractions from the timeless essence of the soul. A zygote is a set of instructions for the creation of a person.” He says that giving equal right to life to the mother and the unborn, “is a mockery of equality”. O’Toole only mentions the early stages of pregnancy in this, so there is no way to know his opinion on late term terminations, but nonetheless his opinion can be considered to be liberal, given that he thinks women should not be considered equal to the early unborn foetus. This article should be labelled 0.8 liberal and 0.2 conservative because of the omission of discussion on later term abortions, the authors further opinion on abortion cannot be understood, and therefore cannot be taken into

account. It is clear he is against the prevention of early term abortion, and equating the mother to the unborn, showing he is liberal in those views but shows no further than that.

14. Breda O'Brien: The right to choose reinforces patriarchy, 855 words.

Breda O'Brien: The right to choose reinforces patriarchy
Designating a child as chosen radically alters the unconditional nature of parental love
Sun, Oct 2, 2016, 06:00

Breda O'Brien 57



Chosen children: such a slogan screams that adults are all-powerful. They have the right to exclude others from even being defined as human. Photograph: Clodagh Kilcoyne/Reuters

The love of a mother for her baby is the most basic and unconditional form of love that there is. Of course, it is not just mothers. Most fathers would identify with the words of Richard Moore's father on learning that his son had been blinded by a rubber bullet: can I give him my eyes?

The unconditional love babies receive is the basis for a secure life, knowing that, no matter what happens, we are valued and valuable.

Figure 21: The right to choose reinforces patriarchy by Breda O'Brien 02/10/2016

O'Brien appears to have a conservative view on abortion based on this article. Firstly the headline says that giving women the right to choose abortion reinforces patriarchy and in the opening paragraphs she discusses the unconditional love she understands parents to have for their children. She refers back to basic human instinct "The urge to protect the weakest and most helpless is primal. Or at least it used to be" and states that mothers bringing their children on pro-abortion rights marches, calling them a "chosen child" suggest to the children that a mother's love is conditional. O'Brien uses the reactions of her children when abortion was explained to them to say that children do not rationalise abortion the way adults might, and to reinforce her opinion that abortion is the taking of a human life. She further goes on to explain that it is dehumanising to liken a foetus in the womb to a clump of cells, and that everyone is simply made up of clumps of cells. While her views are anti-abortion and can be considered conservative, a liberal view can be seen too, that she feels the slogans used by the pro-abortion rights activists reinforce patriarchy and that feminists should try change things to help prevent crisis pregnancies rather than opting to terminate them.

It is not clear if she disagrees with abortion in all circumstances. For these reasons this article should be labelled 0.7 conservative and 0.3 liberal.

2016 MARCH FOR CHOICE: IRISH INDEPENDENT.

15. Ronan Mullen: Repeal turns to repulse in war of weasel words, 893 words.

Ronan Mullen: Repeal turns to repulse in war of weasel words

Campaigners for abortion will stoop to any tasteless stunt

Ronan Mullen
October 2 2016 2:30 AM



Protest: The Repeal the Eighth Amendment march on Merrion Square, Dublin Photo: Gerry Mooney

My father was a big fan of the great Kerry football team who, but for Seamus Darby's late great Offaly goal in September 1982, would have won an unprecedented five All Irelands in a row

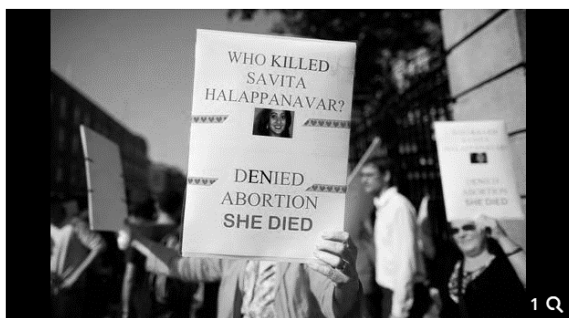
Figure 22: Repeal turns to repulse in war of weasel words by Ronan Mullen 02/10/2016

Mullen uses a football analogy to help describe what he feels the challenges the anti-abortion campaign face trying to “persuade people that Ireland without abortion is a much happier and humane place than an Ireland with abortion.” His stance on abortion is apparent from there on that he is against abortion. He discusses how he has never heard a pro-abortion rights campaigner say abortions shouldn’t be legal in certain circumstances, and claims that terminations take place up to birth in cases of minor disabilities in the UK. He criticised the support shown to the pro-abortion rights campaign from Ministers Zappone and Harris, stating that he thinks they are trying to appear trendy to the younger generation. He also describes abortion providers as “heartless” for providing abortions in cases of severe foetal abnormalities. His anti-abortion stance appears clear that he does not agree with abortion in any circumstances, and that women should be supported throughout pregnancy to insure a safe birth for the mother and child. With this in mind this article should be labelled 0.9 conservative and 0.1 liberal.

16. Barbara McCarthy: 'Pro-abortionists' are aggressive, deluded and lacking in empathy, 915 words.

'Pro-abortionists' are aggressive, deluded and lacking in empathy

Barbara McCarthy
September 21 2016 2:30 AM



A pro-abortion supporter holds up a placard in front of the gates of the Irish Parliament building during a 2013 demonstration. Photo: Getty

I won't be joining the #repealthe8th-ers at the pro-choice march in Dublin on Saturday because I'd feel like a phony. I'm not a card-carrying, jumper-wearing member of the 'pro-abortion' lobby and I'm finding myself less so as each day passes.

