

School of History, Trinity College Dublin.

ENGAGING WITH THE PAST

A history of public history on the island of Ireland in the state formation period, and an investigation into the effects of public historical engagement.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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Summary

This thesis considers how public history, specifically monumental memorials, were used in the public space during the state-formation period in both the Irish Free State/Ireland and Northern Ireland to promote identity narratives in both jurisdictions. This research uses a novel approach in encompassing case studies from the entire island of Ireland, and which compare the urban capital cities with smaller, rural towns. The four case study areas that were used in this research were Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Limavady, Co. Derry/Londonderry, and the capital cities of Belfast and Dublin. Chapters 1-3 compare these four case studies on an all-island basis and uses the rural towns to compare developments in smaller local communities with those happening in the capital cities.

This thesis also utilises methodologies of sociology and pedagogy to create workshops for the public using local history case studies, which are detailed in Chapter 4. These workshops are central to this project and transform this thesis from a study on the history of public history to one which truly encompasses the principles of public history. They were carried out with three groups in two of the case study areas (Nenagh and Dublin) and generated invaluable data for the discipline of public history. The results of these workshops are discussed and analysed in Chapter 5. The workshops have suggested that an engagement with public history can have a number of benefits for an individual, including improving critical thinking skills, multiperspectivity, empathy, and feelings of connectedness to the local area's history.

Covid-19 Research Impact Statement

This PhD was undertaken from September 2018 to September 2022, and was severely impacted by the global Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in global lockdowns, but in particular in the case of this research major restrictions were in place from March 2020 until January 2021, and in the case of some archives and schools even into early 2022. The Covid-19 pandemic has exerted a substantial impact on the execution of this academic thesis, particularly in relation to accessing physical archives and conducting planned workshops in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of the virus have presented significant challenges, impeding the researcher's ability to access crucial physical archival materials, particularly in relation to Limavady and Belfast. Additionally, the inability to travel and carry out workshops in both jurisdictions as initially intended hindered the planned engagement with participants in Ireland and Northern Ireland, limiting the first-hand exploration of their perspectives and impeding the intended cross-border nature of the research. These unforeseen circumstances have necessitated alternative approaches and resulted in limitations to the study.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in its entirety to my family, without whom nothing is possible.

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Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís.

Caitlin White. Nenagh, June 2023.

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Mo fíorbhuíochas libh go léir.

Introduction

'If history at its best is not made available to the educated public as a whole it fails in one of its essential social functions'.¹

- T. W. Moody, 1969.

Public history, the use of history in the public space and the various forms that the public engage with that history, is an important aspect of historical study. Public history, as a subdiscipline of the study of history, has been practiced for centuries but only defined as such in academia since the 1970s.² In recent times, since the late nineteenth century when history became regarded as more of a science than an art form, historians began to withdraw from the public arena. These historians, however, never fully withdrew into their Ivory Towers, especially in an Irish context. In Irish society they remained engaged with a variety of publics across a variety of platforms, mainly through the use of media such as radio, television, newspaper and, in more recent years, social media.³ This thesis is a public history thesis, in more than one sense. In Section I it investigates the use of public history, specifically through the examination of monumental memorials and statuary in the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland during the inter-war period. Then in Section II it employs principles of public history to adapt this research to create workshops for public engagement. This project combines the academic study of history with the principles of public history, and uses methodologies from history, sociology, and pedagogy to undertake research in a unique and pioneering way.

The first three chapters explore how communities and governments remembered (and forgot) through monumental memorials in four case study areas during the period

¹ T. W. Moody, 'A New History of Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 16, no. 63 (March 1969), p. 242.

² Thomas Cauvin, 'The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective' in *Historia Critica* (2018), p. 6.

³ The Thomas Davis lectures on RTÉ Radio featured short historical talks from 1953 for over fifty years, today the History Show on RTÉ Radio One fulfils that same function, national newspapers such as the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* feature historians as regular contributors – see Diarmaid Ferriter's regular articles in the *Irish Times* for example, RTÉ's programme for the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising featured documentaries as well as the drama series 'Insurrection', more recent social media includes the Dublin history blog 'Come Here To Me' (found at <https://comeheretome.com/>) and the Irish History Podcast, broadcast by Fin Dwyer found at <https://irishhistorypodcast.ie/>).

following the establishment of both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. Remembering and forgetting are but two aspects of the process of the formation of social identity, both of the individual and of the group. Geoffrey Cubitt, a leading scholar in the field of memory studies, argues that these processes, which involve a wide variety of cultural devices, loosen bonds that given bodies of data have to individual recollection and serve to create a shared sense of the past for a community group.⁴ This social memory that he explores is the foundation of social identities within families, communities, and nations. Without a shared, collective social memory these groups would lack a commonality that is necessary for their survival. Once this foundation, this social memory, is established, groups must continue to promote and expand it, encompassing events in their present and more recent past. It is these processes of social memory that are engaged with and promoted in the inter-war years through statuary and monuments that are one of the subjects of this thesis.

The state-formation, or inter-war, years that define the period that this thesis examines are those years which begin following the foundation of each jurisdiction, which are 1921 for Northern Ireland, following the Government of Ireland Act 1920, and 1922 for the Irish Free State, following the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.⁵ This period is crucial in terms of group identity and memory in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State because it was a time when the narrative of the nation was being shaped and moulded, and when the public landscape was being curated, to reflect the ‘ideal’ version of identity. It is important to note that rather than offering a comprehensive account of the politics of memory and social identity in the two jurisdictions on the island, this research will be used comparatively to highlight the significance of public history to the construction of identity on the island.

This research uses a novel approach in encompassing case studies from the entire island of Ireland, and which compare the urban capital cities with smaller, rural towns. The four case study areas that were used in this research were Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Limavady, Co. Derry/Londonderry, and the capital cities of Belfast and Dublin. The

⁴ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester, 2007), p. 18.

⁵ While, in law, the Irish Free State doesn’t legally come into being until 6 December 1922, the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in January of that year is taken by many historians to be the beginning of the state, as the Executive Council of the Dáil took over the administration of the country and the armed forces.

rationale behind the inclusion of these four case study areas relates to their size, the presence of at least one monument erected or destroyed during the state-formation years, and (in the case of Limavady) the relative balance between religious beliefs among the local population. In using these case-study areas a comparison can be made between the narrative being projected in the larger capital cities of Dublin and Belfast and that of the more rural communities in Nenagh and Limavady. Both are urban centres of more rural communities, and so while they have an urban centre to shape through monuments and statuary, they are more reflective of communities across the island, outside the major urban centres of Dublin and Belfast. The populations of the towns of Nenagh and Limavady in this period are approximately 4,700 and 2,800, respectively, and so they are relatively comparable in terms of size.⁶ The value of the local, in revealing nuances in our understanding of how society functioned and providing a more well-rounded view of the past is under-utilised in the study of Irish history in this period, and this research seeks to address that gap. Anne Dolan, in 2018, made a plea for historical context of this period ‘in all its forms’, which included that of the local and the particular, to enhance our understanding of the past.⁷ This research addresses the plea made in 2018 and uses the histories of the local alongside the ‘national’ picture to create a broader picture of the identities being promoted in the public sphere in this period, outside the capital cities as well as those within their boundaries.

The question of what constitutes as ‘national’, and how to define that term in relation to the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland in this period, is one that pervades this thesis. It was not possible to thoroughly investigate each and every memorial that was erected or destroyed in the cities of Dublin and Belfast during this period, and so in order to provide a comparison to the monuments erected by communities in Nenagh and Limavady, the decision was made to engage with monuments which had the support of the government of the day, whether that support be practical, financial, or moral. Moral support, which is crucial for monuments being erected in the public space, is bestowed in

⁶ The population of Nenagh in the 1926 Census was 4,524 and in the 1936 Census was 4,902 while the population in Limavady was 2,801 in the 1926 Census and 2,772 in the 1937 Census. Information taken from W.E Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics: Population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp. 45 & 48.

⁷ Anne Dolan, ‘Politics, Economy, and Society in the Irish Free State, 1922-39’ in *Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol. IV: 1880-present*, (Cambridge, 2018) p. 335.

varying degrees. It is much trickier to measure than the pounds, shillings, and pence of a financial contribution, but it is as important for many of the monuments which are discussed in this thesis. In the period being discussed there were a number of elections on both sides of the Irish border, and while the Ulster Unionist Party and James Craig maintained power in Northern Ireland (not without controversy, following gerrymandering in the 1920s and the abolition of proportional representation in favour of the first-past-the-post voting system in 1929) the government of the Irish Free State changed from the pro-Treaty Cumann na nGaedheal party to the more republican Fianna Fáil in 1932.⁸ Even though the party of government changes, both governing parties are considered to be, at the time of their election, the national government. The attitudes of these governments and their approaches to commemoration and monumental memorials are quite different and this provides another layer of comparison for considerations of this period. While the situation in Northern Ireland in this period refutes the assumption that, in a democratic society, the elected government are representative of the majority of those who voted, the actions of the Ulster Unionist Party are classed as representing the ‘national’ in this context owing to their position as the governing party of Northern Ireland. Actions of individuals and their own personalities can, at times, unduly influence the actions of the national government, and this will be considered in the discussion throughout this thesis. This illustrates again why the more rural comparisons of Nenagh and Limavady are critical to this research, as they allow the researcher to examine the emergence of patterns or expressions of instincts at the local level and compare this to each other and to the attitude at government level.

There is another aspect to this research, that has already been mentioned, which is the aspect that encompasses public history, pedagogy, and engagement that has used the research on statuary, monuments, social identity, and memory to create workshops for the public using local history case studies. These workshops are central to this project and transform this thesis from a study on the history of public history to one which truly

⁸ General elections for the Northern Irish parliament took place in May 1921, April 1925, May 1929, November 1933, and February 1938, and general elections for Dáil Éireann took place in June 1922, August 1923, June 1927, September 1927, February 1932, January 1933, July 1937, and June 1938. See Brian M. Walker (ed.), *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland 1918-92: Irish elections to parliaments and parliamentary assemblies at Westminster, Belfast, Dublin, Strasbourg*, (Dublin, 1992) pp. 45-59 & 101-149. For discussion on gerrymandering and the abolition of PR, see Cormac Moore, *Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019), p.74.

encompasses the principles of public history. The workshops have suggested that an engagement with public history can have a number of benefits for an individual, including improving critical thinking skills, multiperspectivity, empathy, and feelings of connectedness to the local area's history. These results are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five but the implications of what they have suggested and implied has the potential to have considerable impact on the future of public history research. The results of the workshops also suggest that the aims of the Junior Cycle curriculum, of which the majority of the participants had completed, are being realised in the student body. The Junior Cycle history curriculum in Ireland identifies the importance of developing critical thinking skills in young people. It states that the 'capacity for critical thinking helps them [students] to interrogate sources of evidence and make judgements about the viewpoint expressed, including the capacity to identify propaganda'.⁹

Ultimately, this research set out to investigate how public history was employed in the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland to promote 'national' identity narratives after partition, to compare these narratives to the situation amongst communities outside of the capital cities and investigate what effects a deeper engagement with the public history, through workshops, can have on the individual. It aspired to contribute to the growing field of all-island history, the study of Irish public history and identity, and to the methodology of adapting academic research for the public domain.

Context

The period under review in this research, from 1921-38 in Northern Ireland and 1922-38 in the Irish Free State/Éire, is a period of global economic and political change. The discrepancy between the start of each period in the two states is due to the establishment, in law, of those states. Northern Ireland was created by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and the first meeting of parliament was held on 7 June that year, with King George V attending the ceremonious opening of the parliament on 22 June. The state, effectively, was born. In the case of the Irish Free State/Éire the twenty-six-county state came into being officially on 6 December 1922, but in reality the moment when the Provisional Government took control of the country following the ratification of the

⁹ Department of Education and Skills, *Junior Cycle History* (Dublin, 2017).

Anglo-Irish Treaty on 7 January 1922 is often considered to be the beginning of the state that soon descended into civil war.¹⁰ Even contemporary sources reveal an acknowledgement of the end of one legal, political structure and the beginning of another, such as the media reporting on the outbreak of civil war that refer to the pro-Treaty forces as ‘government’ or ‘Dáil troops’.¹¹ From 1922 until 1937 the state was known as the Irish Free State, or Saorstát na hÉireann, and from the ratification of Bunreacht na hÉireann in 1937 the state was called Ireland, or Éire. The use of the name Éire for the twenty-six-county state, particularly by British government officials who would only acknowledge the name Éire and not Ireland (its English translation), is contentious but the controversy surrounding the name does not significantly impact on this research and as such the state following the ratification of Bunreacht na hÉireann shall be referred to as Ireland or Éire. Of course, states and nations do not emerge from vacuums and the identities being promoted in this state-formation period stems from imagined communities, a concept developed by Benedict Anderson in 1983 that describes the nation as a social construct created by people who imagine themselves to be part of the group, with political aspirations that exist before the formal beginnings of the states.¹² This is taken into consideration when examining the statues and monuments erected in the public space, but the case studies are confined to monuments erected, destroyed, or planned in these years.

The 1920s and 1930s were difficult decades in countries across Europe and North America. Countries in these continents experienced significant political, economic, and social changes. The period was shaped by several transformative factors, including the establishment of new states after the First World War, , the Wall Street Crash and the global impact of the subsequent recession, and the rise of fascism in Spain, Italy and Germany which coloured international. The dissolution of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian Empires following the end of the First World War led to the creation of numerous nation-states and the transformation of borders across Europe. It was in this wider context, that the Irish War of Independence began in 1919 and the majority of

¹⁰ For discussion of this see Bill Kissane, ‘Defining Independence’ in Darragh Gannon and Fearghal McGarry (eds.), *Ireland 1922*, (Dublin, 2022) pp. 299-304.

¹¹ *Irish Independent*, 29 June 1922.

¹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins of nationalism* (London, 1983).

people in Ireland supported the idea of a sovereign Irish government for the island.¹³ The Government of Ireland Act (1920) established two separate jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, creating the borders for the states that would eventually become Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. As the 1920s progressed, and the political situation in the two jurisdictions in Ireland was settling, the Wall Street Crash in 1929 brought the ‘roaring twenties’ to a very sudden halt. A decade of wealth for society in the United States, this Crash signalled the economic downward spiral that became the Great Depression.

An economic recession that affected countries across the globe, the Great Depression is attributed as one of the factors that lead to the rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nationalist-Socialist German Worker’s Party in Germany in the 1930s. Certainly the high levels of unemployment, almost 30% in Germany in 1932, were a factor in societal dissatisfaction and protests in the early 1930s. The uncertainty created by unemployment and economic recession caused worry for James Craig and his Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland in the 1930s, when they closed ranks against the threat of nationalists and their attitudes towards the minority community within the jurisdiction became altogether uncompromising.¹⁴ Their fear of losing power in this period resulted in the continued extension of the Special Powers (Civil Authorities) Act which was (amongst other uses) used to prevent the nationalist minority from expressing their identity in the public space, as is discussed in chapters two and three. The rise of right-wing extremism and fascism across European countries such as Italy, Spain, and Germany had major societal implications for the Irish Free State, including the establishment of the Blueshirt movement and Irish enlistment in the republican side during the Spanish Civil War.¹⁵ The wider context of historical events that impacted the communities and case studies being considered is discussed in each of the chapters to offer a broader picture of the situation, but the effects of these larger, international developments can be seen in the discussion.

¹³ For social and political histories of this period in Irish history, see Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004); Cormac Moore, *Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019); J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹⁴ Thomas Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920-1996* (London, 1997), p. 56; Susannah Riordan, ‘Politics, Economy, and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39’ in Thomas Bartlett (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4, 1880 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2020) p. 321.

¹⁵ See Anne Dolan, ‘Politics, Economy and Society in the Irish Free State, 1922-39’ in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4, 1880 to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (2020).

These are be taken into consideration when analysing the case studies chosen, and their impact (or lack thereof) on the identities in the public space is incorporated into the findings of this research.

It is in this wider context that the monuments and memorials in this research were being erected and destroyed. That these monuments were conceived of, debated, and funded in this period of social and economic difficulty highlights their importance to individuals, communities, and governments. The importance of emotions, as will be discussed, should not be underestimated in any consideration of monuments and memorials. As will be discussed in chapters one, two, and three, monuments and memorials in the four case study areas under consideration were focused on events that occurred between 1914-1923, namely the First World War and the Irish Revolutionary period (which includes the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence, and the Civil War). Communities that sought to erect monuments to these events were within living memory of them and, as is shown in this research, the emotions that they continued to inspire played a significant role in the erection of these monuments. This phenomenon was not unique to Ireland, and across Europe, America, and Australia attempts to give shape to the outpouring of grief following the First World War resulted in a flurry of monuments and memorials being erected. While the complex political situation in Ireland coloured war remembrance here, many countries faced tensions and debates when it came to deciding how to memorialise their dead, and there are differences between how communities in different countries chose to commemorate. For example, in France the issue of commemoration, as David Kertzer discussed, centred around two areas of disagreement. The first was the ‘negotiation of local and national claims to the memory of the dead’, which was also seen in America in the debates surrounding the bodies of those who died, and the other related to the debate between religious or secular iconography in these monuments.¹⁶ In America the attempt to ‘nationalise’ the war dead and create ‘an official memory of this conflict’ by laying the remains of those who were killed to rest in official cemeteries in Europe failed when almost 70% of American families opted for repatriation. Former President Theodore Roosevelt’s example in insisting that his son Quentin be buried where he fell when he was killed at the Western Front was not an example that most

¹⁶ David Kertzer, *Ritual, politics, and power* (London, 1988), p. 67.