Figure 23: 'Pro-abortionists' are aggressive, deluded and lacking in empathy by Barbara McCarthy 21/09/2016

McCarthy criticises the approaches of the pro-abortion rights campaigners, likening them to the “aggressive, lacking in empathy, deluded” ‘pro-lifers’ of the 1983 referendum. She criticises how they dismiss opinions that do not match theirs, and the use of exaggeration to suit their agenda. McCarthy states that she doesn't “understand how a bunch of strangers, who know nothing about someone's personal situation, have the right to manipulate on either side.” However she then elaborates to say that in cases of foetal abnormality, sexual abuse, or health concerns, women should not have to travel, and women who cannot afford it should not have to have illegal abortions. She thinks that abortion should not be seen as normal, and that support and education on pregnancy should be more widely available to help crisis and unwanted pregnancy situations. She does not make aggressive argument against abortion, however she does acknowledge the fears women face in cases of crisis pregnancy. She also feels empathy towards the mother and the foetus. While many of her views can be deemed as conservative, there is also liberal aspects to her opinion as she thinks women should be allowed abortions in certain cases, and is not 100 percent against abortion. She seems to be more against the pro-abortion rights campaigners, and their tactics than

abortion itself. While she doesn't agree in all instances, she does in some. For this reason this article should be labelled 0.6 liberal and 0.4 conservative.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OF ANALYSIS:

In some time periods up to 100 or more articles about the abortion debate were written in total, with up to 21 opinion or editorial articles written. While news and political articles made up the majority of articles written on abortion, a large number of opinion and editorial articles were also written. This shows the importance given to the educated opinions of journalists, authors, doctors, professors and politicians when discussing abortion and debating the topic from both anti-abortion and pro-abortion rights perspectives. It can be seen that *The Irish Times* gave more coverage than the *Irish Independent* to the abortion debate in opinion pieces during the times analysed.

As these are randomly picked articles, and not all articles were examined due to time constraints, it is difficult to say for certain if the publications have become more liberal or conservative. From this level of research it appears that liberal views have become easier to voice, and more can be discussed, but the same level of liberalism has been maintained. While conservative opinions seem to have been slightly less maintained and have become more difficult to voice.

As can be seen in *The Irish Times* the liberal article from 1983 and liberal 2016 article do not have much of a difference in how liberal/conservative the views they showed were. However, the most recent articles were increasingly open in talking about abortion whereas the older ones were more reserved in this sense. The articles that were mostly conservative did appear to have some change, with the mainly conservative article of 1983 being more conservative than the 2016 one, which was moving closer to neutral. Both of the articles from the 1992 case and the 2012 case were mainly liberal in their views also.

In the *Irish Independent*, it can be seen that the 1983 articles were both mostly conservative, and from 2016 one was mostly conservative, while one was more neutral, showing conservative and liberal opinions. However in contrast with *The Irish Times* the *Irish Independent's* conservative articles examined stayed at the same

level of conservatism, and the level of mainly liberal, which is seen first in the 1992 case, stayed roughly the same throughout the years.

In total 188 opinion and editorial articles were written by the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* in the time periods analysed with 81 and 107 articles respectively. The Irish Times had 43 pro-abortion rights headlines, and 21 anti-abortion headlines, while the Irish Independent had 23 pro-abortion rights headlines and 19 anti-abortion headlines. The remaining 82 articles had either neutral headlines, or headlines which were unsuited to be defined as liberal, neutral or conservative. This will further be discussed in the following Conclusion Chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As discussed in the previous chapter, due to time constraints it was impossible to analyse all 188 opinion and editorial articles in full detail. For the purpose of analysis these articles were broken down into nine periods⁹, and discourse analysis was carried out on a total of 16. Two from each paper from four selected time periods, which were the first, last and two in between. However, despite this, percentages from all periods will be used to aid comparison across the periods.¹⁰

A headline analysis carried out gave a rough estimate of the number of pro-abortion rights, and anti-abortion opinion and editorial articles that were written, by assuming the headlines indicated the opinion written in these articles. While both publications had a total number of pro-abortion rights headlines that was higher than the total number of anti-abortion rights headlines, the neutral and indefinite headlines could sway the number of articles that are pro-abortion rights or anti-abortion. This makes it hard to determine for definite whether there were more liberal or conservative articles written and if there has been a change in this over the years.

However inferences can still be made from the results gathered in the research process. From the research information 40.2 percent of articles in *The Irish Times* were given liberal headlines, versus 19.6 percent being given conservative headlines. It can be anticipated that if a headline appeared to be conservative or liberal that the opinion or editorial article itself was then mostly conservative or liberal.

In the *Irish Independent* 28.4 percent of opinion and editorial articles had liberal headlines whereas 23.5 percent had conservative headlines. The difference between the two is much smaller than that in *The Irish Times*. However, the number of neutral headlines was much larger at 38.3 percent and indefinite headlines accounted for 9.9 percent.

Based on this information it can be said that both *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* likely published more liberal than conservative opinion and editorial articles in the time periods analysed. However without analysing these articles in full, this is hard to confirm.

⁹ See chapter 2.

¹⁰ See appendix for full information.

In *The Irish Times* during the 1983 referendum 25 percent of the 8 articles published were pro-abortion rights and 12.5 percent were anti-abortion. This increased in 2016, with both pro-abortion rights and anti-abortion articles accounting for 44.44 percent each of the 9 articles published. This increase in both shows that *The Irish Times*, has become more impartial in its coverage of the abortion debate, having an equal amount of argument for each side of the debate. This was the highest percentage of anti-abortion or conservative articles published by *The Irish Times*. However there were three time periods in which the pro-abortion rights or liberal side of the debate received the same or more coverage in this publication. This shows a gradual build up to *The Irish Times* becoming close to equal in covering both sides of the debate.

In the *Irish Independent* in 1983 16.67 percent of the articles published were liberal and 41.67 percent were conservative out of a total of 12 articles. Articles labelled neutral accounted for the final 41.67 percent. However in the 2016 time period analysed, only 5 opinion/editorial articles on abortion were published, with 75 percent of the articles labelled as conservative, 25 percent neutral, and zero liberal articles. This shows that the *Irish Independent* gave less coverage to the abortion debate in 2016 than it did in 1983. The difference in the number of articles written in both time periods makes it difficult to say if the publication became more conservative, or if this figure is simply skewed because of the small number of articles.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.2 the 1995 divorce referendum can be viewed as an equal marking point in the debate between conservative and liberal views. After this time an increase in the percentage of liberal opinion articles can be seen. In *The Irish Times* 41.67 percent of the 12 opinion articles published were labelled liberal during the 1992 referendum with 16.67 percent labelled conservative. This increased to 50 percent in the 1997 C case time period with zero conservative articles, also with 12 articles published. Similarly in the *Irish Independent* the percentage of liberal opinion/editorial articles in this time period increased. Out of four opinion/editorial articles published during the 1992 referendum, zero were labelled liberal or conservative. In 1997 however 33.33 percent of six published were labelled liberal and 16.67 labelled conservative. This shows that views were becoming more liberal at this time.

Based on the discourse analysis done on the 16 opinion and editorial articles (eight from each publication) from four of the nine time periods, a majority of these articles were also liberal, with a total of nine labelled liberal and seven conservative in total. Six opinion/editorial articles from *The Irish Times* were liberal, and two were conservative. In the *Irish Independent* however three opinion/editorial articles were labelled liberal, five were conservative. This coupled with the above information that *The Irish Times* has a higher percentage of liberal opinion pieces than the *Irish Independent* confirms that *The Irish Times* is the more liberal of the two publications.

It can also be seen from the research that both publications gave more coverage to liberal opinions than to conservative opinions, with both having a higher percentage of liberal articles than conservative articles published. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it appears from this level of research that liberal views have become easier to voice. The public appears to have become more receptive to the liberal views, and more topics can be brought into the discussion. However a similar level of liberalism appears to be maintained. While conservative opinions seem to have been slightly less maintained, for the most part. However there are some outliers in this data, such as the *Irish Independent* in 2016 with 75 percent of opinion/editorial articles labelled conservative and 25 percent labelled neutral.

In conclusion, based on the level of research that has been done, it appears that the publications analysed have become neither more liberal nor more conservative. However, what does appear to have changed is the range of views which can be discussed. It appears to this author that the Irish electorate have become more open to views that do not align with the morals of the Catholic Church, as seen in the 1995 Divorce Referendum, and the 2015 Marriage Equality Referendum¹¹. This allows for more liberal views to be discussed in greater detail. Topics that would have created tension and offended readers at the time of the 1983 Referendum may be seen as less offensive in the present day. Change may not have been pronounced in the above publications, however the scope for discussion has become more extensive.

¹¹ Discussed further in Chapter 2.2 and 2.3.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Article analysis – Full version of some articles examined in discourse analysis.

1. **Barbara McCarthy: 'Pro-abortionists' are aggressive, deluded and lacking in empathy, 915 words.**

I won't be joining the #repealthe8th-ers at the pro-choice march in Dublin on Saturday because I'd feel like a phony. I'm not a card-carrying, jumper-wearing member of the 'pro-abortion' lobby and I'm finding myself less so as each day passes.

They are what the pro-lifers were in the 70s and 80s - aggressive, lacking in empathy, deluded, and condescending. I shall elaborate - aggressive in their blanket dismissal of opinions that don't match theirs, apathetic in their feelings towards the unborn child, deluded in the fact that they think a right to abortion has something to do with 1916 among others things, and condescending of 'Catholic ideologist idiots' who don't follow their mantra.

Exaggeration has also been rampant in recent weeks. The earth-shattering story where a counsellor in a Dublin clinic warned an undercover reporter that she could get breast cancer from having an abortion made headlines. An organisation with direct links to a Catholic anti-abortion group, which is unregulated by Irish law, saying abortions could be dangerous - well I never. An online newspaper called the street where the clinic is housed a 'street of shame'. An entire street, no less.

Liberals and group-thinkers are losing their collective minds. I think a lot of it is due to the fact that many of the repealers weren't around during the last referendum in 1983, otherwise they would have been afflicted with chronic taedium vitae brought on by 'I can't believe we're still talking about abortions 33 years later' syndrome.

If a woman has an abortion and regrets it in 20 years' time, where will the pro-choicers be? I don't understand how a bunch of strangers, who know nothing about someone's personal situation, have the right to manipulate on either side. Women who have abortions because of sexual abuse, foetal abnormality or other health concerns should never have to travel abroad. Women who don't have the financial means should never have to have a backstreet abortion.

I'm neither Catholic, nor anti-abortion, but I find it strange that pro-abortionists - that's what I call them because 'choice' doesn't seem to be on their agenda - can get behind the ending of a human life with such fervour. I had my head bitten off recently when I said I felt sorry for the baby that was aborted into a bin in Northern Ireland.

One journalist recently wrote: "I had an abortion. It's normal." I don't think it should be sold as thus. What if, say, you're 28, about to travel around the world with a friend, and you get pregnant after a one-night stand. Your friends and society will tell you it's OK to have an abortion. It is all about your rights after all. Then 10 years later, your friends all have kids and you don't. Do they care that they talked you into it all those years ago? Probably not.