Americans chose to follow.¹⁷ While there was a focus in Ireland, Britain, and America on the naming of each individual fallen soldier in monuments, a phenomenon that Thomas Laqueur terms ‘democracy of death’, in Australia this naming also extended to the living. Ken Inglis and Jonathan Phillips suggest that this may be linked to the controversy around conscription in Australia, a controversy that did not exist in Ireland due to conscription never being enforced following the Conscription Crisis of 1918.¹⁸ Notwithstanding these differences in debates and tensions, there are similarities and commonalities between war memorials following the First World War. They all commemorated and memorialised individuals who lost their lives in the conflict, they are each individual sites of mourning. While Jay Winter argued that there were two motifs – of war as both noble and uplifting *and* tragic and unendurably sad – that were common across all postwar memorials this research argues that the war memorial in the Irish Free State does not conform to this model and, in the case studies chosen, the notion of the First World War as noble and uplifting is absent in the newly independent Irish state.¹⁹

The work of Anne Dolan has been hugely influential on this research. Her publication, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, laid bare the nuances, debates, and elisions in the commemoration of the pro-Treaty dead by the Irish Free State.²⁰ When Dolan was writing, the historiography on memory in Ireland was, she claimed, scant.²¹ The focus had, when memory was even engaged with, been on the memory of the First World War and the 1798 Rebellion (spurred by the bicentenary in 1998). Inspired by the Decade of Centenaries, a public history initiative funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to complement the ongoing programme of State commemorations, there has been a surge in research and publications considering the

¹⁷ G. Kurt Piehler, ‘The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War’ in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1994), p. 173.

¹⁸ K. S. Inglis and J. Phillips, ‘War memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 24 (1991), pp. 171–91.

¹⁹ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995), p.85.

²⁰ Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2003).

²¹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 2.

memory of the revolutionary decade in Irish history.²² However Dolan's work, like the research in this thesis, focuses on monuments – those very points at which memory becomes part of the landscape.²³ In the same way as she posed her questions at the foot of the cenotaphs and crosses, this research uses the same prisms through which to explore the landscape of memory and what it reveals about considerations of identity in the state-formation period. Similarly, Catherine Switzer's research on monuments and commemoration in Northern Ireland uses public monuments, among other forms of commemoration, through which to analyse the remembrance of the First World War.²⁴ Switzer's research focused on unionist commemorations of the war, and found that in Northern Ireland, the driving force behind commemoration of the war was local. Unlike Dolan's consideration of the Cumann na nGaedheal government or Switzer's detailed analysis of unionist commemoration of the First World War this research widens the scope to encompass the Fianna Fáil government, the Northern Irish government, and the local authorities and communities in Nenagh and Limavady. This widening allows for comparisons between the pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty, those who found themselves in the Irish Free State and the Northern Irish state, and those who were far from the influence of the cities of Dublin and Belfast.

In situating these workshops, and this research, in the political situation of the island of Ireland, Nick Vaughan-Williams' article 'Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem' has been crucial to this research.²⁵ Vaughan-Williams argues that by adopting a 'problem-solving' approach to Northern Ireland, it itself is reduced to a 'problem'. This problematisation does not facilitate reconciliation and moving forward for society. Using Foucault's understanding of 'problematisation', in that a given solution to a given problem is only ever constructed

²² See David Fitzpatrick, 'Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts, 1912-23' in Horne, John and Madigan, Edward (eds.), *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912-23*, (Dublin, 2013); Róisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Memory, Meaning and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising*. Cork University Press, Cork (2013).

²³ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 5.

²⁴ Catherine Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918* (Dublin, 2007).

²⁵ Nick Vaughan-Williams, 'Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem' in *Critical Review of International and Political Philosophy*. Vol. 9, no. 4 (Dec 2006), pp. 513-26.

according to how the problem is perceived in the first place, Vaughan-Williams complicates the idea of the Northern Irish ‘problem’.²⁶

The problem, he argues, is not as straightforward as presented in the ‘two communities’ thesis. In framing the whole of Irish history in terms of two communities or traditions destined to be in conflict, a shapeliness and coherence on the narrative of the past that is absent from the way events present themselves has been imposed. Vaughan-Williams is careful to clarify that this does not deny the salience of terms such as ‘Catholic’, ‘Protestant’, ‘unionist’ or ‘nationalist’, but calls into question the prominence of the two-community narrative as some sort of self-evident truth. Such narratives rely on one-dimensional understandings of identity instead of taking on board overlapping, confused, or even contradictory identities, identities that were detailed by Brian Walker in 2019.²⁷ This fantasy, he goes on to argue, simplifies the matrices of diversity and consequently delimits the range of possible ways of dealing or coping with conflict. By continuing to rely on solutions that diagnose the problem in Northern Ireland as a problem between two communities, ‘the concern is that we end up recycling rather than displacing this constant search for a solution’.²⁸ Vaughan-Williams’s argument has been central in the shaping of this research, and this thesis (in its approach to history on an all-island basis and the conscious decision not to separate the case studies on the basis of the border) attempts to investigate the history of the island without reducing the Northern Irish state to the status of a ‘problem’ that needs to be solved. Although the workshops discussed later in the thesis do suggest that they may be tools of reconciliation, they promote a multiperspective approach to history and, through their content, seek to actively undermine the ‘two communities’ approach to the past.

There is a huge dearth of research into all-island histories of Ireland. In J. J. Lee’s comprehensive study on Irish history, published in 1989, entitled *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, he consciously prioritises the history of the twenty-six county Irish Free State and later Republic. While Northern Ireland is discussed in various parts, he

²⁶ Ibid., p. 517.

²⁷ Brian M. Walker, *Irish History Matters: Politics, Identities and Commemoration* (Dublin, 2019).

²⁸ Vaughan-Williams, ‘Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem’, p. 518.

himself acknowledges that ‘a truly comparative history of North and South has yet to be adequately conceived, much less completed’.²⁹ Writing just over three decades before this research, Lee states that ‘Southern Irish historians’ like himself are ‘likely to be as ambivalent towards the North as are citizens of the Republic in general’.³⁰ This attitude towards the history of the island of Ireland has been slowly changing. In 1998 David Fitzpatrick published the first monograph taking this approach in *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939*.³¹ He paved the way for historians to consider Ireland as one island and to compare the different governments and social structures in both jurisdictions. This approach was novel and gave great insight into societies in both jurisdictions. Diarmaid Ferriter builds on this approach in his detailed and comprehensive publication in 2005, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000*, in which Northern Ireland and the twenty-six county Irish Free State and Republic are discussed chronologically, side-by-side.³² More recently the value of this approach has been recognised by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth in the establishment of the All-Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO) which undertakes applied mapping and academic research and produces data to analyse life and society on the island of Ireland, and the Centre for Cross Border Studies which encourages research of both sides of the border in academia. It has also been recognised by recent historians, such as Cormac Moore, but in general the call made by Fitzpatrick in 1998 has gone largely unanswered with much of the research of this period lacking a consideration of historical developments on an all-island basis.³³ This is an area which this research will contribute to and expand on, ultimately enhancing our knowledge of the island as a whole.

Of course, a crucial consideration in the context of this research is the international developments and debates that were happening at the time of writing. In recent years, statues and monuments have become focal points in the ongoing discussions surrounding historical memory and social justice, reinvigorated by the the Black Lives Matter movement that spread across the globe following the killing of George Floyd by a police

²⁹ J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. xiv.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

³¹ David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998).

³² Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London, 2005).

³³ Cormac Moore, *Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019).

officer in Minneapolis in May 2020.³⁴.. The incident sparked global protests and ignited a broader conversation about racial injustice. Activists and protesters began targeting statues and monuments that honoured historical figures associated with racism, slavery, or colonialism, such as the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol in June 2020.³⁵ These debates, protests, and counter-protests have become known as the Statue Wars and have, as Australian public historian Stephen Gapps acknowledged, ‘ignited debates around deep-seated historical legacies that, like the statues themselves, have been [...] uncontested for far too long’³⁶

³⁷ Throughout the period of this research there were numerous instances of statues being vandalized, toppled, or removed, often amid contentious debates. The removal of statues also extended beyond the United States. For example, the statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Oxford faced intense scrutiny due to Rhodes' involvement in the exploitation and subjugation of African people during the British Empire.³⁸ Closer to home, statues were hastily removed from outside the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin city amid allegations that they represented enslaved people. Evidence from the purchase catalogue in the nineteenth century refuted this claim, and the Shelbourne statues became a rare example of removed statues being reinstated.³⁹ Such actions prompted broader discussions on the decolonisation of public spaces and the need to re-examine historical narratives.

The debates surrounding statues and monuments were not without controversy and opposition. Critics argued that removing or defacing these symbols amounted to erasing

³⁴ Evan Hill, Ainara Tiefertaler, Christiaan Triebert, Drew Jordan, Haley Wills and Robin Stein, ‘How George Floyd Was Killed In Police Custody’, *New York Times*, 31 May 2020. Accessed online on 31 May 2023 at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>; Steven Groves and Amy Forliti, ‘Former Police Officer Who Knelt on George Floyd’s Back Jailed Over Role in Death’, *Irish Times*, 10 Dec. 2022.

³⁵ “‘Violent Protestors Will Face Justice’-Patel”, *Irish Examiner*, 9 Jun. 2020; ‘The Irish Times view on historical monuments: The statues keep falling’, *Irish Times*, 13 Jun. 2020.

³⁶ Stephen Gapps, ‘Statues, monuments and the smoothing over of historical injustices’, *History Australia*, vol. 18, no. 4 (2021), p. 835.

³⁷ “‘Violent Protestors Will Face Justice’-Patel”, *Irish Examiner*, 9 Jun. 2020; ‘The Irish Times view on historical monuments: The statues keep falling’, *Irish Times*, 13 Jun. 2020.

³⁸ Aamna Mohdin, ‘Cecil Rhodes statue at Oxford college should go, says independent report’, *The Guardian*, 19 May 2021.

³⁹ Eoghan Moloney, ‘Shelbourne Hotel statues to be restored to plinths’ *Irish Independent*, 24 September 2020.

history or engaging in "cancel culture".⁴⁰ They maintained that statues and monuments should be viewed within their historical context and could serve as reminders of the progress made or the lessons learned from past injustices, similar to some of the arguments mentioned in Chapter One about the imperial statues in Dublin following the establishment of the Irish Free State. Beyond the debates around the physical removal of statues, the discussions surrounding them prompted broader conversations about education, representation, and social justice.

While the future of statues and monuments remains a topic of ongoing discussion, the events of these years have undeniably sparked a broader reckoning with history, contributing to a more critical examination of the public symbols that shape our shared spaces and collective memory. This research, which developed in parallel with the international debates on the meanings of monuments and statues in our midst, positions itself within these debates and offers both a historical perspective on the debates surrounding contentious statues and a contemporary insight into the potential effects that engaging with these statues, as examples of local history, can offer.

Methodology

In *The Presence of the Past*, Rosenzweig and Thelen acknowledge that while their subject is the past, which is at the heart of historians' inquiry, it investigates a moment in time (the present), which is usually the reserve of anthropologists and sociologists.⁴¹ This is also the case with this research and as such, methodologies from sociology and pedagogy have been employed in this research to develop and design the practical workshops to the highest standard of academic rigour and practice. Chapter Four, Workshop Design, details the decisions made, ethical considerations, and methodologies used to design the public engagement workshops that feature in this research.

These workshops were carried out in two separate schools, in Nenagh and Dublin, with Transition Year students in three different groups. The design of these workshops and rationale behind decisions taken in the design process are detailed in Chapter Four, and the

⁴⁰Denis Staunton, 'Johnson denounces 'know-nothing cancel culture' in speech that delights Tory activists', *Irish Times*, 6 Oct. 2021.

⁴¹ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, 1998), p. 209.

experience of carrying out these workshops and report on the results is discussed in Chapter Five. The surveys that were distributed at the beginning and end of each workshop have served to give an insight into the effect that engaging with local history case studies has on individuals and indicate how future engagement with academic historical research and public history might be beneficial to wider society.

These workshops were designed as a crucial component of this project, and it is their presence in the research that transform this thesis from a history of public history to one that truly embodies the principles of public history by engaging with the public and providing a framework for others to do the same. Naturally, the delivery and implementation of the workshops as designed was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is discussed in Chapter Five which details the practicalities of implementing the workshops and how they might have been adjusted or altered from the design stage. One of the adjustments made to the implementation of the workshops was the all-island dimension. This research encompasses the entire island of Ireland in its scope, both in the consideration of monuments erected or destroyed and in the design of the workshops. While this dimension is retained for the research on monumental memorials, it was not possible to carry out workshops in Northern Ireland. It is hoped that future iterations of this project will incorporate this aspect but, for the purposes of this research, the scope of the implementation is limited to the Irish republic.

Theories

A number of theories have been employed in this research, and have influenced the findings, arguments, and final conclusions. Theories are discussed throughout the thesis where relevant, but there are a number which underpin the entire project and are outlined here in the Introduction in order to frame the research undertaken for the thesis.

Public History

Public history, while having only been institutionalised from the 1970s onwards in the United States, has long been practised. As Thomas Cauvin discusses in ‘The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective’ public history, as he defines it, has been practised internationally for centuries.⁴² It is only with the shift in attitude towards history

⁴² Cauvin, ‘The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective’, p. 6.

in the late nineteenth century, when history was regarded as more of a science than an art form, that professional historians withdrew from the public arena. He also presents examples from throughout the twentieth century when professional historians were actively engaged in professional pursuits outside of academia, such as the historians appointed to national parks in the USA in the 1930s and the Historical Division of the War Department of the USA in 1945.⁴³ From this research we can discern that public history was being practised before it had been labelled or institutionalised. This point is key to this research as in the time period being studied the phrase had not entered the public domain, and so historians, governments, political groups, and practitioners would not have been aware that what they were practising would later be defined by academics as public history.

Thomas Cauvin's work has been significant in the understanding of public history that is used for this research. Public history is both historical and political, the research analyses the use of history in the public sphere and public spaces (often for political or social gain) and also employs principles of public history to engage the public with this research. Cauvin co-wrote an article with Irish historian Ciaran O'Neill, published in 2017, entitled 'Negotiating Public History in the Republic of Ireland: Collaborative, Applied, and Usable Practices for the Profession'.⁴⁴ In this article both historians explore the concept of public history in an Irish context. Their perception of the role of public history in Ireland thus far is as follows:

As it is presently conceived public history in Ireland either relates specifically to commemorative events and the effect historians might have on official discourse relating to them, or to a series of controversial and contested historiographical debates.⁴⁵

Cauvin and O'Neill make an important differentiation in their definition of public history. They assert that while there is an emphasis on communication it is not merely 'history with a loudspeaker, but it is based upon democratising principles of history for the people'.⁴⁶ This is an essential caveat in their definition that concurs with my own understanding of

⁴³ Ibid., p 7.

⁴⁴ Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O'Neill, 'Negotiating public history in the Republic of Ireland: collaborative, applied, and usable practices for the profession' in *Historical Research*, vol. 90, no. 250 (Jul. 2017).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

the field. They profess that ‘strong links exist between historians’ public activities and the Irish national narratives’ which is precisely the reason public history has been chosen as a prism through which to examine the promotion of national narratives and identity.⁴⁷

There is, however, a statement in their article that this thesis strongly disagrees with. Cauvin and O’Neill declare that

In the two decades that followed the creation of the Irish Free State, Irish politicians barely participated in the construction of official historical narratives that mostly emerged from Republican groups.⁴⁸

This is precisely what this research will explore and examine, and this thesis argues that Irish Free State politicians were heavily involved, or attempted to be, but that Republican groups succeeded in controlling the historical narrative in a wider sense. Their failure at controlling the narrative, and at times their downright neglect of certain narratives as explored in Anne Dolan’s *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, does not necessarily indicate their lack of interest or participation.

The decision to consider the promotion of identities through monumental memorials and statues was one which, as noted previously in this Introduction, was heavily influenced by Dolan’s study on the memory of the Irish Civil War.⁴⁹ It began as a consideration of commemorative monuments and the ritual of commemoration itself, as Dolan includes in her publication, but the decision was made to focus on monuments alone for the purposes of this thesis. It was also influenced by scholars such as Yvonne Whelan, Nuala C. Johnson, Síghle Bhreathnach Lynch, and Catherine Switzer.⁵⁰ All of these considerations of monuments, memorials, and commemoration reflect the culture of partition in confining the research undertaken to the borders of either the Irish Free State or Northern Ireland, with the exception of Nuala C. Johnson. Johnson, in her study of remembrance of the First World War, focuses on the Irish Free State but does consider

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*.

⁵⁰ See Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, iconography and the politics of identity*, (Dublin, 2003); Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge, 2003); Síghle Bhreathnach Lynch, ‘Commemorating the hero in newly independent Ireland: expressions of nationhood in bronze and stone’ in Lawrence McBride *Images, Icons and the Irish Nationalist Imagination* (Dublin, 1999); Catherine Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918* (Dublin, 2007).