I fear that more people will have abortions as a result of a possible 'yes' vote and as I am no longer in my 20s, I am better poised to comment on the negative effects of them. When you're 23, you know everything and think you'll be young forever. By 40, all that changes. At that stage, a large percentage of people hope and pray they'll have a

baby, rather than get rid of one. Not everyone obviously, but more than would admit it publicly.

Rather than all shout at once, why not examine the fact that more than 100,000 women had abortions between 1994 and 2014 even though clearly pregnancy is the last thing they wanted. Is it down to lack of education, financial means, alcohol?

Unprotected sex, possibly with strangers, means people are putting themselves at risk. According to figures from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, there have been around 7,000 STI cases so far this year, a 13.8pc increase on last year, and 326 cases of HIV, 71 more than last year. Syphilis, which was reduced to negligible levels in the 80s and 90s, is now beginning to re-appear. Having abortions accessible in Ireland won't necessarily change those statistics, it may even increase them. In 2014, 5.2pc of pregnancies in Ireland ended in abortion, while in Spain it was 18pc, and 21pc in England, where abortions are legal.

Young women and men need to be educated properly at school and college, starting with properly taught biology class and access to free condoms, which could be available through sponsored initiatives.

Once a woman is pregnant, she is unwillingly thrust into a situation where fear prevails. No doubt the idea of becoming a single parent is awful for many women. Not only do they get an allowance of just €30 more per week on top of €188 social welfare, but the housing crisis, crèche fees and possible problems in the parental home are all good reasons to put them off. But being a single parent is not always as bad as people fear and once the baby arrives, it can be wonderful.

By their very nature, abortions require quick decision-making and it's important for mothers and fathers, who count too by the way, to have as much information as possible should the situation arise.

I also think people who feel empathy towards an aborted foetus, or a baby as I like to call it, should not be ridiculed for exercising free speech. If someone doesn't get why people have abortions, deal with it.

We were once, unless I am very much mistaken, foetuses after all.

2. Breda O'Brien: The right to choose reinforces patriarchy, 855 words.

The love of a mother for her baby is the most basic and unconditional form of love that there is. Of course, it is not just mothers. Most fathers would identify with the words of Richard Moore's father on learning that his son had been blinded by a rubber bullet: can I give him my eyes?

The unconditional love babies receive is the basis for a secure life, knowing that, no matter what happens, we are valued and valuable.

No parent loves perfectly, but babies bring out a fierce protectiveness in us. The urge to protect the weakest and most helpless is primal.

Or at least it used to be. Now, participants in last week's pro-choice march hang signs around children's necks proclaiming, "I was a chosen child."

The implications are chilling. "Chosen" has surface connotations of being special, but also the cold wind whispering in your ear: you could have just as easily not been

chosen. Your siblings, your flesh and blood, may not have been chosen and therefore are absent forever from your life.

Such a slogan screams that adults are all-powerful. They have the right to exclude others from even being defined as human.

I don't object to children being taken on marches, even marches that are held with the explicit intention of forcing the Government to allow women to deny the right to life to the next generation. I took my own children on pro-life marches.

Children attending marches is a way of passing on values. But if those values are that even a mother's love is conditional, the radical insecurity that any child could just as easily have been un-chosen and that your right to life is completely dependent on being wanted, then surely there is a duty to consider the impact on your child?

Not an ideological choice

Perhaps because they are closer to the womb than we are, children find it harder to forget that we are all former foetuses. Although I took my children to pro-life marches, I told them that abortion was a word that they had to trust me to worry about and not to explain until they were much older.

Later on, when they were told that some women who are in really difficult circumstances feel that they cannot continue with a pregnancy, they were horrified. They never asked about methods of abortion. They did not need to. They just wanted to know why people did not help so the baby could get to live.

Children cannot rationalise abortion in the way adults can. They cannot rationalise taking away a life as a solution.

It is important to distinguish between ideologues who demand the right to end life, and women who face crisis pregnancies. An overlap exists, but research shows that the majority of women do not choose abortion for ideological reasons.

They choose it even though it is awful because it seems like the least bad option available at the time. As Frederica Mathewes-Green wrote: "No woman wants an abortion as she wants an ice-cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg."

Irony of ironies: the alleged right to choose just leaves you alone with your misery, because you can always get rid of it, can't you? There is no onus on society to help, or support, or care.

We already see the cost to women of presenting pregnancy as the ultimate burden, and the contents of the womb as less than human.

Instead of women being seen as beings with the amazing power to carry and nurture another human being, pregnancy is construed as being condemned to be a walking womb carrying a worthless clump of cells. And women have colluded in this so that smug men can continue to see themselves as the ideal.

Unique ability

Way to go, gals. What a wonderful way to reinforce patriarchy. Men can never become pregnant, so women have to imitate their limitation by becoming un-pregnant when they wish. They have gained nothing except the reclassification of one of women's

unique abilities as a crippling disadvantage. (And no, I don't think becoming pregnant is the point of women's existence. Try to read what I am actually saying instead of what you think I am saying.)

Feminists could have said, "Women get pregnant. Get over it. Change society so that it is never a nightmare." But many chose instead to use dehumanising language to stigmatise the developing child as a mere clump of cells. We are all clumps of cells.

Any description designed to dehumanise a member of the human species is always a prelude to damaging or even destroying that individual. History proves that to be true.

Human rights depend on one thing only – common humanity. Once you make being human conditional on being wanted, you rip up the very basis of all such rights.