Northern Ireland in her analysis. These studies again highlight the novelty of the approach undertaken in this thesis. Monuments cannot hold memories, they are immobile, emotionless, inanimate objects. However, as shown by the research of these historians, which is discussed throughout this thesis, monuments have the potential to engage with questions of identity and, through changes to these monuments, we can examine the developments or conflicts in group identities. This research will build on that of these scholars to look at these monuments in a new light, to glean new insights into the peoples of the past through the tangible markers of memory they left behind.

One of the most important works of public history and memory in recent scholarship, and a work that has greatly influenced this research, is Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*.⁵¹ Published in 1998, the authors argued that much scholarship on historical memory up until their research had focused more on how the past had been popularly presented, rather than understood. They argued that most wrote about presentation in the public sphere, but then fell back on speculation when it came to analysis of what the public made of these sources.⁵² There was a danger that this research might have followed the same path had it not been for the innovative introduction of workshops to investigate the effects of engagement with that public history, and explore the monuments and statues with groups in their localities. These workshops, inspired by the scholarship discussed in this thesis, are a novel approach to historical research and have the potential to bridge the gap between academic historical research and public history as an academic subdiscipline. Rosenzweig and Thelen concluded that respondents consistently felt deeply connected to the past when they visited museums and heritage sites, and that they placed more trust in the history being told there, and subsequently felt notably disconnected from the past when they studied history in school, and that they did not rate it highly for trustworthiness.⁵³ This would suggest that the workshops carried out that engage with monuments and memorials in the localities, and with primary sources from the period, might encourage feelings of connectedness and engagement amongst participants.

⁵¹ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*.

⁵² Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 4.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 92.

The research carried out by Rosenzweig and Thelen in the 1990s remains one of the most authoritative publications on public history and of people's attitudes and views towards public history to this day. In their focus on the attitudes towards the past, rather than the past itself, Rosenzweig and Thelen provided rich insights into how people use the past and how public historians might best engage people with public history or the historical past. They found that overall, the people who were surveyed 'did not view the past as distant, abstract or insignificant'.⁵⁴ They were very much aware of the past and pursued it actively (through hobbies, etc.) and made it a part of their everyday lives. However, when asked about how connected they felt with the past in different scenarios, only 27.8% of respondents felt a close connection with the past when studying history at school.⁵⁵ Considering that this is where most people first encounter formal study of the past, this is quite a low percentage. They advocate for a more participatory approach to history, an approach also advocated in the work of educationalist Alan McCully, and also the approach taken by the workshops in this research.⁵⁶ Rosenzweig and Thelen's research and its participants, while separated from this research by time, geography, and even demography (as acknowledged in Chapter Four), are relevant to this research because of their focus on how people use and interact with the past. Their findings, while published in 1998, share commonalities with the results of this study and suggest that, despite the differences that separate them, people continue to use their pasts in similar ways.

There are critics of public history, and in a specifically Irish context Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh in 2014, three years after the establishment of the first postgraduate level course on the island, defines public history as 'the state of historical awareness among the general public, not specifically trained or educated in historical enquiry'.⁵⁷ Ó Tuathaigh goes on to discuss the cases for and against public history. He proceeds to argue against the involvement of trained historians in public events. History, he argues, can be misused and used to skew a narrative of the past. We see clear examples of this in the research of monuments and statues erected in the inter-war years, but as an academic public history

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁶ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 190; Alan McCully, 'History Teaching, Conflict and the Legacy of the Past' in *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. Vol. 7, no. 2 (2012), pp. 145-59.

⁵⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, 'Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective' *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 9 (January 2014), p.138.

project this thesis argues that Ó Tuathaigh's argument here fails to engage with examples successful public historical participation, such as were mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction. Abstaining from public engagement will not prevent history being used in the public sphere but it will serve to ensure that his fear becomes manifest: history will continue be used inaccurately and exploited for political gain to influence a majority. Without the intervention of trained historians these narratives will run unchecked.

In 'Public Policy and the Public Historian: The Changing Place of Historians in Public Life in France and the UK' another leading scholar Mary Stevens compares the discipline in two European countries (Britain and France) to contextualise how both countries approach public history.⁵⁸ Stevens' article is critical to this research because, while she doesn't go so far as to define public history she contextualises the discipline in two comparable European countries and also introduces the argument for the need for public history. She argues that in the current political climate citizens need to learn to think with history. This, she believes, is the only way for people to avoid being influenced by politicians seeking to use history for political gain. And while this skill is taught to historians she argues that it needs to be taught in the wider public sphere. For people to think with history 'they must find ways to appropriate it and make it meaningful to their current concerns, whilst avoiding the worst distortions', and public historians will be required in this future to develop this skill in the wider public.⁵⁹ It is Stevens' argument for the necessity of public history, and the benefits of the sub-discipline, that is critical for this research.

Olwen Purdue, in her recent article exploring the role that teaching public history in Northern Ireland might have, acknowledges the criticisms echoed by Ó Tuathaigh when she noted that the past is often used to explain and justify people's (or groups') position on a range of issues. Often, the past used in this way is simplified, and she asserted that 'it is in this extreme over-simplification of the past that its symbolic capital lies'.⁶⁰ However,

⁵⁸ Mary Stevens, 'Public Policy and the Public Historian: The Changing Place of Historians in Public Life in France and the UK' in *The Public Historian*, vol. 32, no. 3 (Summer 2010) pp. 120-38.

⁵⁹ Mary Stevens, 'Public Policy and the Public Historian: The Changing Place of Historians in Public Life in France and the UK', p. 130.

⁶⁰ Olwen Purdue, 'Troubling Pasts: Teaching Public History in Northern Ireland' in *International Public History*, vol. 4, no. 2 (June 2021), 2.

rather than argue that historians should avoid public history, Purdue championed the opposite. Her examples focused on museums rather than workshops, but her argument to abandon the search for neutrality and instead to challenge preconceptions and prejudices that encourage ‘dialogue, discussion, even dissention’ in a safe space chimes with the calls made by Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr for an agonistic mode of remembrance, which are discussed later in this chapter.⁶¹ She advocated for engaging with the public in developing a ‘richer, more nuanced understanding of such pasts’, a process that she asserted will be ‘challenging, but vitally important’.⁶² It is this challenging process that this thesis will detail, from design, to implementation, to the final encouraging results.

This thesis employs a completely innovative approach to the public history thesis in combining the principles of public history with academic research. The nature of this thesis situates the research being undertaken in the crossover point between how history was used in the past and how it is being used in the present. This novel approach poses significant challenges to the researcher, as it brings the research outside of the familiar realm of academic history and into more uncharted territory. It is in the exploration of uncharted territory that new paths can be found, and this is a considerable advantage in the type of research being undertaken for this thesis.

Identity

Theories of identity, and specifically of social identity and collective identity, are central to this research. It is the social and collective identities being promoted and portrayed in the public sphere, through statuary and monumental memorials, that is one of the foci of this research. But one must first understand and engage with what identity means, and what it means to have an identity, before discussing collective and social identities. Francis Fukuyama determines the beginnings of the modern concept of identity as recently as a few hundred years ago, when societies around Europe started to modernise.⁶³ The modern concept, he argues, unites three different phenomena which are a distinction between the inner and outer self, an evolving concept of dignity, and finally a

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 7.

⁶² Ibid, p. 9.

⁶³ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition* (London, 2018), p. 25.

phenomenon called thymos.⁶⁴ Thymos, defined by Socrates and Adeimantus as the third part of the soul, is the seat of judgements of worth - positive judgements inspire pride, negative judgements inspire anger or shame. 'Identity', Fukuyama concludes, 'is rooted in thymos, which is experienced emotionally through feelings of pride, shame, and anger'.⁶⁵ In this regard, the feeling of belonging is crucial to identification with a social group or identity. Fukuyama goes on to define national identity in the following terms

National identity begins with a shared belief in the legitimacy of the country's political system, whether that system is democratic or not. Identity can be embodied in formal laws and institutions that dictate, for example, what the educational system will teach children about their country's past, or what will be considered an official national language. But national identity also extends into the realm of culture and values. It consists of the stories that people tell about themselves: where they came from, what they celebrate, their shared historical memories, what it takes to become a genuine member of the community.⁶⁶

In this sense, the memories and historical narratives that are promoted and perpetuated by communities within states, including those identities and narratives promoted and perpetuated through statuary and the erection of monuments, all contribute to the building of a 'national' identity, and are reflections of an already existing collective social identity.

The memories and historical narratives mentioned by Fukuyama highlight the importance of history to the idea of identity, or identities. Brian Walker argued that history, and ideas of history, 'serve to provide a historical narrative at the core of the identity of both individuals and national groups'.⁶⁷ The historical narratives, he explained, are created from selective versions of history or from myths, and 'give the past an important role in the identity of individuals and national communities, north and south'. Crucially, Walker noted that these narratives have an impact on the present day and have, since their creation, 'helped to give selective, incomplete and often inaccurate pictures to communities of their own history'.⁶⁸ It is the narratives that were promoted publicly in the

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 37.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 131.

⁶⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition*, p. 126.

⁶⁷ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 17.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 20-1.

years immediately following partition, when governments and local communities in the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland were asserting their identities and ideological allegiances, that this research considers. It is important to note that, while much of the scholarship discussed in this thesis relates specifically to Northern Ireland (particularly in the work of Alan McCully in education, and Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr in memory – due in part to the political climate and recent conflict in that state), but the theories can be applied to communities north and south as, Walker asserts above, the past plays an important role in the creation of identities across the island.⁶⁹

These narratives, while having roots in communities before 1921, were honed and fine-tuned in this period. In discussing the role of memories and identities in the Troubles, Walker reflects on contemporary identities on the island, asserting that they are important in ‘developing a shared sense of history’ between all the communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland.⁷⁰ It is increasingly evident that more research on all-island and cross-community histories is needed, and histories which challenge narratives of division and elision.

People across all communities in towns, cities, and countries in the world self-identify as belonging to one of many available ‘imagined’ communities. Benedict Anderson argued that whole nations and states belong to one particular community or another simply because they imagine themselves to be so.⁷¹ This identifying or grouping to one or multiple imagined communities is a psychological feature of the human species, explored in the work of Henri Tajfel, that enables us to form groups and societies. By identifying with various groups through social categorisation an individual adopts a social identity and takes pride in their own group.⁷² It is the expression of identities in these imagined groups that will be considered in this research. The imagined aspect of these communities is defined as such because, Anderson argues, the community lives in the

⁶⁹ These works will be discussed later in this introduction, see Alan McCully, ‘History Teaching, Conflict and the Legacy of the Past’ in *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2012), pp. 145-59; Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr, ‘Northern Ireland’s 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 35, no. 1 (July 2020).

⁷⁰ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 44.

⁷¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983), p. 6.

⁷² Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in social psychology* (Cambridge, 1981).

minds of the people within it. After the partition of Ireland in 1920 the communities on both sides of the Irish border had to come to consolidate their established sense of identity with the seismic change in their own individual imagined community. In states with upheaval and huge change citizens require more than a vague awareness of their own identity, Anthony D. Smith argues that concrete manifestations of self are necessary to make tangible sense of a communal identity and thus in both Irish states we see a huge surge in the erection of monuments to the heroes of the newly created states.⁷³ These concrete manifestations of identity aim to cultivate an identity amongst citizens of the community, but they also served as tangible territorial markers for an established or popular identity group. These identity markers are found in all of the areas chosen as case studies for this research.

The history of emotion is integral to these questions, as Katie Barclay has already asserted, histories of the nation have long recognised that who we include and exclude as part of the group has long been a question of emotional investments and the protection of interests.⁷⁴ She declares that ‘the nation itself is thought to rise from emotion, a sense of belonging and attachment to our neighbours, a political entity often underpinned by patriotism and nationalism, emotions designed to attach people to place’.⁷⁵ This links to Barbara Rosenwein’s concept of emotional communities, which refer to the shared feelings that bind groups or communities together.⁷⁶ Forged during war, both in the theatre of war and at the home front, emotional communities were created that formed the basis of social identities who became active in memorialisation after the end of the conflict, e.g. Ulster Unionists and their relationship to the Battle of the Somme.⁷⁷ The phenomenon of expressing communal grief through public memorialisation following the war, as discussed in the following chapters, was not unique to Ireland and, as Jenny MacLeod and Yvonne Inall have shown in their research on war remembrance across Britain, revealed a tension

⁷³ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, 1991).

⁷⁴ Katie Barclay, *The History of Emotions: A Student Guide to Methods and Sources*, (London, Sept 2020). E-Book accessed from Trinity College Library on multiple occasions in April 2022.

⁷⁵ Ibid., ‘Chapter Eight - Going Further’.

⁷⁶ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (New York, 2007).

⁷⁷ Edna Longley, Guy Beiner, and Kris Brown (2007) ‘Our father organization’: The cult of the Somme and the unionist ‘Golden Age’ in modern Ulster Loyalist commemoration, *The Round Table*, 96:393, 707-723, DOI: [10.1080/00358530701634283](https://doi.org/10.1080/00358530701634283).

between non-participants who lost a loved and veterans who survived.⁷⁸ Fukuyama declares that identity is rooted in thymos, which is experienced by an individual emotionally.⁷⁹ People belong to a social identity group because they feel themselves to belong to that particular group. Identity, whether of the individual or the group, is a concept created and shaped by our emotions. Any consideration of identity without an acknowledgement of the importance of the history of emotions lacks the consideration due to those phenomena in our bodies that drive our decisions as much today as they did in the past.⁸⁰

Memory

Memory looms large in this research, and the ‘memory boom’ in historical study and the recent Decade of Centenaries programme in Ireland have both provided a platform for historians to probe questions of memory and remembering. From the mid-twentieth century a new understanding of history’s relationship to memory, different to how it had been understood before, began to emerge. History was considered as ‘a radically different form of knowledge whose emergence was linked to memory’s weakening hold on human societies’.⁸¹ The most influential theorists in this period were Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora. Halbwachs argued that common memories of the past among a social group link individuals with a common shared identity, and that this was the root of social or collective memory.⁸² His modernist view was that history and memory were completely different concepts, with collective memory being traditional and oral while history was a written artificial substitute for memory. As the century progressed Pierre Nora expressed a postmodernist approach to the relationship as history being an active nemesis of memory, a conquering force that subverts and demolishes memory. When history addresses the traces of once living traditions it has undermined, and becomes focused on the *lieux de*

⁷⁸ Jenny Macleod & Yvonne Inall ‘A century of Armistice Day: memorialisation in the wake of the first world war’, *Mortality*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2020), pp. 48-68, DOI: 10.1080/13576275.2019.1611752

⁷⁹ Fukuyama, *Identity*, p. 131.

⁸⁰ For further reading on how emotions have shaped developments internationally, see Richard Firth-Godbehere, *A Human History of Emotion* (London, 2021).

⁸¹ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 42.

⁸² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (London, 1992), translated by Lewis A. Coser, translated from *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris, 1952).

mémoire, memory becomes an emblem of loss and social rupture.⁸³ This fatalistic approach has not been fully accepted by modern historians, who continue to employ memory as a concept in historical enquiry and attempt to approach the relationship with more fluid understandings. The historian Patrick Hutton has argued that history always draws on both sides of the memory puzzle; that it seeks to reconstruct the events of the past but is prompted to do so by understandings rooted in our memory (both individual and collective).⁸⁴ The relationship between history and memory is explored by Geoffrey Cubitt in his comprehensive 2007 publication *History and Memory*, and in it he maps the development of the relationship and the different approaches taken at different stages of history. Cubitt evaluates the field and discusses the historical developments to conclude that social memory is ‘the name we give to processes by which knowledge and awareness of the social past are generated and maintained in human societies’.⁸⁵ To him history (as an intellectual discipline geared to the production and extension of such knowledge and such an awareness) is obviously part of social memory. This thesis, and its treatment of memory and history, is closely aligned with Cubitt’s view on this relationship.

Cubitt acknowledges that the strands of thought on the relationship between history and memory have their roots long before the recent turn to memory studies. The relationship between the two concepts has a long history, and it would be naive to expect such a complex interweaving of intellectual currents to produce a neat and tidy resolution.⁸⁶ For future historical engagement with memory, he suggests that it must lie ‘in the way it helps us to explore and to analyse the complex processes by which the past invests the consciousness of the present in human societies’.⁸⁷ This research directly

⁸³ The *Lieux de Mémoire* are ‘sites of memory’, a concept popularised by Pierre Nora. It might refer to any concept, place, or object with historical significance in the collective memory, both tangible and intangible. Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France - Les lieux de mémoire*, translation directed by David Jordan (Chicago, 2010).

⁸⁴ Detailed in Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 49.

⁸⁵ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 26

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 62

addresses the call to explore how memories of the past can impact on present society through the implementation of the workshops described in chapters four and five.