"Every child a chosen child" is a slogan that undermines not only human solidarity and unconditional love but also helps reinforce a patriarchal system where women are valued to the extent that they resemble men.

3. Ivana Bacik: Time for Government to stop talking and legislate, 1011 words

The news of Savita Halappanavar's death in appalling circumstances is a wake-up call for legislators

No more inaction. For 20 years now the lives of Irish women have been put at risk by the failure of successive governments to legislate for the X case.

The news this week of Savita Halappanavar's death in appalling circumstances at University Hospital Galway is a wake-up call for legislators. The heartbreaking account of her final days, as expressed in the dignified words of her husband, has generated immense grief and outrage nationally. It has also generated a strong sense of shame. It is utterly shameful that our State could have failed a young woman and her family so tragically.

The saddest and most shameful thing of all is that deaths of pregnant women in circumstances such as these were predictable once the 1983 amendment to the Constitution was passed, equating the right to life of the "unborn" with that of the pregnant woman.

That year, Sheila Hodgers died in Drogheda having been refused necessary medical treatment because of her pregnancy. But it took the X case, 20 years ago, to make people see the real implications of the 1983 amendment – that it could mean the refusal of life-saving medical treatment to pregnant women or girls in order to preserve the life of the foetus. The Supreme Court ruled then that because X was suicidal the pregnancy threatened her life, and her right to life should prevail.

The test means abortion is lawful where a woman faces a "real and substantial risk to her life" which can be avoided only by termination of her pregnancy – but no guidance is given to doctors on how to assess "real and substantial risk".

In his X case judgment, the late Mr Justice Niall McCarthy asked a series of questions that have particularly poignant resonance this week.

Pointing out that the people, in passing the referendum in 1983, were entitled to believe legislation would be introduced to regulate how the right to life of the unborn and that of the pregnant woman could be reconciled, he said: "The failure by the

legislature to enact the appropriate legislation is no longer just unfortunate; it is inexcusable. What are pregnant women to do? . . . What are the medical profession to do? They have no guidelines save what may be gleaned from the judgments in this case . . . The amendment . . . remains bare of legislative direction.”

Twenty years on, the amendment remains bare of legislative direction. For those 20 years the debate has been dominated by a group of highly vocal lobbyists, backed by the Catholic Church – the so-called pro-life campaign.

Their intimidatory tactics – currently targeted at Fine Gael deputies and Senators – have scared politicians away from legislating. Over the past few days I have listened in disbelief to their smooth spokespeople arguing that what we really need is yet another referendum to overturn the X case. They also insist abortion is never necessary to save women’s lives – and when it is, they don’t call it abortion.

It is time to confront these discredited arguments. Time to face up to the bullying tactics of those who would seek to return us to a time when Catholic doctrine was enshrined in our law; and to acknowledge the disgraceful failure of our political system to acknowledge the pressing reproductive health needs of women – pregnant women with cancer, such as Michelle Harte; and women who have bravely gone public about their experience of fatal foetal abnormality.

The “pro-life” campaign must not be allowed hijack this debate again. They did so after the X case, and pressed the government into holding a referendum in November 1992 to rule out suicide risk as a ground for abortion. It was defeated. In March 2002, following more anti-choice pressure, a referendum to overturn the X case test was again put to the people. Again the people voted to keep the test. Yet still no legislation.

Mr Justice McCarthy’s words were echoed by the European Court of Human Rights in the ABC case in December 2010. It found the State had breached the human rights of a young woman whose pregnancy posed a risk to her life but who had been forced to travel to England. The court stated the need for a “legislative or regulatory regime providing an accessible and effective procedure by which [she] could have established whether she qualified for a lawful abortion in Ireland”.

The report of the Government’s expert group on how to implement the judgment of the European court has coincidentally been delivered to Minister for Health James Reilly this week. It was originally expected to be ready by the end of June; that was the understanding of the Labour TDs who voted against Clare Daly’s Bill in the Dáil in April. I was heartened then by the words of the Minister, affirming that this would not be the seventh government to fail to legislate since the X case.

This week we have learned a stark lesson about the urgency of legislation. The report must be acted upon swiftly. It should be given to Cabinet next week. The Government has a deadline of November 30th to report to the Council of Europe on the implementation of the ABC judgment. A firm proposal for Government legislation needs to be made by that date.

Such legislation must be supported by all Government TDs and Senators – and should also be supported by the Opposition. It must clarify the principles outlined by the Supreme Court in 1992, affirmed by referendums and given expression in current Medical Council guidelines.

Legislation is necessary to fulfil our international responsibilities, to provide clarity in our law and most importantly to prevent any further uncertainty for doctors. We need to give doctors clear instructions as to when the performance of necessary procedures, including abortion, may be carried out to save the lives of pregnant women. The courts have spoken. The people have spoken. A young woman has died tragically. It's time for us to stop talking and legislate.

4. **Ronan Mullen: Repeal turns to repulse in war of weasel words, 893 words.** My father was a big fan of the great Kerry football team who, but for Seamus Darby's late great Offaly goal in September 1982, would have won an unprecedented five All-Irelands in a row.

Mick O'Dwyer's men had a will to win and self-belief that made them almost impossible to beat.

It sometimes seems that a similar challenge faces the Irish pro-life movement in its struggle to persuade people that Ireland without abortion is a much happier and humane place than an Ireland with abortion. It's not that our opponents are so good, though. They just have powerful backers. Some are outside the country. We recently learned that American billionaire George Soros is pumping hundreds of thousands of dollars into the campaign for abortion in Ireland.