The most important theory of memory applied to this research is that of agonistic memory. Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen's 2016 article 'On Agonistic Memory' discusses the political theory of agonism and applies it to the study of memory and remembrance. Cento Bull and Hansen draw on the work of Chantal Mouffe, who accuses cosmopolitanism of ignoring real and legitimate political and social differences, leaving vital and difficult political questions unanswered for populist nationalists to seize upon. Agonistic political theory is a theory that accepts conflict as a necessary part of the political sphere but seeks to show how individuals might accept and channel this conflict positively. In an agonist approach, the need to recognise the central role of passion and emotions to political confrontation is recognised, while providing a democratic outlet for such passions.⁸⁸

Cento Bull and Hansen discuss modes of remembering identified in the modern age (mid-nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries), antagonism and cosmopolitanism. Antagonistic remembering coincided with the rise of the nation state and nationalism from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, and following the Second World War was replaced by a cosmopolitan approach linked with transnationalism.⁸⁹ While antagonistic remembering promotes an 'us vs. them' mentality and has been linked to exacerbating conditions and contributing to the political situation that preceded both World Wars, cosmopolitanism was adopted after these events to encourage the creation of a more peaceful, global society. In cosmopolitan remembrance, narratives of the past prioritise the suffering of the victim while the 'hero' in the traditional sense has disappeared. This continued the pursuit of a single, 'correct' narrative, and alienating groups from remembrance. They assert that 'the quest for a central narrative that placates everyone has

⁸⁸ Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, 'On Agonistic Memory' in *Memory Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2016), p. 393

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

meant that certain, challenging issues of the past have been avoided with the aim of reducing the tension they risk exposing'.⁹⁰

Cento Bull and Hansen discuss how a cosmopolitan approach has failed to stem the growth of antagonistic remembering or to address the experiences of many people, and they conclude that 'we are in serious need of rethinking the ways in which we remember the past'.⁹¹ They argue that both antagonism and cosmopolitanism tend to simplify the events of the past, thus creating misleading narratives of history.⁹² They advocate the application of agonism to memory, remembrance, and commemoration in an attempt to move away from antagonism, societal divisions and populist, extremist politics.

Providing guidance for researchers and practitioners, they list the features of an agonistic mode of remembering, which as they define it are:

- 1) An avoidance of the 'good vs evil' narrative through acknowledging human capacity for evil in historical context.
- 2) A multiperspective approach to remembering the past through perpetrators, victims, witnesses, bystanders, traitors, spies, etc.
- 3) A recognition of the importance of the role emotions play in remembering, and promotion of empathy as a way to facilitate and promote critical understanding.
- 4) A reconstruction of historical context, socio-political struggles and individual collective memories which led to mass crimes.⁹³

They argue that 'exposing the artificial nature of memory, therefore, should go hand in hand with promoting a mode of remembering, which is both reflexive and

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 391.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 394.

⁹² Ibid., p. 395.

⁹³ Cento Bull and Hansen, 'On Agonistic Memory', p. 399.

dialogic, but does not shy away from addressing politicised representations of past conflicts'.⁹⁴ This new mode of remembering would

rely on a multiplicity of perspectives in order to bring to light the socio-political struggles of the past and reconstruct the historical context in ways which restore the importance of civic and political passions and address issues of individual and collective agency.⁹⁵

The agonistic mode of remembering is advocated as the future of remembrance and reconciliation in twenty-first century societies. While it is too early yet to have sufficient data from multiple projects on agonistic remembering, it is clear that both antagonistic and cosmopolitan modes of remembrance have failed to address the needs of all of society and have ultimately contributed to the growth of populist movements. This new mode of remembering, the agonistic mode, is employed by Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr in research on Northern Ireland. They argue that it is the future of remembrance and commemoration for a peaceful society moving towards reconciliation.⁹⁶

Reynolds and Parr argue that Northern Ireland has experienced the effects of a cosmopolitan approach to memory and that an agonistic approach would best serve the Peace Process in Northern Ireland.⁹⁷ An agonist approach acknowledges the central role of difference and conflict and provides grounds for such tensions to be a constructive part of the process where multiple perspectives are encouraged, creating 'conflictual consensus'. Agonism, crucially, does not aim to create a single master narrative of events but rather encourages multiperspectivity to facilitate the co-existence of contesting narratives of the past. In order to embrace multiperspectivity a self-reflective acceptance is required of the complexity of how such memories are constructed and the importance of emotion in such processes. The workshops designed for this research are tools of agonism, encouraging students to explore their own preconceptions of history and identity through local public history case studies.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 400.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 401

⁹⁶ Reynolds and Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights'.

⁹⁷ Reynolds and Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights', p. 12.

Reynolds and Parr, in their own research, demonstrate how an agonistic approach to remembering in Northern Ireland can facilitate integration of complex and hitherto marginalised perspectives. Analysing a project based on oral history, education, the fiftieth anniversary of Civil Rights in 1968, and agonism, Reynolds and Parr argue that this approach is key for future commemoration and remembrance in Northern Ireland. While researchers and academics must acknowledge that peace in a conflicted society cannot be achieved through theory alone, and in an Irish context researchers must be acutely aware of Nick Vaughan-Williams's warning to researchers not to assume they hold a non-existent magic key to a peaceful future, the potential role that an agonistic mode of remembrance could play is thrilling.⁹⁸

Space

The space in which these case studies are located is both shaped by, and in themselves shape, the monuments being discussed. A monument erected in a main square or at the seat of parliament is far more politically charged than one erected in the privacy of a school, a church, or a workplace. Politics of space, and the use of space, dominate much of the debates and discussions around the monumental memorials being discussed in this thesis. Nuala Johnson, in her work on First World War remembrance in Ireland, refutes Pierre Nora's claim that statues or monuments could be relocated without changing their meaning, arguing that to ignore the power of space in a monument is to ignore the historical moment and geographic specificity of debates.⁹⁹ Space is a commodity, over which only those with sufficient power and status can exert their influence. In democratic societies power and status is not enough and a degree of consensus amongst the population is necessary to ensure the erection and continued survival of a monument. This research, in its consideration of monuments, also assesses the significance of space in relation to them.

The monuments chosen for this research are all, or were at the time of their unveiling, situated in public, or in some cases semi-public, space. The expressions of identity in statuary or monumental form in completely private space has not been

⁹⁸ Vaughan-Williams, 'Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem', p. 519.

⁹⁹ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War, and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 81.

considered because, among other reasons, no communal consensus is needed to erect a statue or monument in private space. As such it is not as accurate a reflection of the collective social identity of the community or area in question. Like the approach taken by Catherine Switzer in her research, memorials erected on church grounds or in cemeteries are not considered in this thesis because they cannot be considered public in the same way a street or town square can.¹⁰⁰ There are some case studies considered that are located in semi-private spaces, such as the Roll of Honour inside the War Memorial Institute in Limavady, the Roll of Honour in the 1937 Room at Trinity College, Dublin, and the War Memorial at Queen's University, Belfast, all of which incidentally commemorate the fallen of the First World War. The nature of the location of these monuments is significant in itself and is considered as a unit of analysis in these cases. Henri Lefebvre's Marxist approach to the use of space considers it as a form of capital, and analyses how, particularly in urban centres, urban forms are made not only of physical materials but out of meanings, language, and symbols.¹⁰¹ Continuing with Lefebvre's thinking on the use of space Fran Tonkiss develops this concept further and asserts that 'urban space is both the object of political agency and its medium'.¹⁰² The control of public space, in any community, is one of the most visible ways of exercising power.

When analysing these case studies this research will consider the statement made by Cecile Sachs Olsen that creations in an urban space don't necessarily exist primarily to create communal agreement.¹⁰³ These monuments or statues could be erected to reaffirm the supremacy of one community in a divided society and to belittle, intimidate, or erase the identity of other communities present. The monuments will reveal the dominant narrative, or perhaps the narrative with the most financial or governmental backing, but this thesis acknowledges that the dominant is not necessarily the only identity narrative.

¹⁰⁰ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland*, p. 56.

¹⁰¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (New Jersey, 1974) and Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms* (Cambridge, 2015).

¹⁰² Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory*, p. 63.

¹⁰³ Cecile Sachs Olsen, "Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art", *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 43, no. 6 (Dec 2019).

This project brings together the theories that have been outlined and applies them to research of monumental memorials in the state-formation period and the development of public engagement workshops. It is informed by the wider context of the historical developments at the time, and considers questions of the space, commemoration, and social identity with this in mind. In refusing to apply the partition of the island to the content being considered this research allows for new comparisons to be made between the communities in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. In considering the local alongside the capital cities and the actions of government this research also provides new and exciting insights and comparisons into the individuals, groups, communities, and governments who shaped the public landscape that is reflected around us today. This research has the potential to contribute to multiple aspects of historical knowledge, including all-island history, history of public history, and Irish social history, as well as contributing to our understanding of the effects of history engagement on society.

Section I

Chapter One: State-supported monuments in Dublin, 1922-38.

Introduction

'Fort of the Dane
Garrison of the Saxon.
Augustan capital
Of a Gaelic nation,
Appropriating all
The alien brought,
You give me time for thought.'
- Louis MacNeice, *Dublin* (1939)

The Dublin of 1922, at the establishment of the Irish Free State, was a city whose landscape reflected its own complicated history of colonisation, conquest, and rebellion. Castles, gaols, and monarchs occupied the public space alongside rebels, nationalist politicians, and sites of resistance. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the public space of the expanding city reflected the close relationship between Ireland and its nearest neighbour. Statues of monarchs adorned the streets and public spaces, the names of buildings, areas and streets honoured British monarchs, conquests, and peerage.¹ By the close of the nineteenth century the situation in Ireland was markedly different. A series of political and social developments, coupled with a growth in patriotism and nationalism throughout the Western world, contributed to the spread of nationalist sentiment in Ireland and an increasing demand for self-governance. The growing popularity of nationalist political ideologies was reflected in the public sphere in Dublin through the actions of the local authority, Dublin Corporation. This was evidenced by the erection of upwards of forty monuments in Ireland between 1870 and 1914 of men who had either practiced or

¹ Portobello (military victory), Nassau Street (William of Orange belonged to the House of Orange-Nassau), Talbot Street (Third Earl of Talbot, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland)

preached armed resistance to British rule in Ireland.² As a result of the Corporation's actions from the mid-nineteenth century on, the public spaces that the government of the Irish Free State acquired in 1922 featured both imperial legacies and nationalist expressions. In the newly independent Irish Free State, much of this landscape would be altered by destruction, removal, and the erection of monuments from the new pantheon of Irish heroes.

There are aspects of the landscape, as it was in 1922, that remain to the present day and provide a tangible link to the peoples of the past. The narrative of history curated in the public space through statuary is now one of unified and coherent resistance to British rule; culturally, politically, and militarily, across generations. Many remnants of the British Empire did not survive the state-formation decades, and many of those that did found that, following the Second World War and the growing tensions in Northern Ireland, their presence was no longer suffered in Éire, or the later Irish republic.³ Cubitt acknowledges the importance of the arrangement of statues in the public space in relation to memory as they provide instances of narrative corrective arrangements, a space through which to tell the story of a shared past.⁴ But composing a collective past involves choosing certain elements of history that belong to 'this' past, the sanctioned past, rather than of any other. In choosing these elements that belong to the 'us', other elements automatically belong to the 'them', thus creating the tension and contention that surrounds public monuments as each group tries to assert their belonging in the legitimised history. By securing a place in the approved history of the nation, state, or community, a group secures its future. It is this tension that shaped the development of Dublin's monumental landscape in that crucial state-formation period.

While a consideration of statues erected in public space forms the main focus of this thesis and is the dominant preoccupation of most research connected with identity expression through statuary in historiography, the historian cannot ignore the concerted

² Ian McBride, 'Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland' in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 30.

³ For discussion of the complexity of that nomenclature, see Mary E. Daly, 'The Irish Free State/Éire/Republic of Ireland/Ireland: "A Country by Any Other Name"?' in *Journal of British Studies*, 46, 1, (2007), pp. 72-90. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/508399>.

⁴ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 215-6.

effort that is made to forget through these monuments and statues. The curation of space and narrative depends as much on the ability of people to forget as it does to remember. Although mainstream historiography has been accused by Guy Beiner of having ‘a disconcerted record of collaboration with social forgetting’, this research will acknowledge sites and instances of social forgetting as best as the evidence will allow.⁵ Social forgetting is facilitated through the destruction of existing monuments, the denial of proposed monuments and even in the erection of alternative monuments. By erecting a monument to one event, such as the 1916 Rising, the space is claimed for the memory of those dead and others, such as those who were killed months later at the Battle of the Somme, are sidelined.⁶ This applies not only to the forgetting, or erasure, of the British dimension of nineteenth century Irish identity but also to acts committed during the Irish Civil War, women’s role in the revolution, and the socialist ideals of the 1916 leaders. While some aspects of the history of this island were forcibly removed from the public space, others quietly slipped away from public memory.

Forgetting, as Ernest Renan intuited, is as influential to the creation of a coherent national identity as remembering. And, in order for societies to create common memory, this forgetting needs to be carefully managed. In his famous lecture at the University of Sorbonne in 1882, Renan claimed that the nation is a ‘daily referendum’, and went on to argue that ‘forgetfulness, and I would even say historical error, are essential in the creation of a nation.’⁷ Whether it be through remembering or forgetting, those who seek to extend, consolidate, or access power ‘have a vested interest in the ways in which the past is represented’.⁸ The importance of this shaping of the past is especially urgent during state formation periods when, as Beiner observes, governments generally attempt to erase the narratives of violence that the state was built on.⁹ In the case of the Irish Free State the opposing political forces attempted to claim the glory of the Rising and the War of

⁵ Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and a Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford, 2018), p. 29.

⁶ See discussions of commemorations of the 1916 Rising in Róisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Memory, Meaning and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork, 2013).

⁷ Ernest Renan, *What Is a Nation? And Other Political Writings*, Columbia University Press (1882, republished 2018), translated and edited by M. F. N. Giglioli.

⁸ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 224.

⁹ Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, p. 446.

Independence for their own while either using the memory of the Civil War to assign blame or neglecting to engage with it at all.

The monuments erected in Dublin during the period considered in this research are not representative of all of the local communities within the city. Notably, they did not reflect the identities that were promoted and expressed by committees or by localities. Rather, the monuments under consideration are ones that had the support of the national government to varying degrees. The government support for these monuments, and the extent to which that support was exhibited, indicates their approval (or lack thereof) of the identity narrative that these monuments portrayed, their endorsement of the history being told. Ian McBride asserts that for national communities, as for individuals, ‘there can be no sense of identity without remembering’, and this was a fact acknowledged by the successive Irish Free State governments in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰ There are two political parties who govern the Irish Free State in this period, Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, and it is recognised that both have different claims to the memory of the past, and different approaches to commemorating in the public sphere. This research attempts to compare the attitudes of national government to those of local communities and while it cannot be suggested that these political opponents are a homogenous unit, both are representative of the majority of voters at a given time and so their actions and attitudes can be taken to be a good indicator of the nation at large. Of course, by considering monuments destroyed or removed other opinions and voices can be incorporated into the analysis. The reason for establishing these criteria is to establish what narratives were or were not acceptable to the Free State government at various points in this period. In doing so, a meaningful comparison can be made between the narrative being projected in the more rural areas of Nenagh and Limavady and the national governments.

Space, as previously established in the introduction to this thesis, wields power. Those who command the public space and stake their claim to the identity(ies) perpetuated harness the support of a sizable portion of the population and, in doing so, can firmly proclaim their group identity as belonging to the local or national community. In turn those who don’t feel represented or misrepresented in the public space often attempt to wield

¹⁰ McBride, ‘Introduction: Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland’, p. 1.

their influence through the destruction of existing offending monuments or, particularly in the case of Northern Ireland, through the creation of temporary forms of physical commemoration such as murals. The practice of *damnatio memoriae* (the condemnation of memory) is not unique to the modern, or Western, world. The destruction and removal of monuments to Emperor Caligula in ancient Rome or Pharaoh Akhenaten in ancient Egypt have much in common with the current debate surrounding monuments to confederates, enslavers, and colonisers at the time of writing, as they do to the debates over the imperial monuments in the Irish Free State in the period being considered.¹¹

Memory of the Revolution

1922-32

The memory of the revolution upon which the foundations of the state were built was contested from the creation of the Irish Free State.¹² It is clear that the phenomenon termed by Beiner as ‘prememory’, where memory shapes unfolding historical events as they are understood and interpreted through the memories of previous historical events, influenced the curation of the narrative of the revolution.¹³ In particular he notes that prememory should be considered in relation to the Irish Civil War. He suggests that historians consider both the postmemory anxieties of the pro-Treatyites, as is explored by Anne Dolan in *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, and also to the frustrated prememory of anti-Treatyites who in this period ‘anticipated a different turn of events in which the republican insurgency against the free State would be publicly celebrated in years to come’.¹⁴ Recent historiography has challenged reductive prior portrayals of the anti-Treaty IRA as simply destructive-minded anti-democrats; see, for example, Bill Kissane (2005) and Gavin M. Foster (2015).¹⁵ This postmemory anxiety often conflicts with the frustrated

¹¹ Alex von Tunzelmann, *Fallen Idols: Twelve Statues That Made History* (London, 2021), p. 11.

¹² For further discussion see Frances Flanagan, *Remembering the Irish Revolution: Dissent, Culture and Nationalism in the Irish Free State* (Oxford, 2015).

¹³ Guy Beiner, ‘Probing the boundaries of Irish Memory: From postmemory to prememory and back’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 34, no. 154 (Nov 2014), p. 300.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹⁵ Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford, 2005) and Gavin M. Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class and Conflict* (Hampshire, 2015).

prememory and as a result monuments and statues are debated, contested, vandalised and revered.

One of the first monuments commissioned and erected in the state was the Cenotaph erected on 13 August 1923 on Leinster Lawn commemorating two leading figures in the struggle for Irish independence and of the Cumann na nGaedheal government, Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith.¹⁶ The cenotaph was unveiled at the seat of central government in Dublin, a government that had been embroiled in a civil war against anti-government forces up to May 1923. The commission of this cenotaph, within two months of the end of the conflict, shows that the newly established government understood the importance of consolidating the public space.¹⁷ Fran Tonkiss argues that controlling public space is ‘one of the most visible ways of exercising power’, and by erecting a monument to the dead heroes of the Civil War the government were clearly staking their claim to the space of government buildings.¹⁸

The Cenotaph itself was designed as a Celtic cross with plaques of Griffith and Collins visible on either side. The style was traditional and religious, harking back to an ancient Celtic past – what Síghe Bhreathnach-Lynch observes was the perceived Golden Age of Ireland’s past.¹⁹ Written in Irish, the inscription read ‘Do chum glóire Dé agus onóire na hÉireann’ and listed the names, years of birth, and years of death of Collins and Griffith.²⁰ The style was described by the *Irish Independent* as ‘in keeping with the spirit of self-sacrifice which Griffith and Michael Collins showed’.²¹ The article acknowledged that the monument might be thought of as too austere by others, but aired appreciation for

¹⁶ Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 15.

¹⁷ Various correspondence in NAI TAOIS S5734A & NAI CAB G2/2.

¹⁸ Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms* (Cambridge, 2015).

¹⁹ Síghe Bhreathnach-Lynch, ‘Commemorating the warrior hero in the Irish Free State’ in Lawrence McBride (ed.), *Images, Icons, and the Irish Nationalist Imagination, 1870-1925*, (Dublin, 1999), p. 148.

²⁰ The inscription, common on memorials to this period, reads ‘For the glory of God and the honour of Ireland’.

²¹ *Irish Independent*, 14 Aug. 1923.

the design (it was designed by Mr. George Atkinson and the reliefs of the fallen leaders sculpted by Albert Power).

In erecting this empty tomb to the fallen the government were associating Collins and Griffith with those who died in 1916, portraying them to the nation as their heirs, and the Cumann na nGaedheal government as the direct descendants of this line. It also positioned the civil war firmly in the past. This creation of new heroes in a newly established nation is a common strategy in achieving legitimacy, according to Bhreathnach-Lynch.²² The Cumann na nGaedheal government were quick to commemorate these men who were so influential in the struggle for independence, but also to curate the versions of them that would be remembered. While the monument is not inscribed with other names Dolan notes that it itself was a monument to the Civil War and by default honoured the nameless victims.²³ In linking all dead of the civil war with Collins and Griffith, and by extension themselves, the government was attempting to unite the memory of the dead and to claim their legacy as its own.²⁴ The high cross united the dead under the banner of Christianity and an ancient Gaelic heritage. The unveiling ceremony itself was relatively short, with President Cosgrave delivering a ‘historic and eloquent tribute’ that only lasted approximately nine minutes.²⁵

The day’s ceremonies began with a mass at 11am at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, again reaffirming the strong link between Irishness and Catholicism. The Bóthar Buadh parade provided a huge spectacle for the crowds, featuring armoured cars, fighter planes, and marching bands.²⁶ The army were heavily involved in the unveiling ceremony of their first Commander in Chief, with buglers playing the Last Post and General Seán MacMahon laying a wreath on their behalf. W. T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive

²² Bhreathnach-Lynch, ‘Commemorating the warrior hero in the Irish Free State’, p. 149.

²³ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p.14.

²⁴ Jason Knirk, *Afterimage of the Revolution: Cumann na nGaedheal and Irish Politics, 1922-1932* (Wisconsin, 2014).

²⁵ *The Butte Independent*, 13 Oct. 1923.

²⁶ The Bóthar Buadh (or ‘Victory Parade’) marked the first anniversary of the deaths of Griffith and Collins, events lasted almost two weeks. See Anne Dolan, ‘Commemoration: ‘Shows and stunts are all that the thing is now’ – the Revolution Remembered, 1923-52’ in Joost Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (New York, 2002), p. 186.

Council, spoke of the memory of Griffith and Collins ‘in the name of the Irish nation’, having been bestowed this position as national mouthpiece ‘by the Irish nation commissioned and empowered’.²⁷ Cosgrave laid a wreath on behalf of the government and the crowd (approximately 2,000 people, strictly invite-only, with assigned entry points) rose to their feet in applause.²⁸ This dignified and rational monument, erected in haste and urgency, reasserted the legitimacy of the Cumann na nGaedheal government and attempted to lay claim to the narrative of the struggle for independence. Dolan notes that the unveiling ceremony was an opportunity for the Free State government to bask in the triumph of their victory. The erection of this monument was proof that the civil war had a purpose and that the sacrifices made were not in vain, it acted as a ‘physical manifestation of this new martyrdom’ for the Free State dead.²⁹ Whelan suggests that the unveiling of this monument can be seen to be ‘a celebration of contemporary Irish heroes, as well as a proclamation of Ireland’s independence’.³⁰

It should be noted that while the Cenotaph has been considered a ‘sham’, a stain on the memory of those it commemorated, it was also an additional expense (however small) on the fledgling government.³¹ The introduction of the Military Service Pensions following the Army Mutiny in 1924 left the new state ‘with a considerable financial liability for nearly fifty years’.³² These pensions, described by Marie Coleman as ‘incongruous’ in light of the state’s attitude to commemorating the events of the revolution, attempted to provide for those who participated in the conflict.³³ Notwithstanding the global depression following the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and the dire economic situation and high emigration in Ireland, the criteria for qualification was widened in 1934 by the Fianna Fáil government and, within eleven years of the cessation of civil war both sides could now

²⁷ *Freeman’s Journal*, 14 Aug. 1923.

²⁸ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 16.

²⁹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 11.

³⁰ Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, iconography and the politics of identity* (Dublin, 2003), p. 161.

³¹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 7.

³² Marie Coleman, ‘Military Service Pensions for Veterans of the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923’ in *War in History*, vol. 20, no. 2 (April 2013), p. 203.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

apply for compensation. Of course, not all those who applied were awarded pensions, 18,000 were successful from 80,000 applications, and the term ‘active service’ remained vague and undefined.³⁴ But this, a utilitarian and functional project received far more time, attention, energy, and (crucially) money than the proposals to replace the crumbling Cenotaph ever did.

In 1926, the Minister for Finance Ernest Blythe outlined expenses totalling £500 that would be paid by the government towards the erection of the Sigerson Shorter 1916 Memorial.³⁵ Dora Sigerson Shorter, labelled ‘a very distinguished Irishwoman’ by Blythe in his address to the Dáil, was an influential artist and poet during the Gaelic Cultural Revival. Following her death in 1917 funds were left in her will for the sculpting of a memorial that she herself had designed, and she left instructions for it to be erected in Dublin. Blythe emphasises that this matter had been before the government for a considerable amount of time and had been seconded ‘very warmly’ by the late General Collins and President Griffith.³⁶ The monument was erected in Glasnevin Cemetery, outside of the urban space of the city and within the walled cemetery that held the remains, up to that point, of Irish nationalist heroes such as Daniel O’Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell, the lost leaders of Cumann na nGaedheal Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, and anti-Treatyite figures such as Cathal Brugha, Harry Boland, and Rory O’Connor. While the government’s financial contribution is significant, the erection of the monument outside the city in a strongly nationalist space excludes it from comparison in this research. However, as evidenced in the next chapter, ignoring monumental memorials that don’t strictly adhere to the criteria for research can offer a narrowed and incomplete view of the past. While this monument is not included in the comparisons made throughout this research, it illuminates the wider context of the period being analysed.

Apart from the Cenotaph there were no other monuments to the revolutionary period supported, commissioned, or financed in the public space of Dublin by the national government during the Cumann na nGaedheal government’s term. Their haste in erecting

³⁴ Ibid., p. 222.

³⁵ ‘Supplementary and Additional Estimates – Vote 11 – Public Works and Buildings’, *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 14, No. 11 (24 Feb 1926).

³⁶ Ibid.

the Cenotaph betrays their anxieties in relation to controlling the historical narrative; however, the subsequent deterioration of the monument, and lack of adequate replacement, suggest that the nuts and bolts of administering the state overtook the ideological debates that pervaded its establishment.³⁷ Public finances were also constrained and, with other pressing matters demanding funds, the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn, and other possible memorials to the revolution, were less of a priority. There was one other significant monument to the revolutionary period that the government engaged with in this period, that of a cross to General Michael Collins at the site of his ambush at Béal na Bláth, Co. Cork. The memory of Collins at Béal na Bláth was heavily co-opted in this period by the Army Comrades Association, or Blueshirts, who later merged with Cumann na nGaedheal to form Fine Gael in 1933.³⁸ While this memorial is outside the parameters of this research it is worth noting that on these rare occasions when the Cumann na nGaedheal government engaged with the public narrative of revolutionary nationalism it was to claim the allegiance of the popular Collins, a figure respected on both sides of the Civil War divide and whose memory could be wielded for political capital.³⁹

1932-39

The general election of February 1932 heralded a new era in Irish politics and brought the Fianna Fáil party, formed in 1926 and led by the sole surviving commandant of the Easter Rising and vehement critic of the Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921, Éamon de Valera, into power. Fianna Fáil, who had won 44 seats in the 1927 general election, increased their number to 72 (in comparison to Cumann na nGaedheal's 57) in 1932.⁴⁰ This change of government less than a decade after the Irish Civil War was a public response to economic and social dissatisfaction amongst the population, a pattern reflected throughout Europe as governments were falling as a result of the Great Depression. The Fianna Fáil party promised economic, and eventually political, independence. A number of popular veterans

³⁷ 'Letter from Commission of Public Works to Department of the President', 5 Sept 1928, NAI TAOIS S5734A.

³⁸ Maurice Manning, *The Blueshirts*, (Dublin, 1970); Mike Cronin, *The Blueshirts and Irish Politics*, (Dublin, 1997).

³⁹ While this is generally true, it wasn't always the case. See discussion in Seán Donnelly, 'Republicanism and Civic Virtue in Treatyite Political Thought, 1921-3' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 63, no. 5 (December 2020), pp. 1257-1280.

⁴⁰ Michael Laffan, *Judging W. T. Cosgrave* (Dublin, 2014), p. 274.

of the Easter Rising and the War of Independence, as well as the Civil War, were among the ranks of politicians standing for election. They promoted an ideology of republicanism, used the rhetoric of Irish nationalism, and maintained close ties with the IRA and the abstentionist Sinn Féin in the early years of their government.⁴¹ Following the election of 1932 expressions of republicanism became more acceptable in the ‘official’ sphere, although the varying levels of support within the IRA for the Fianna Fáil party, who some considered traitors and deceivers, led to a split after the election in 1932, which damaged their relationship. Violent clashes between the IRA and the increasingly militant Blueshirts, who had now merged with Cumann na nGaedheal to form Fine Gael and led by Eoin O’Duffy, instilled anxiety in the Fianna Fáil government as these clashes threatened the stability of the new state. De Valera moved against these groups and the Blueshirts were declared illegal in 1933, while the IRA was declared illegal in 1936.⁴² Fianna Fáil, as a political party, satisfied the aspirations of most republican voters in the state through their policies and the undermining of the Anglo-Irish Treaty throughout the 1930s, and they succeeded in maintaining democratic government at a time when democratic governments in Europe were under threat.

As with the previous Cumann na nGaedheal government Fianna Fáil recognised the importance of curating the historical narrative in the political and public sphere. They had been cultivating their preferred narrative of history since their foundation in 1926, emphasising their links with veterans of 1916 and claiming the allegiance of those who died before the civil war through their surviving families and comrades. In 1935 their efforts culminated in a re-enactment of the storming of the GPO during official commemorations in which Éamon de Valera played a central role.⁴³ Shortly after taking office de Valera expressed his wish to commission and acquire busts of Austin Stack and Cathal Brugha, anti-Treaty heroes, to decorate his office.⁴⁴ He also showed an interest in acquiring the completed busts of Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith commissioned by the

⁴¹ Brian Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 133-5.

⁴² Anne Dolan, ‘Politics, Economy and Society in the Irish Free State, 1922-39’ in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol. IV: 1880-present*, (Cambridge, 2018); Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, p. 140.

⁴³ James Moran, *Staging the Easter Rising: 1916 as Theatre* (Cork, 2005), p. 10.

⁴⁴ Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood in Bronze and Stone: Albert G. Power, RHA* (Dublin, 2019), p. 102.

Cumann na nGaedheal government, this was seen by some as motivated by a desire to heal the wounds of Civil War but further solidified his position as a traitor to hard-line republicans. While notable commissions and acquisitions, these busts were never intended to be displayed in a public space and can only serve as context to the wider picture in our consideration of Fianna Fáil's curation of the public space through endorsement, commissions and funding from 1932-39.

Yvonne Whelan notes that the election in 1932 'heralded a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards public memorials dedicated to those who had died in the independence struggle', an attitude she attributes to the belief within Fianna Fáil that the struggle had not yet been completed.⁴⁵ The first involvement of the new government, albeit in a limited capacity, in a public monument was in July 1932 when the newly elected President of the Executive Council, Éamon de Valera, unveiled a bust to Countess Markievicz in St Stephen's Green.⁴⁶ The Markievicz Memorial Committee was established in 1929, two years after her death, to raise funds for a 'suitable memorial' to the Countess.⁴⁷ The memorial proposed would take the form of a practical addition to St Ultan's Infant Hospital, a cause that the Countess had been involved with in life, and the erection of some sort of memorial in St Stephen's Green if funds were available. De Valera, a TD at the time, was a member of the committee alongside fellow TD and future Vice-President of the Executive Council, Seán T. O'Kelly. The Committee featured people from a wide range of professions, backgrounds and political persuasions also including the Labour Party Senator Thomas Foran and Lord Mayor of Dublin, Laurence O'Neill.⁴⁸ De Valera and O'Kelly, Fianna Fáil founding members and TD's, both had joined the committee in a personal capacity but following their victory in the 1932 election acted in their official capacities in endorsing the commemoration of the Countess in the public space.

⁴⁵ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 162.

⁴⁶ *The Irish Press*, 2 Jul. 1932.

⁴⁷ *Sligo Champion*, 5 Jan. 1929.

⁴⁸ Lot 133: Countess Markievicz Memorial Committee Pamphlet, date unknown but presumably early 1929, Cuala Press, Dublin. Accessed at James Adams & Sons Ltd., Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers on 10 Feb 2021.

During the unveiling ceremony de Valera addressed the crowd and simultaneously paid homage to the Countess while articulating the ideal vision of womanhood that his government would infamously be remembered for enshrining in the 1937 Constitution. Although she was described as a ‘bean dílis duthrachtach, bean caomh charthanach, saighdúir a throid go calma i measc na fear ar son saoirse na tíre’, the public could not forget that she was, first and foremost, a woman who never lost the placidity and femininity that is the nature of women.⁴⁹ The crowds that gathered for the unveiling of the new monument were reported to be ‘immense’. The memorial was situated in a prominent space in St Stephen’s Green, close to where a shelter had been used as a Red Cross station for rebels during the Easter Rising when she had occupied that space as a member of the Irish Citizen Army and second-in-command of that garrison.⁵⁰ Newspapers noted that de Valera remarked at the unveiling ceremony that this monument was, in fact, unnecessary, as ‘her memory will live forever in the hearts of the Gael’.⁵¹ Perhaps the aspirations of the committee were, as well as enshrining the memory of the Countess in stone, to publicly celebrate the newly-founded party through its association with a well-known veteran of 1916 in that same space in which she fought for independence. The presence of de Valera and his involvement in this memorial in a personal capacity was a clear endorsement of the ideals for which the memorial stood (republicanism), and it afforded him an opportunity to articulate the approved group identity in the public space, to celebrate the long history of this new political party, and to claim the memory and allegiance of a national hero, similar to how Cumann na nGaedheal had in 1923.

In the years following the Rising the event was commemorated by various groups such as Cumann na mBan, the Irish Trade Union and General Workers Union and the IRA. The memory of 1916 was powerful, it was on this memory that the War of Independence had been fought, and the collective power that the veterans and families of signatories wielded was significant. The problem for the successive governments in the state-formation period was that veterans and families of the signatories belonged to all parties and none. The traditional method of claiming legitimacy through 1916 was divided and so

⁴⁹ In English it means ‘a faithful and loyal woman, a kind and charitable woman, a soldier who fought calmly amongst men for the cause of Ireland’ in the *Irish Press*, 4 Jul. 1932.

⁵⁰ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 168.

⁵¹ *Irish Press*, 4 Jul. 1932.

it became increasingly more important to claim the memory of the event through commemoration and statuary. The statue of Cú Chulainn which was unveiled at the GPO in 1935 was an official government initiative to commemorate the 1916 Rising. The sculpture by Oliver Sheppard had in fact been modelled in 1911-12 and had been purchased by the government for £1,000 in 1934.⁵² Cú Chulainn had been a prominent figure in the Gaelic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He symbolised an Irish people defeated, but defiant. Cú Chulainn in his dying moments represented all those who had given their lives for the struggle for Irish independence. The figure is slumped, tied to a standing stone to face his enemies, with the raven on his shoulder signalling his death. A depiction of this moment, defiance in defeat, glory in sacrifice, was chosen as the most appropriate to commemorate the men and women of the Easter Rising. Cú Chulainn's role as the 'Defender of Ulster' was especially significant as the government was perceived to have abandoned the six counties of Northern Ireland by republicans. This statue was seen by its critics as an insult to the republic that people had died for, with the *United Ireland* newspaper describing it as an 'indecent [...] figurative scramble for the bones of the patriot dead', declaring that 'the men who for the time being constitute the Government of the State [...] have decided to outdo all that has been heretofore done by partisan bodies to desecrate the memory of Easter Week'.⁵³

The monument features the statue itself alongside a plaque on which is reproduced the third paragraph of the 1916 Proclamation, the paragraph declaring the ownership of Ireland to the people of Ireland and pledging the lives of the signatories and their comrades to the establishment of a sovereign Irish republic. The choice of excerpt, as with the erection of monuments, tells as much through what was not chosen as through what was. By emphasising the commitment to the establishment of a republic, the pledge of lives to this cause and the legitimisation of the cause of Irish independence the Fianna Fáil government were promoting their association with the narrative of the struggle for independence and being the keepers of the flame over the promises made in following

⁵² *Southern Star*, 27 Apr. 1935; 'Committee on Finance - Vote No. 65 - Army', *Dáil Debates*, 3 Apr. 1935, Vol. 55, No. 13.