Also, and particularly in our public service broadcaster, we see massive double standards in the way abortion stories are covered. Last weekend's pro-choice march got generous coverage on RTE, but not the fact that the organisers got a much lower attendance than they had hoped for, and not the hideous message on some of their placards. What kind of person turns their child into a sandwich board with the message "I was a chosen child"?

Last week we saw the latest pro-abortion stunt as hard-left TDs led by Ruth Coppinger took their Repeal jumpers into the Dáil. But behind the hijacked rhetoric of compassion is a cold, ideological agenda to destroy vulnerable human beings instead of living in solidarity with them.

Abortion campaigners are never asked where they would actually draw the line. They talk about foetal anomalies and hard cases like rape and incest. Only when you press them further do you discover that many of them don't favour any limits at all. Or they clam up and won't say. I can't think of a single abortion campaigner who will say: "It should not be legal in this or that case."

How come they are not asked about the British abortion laws, where children can be and are aborted up to birth if they have even a minor disability?

Do abortion supporters have a problem with such late-term abortions, or with the fact that anaesthetics are never used? Are they willing to discuss the different abortion techniques? Do they think it is right for pregnancy counsellors to tell women that their unborn child is just a clump of cells or to discourage women from looking at the ultrasound monitor, as some pregnancy counsellors routinely do? Or to hide the fact that the baby recoils during the procedure?

What do the people who want abortion legalised in Ireland think of this? To match the kind of scrutiny pro-life people get, questions like these would have to be asked again and again.

How come Minister for Children Katherine Zappone wasn't asked how she could reconcile her role with her call last weekend for the legalised abortion of children as a matter of choice?

A few weeks ago, Minister for Health Simon Harris tweeted his support for the abortion social media campaign, TwoWomenTravel. This was a travelogue that conveniently left out what went on in the abortion clinic but finished up with the cruel message, "Done-and-dusted"

At Electric Picnic, Harris even backed the idea that there were mental health implications for the women having to go to England for abortions. Here you have our health minister, desperate to appeal to the trendy people at the Picnic, refusing to insist on evidence for his claims, failing to note the mental health consequences of abortion for some women and failing to suggest there was a baby involved.

What about the thousands of lives saved by Ireland not having abortion? A study commissioned by the Pro Life Campaign estimates conservatively that 100,000 people have lived because of the Eighth Amendment. Britain, with a population of about 64 million, has slightly fewer than 200,000 abortions a year. Ireland, with a population of 4.6 million, had fewer than 4,000 women who travelled last year for abortions. Tragic, but a lot fewer than the 14,500 abortions we would be having if we were to match the British rate.

Lately, we have been presented with the sad scenario of people who got a diagnosis of foetal abnormality. We were told how tragic it was for them to have to go to England for an abortion, and that they had to use a courier to bring their baby's body back for burial. Doesn't that sad little story, in which a sick unborn baby was denied the dignity of being allowed to reach a natural end, illustrate how heartless abortion providers are? Whether it's in Dublin or Durham, the contents of an abortion are debris - not the kind of thing you put into a coffin and grieve over.

Instead of abandoning parents to the cold choice between going to England for an abortion and letting their baby die in his or her own time, shouldn't Irish doctors be helping people to care for their sick child until the end, and to prepare for death and grieving in a dignified way (assuming, of course, that the diagnosis isn't faulty and the child won't live on, perhaps with a less serious condition, to give and receive love)?

We should insist on answers to these questions from the people who would deny unborn babies the protection of our Constitution.

5. Susan McKay: Abortion amendment has been disaster and must go, 802 words.

Women must be allowed to make informed decisions about crisis pregnancies

A few days before the 1983 referendum that gave us article 40.3.3 of the Constitution, a heartbroken man spoke out. Brendan Hodgers described the death of his wife Sheila in an Irish hospital.

She had cancer but was taken off all drugs and treatments when she became pregnant because they might harm or kill the foetus. Mr Hodgers said that with his wife screaming in agony, he asked for her to be given an abortion. He got no reply. After giving birth to a premature baby girl who died immediately, Sheila Hodgers died.

He revealed his personal tragedy in the hope that it would remind Irish people that sometimes a woman needs an abortion and that the amendment could cost women's lives. In the same year, an Irish man was convicted of the rape of two girls aged 14 and 16, both of whom had given birth to babies.

The architects of the amendment swept aside all such sorrowful facts. Ireland was a Catholic country, they insisted. Feminists who said they wanted contraception, women's refuges, rape crisis centres, support for single mothers and divorce, were out to destroy traditional Irish values. Abortion must be banned in all circumstances. Leading campaigner John Reilly warned that those who opposed the amendment were opportunists whose strategy would be to spread confusion by arguing for abortion in cases of rape, incest, alleged "life and death" situations, and in the case of foetal abnormality.

The counter-strategy was to convince the people that abortion was, in the words of Fine Gael TD Alice Glenn "a slaughter of the innocents".

The Catholic bishop Joseph Cassidy said in the full confidence of his moral authority that the most dangerous place for a child to be in the world was in a woman's womb.

The zealots didn't get the wording they originally wanted. Women were to be given equal rights with the foetus. However, they were confident when the amendment was passed that Ireland was the safest place in the world to be unborn.

In 1992, they were appalled when the Supreme Court ruled that a suicidal 14-year-old girl, pregnant as a result of rape, had a constitutional right to an abortion in Ireland. This followed huge demonstrations of solidarity for the child by the Irish public, with candlelit marches, impassioned debates, and, most potent of all, the brave and sometimes devastated voices of women and children telling their own secret abortion stories to journalists.

The late John McGahern believed pregnancy was a private matter and felt "nothing but shame" upon being asked to vote in the subsequent referendum to give or withhold from women the right to travel or obtain information about abortion. The whole sorry situation was the fault of cowardly politicians who had failed to legislate, he wrote.

Praveen Halappanavar has described the death in agony of his pregnant wife Savita. He said that when, knowing she was miscarrying, she asked for an abortion, she was refused and told that she was in a Catholic country. The foetus died and was delivered, and later Savita died. They should, her grieving husband said, have saved "the bigger life". The couple could have had other babies.

Anti-abortionists – and let us call them this, for they are no more pro-life than the rest of us – have accused pro-choice activists of being opportunists over this case. There is no problem with our laws or our Constitution, they insist.

But Mr Halappanavar, through his friends, went to the Galway Pro-Choice group and decided with its support to reveal the story of his tragedy because, like Brendan Rodgers 30 years ago, he wanted to let the Irish people know that our prohibition on abortion can cost the lives of women.

Article 40.3.3 has been a disaster. It has led to misery and it has failed to stop women from wanting, needing and in many cases getting abortions.

Ten women a day leave Ireland for terminations, and others go online and order abortion drugs. Proposed restrictions through further amendments were rejected in 1992 and 2002. Opinion polls show steadily increasing support for liberalising abortion law.

Successive governments have claimed legislating for article 40.3.3 is too complicated. This one must give us the chance to remove it and legislate in a way that trusts women to make informed decisions about crisis pregnancies.

Doctors should never be distracted in clinical emergencies by worries about the distinction between life and health, intentional and unintentional outcomes.

This is not a Catholic country. It is not opportunistic to talk about rape and incest and life and death situations and foetal abnormality in relation to abortion. It is the real experience of women.

Who, instinctively and lovingly, does not understand and support what Praveen Halapannavar said about “the bigger life”

APPENDIX B:

Content Analysis – Tables of data presented in chapter 3.

Weeks A: 1983 Referendum – from 31 August to 14 September.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
31/08/83	0	1
01/09/83	1	1
02/09/83	1	2
03/09/83	0	0
04/09/83	0	0
05/09/83	1	1
06/09/83	2	3
07/09/83	0	0
08/09/83	2	1
09/09/83	0	2
10/09/83	1	1
11/09/83	0	0
12/09/83	0	0
13/09/83	0	0

14/09/83	0	0
Total:	8	12

Number of articles in weeks around the 1983 referendum.

1. **Weeks B:** 1992 X case – from 17 February to 29 February, 5 and 6 March also included (the day and day after the case was settled in the Supreme Court).

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
17/02/92	0	0
18/02/92	1	2
19/02/92	0	4
20/02/92	2	2
21/02/92	2	0
22/02/92	2	2
23/02/92	0	0
24/02/92	2	0
25/02/92	0	0
26/02/92	0	0
27/02/92	3	2
28/02/92	0	0
29/02/92	1	0
05/03/92	1	0
06/03/92	4	1
Total:	18	13

Number of articles in weeks around 1992 X case ruling.

2. **Weeks C:** 1992 Referendums – from 16 November to 30 November.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
16/11/92	1	1
17/11/92	1	0
18/11/92	0	0
19/11/92	2	1
20/11/92	0	1
21/11/92	2	0
22/11/92	0	0

23/11/92	1	0
24/11/92	0	0
25/11/92	2	0
26/11/92	1	0
27/11/92	0	0
28/11/92	0	1
29/11/92	1	0
30/11/92	1	0
Total:	12	4

Number of articles in weeks around 1992 referendums.

3. **Weeks D:** 1997 C case – 21 November to 5 December.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
21/11/97	2	0
22/11/97	4	2
23/11/97	0	0
24/11/97	1	0
25/11/97	0	0
26/11/97	0	0
27/11/97	0	0
28/11/97	1	0
29/11/97	3	1
30/11/97	0	0
01/12/97	1	2
02/12/97	0	1
03/11/97	0	0
04/11/97	0	0
05/11/97	0	0
Total:	12	6

Number of articles in weeks around 1997 C case.

4. **Weeks E:** 2002 Referendum – 28 February to 14 March

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
28/02/02	1	1
01/03/02	2	0
02/03/02	2	1
03/03/02	0	0
04/03/02	2	0
05/03/02	4	0
06/03/02	1	2
07/03/02	1	1
08/03/02	1	4
09/03/02	2	0
10/03/02	0	0
11/03/02	1	0
12/03/02	0	0
13/03/02	1	0
14/03/02	0	0
Total:	18	9

Number of articles in weeks around 2002 referendum.

5. **Weeks F:** 2007 D case – 1 May to 15 May.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
01/05/07	1	1
02/05/07	1	0
03/05/07	1	2
04/05/07	0	0
05/05/07	1	2
06/05/07	0	0
07/05/07	0	0
08/05/07	0	1
09/05/07	0	0
10/05/07	2	0
11/05/07	0	0
12/05/07	0	0

13/05/07	0	0
14/05/07	0	0
15/05/07	0	1
Total:	6	7

Number of articles in weeks around 2007 D case.

6. **Weeks G:** 2010 A, B and C v Ireland case– from 9 December to 23 December.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
09/12/10	0	0
10/12/10	0	0
11/12/10	0	0
12/12/10	0	0
13/12/10	0	0
14/12/10	0	0
15/12/10	0	0
16/12/10	0	0
17/12/10	2	2
18/12/10	1	1
19/12/10	0	0
20/12/10	2	1
21/12/10	1	0
22/12/10	2	0
23/12/10	0	0
Total:	8	4

Number of articles in weeks around 2010 A, B and C v Ireland case.