⁵³ *United Ireland*, 20 Apr. 1935.

paragraphs guaranteeing civil and religious liberty, equal rights and suffrage to all citizens, and to cherish all children of the nation equally.⁵⁴

At the time of its unveiling it was considered to be a contentious monument with TDs of the Cumann na nGaedheal party refusing to attend and a counter-commemoration organised on that same day by the IRA.⁵⁵ The unveiling of the statue and accompanying 1916 commemorations in 1935 angered many who believed that Fianna Fáil and de Valera were manipulating the narrative of the Irish revolution and co-opting the memories of the fallen heroes.⁵⁶ Former National Army Chief of Staff and Minister for Defence Richard Mulcahy accused Fianna Fáil of using public money and the manpower of the National Army to consolidate their power by orchestrating the 1935 commemorations and utilising them to garner more support for Fianna Fáil.⁵⁷ The monument to the dead of the 1916 Rising consigned, as all monuments do, that seminal event firmly to the past. The Irish revolution in the form of violent resistance that it had taken was no longer a feature of the present or the future. The republic remained an aspiration but the Fianna Fáil government committed themselves to achieving this through constitutional means, working within the confines of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 to dismantle and undermine it. This was, perhaps, a watershed moment in the projection of the republican identity in this period. Granted, not all republicans accepted this and nor did they all commit to Fianna Fáil's approach, but it was one of many developments, such as the establishment of the Fianna Fáil party and their participation in government, that brought the rank and file of the anti-Treaty factions, the moderate republicans, into the functions of the Irish Free State and away from violent resistance.

The legacy of the 1916 Rising and War of Independence belonged to both of the main political parties in the Dáil chamber with veterans of the conflicts on both sides. The 1916 Rising was established as the foundation myth for the new state in much the same way that the First World War was for the Northern Irish state. It provided an event that

⁵⁴ 1916 Proclamation, accessed on 13 Sep 2021 at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bfa965-proclamation-of-independence/>.

⁵⁵ *Irish Independent*, 22 Apr 1935.

⁵⁶ *United Ireland*, 20 Apr. 1935.

⁵⁷ 'Committee on Finance - Vote No. 76 - Army' *Dáil Debates*, vol. 55, no. 13, 3 Apr. 1935.

both sides of the Civil War could agree on remembering and commemorating and gave an impression of a hegemonic Irish state united against the common foe. The main debate surrounding the erection of a monument to the revolutionary period was not an opposition to the ideological place of the revolution in the historical narrative, but rather that once erected the event would be consigned firmly to the past. While de Valera's speech at the unveiling of the Cú Chulainn monument in 1935 attempted to forge a link between past and present by calling on the youth to emulate the valour and sacrifice of those being commemorated, the leader of the opposition W.T. Cosgrave was scathing in his criticism. He declared that 'it is not possible to hide these national limitations today or to cover them up with a veil lifted from the bronze statue of Cú Chulainn.'⁵⁸ Cosgrave had been a driving force in the commissioning and erection of the Cenotaph in 1923 in his capacity as President of the Executive Council, in 1935 he was all too aware that the Cú Chulainn monument in the GPO would have the same effect on the position of the revolution in historical memory. After the commissioning of the Cú Chulainn monument, the Irish government did not issue any further commissions until the 1940s.⁵⁹ However, that is not to say that they did not involve themselves in the erection of monuments in a more indirect way, as discussed throughout this chapter.

The memory of the revolutionary period was a memory that was often invoked in the public and political sphere, but it is not one that governments in the interwar period actively engaged with commemorating through permanent statuary. The unsettled conditions in the country and vacillating popularity of the IRA did not encourage governments to be involved in the commission or erection of memorials to the revolution. Where it did involve itself, the narrative that both governments endorsed had striking similarities. In all three monuments considered the heroic male sacrifice was celebrated and commemorated as the epitome of glory. The heroes of the revolution were portrayed as noble individuals who gave their lives gladly for the cause and whose sacrifice legitimises the state. The contribution of women was muted and, except for the Countess Markievicz, no women who fought or died in the struggle were commemorated by either government. Markievicz, as a politician and very public figure, could not be ignored but

⁵⁸ NAI TAOIS S6405 B

⁵⁹ Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, *Ireland's Art Ireland's History: Representing Ireland, 1845 to present* (Michigan, 2009), p. 173.

her image was distorted. Rather than being honoured as a passionate nationalist and socialist, she was lauded as a woman who keenly embodied the feminine qualities of her gender. The memory of the civil war was highly contested, and the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn is indicative of an anxious and worried government who had recently lost their leaders in quick succession and were keen to establish themselves as competent heirs to their legacy. It is clear that while there are few examples of monuments to the revolution, the government involvement on an individual or official level indicates that both governments supported the perpetuation of the memory and the establishment of physical representations of nationalist identity. It was not until the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising that the national memorial in the form of the Garden of Remembrance was opened by President de Valera.⁶⁰

Memory of the First World War 1922-32

Unlike the popular support that commemorating and remembering the Irish Revolution received in this period, the memory of the First World War was far more contested and complex. There were many more families in Ireland in the interwar period who had been directly impacted, through the death or serious injury of a family member, by the European War than by the Irish Revolution. Though some contemporary records are inaccurate, historical research has revealed an estimated 250-300,000 Irishmen fought in the War, with approximately 30-50,000 killed.⁶¹ Indeed, as Jeffery wryly notes, ‘while we shall never know precisely how many died, the dead are the only certainty’.⁶² The most recent research on the death toll of the Irish revolutionary period by Eunan O’Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin estimates that approximately 2,849 men, women and children died as a result of the Irish revolution, including those fighting on the British side in the conflict.⁶³ The political situation in Ireland changed drastically during the war, and the violence and

⁶⁰ *The Irish Times*, 12 Apr. 1966.

⁶¹ See varying claims in David Fitzpatrick, ‘Irish Consequences of the Great War’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 39, no. 156 (2015), p. 646; John Horne, ‘The Aftermath’ in ‘1918- Empires Fall, Nations Rise’ Supplement, *Irish Times*, 24 Apr. 2018.

⁶² Keith Jeffery, ‘Echoes of War’ in John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin, 2008), p. 274.

⁶³ Eunan O’Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Yale, 2020).

conflict that followed from 1919 to 1923 prevented any large scale or meaningful remembrance of the war dead until 1924, six years after the war had ended. Again, prememory is an important feature of war remembrance, as those who remained in Ireland posited the Irish volunteers as pro-British imperialists while many who enlisted did so for religious, nationalist, or economic reasons.⁶⁴ By the time they returned after the war the memory of the conflict had already taken on a contested nature. From recruitment to commemoration 'Ireland's role in the war was consistently interpreted through the lens of the conflicting tropes of identity on the island'.⁶⁵

The Guillemont Cross, temporarily erected on College Green in 1924 before being permanently erected outside a Catholic church in Guillemont, France, hints at the seemingly contradicting attitudes of the Free State government in the early years of the state. The cross was one of three crosses created to commemorate Irish soldiers on the battlefields of the First World War, the other two being erected at Wytschaete (near Ypres, Belgium) and in the Macedonian mountains (near Salonika). The Guillemont and Wytschaete crosses were dedicated to the 16th (Irish) Division and the Salonikan cross was dedicated to the 10th (Irish) Division. By this time the other prominent Irish division that fought in the European War, the 36th (Ulster), had already erected the Ulster Tower at Thiepval, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Commemoration on the battlefield was common throughout Europe in the aftermath of the war. That the bodies of those who died in the war were not returned home meant that families, comrades and loved ones did not have a physical focal point for their grief, an outlet through which to express their loss, and so crosses, rolls of honour and other commemorative monuments took on a new function.⁶⁶

The temporary erection of the Guillemont cross at College Green was organised by the Irish Legion of Ex-Servicemen. It was the first such commemoration of the Armistice held in the capital due to the War of Independence and Civil War.⁶⁷ There was a huge

⁶⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004), pp. 132-3.

⁶⁵ Nuala Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, 13.

⁶⁶ Nuala Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, 102.

⁶⁷ 'Armistice Day Celebrations - Scenes in Dublin', *Irish Independent*, 12 Nov 1924.

turnout, with approximately 50,000 members of the public and 20,000 ex-servicemen present for the unveiling of the cross and the observation of the two minutes silence at 11am. The crosses themselves had been funded by the Irish National War Memorial Trust, and while the Irish Free State government were not directly involved they were represented by Senator Colonel Moore who laid a wreath at the memorial that commemorated ‘na nÉireannach uile a fuair bás son choga mór’.⁶⁸ The *Irish Independent* also reported that Senator Sir Bryan Mahon’s absence at these events was due to his attendance at the Armistice Day ceremony in London on behalf of the Irish Free State government. While the individual’s position in government was significant – the closer one’s position to the President of the Executive Council, the greater the endorsement – so, too, was the role these individuals played during the First World War itself. In John Horne claimed that ambivalence ‘reigned’ in the Irish Free State, and the attitude of government to the expression of the memory of the war in stone reinforces his assertion.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The full note read ‘O Rialtas Saorstát Éireann i gcuimhne na mÉireannach uile a fuair bás son choga mór’, which in English reads ‘From the government of the Irish Free State in memory of all Irish who lost their lives in the Great War’.

⁶⁹ John Horne, ‘Our War, Our History’ in John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin, 2008), p. 13.



Photograph 1: Armistice Day in College Green, Dublin, in 1924. Source: National Library of Ireland.

The state can support the commission, erection, or removal of a monument in a variety of ways. While the Free State government was directly involved in all of the stages of the Cenotaph at Leinster Lawn, there were less direct indications that revealed more nuances about the preferred version of the national Irish identity. The bust of Thomas Kettle who had died fighting in the First World War was delayed a number of times before finally being erected in 1937. Kettle had a distinguished career in public life as a nationalist MP with the Irish Parliamentary Party, poet, academic and journalist⁷⁰ He had joined the British Army after witnessing the plight of Belgium while travelling there in 1914 to secure arms for the nationalist military organisation, the Irish Volunteers. On his return to Ireland he made a number of recruitment speeches and was convinced of the righteousness of the Allied cause.⁷¹ These speeches made him unpopular with the portion of nationalists who opposed enlistment and favoured Irishmen remaining on Irish soil. His reasons for enlisting were immortalised when, on the eve of his death, he wrote his most

⁷⁰ Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, p. 53.

⁷¹ Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, p. 53.

famous poem 'To My Daughter Betty - Gift From God'. Within the poem Kettle reveals that he volunteered not for the love of Empire, 'but for a dream born in a herdsman's shed'. He was motivated, he claimed, entirely by Christian compassion and felt compelled to come to the aid of his fellow Catholics in Belgium. Kettle's bust was commissioned in 1917 sculpted by Albert Power and its completion predated the Irish Free State but due to disagreements over details of the monument the erection and unveiling were postponed.⁷² Meetings were held between the Kettle Memorial Committee and the OPW regarding the exact location of the monument within St Stephen's Green, the wording featured on the pedestal, and the particulars of the unveiling ceremony itself.⁷³ The constant negotiation between the two parties reveals the extent to which the government was involved in influencing the final monument, their constant concern that the monument would become a target for republican extremists, and discouragement of the perception of the nation that it might portray in the very public sphere of St Stephen's Green.

The OPW reportedly objected to the monument being erected in too prominent a position in the park as well as the wording proposed for the monument. At the time St Stephens Green featured a variety of statues and monuments that represented various aspects of Dublin's past, from statues of George II, and Lord Winton, 1st Earl of Eglinton (a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), and even Queen Victoria's Jubilee Bandstand, alongside more popular figures such as Lord Ardilaun (a member of the popular Guinness family who had gifted the park to the public), James Clarence Mangan (an Irish patriotic poet), and Anna and Thomas Haslam (a Quaker couple who supported the suffrage movement and improved living conditions for Dublin's poor).⁷⁴ The main entrance to the park was through the Fusiliers Gate, erected in 1907, a monument that commemorated the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who fought for the British Army in the Second Boer War.⁷⁵ The space was a highly charged expression of political ideology. As well as the monuments

⁷² *The Irish Press*, 16 Sep. 1937; Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, p. 54.

⁷³ Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, p. 88.

⁷⁴ For further information on the people commemorated in St Stephen's Green, see their entries in the Dictionary of Irish Biography: Diarmuid Ferriter, 'Guinness, Arthur Edward', <https://www.dib.ie/biography/guinness-arthur-edward-a3677>; Sean Ryder, 'James Clarence Mangan', <https://www.dib.ie/biography/mangan-james-clarence-a5431>; Patrick Maume, 'Anna Maria Haslam', <https://www.dib.ie/biography/haslam-anna-maria-a3850#co-subject-A>. All accessed on 20 June 2023.

⁷⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Aug. 1907.

themselves, the Park was the site of the Battle of St Stephen's Green where Michael Mallin, Countess Markievicz and members of the Irish Citizen Army fought the British Army during the 1916 Rising.

Another reported objection was to the wording on the pedestal which read 'Thomas M. Kettle (1881-1916). Killed in action in France. Died not for Flag, nor King, nor Emperor, But for a Dream born in a herdsman's shed, And for the secret scripture of the poor.'⁷⁶ The OPW reportedly opposed the lines from his poem being included, for fear that it would provoke an angry and possibly violent reaction from republicans.⁷⁷ In February 1928 there was a meeting between the Chairman of the Commissioners of the OPW and representatives of the Kettle Memorial Committee (Tom's wife, Mary, and his brother, Laurence). It was decided to postpone the unveiling ceremony, with no new date set.⁷⁸ Kettle's bust would later be erected in the Green, under a different government and following years of debate and negotiation, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Ultimately, to erect a monument to a fallen British soldier, regardless of his popularity in life, proved too much of an ask for the Cumann na nGaedheal Free State government in the first decade of the state. Kettle's bust was erected in St Stephen's Green in 1937, as discussed later in this chapter. In this sense the Cumann na nGaedheal government, through their department of the Office of Public Works, exercised influence in preventing the erection of a monument in the public space that might suggest a group identity at odds with that which the state was founded on. In this sense, their actions mirror those of the Northern Irish government discussed in the next chapter, who influenced the public space through prevention.

National War Memorial Gardens

The Irish National War Memorial was a project which spanned the terms of these successive governments, and a project that was frequently debated in public media and the houses of parliament. The concept for this project began before the establishment of the Irish Free State in July 1919 when, as Nuala Johnson notes, there was an explosion of

⁷⁶ Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, p. 88.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 88; 'In Committee on Finance - Vote 10 - Public Works', *Dáil Debates*, 5 Jul. 1927, vol. 20, no. 5.

⁷⁸ Síghle Bhreathnach Lynch, *Expressions of Nationhood*, 88

public discourse and activity relating to the commemoration of the war.⁷⁹ A committee of over one hundred people was established by Lord French and they obtained offices at 52 Dawson Street from which they planned and regulated fundraising activities.⁸⁰ This committee represented the entire island of Ireland and they envisaged a truly national memorial that would, although located in Dublin, remember all Irishmen who fought and died in the war.⁸¹ However, in 1919 at the inaugural meeting of the Comrades of the Great War, Ulster representatives did make it known that while they were supportive of the memorial gesture, they had already begun some commemorative work relating specifically to Ulster and the 36th (Ulster) Division.⁸² The border that would later impose a physical boundary between a portion of Ulster and the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State, a border which had already been imagined through the division of Ulster and the rest of Ireland in separate divisions during the war, had already begun to manifest in acts of remembrance.

This Committee that was established in the summer of 1919 in an island without borders, ruled from Westminster, and relatively unmarred by violent conflict experienced profound change in political and social life in the first few years of its existence. By December 1919 over £30,000 had been subscribed by ‘every class’ of citizen for the purpose of commemorating ‘the deeds and sacrifices of 50,000 of Ireland’s noblest sons’.⁸³ While there was evidently enthusiasm for the erection of a war memorial the political developments on the island meant that most of the committee’s energies from 1919 to 1923 were given to researching the names of those who died and fundraising. The initial proposal of a home or hospital for soldiers of the British Army was no longer feasible in the new Irish Free State and so the Committee debated a number of different proposals, ranging from the practical suggestion of building houses for unemployed veterans who returned from the war to the grandiose proposition of the erection of a permanent national

⁷⁹ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 84.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸¹ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 186.

⁸² *Irish Times*, 18 Jul. 1919.

⁸³ *Irish Times*, 16 Dec. 1919.

monument to enshrine the memory of those who died.⁸⁴ This debate between honouring the dead and providing for the living was not unique to Ireland, but reverberated in the countries rebuilding their societies and economies in the aftermath of the war.⁸⁵

By 1924 the Irish National War Memorial Committee were ready to renew their efforts and had resolved to erect a permanent memorial to the fallen. On 28 March the General Committee approved the conversion of the then private Merrion Square into a public memorial park featuring a memorial monument or cenotaph ‘of an appropriate and beautiful character’ to those who died in the war as a suitable proposition for a national memorial.⁸⁶ They elected an Executive Committee to oversee the development of this memorial who would liaise with the government, shareholders, and General Committee members on the progress of the project. The Committee also resolved that the park, when completed, would be handed over to the state for maintenance, as per the terms of the initial scheme (envisaged in 1919). While the majority of the Committee were in agreement with this scheme, there were some voices of discontent who continued to argue for a more practical use of the money. The Chairman’s response to this suggestion was that it was something they had considered, but that at £500 apiece they could only build approximately eighty homes which was not sufficient for the volume of veterans in the country, and crucially that in time when there were no longer ex-servicemen to occupy them ‘they would cease to have any memorial character’.⁸⁷ This was paramount to the majority of the Committee who were committed to preserving the memory and sacrifice of those who died in perpetuity, and who wanted a space to gather and pay tribute to their fallen family and comrades every November. The proposal for a national monument was as much about ensuring the continuation of remembrance in the future as it was about preserving the memory of the past. It can also be seen as a crucial ideological struggle between the grieving families’ right to remembrance and the surviving veterans’ efforts to be provided for in the post-war era, a tension played out in communities across Ireland and Britain. As already mentioned, the lack of graves for families to visit contributed to the

⁸⁴ *Irish Times*, 16 Dec. 1919.

⁸⁵ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 87.

⁸⁶ *Irish Times*, 1 April 1924.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

families' desire to erect a monument to their grief. Johnson noted that the local memorial, for many, became the 'shrine of remembrance' and many unveiling ceremonies were almost 'surrogate funeral services'.⁸⁸ Jay Winter's research charts this same phenomenon across England, France, and Germany in the aftermath of the war and asserts that across Europe these memorials had a 'highly personal meaning' to the mourning communities who erected them.⁸⁹ Again, a clear example of emotions in affecting historical events or change. The huge outpouring of grief that came after the war drove many of these committees and individuals to erect these monuments and ensure their loved ones were honoured and remembered in the public space.

The atmosphere at the meeting of the National War Memorial Committee in March 1924 reads as one of hope and optimism. While some aired disagreements with the scheme, the contributions of members were in the vast majority approving and positive. The Chairman assured the Committee of the support of the Minister for Finance, Ernest Blythe, in convincing the government to accept this proposal and take on the maintenance and care of the park once constructed, Lord Pembroke had stated that he would sell Merrion Square 'as cheaply as the trustees for the successors could reasonably allow', and Lady Arnott assured the committee of no opposition from the residents of Merrion Square.⁹⁰ The Committee were content that this was the most appropriate culmination of two to three years of fundraising and consideration, and even declared that having the support of the Free State government to maintain the memorial 'made it the most satisfactory thing that any of them could have dealt with for many years'.⁹¹ One committee member, Mr. Story, acknowledged that they had had 'a period during which it was not easy to suggest a public memorial to soldiers who fell in the European war' but he believed that there would not be any opposition as 'things were better now'.⁹² It was in this atmosphere of hope and optimism that the Committee brought the proposal to the Irish Free State government. On 24 November 1924 the Minister of Finance wrote to the

⁸⁸ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 102.

⁸⁹ ; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 94.

⁹⁰ *Irish Times*, 1 April 1924.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

Executive Council outlining the new proposal for the National War Memorial and enquiring as to whether any ministers had any objections to the proposal.⁹³ Within a week a memo from the Executive Council notes that financial considerations precluded the government from undertaking the maintenance of any new parks in Dublin.⁹⁴ That the Minister for Finance would not have been aware of any such financial considerations would be incredibly peculiar. This further highlights the fervent haste with which the cenotaph on Leinster Lawn was approved and constructed, emphasising the conscious effort from the government to endorse, control, and curate the narrative of the revolution.

Less than a year later the National War Memorial came before the President of the Executive Council again when John Sweetman, an influential pro-Treatyite, wrote to W.T. Cosgrave to interrogate government support for the Merrion Park Memorial scheme.⁹⁵ A man who was acutely aware of the power of the media and an avid contributor to Irish daily papers on economic and political issues, a letter from Sweetman was published in *The Leader* on the same day he wrote to Cosgrave.⁹⁶ More vehement in his opposition to the scheme in the public media than in private correspondence, Sweetman attributes the plan to erect a national memorial in Merrion Park to the ‘West Britain element in Dublin’.⁹⁷ He accuses those who support the scheme of plotting to reunite Ireland and Britain under one flag once more, asserting that they ‘wish to make us one nation by degrees’ (one of which being the establishment of the memorial park in Merrion Square).⁹⁸ He asserts that ‘the West Britons must learn they do not own Ireland’, and refusing this scheme would be one way to show them that.⁹⁹ Sweetman is unable, or unwilling, to separate the Irish men who fought in the European War to those who served in the British Army at home to quell rebellion. His objections represent a sizeable portion of the

⁹³ Letter from Minister for Finance to members of the Executive Council, 24 November 1924, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

⁹⁴ ‘National War Memorial Fund’, 1 December 1924, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

⁹⁵ Letter from John Sweetman to President Cosgrave, 1 August 1925, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

⁹⁶ Entry for John Sweetman in the Dictionary of Irish Biography Database. Accessed on 19 Jan 2021 at <https://dib-cambridge-org.elib.tcd.ie/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a8406&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes>.

⁹⁷ *The Leader*, 1 August 1925 found in NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

population who were increasingly reluctant to commemorate the British Army as an institution in the public sphere. The naivety of the National War Memorial Committee in 1924 about how much Ireland, and their position in it, had changed was exposed. The associations of war commemoration with imperialism, an association that prompted the Nenagh Urban District Council to refuse ‘moral support’ to the War Memorial Cross in 1928, are clearly prevalent in society by this point.¹⁰⁰

The matter continued to be proposed, revised and revisited and correspondence from the Secretary of the President of the Executive Council to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Séamus Burke, in March 1926 notes that, in Cosgrave’s opinion, a Private Bill to enable the Merrion Park scheme would have little chance of success in Dáil Éireann.¹⁰¹ A resolution to consider the Private Bill was passed by the Seanad on 9 March 1927, a year after Cosgrave had aired his doubts as to the support it would receive, and was defeated in the Dáil on 29 March.¹⁰² In the Dáil debates Minister for Justice, Kevin O’Higgins, referred to the changing nature of the National War Memorial, quoting a letter published in the *Irish Times* in May 1926 in which the influential Lord Glenavy opposed the Merrion Park scheme on the basis that it was not for this purpose that £40,000 was subscribed to the Committee, and that the memorial should be of use to the surviving comrades of those who died.¹⁰³ O’Higgins added that for this reason, as well as his own personal objections to the memorial, the Executive Council recommended that members of the Dáil reject the proposal. He believed that the proposed location of this memorial, outside the seat of central government, would give a ‘wrong twist’ as to the origins of the State to visitors. He was anxious to clarify that he bore no ill-will towards the veterans of the European War, in which two of his own brothers fought and one had died, but that the current proposal was not acceptable to him. Through O’Higgins’s speech it is clear that the Executive Council attached huge significance to the monument and where it would be located. O’Higgins’s personal connections to the

¹⁰⁰ *The Nationalist*, 12 May 1928.

¹⁰¹ Correspondence from Secretary of the President of the Executive Council to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, 10 March 1926, NAI TAOIS/ S 4156 A.

¹⁰² ‘Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution’, *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

memory of the war, which mirrored people's situations all over the country, such as Councillor John Tierney on the Nenagh Urban District Council, complicated matters. Tierney's situation, as a British Army war veteran with one son in the Irish National Army and another who died as a result of his imprisonment by Free State forces, is discussed further in Chapter Three. Simultaneously acknowledging the nationalism of many of the Irish recruits, a sizeable portion of which came from the nationalist Irish Volunteers, he disconnects their sacrifice from the independent Irish Free State;

No one denies the sacrifice and no one denies the patriotic motives which induced the vast majority of those men to join the British Army to take part in the Great War, and yet it is not on their sacrifice that this State is based, and I have no desire to see it suggested that it is.¹⁰⁴

While their sacrifices may have been justified, noble and patriotic they were not for a republic and therein lies the central issue of situating the National War Memorial at the seat of the newly established government.

The Dáil and Seanad debates in March 1927 relating to the Merrion Square Scheme reveal anxieties and tensions that the government, and even the National War Memorial Committee and ex-servicemen, had over the place of the First World War and its remembrance, both physically and metaphorically, in the new Irish State. While O'Higgins stated that his opposition to the scheme was based entirely on the proposed location and proximity to the seat of government there were aspersions cast in the Dáil as to the true reason for objection. Deputy William Redmond, son of the Irish Parliamentary Party leader and constitutional nationalist John Redmond, MP, advocates for an agreement between opposing ideological sides 'to tolerate and facilitate the commemoration, without offence to either side, of their respective dead'.¹⁰⁵ O'Higgins concludes by agreeing that the commemoration of the dead 'is a pious and proper thing' but adds that there is a danger that certain people wish to turn Armistice Day commemorations from a solemn event into a controversial one advising that 'we should always try to distinguish very clearly between

¹⁰⁴ 'Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution', *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

commemoration of the dead and glorification of the living'.¹⁰⁶ It is clear from this debate that Ireland had difficulty positioning the war in its own political and cultural history, and with these existing tensions and debates over the interpretation of the war there could be no consensus on a national memorial.

While political opposition to the scheme centred around the location of the proposed memorial and its proximity to the central seat of government, and the government's own memorial to those who died for Irish independence, the opposition voiced by ex-servicemen and some subscribers is significant. Following the First World War unemployment among veterans was high across Britain and Ireland. Furthermore, in Ireland the economy was suffering following years of violent conflict that culminated in the establishment of a new state.¹⁰⁷ In a letter to the editor of the *Irish Independent* in 1924 C. J. Kennedy laments that ex-servicemen did not parade on Armistice Day that year, when 50,000 members of the public gathered in College Green, as 'all ex-servicemen should have marched in a body through the principal streets, so that the general public would see for themselves who is most deserving for employment'.¹⁰⁸ In the Seanad itself the Bill was opposed by influential and respected veterans of the war Senator Sir Bryan Mahon and Senator Sir William Hickie.¹⁰⁹ There was a significant group of veterans, politicians and public who argued for the money subscribed to be used to provide for ex-servicemen, with those opposed arguing that £40,000 would not be enough to provide for a significant portion of those in need.¹¹⁰ The economic situation following the war and the foundation of the state exacerbated this tension and fostered disillusionment amongst veterans whose experiences of war were superseded by grieving families and their desire to erect memorials to fulfil the function of the absent headstone.

¹⁰⁶ 'Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution', *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

¹⁰⁷ John Dennehy, *In A Time of War, Tipperary 1914-1918* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 226-7; Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1989), pp. 519-20.

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Independent*, 14 Nov. 1924.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927 – Second Stage', *Seanad Éireann Debate* - 9 March 1927. Vol. 8.

¹¹⁰ See a variety of 'Letters to the Editor' on the topic in *The Irish Times* 11, 14 & 18 May 1926, 5 & 7 March 1927.

Nuala C. Johnson notes that this exchange in the Seanad, and later the Dáil, was the first public debate on the role of the First World War in Irish history. She states that there were three lines of debate in the public sphere namely the geographical proximity of a monument to the British Army to the seat of Irish government, concern over the role of the park as a site for civic improvement for inner-city citizens (which some veterans perceived as a dilution of the aim of the park), and the tension between a responsibility to provide for the living and veteran's (arguably societal) debt to the dead.¹¹¹ The only one of these debates that was reflected in the town of Nenagh in this same period was that of the politics of place. In a very similar situation, albeit exacerbated by scale of donations, significance of place in the capital, and the amount of people involved, at no point did the veterans of Nenagh debate the form that the memorial would take, utilitarian or monumental. This can be attributed to the existence of twenty-three homes built specifically for ex-servicemen very soon after the war two miles outside of the town in Knockalton, in 1923, and the existence of the Ex-Servicemen's Hut that predated the outbreak of the First World War in Cudville (on the grounds of which they erected the memorial cross in 1928).¹¹² The functional, utilitarian memorials already existed in the town and while unemployment continued to be a pressing issue, their existence undoubtedly contributed to memorial debates later in the decade being focused on a monumental memorial.

After the defeat of the resolution the National War Memorial Committee returned to creating possible suggestions and proposals which crossed W.T. Cosgrave's desk a number of times in 1928 and 1929. The suggestion to erect a gateway to the memory of the fallen in the Phoenix Park was proposed in June 1928 but the Executive Council was not in favour of the scheme and it failed to secure approval in the Dáil.¹¹³ This would not have been the first gateway dedicated to members of the British Army in the city as the Fusilier's Arch at St Stephen's Green remained where it had been erected in 1907 to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who

¹¹¹ Johnson, *Ireland, The Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, pp. 93-4.

¹¹² *The Nationalist*, 7 Nov. 1923; *Nenagh Guardian*, 21 Aug. 2021.

¹¹³ Circular to Members of the Executive Council, 2 March 1929 and Minutes of Executive Council Meetings and Discussions on War Memorial Gateway in Phoenix Park, 11 Jul. 1928, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

fought and died in the Second Boer War.¹¹⁴ It caused controversy from the outset as many Irish nationalists ideologically opposed the Boer War and placed the Boer struggle for independence in the context of the Irish struggle with well-known figures such as Major John McBride, later executed for his part in the Easter Rising 1916, fighting in the Boer Army against the British. To mimic the British administration in Ireland and erect a second gateway to a public park in Dublin would perhaps have been too close a parallel for Cumann na nGaedheal whose position in government was now under threat from the newly established Fianna Fáil party.¹¹⁵

Finally in September 1929 the Secretary to the President wrote to the Office of Public Works to enquire as to whether they had any lands adjacent to the Phoenix Park that they could grant to the War Memorial Trust¹¹⁶ The following month Senator Andrew Jameson, a man who had been involved in the National War Memorial Committee since the outset, met with Sir Philip Hanson of the OPW to discuss the site being offered in Islandbridge. Thus began the planning, design, development, and construction of the National War Memorial Gardens. While the matter of the location for the memorial was now fixed the project itself did not proceed without delays and controversies. W.T. Cosgrave himself, in a letter to Senator Jameson, acknowledges discontent in certain quarters towards the scheme. He declared that it would be unwise ‘to ignore the fact that there is a certain hostility to the idea of any form of War Memorial’.¹¹⁷ In 1930 Sir Edwin Lutyens, designer of the British National War Memorial Cenotaph at Whitehall, London, was employed to design the memorial at the twenty-five-acre site at Islandbridge. In the spirit of utilising the subscription money to benefit the living ex-servicemen the labour for the construction of the memorial and surrounding park was to be undertaken by unemployed veterans of the British Army and the National Army.¹¹⁸ The finished memorial took the form of a Garden of Remembrance which was itself situated in a public park at the banks of the river Liffey in Islandbridge. The memorial consists of a 30-foot-

¹¹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Aug. 1907.

¹¹⁵ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 116.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Secretary to the President of the Executive Committee to the Chairman of the Office of Public Works, Sep. 1929, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 A.

¹¹⁷ Letter from W.T. Cosgrave to Andrew Jameson, 2 Dec. 1929, NAI TAOIS/S 4156 B

¹¹⁸ *Irish Press*, 31 Dec. 1931.

high Cross of Sacrifice inscribed with the years of the war accompanied by a Stone of Remembrance inscribed with the words 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore'. Around these memorials were four pavilions linked by pergolas containing the official Roll of Honour of the names of those who had died in the Irish Brigades, all of which were flanked by two fountains in sunken rose gardens. Walls in the memorial garden that lead to the Cross of Sacrifice were inscribed in English and in Irish 'To the memory of the 49,400 Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-18'.¹¹⁹

Work on the site began in late 1931 and was mostly completed by 1937, although the *Irish Press* reported that Remembrance Day ceremonies could not be held there that year due to delays as a result of the building strike that year.¹²⁰ The park and monuments were completed by 1938, and the files in the Department of An Taoiseach detail extensive conversations and correspondence between the government and the trustees of the Irish National War Memorial discussing an official opening ceremony.¹²¹ A formal ceremony was scheduled to take place to dedicate the monument and officially open the War Memorial Park, and the Taoiseach Éamon de Valera had indicated that he would attend to unveil the monument, with Minister for Finance Seán McEntee adding that it would be a 'graceful gesture' as late as 1937.¹²² However, just over two years later de Valera confirmed that he would probably not attend or be represented at the ceremony due to 'the tenseness of the international situation now' and the threat of conscription being introduced in Northern Ireland in the event of Britain entering a war, and in June that year the ceremony was declared to be postponed.¹²³ While there was no official opening of the Park on its completion the British Legion used it to host their Armistice Day commemoration for the following thirty years.¹²⁴ Due to poor upkeep and lack of investment the Park subsequently became dilapidated and neglected until the regeneration

¹¹⁹ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 109.

¹²⁰ *Irish Press*, 22 Oct 1937, 11.

¹²¹ Various correspondence and memorandums found in NAI TAOIS S4156 B & NAI TAOIS S4156 C.