7. **Weeks H:** Savita Halappanavar case – 13 November to 27 November.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
13/11/12	0	1
14/11/12	0	0
15/11/12	2	8
16/11/12	1	3
17/11/12	3	3
18/11/12	0	0

19/11/12	1	1
20/11/12	1	1
21/11/12	1	0
22/11/12	1	2
23/11/12	2	0
24/11/12	1	1
25/11/12	0	0
26/11/12	2	1
27/11/12	1	0
Total:	16	21

Number of articles in weeks covering the death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012.

8. **Weeks I:** March for Choice 2016, and counter protests – 18 September to 2 October.

Date:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
18/09/16	0	0
19/09/16	0	0
20/09/16	0	0
21/09/16	0	1
22/09/16	0	0
23/09/16	1	0
24/09/16	0	0
25/09/16	1	0
26/09/16	0	0
27/09/16	2	1
28/09/16	1	0
29/09/16	1	0
30/09/16	0	0
01/10/16	2	0
02/10/16	1	3
Total:	9	5

Number of articles in weeks around the fifth annual March for Choice, and counter-protests in 2016

9. **Word Counts:**

Word Count:	The Irish Times	The Irish Independent
	No. of Articles	No. of Articles
200 – 299	0	1
300 – 399	1	3
400 – 499	8	7
500 – 599	10	12
600 – 699	6	11
700 – 799	7	8
800 – 899	19	12
900 – 999	18	10
1,000 – 1,099	12	9
1,100 – 1,199	10	2
1,200 – 1,299	7	3
1,300 – 1,399	3	2
1,400 – 1,499	1	0
1,500 – 1,599	4	0
1,600 – 1,699	1	1
Total Number of Articles:	107	81
Average Word Count Per Article:	912	782
Overall Total Word Count:	97,531	63,360

Table 1: Word counts per article, average word count per publication and total word counts of opinion and editorial articles per publication.

APPENDIX C:

Headline Analysis – Table of data presented in chapter 3.

Irish Independent

Irish Independent	Pro-abortion rights (Liberal)	Neutral	Anti-abortion (Conservative)	Indefinite
1983 Referendum	2	5	5	0
1992 X case	4	4	3	2
1992 Referendum	0	3	0	1
1997 C case	2	3	1	0
2002 Referendum	3	5	1	0
2007 D case	4	2	0	1
2010 ABC case	1	2	1	0
2012 Savita Halappanavar case	7	6	4	0
2016 March for Choice	0	1	4	0
Total:	23	31	19	8

The Irish Times

The Irish Times	Pro-abortion rights (Liberal)	Neutral	Anti-abortion (Conservative)	Indefinite
1983 Referendum	2	3	1	2
1992 X case	4	7	4	3
1992 Referendum	5	3	2	2
1997 C case	6	4	0	2
2002 Referendum	8	4	4	2
2007 D case	2	3	1	0
2010 ABC case	3	3	2	0

2012 Savita Halappanavar case	9	4	3	0
2016 March for Choice	4	1	4	0
Total:	43	32	21	11

The Irish Times – Percentages of headline analysis

	Pro-abortion rights	Neutral	Anti-abortion	Indefinite
1983 Referendum	25%	37.50%	12.50%	25%
1992 X Case	22.22%	38.89%	22.22%	16.67%
1992 Referendum	41.67%	25%	16.67%	16.67%
1997 C Case	50%	33.33%	0%	16.67%
2002 Referendum	44.44%	22.22%	22.22%	11.11%
2007 D Case	33.33%	50%	16.67%	0%
2010 A,B,C v Ireland Case	37.50%	37.50%	25%	0%
2012 Savita Halappanavar Case	56.25%	25%	18.75%	0%
2016 March for Choice	44.44%	11.11%	44.44%	0%

Irish Independent – Percentages of headline analysis

	Pro-abortion rights	Neutral	Anti-abortion	Indefinite
1983 Referendum	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%	0%
1992 X Case	30.77%	30.77%	23.08%	15.38%
1992 Referendum	0%	75%	0%	25%
1997 C Case	33.33%	50%	16.67%	0%
2002 Referendum	33.33%	55.56%	11.11%	0%
2007 D Case	57.14%	28.57%	0%	14.29%
2010 A,B,C v Ireland Case	25%	50%	25%	0%
2012 Savita Halappanavar Case	33.33%	28.57%	19.05%	19.05%
2016 March for Choice	0%	25%	75%	0%

APPENDIX D:

List used to categorise articles as conservative or liberal.

While categorising the articles to keep unbiased the following words, things or phrases being mentioned, and how they were phrased, were used as indicators to decide how liberal or conservative an article was. Based on the number of these indicators mentioned, as well as the language styling and phrasing used in the article, the labels were decided.

Conservative:

- Focus on: child/foetus's right to life
- Oppose abortion
- Focus on: child/foetus in general (disability, right to life)
- Supports the Eighth Amendment, suggests it is good
- Negative attitude towards abortion and contraception access and services
- Oppose access to abortion
- Agree with equal right to life of mother and unborn
- Negative attitude toward those who are pro-abortion rights

Liberal:

- Focus on: mother's right to life
- Support abortion
- Focus on: mother in general (health, right to travel)
- Oppose the Eighth Amendment, suggests it is bad
- Positive attitude toward abortion and contraception access and services
- Support access to abortion
- Disagree with equal right to life of mother and unborn
- Negative attitude towards those who are anti-abortion