¹²² 'Letter from Secretary of Minister for Finance Seán McEntee to President of the Executive, Éamon de Valera', dated 22 Mar. 1927, NAI TAOIS S4156 C

¹²³ 'Notes of Meeting Between An Taoiseach and Captain A. P. Connolly and Major Tynan (British Legion)', dated 28 April 1939, NAI TAOIS S4156 C; *Irish Press*, 21 Jun. 1939.

¹²⁴ Nuala Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 111.

of Dublin in the mid-1980s, leading to the Park being officially reopened to the public and formally dedicated on 10 September 1988.¹²⁵

Much has been written about the choice of Islandbridge for the site of the National War Memorial, and historians have debated the significance, or insignificance, of the chosen location.¹²⁶ What is perhaps more significant than the eventual site chosen was the scale of the government's anxiety with finding an appropriate location for this memorial in the newly established state. The debates and controversies that surrounded the National War Memorial project were reflective of the anxieties that surrounded the telling of history in this state-formation period. Exacerbated by the enthusiastic fervour with which unionists embraced the memory of the First World War, the positing of the event as a milestone in the creation of the Northern Irish identity, and the associations between war commemoration and imperialism, Irish nationalists could not publicly engage with the memory of those who had died as British soldiers without renouncing their nationalist credentials. The sacrifice of the fallen, and that of the surviving veterans, was marginalised in the telling of Irish history. Their remembrance was largely left to the local communities from whence they came. The commemoration of the approximately 300,000 Irish soldiers who fought in the First World War was permitted but not encouraged.

1932-39

The year 1932 was a significant one in the short history of the Irish Free State. It was in this year that the first transfer of power occurred when, following the general election of February, power was transferred from Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal to de Valera's Fianna Fáil. June saw the 1,500th anniversary of the arrival of St Patrick to Ireland which was celebrated with the visit of a papal legate and the holding of the 31st International Eucharistic Congress.¹²⁷ The Congress was a celebration of Catholic Ireland and was promoted by the government as a vindication of their struggle to establish the state. The impact of the Great Depression was felt in the Irish Free State and, on 21

¹²⁵ *Sunday Press*, 11 Sep. 1988.

¹²⁶ See Yvonne Whelan *Reinterpreting Modern Dublin*, Nuala Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, and Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, *Ireland's Art, Ireland's History: Representing Ireland, 1845 to present*.

¹²⁷ David Dickson, *Dublin: The Making of a Capital City* (London, 2014), p. 484.

October, approximately one thousand unemployed workers marched through the streets of Dublin to deliver a petition to Seán T. O'Kelly, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister for Local Government and Public Health.¹²⁸ This occurred only days after thousands of unemployed in London attempted to march on the County Hall in Westminster that ended in violent clashes with the police, and was followed by smaller demonstrations around the country indicating intense dissatisfaction amongst the working classes.¹²⁹ In this same month the Anglo-Irish Trade War, which would dominate the economic policy of the Irish Free State throughout the 1930s, began.¹³⁰ The changes heralded by the new government also had significant impact on the monumental landscape of Dublin city and in 'official' attitudes towards commemoration and memorialisation in this period.

The little encouragement that those who campaigned to commemorate the First World War received from the Cumann na nGaedheal government was further diminished following the victory of Fianna Fáil in 1932.¹³¹ Éamon de Valera had himself spoken at an anti-Armistice Day rally in 1930 and upon Fianna Fáil taking office official government representatives were immediately withdrawn from participation in Armistice Day events in Dublin, and in 1936 were withdrawn from commemorative ceremonies in London.¹³² The Fianna Fáil government saw out the completion of memorial projects linked to the First World War that had been started in the previous decade, but did not initiate or endorse the initiation of further commemorative projects. Their attitude towards commemoration of the war throughout the 1930s was coloured by the polarisation of war memory on the island and, towards the end of the decade, the increasing possibility of Britain entering another international conflict.

The construction of the National War Memorial was completed during this period, as well as the erection of a monument to Thomas Kettle. A number of years after the

¹²⁸ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 21 Oct. 1932.

¹²⁹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 19 Oct. 1932.

¹³⁰ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, p. 537.

¹³¹ George D. Boyce, "'No Lack of Ghosts': Memory, Commemoration and the State in Ireland" in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 255.

¹³² Brian Walker, *Irish History Matters: Politics, Identity and Commemoration* (Dublin, 2019), p. 84.

indefinite postponement of the memorial the bust, which had been on loan to the National Gallery of Ireland, was fixed to the empty pedestal that had been erected years before in St Stephen's Green.¹³³ It was nine years since the monument had been scheduled to be unveiled, and twenty-one years after the committee was established to raise a monument. The *Irish Press* revealed that the reasons for the delay of the memorial were due to the 'unsettled conditions' of the 1920-23 period. Following this, in 1928, the delay was attributed to the government and the Board of Works' stipulations for the monument - namely that the oration delivered by Joe Devlin, Nationalist Party MP for Belfast, was not to be political, that there be no public announcement of an unveiling ceremony, and that the inscription from his poem be removed. The latter stipulation was reported to be particularly unacceptable to Mrs Mary Kettle, and the erection of the monument was indefinitely delayed.¹³⁴ The *Irish Independent* reported on 14 December 1937 that the monument to Kettle was erected 'without public ceremony' on its pedestal in the Green.¹³⁵ There was no public ceremony and no oration that was reported in the local or national newspapers, but the lines from his poem remained on the pedestal justifying his enlistment to the British Army and painting the European War as one defending Christian democracy rather than one in which men fought for the love of Empire.

In 1937 Éamon de Valera attended a ceremony in Trinity College which officially opened a new branch of the college library, a reading room. The reading room featured in a prominent position on the campus amongst the historic buildings of the Front Square. Nine years earlier a Hall of Honour had been unveiled in the College to honour the 463 staff, students and alumni who lost their lives in the European War.¹³⁶ At that unveiling Lord Glenavy referred to 'a growing conspiracy of silence' surrounding the war and Ireland's participation in it.¹³⁷ This monument did not qualify for inclusion in this research because it was a private, ticketed event held within the walls of the college campus. However, it is notable that in 1937 when de Valera attended to officially open the reading

¹³³ *Irish Press*, 16 Sep. 1937.

¹³⁴ *Irish Press*, 16 Sep. 1937.

¹³⁵ *Irish Independent*, 14 Dec. 1937.

¹³⁶ *Irish Times*, 17 Nov 1928.

¹³⁷ *Irish Independent*, 12 Nov 1928.

room adjacent to the Hall of Honour, he did not mention the memorial, or the war, in his speech. He took the opportunity to highlight the service done to Trinity by a seventeenth century Catholic provost, Rev. Michael Moore.¹³⁸ De Valera unveiled a bronze plaque to Moore and quoted the Trinity College alumnus Thomas Davis extensively. He highlighted the Irish nationalist tradition in the college renowned for its imperialistic attitude and links to Britain. This can be interpreted as an attempt to integrate it into the narrative of Irish history, but the lack of recognition given to the building in which he stood indicates that perhaps rather than integrate his aim may have been to exonerate Trinity's past by highlighting the nationalist contributions it had made to Irish culture. His presence at Trinity was significant, as would his presence have been at the official unveiling of the National War Memorial to which he had committed, but which was postponed due to growing international tensions and the expectation that perhaps conscription would be imposed on the population of Northern Ireland.¹³⁹

A certain level of class tension is also revealed during debates surrounding the monuments and memorials to the First World War. The surviving veterans' associations provided a platform for the working-class ex-serviceman to demand that money subscribed to honour those who fought in the war be used to benefit those who served and now struggled to provide for their families and challenged the hegemony of the middle and upper classes in the control and execution of a national monument. The entire purpose of monuments and memorials was debated, in Ireland as elsewhere in Europe, with input from the lower classes who had swelled the ranks of the armies. The claims of the lower classes to their right to benefit from any memorial to the conflict contributed in no small way to the execution of the National War Memorial in Islandbridge, where the government committed to employing unemployed ex-servicemen from the Irish and British armies to carry out the works.¹⁴⁰ This indicates an important shift in the debate surrounding monuments from heroic, glorious nationalism of the nineteenth century to a more pragmatic and utilitarian attitude in the twentieth. This shift in attitude affected the erection, removal, and destruction of all monuments in the public space in this period, even

¹³⁸ *Irish Press*, 3 July 1937.

¹³⁹ Irish, Tomás, *Trinity in War and Revolution 1912-1923* (Dublin, 2015).

¹⁴⁰ *Irish Press*, 31 Dec. 1931.

if not explicitly acknowledged at the time. It is clear that the anger experienced by the veterans who returned shaped the public landscape of monuments in this period, and a history of emotions can help illustrate and illuminate other histories, such as a history of class.

The memory of the First World War was uneasy and contested, and its place within the national historical narrative was awkward and changeable. The memory and commemoration of the war was framed in this state formation period as a choice between two identities which had, in varying degrees, co-existed. This huge shift in attitude amongst the general public had begun to take hold before the war had even ended, another example of Beiner's theory of prememory. Tom Kettle himself sensed that opinion in Ireland was changing and, anticipating that the Easter insurgents would 'go down in history as heroes and martyrs', remarked to friends he would be remembered, if at all, as 'a bloody British officer'.¹⁴¹ There were nationalists who persisted in attempting to integrate the memory of the war into the national narrative, but the success of the unionists of Northern Ireland in claiming the First World War as a foundation myth for the Northern Irish state contributed to the uneasiness with which many Irish nationalists, and the Irish Free State, engaged with it. Catholic nationalists in Northern Ireland gradually disassociated themselves from the memory of the war. Protestant unionists saw Armistice Day 'as an occasion for the affirmation of their own sense of Ulster and British identity'.¹⁴² As a result, the progression of the 1920s saw the Catholic, nationalist community disassociating themselves from participating in remembrance of the First World War, both north and south of the newly imposed border. By the end of the decade the memory of the war had become almost exclusively Protestant unionist with no representatives of the Catholic church nor the 16th (Irish) Division present at the unveiling of the Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall.¹⁴³ These developments north of the border had a direct impact on how the Irish government, and Irish people, treated the memory of the war in the public sphere, and there was a significant portion of the population in the Free State that viewed war remembrance as inherently pro-British, an opinion strengthened by

¹⁴¹ J. B. Lyons, *The Enigma of Tom Kettle: Irish Patriot, Essayist, Poet, British Soldier, 1880-1916* (California, 1983), p. 293.

¹⁴² Brian Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 86.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

the proliferation of Union Jacks and singing of ‘God Save The King’ that accompanied many commemorations.¹⁴⁴ Armistice Day events in the Irish Free State became increasingly imperialist in character, with Chief Superintendent David Neligan complaining on behalf of the Gardaí Síochána that the Armistice Day parade was ‘a definite Imperialistic display, and not a commemoration to the war dead’.¹⁴⁵ The state itself had experienced significant changes, economically, socially, and constitutionally in this short period. The twenty-six state was now Éire and its citizens lived under a new constitution, Bunreacht na hÉireann, which was ratified in 1937. It had much more sovereignty than its counterpart state of Northern Ireland and, exercised this by remaining neutral during the Second World War which began in September 1939.

The official treatment of the memory of the First World War, an event that entered the homes of a huge number of people across the island, is testament to the outpouring of grief displayed by every community in its immediate aftermath. The acknowledgement of the significance of war remembrance amongst communities while simultaneously being incredibly conscious of the placing of that war memory in the narrative of the history of the state created a unique and difficult position for the government of the Irish Free State. The Cumann na nGaedheal government, while being vigilant of the narratives being promoted in the public space, were more considerate of the memory of war and facilitated remembrance and commemoration in society. They governed a society whose grief was raw, whose need for a physical site to pay tribute to their dead was palpable from those early meetings of the Irish War Memorial Committee. As the grief subsided, so too did the level of public support for these monuments and commemorations. From 1932, with the arrival of the overtly republican Fianna Fáil government and the increasing associations of war remembrance with imperialism the national government decreased their involvement in, and permittance of, public monuments, memorials, and ceremonies. These tensions are evident in the debates surrounding the erection of the National War Memorial and in the length of time it took to build and unveil. With money raised for this purpose in 1919, it

¹⁴⁴ See correspondence between Chief Superintendent David Neligan, Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy, and later the Ministers for Justice James Fitzgerald-Kenney and James Geoghegan between 1928 and 1932 in relation to reports of Armistice Day in NAI JUS 8/684.

¹⁴⁵ Correspondence from Chief Superintendent, David Neligan, to Secretary, Department of Justice, 11 November 1930, NAI DJ 8/684.

was twenty years before the memorial was ready to be unveiled. That the unveiling never went ahead because of growing international tensions prior to the Second World War was not an intentional slight to the memory of the war, and those who died in it, but was indicative of the anxieties surrounding the treatment of that memory in the public sphere. Johnson suggests that ‘the sculptural mapping of the war in the Irish Free State was informed by a contested reading of the literal and symbolic place of the war in Irish historiography’.¹⁴⁶ Political conditions on the island, as they always had, influenced the position that the memory of the war could be afforded in public discourse.

Keith Jeffery notes that the Second World War completely changed the tone of war remembrance in the state that would become the Republic.¹⁴⁷ During the war a neutral country could not be seen to be hosting public events that could be identified with support for the British war effort, and so Armistice Day parades in Dublin were banned. The memory and commemoration of the First World War was forever changed by the outbreak of the Second World War, but in this state-formation period it is clear that while the memory was debated, contested, and uneasy, it was certainly not forgotten.

Monuments destroyed/removed

As well as monuments erected or commissioned, consideration must also be given to monuments in the urban centre of Dublin that were defaced, damaged, or destroyed in this period. In the absence of any official government policy to remove imperial monuments, dissident groups seeking to undermine the legitimacy of the government undertook their removal; concerted destruction featured in the IRA’s anti-imperialist campaign in which they targeted symbols of British imperialism such as monuments and commemorations.¹⁴⁸ There were debates amongst government and in public fora as to the fates of these monuments, indicating significant support for their removal outside of membership of the IRA. Yvonne Whelan notes that these imperial monuments dominated the landscape by the mid-nineteenth century, and even then, were tangible targets for resistance. They contributed to the veneer of an imperial city, but she observes that they

¹⁴⁶ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 83.

¹⁴⁷ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 135.

¹⁴⁸ Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, p. 71.

were less successful in ‘cultivating among citizens a more long-term sense of loyalty and imperial identity’ and, following independence, their presence became ever more contested in the public space.¹⁴⁹ It should be noted that, in any study of monuments, it is important to include analysis of those that were damaged, destroyed, or removed, as a study focusing on those erected alone can limit historians to histories of those with a stake and influence in society. While there is limited involvement of women in the debates around monuments and memorials, both the Irish National War Memorial and the Limavady War Memorial had women on the general committee, there is a noticeable absence of the working class in these debates. For those less privileged, it is possible that the defacement or destruction of a monument was the only means available to them of shaping the narrative of the public space. This is not to suggest that acts of vandalism were exclusively the reserve of the working classes, but rather that because these acts of violence had no class barrier, including them in any analysis of the monuments in public spaces allows for a consideration of a wider range of voices and experiences.

In the consideration of these expressions of the past, we must acknowledge that the working classes lack representation in the public sphere and so the identities being projected are those representative of middle- and upper-class sensibilities. These sensibilities, however, do not exist in isolation and require a certain level of societal consensus to be supported, permitted, and perpetuated in the public sphere. Cubitt acknowledges that while it may be misleading to see expressions of the past in a society as an unproblematic expression of agreed collective self-knowledge, it is equally too simple to dismiss them as nothing but the cultural instruments of elite domination.¹⁵⁰ One of the most contested monuments in the public space of Dublin was arguably the statue of King William III, William of Orange, erected in College Green in 1701. William’s statue had been the victim of vandalism and damage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and had been repaired a number of times.¹⁵¹ Erected a decade after the Treaty of Limerick (1691) was signed which signalled William’s victory in Ireland and the ascendancy of an exclusively Protestant ruling class the statue was triumphalist in form and symbolised for

¹⁴⁹ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 52.

¹⁵⁰ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 230.

¹⁵¹ *Irish Independent*, 13 Nov. 1928.

many the oppression and persecution of Catholics and native Irish. The statue was one of three targeted in a coordinated attack on Armistice Day, 1928, the other two being the statue of King George II in St Stephen's Green and the lesser discussed Herbert Park Fountain, dedicated to King Edward VII.¹⁵² The other statues suffered only minimal damage, but the statue of William III was badly damaged and removed in early 1929.

Similarly, the statue of George II had been a target of nationalist attacks throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Erected in 1758, the statue sculpted by the renowned John van Nost the Younger was the first commemorative statue to be erected in St Stephen's Green.¹⁵³ The statue was placed atop a high pedestal and towered over the Green which created a dramatic visual effect and simultaneously provided protection for the statue. The protective pedestal was effective in 1928 as the damage done to the statue was not lasting and George II remained on his plinth until 13 May 1937 when it was destroyed by a bomb planted by the IRA.¹⁵⁴ As with the previous coordinated attack on the monument in 1928 the explosion happened on a notable day, further emphasising the political ideology underscoring these actions. It was the morning after the coronation of King George VII, a day of almost universal celebration throughout the Empire. A bust of the same monarch, also sculpted by John van Nost the Younger, had been on display at Weaver's Hall in Dublin's Coombe area. As a result of the destruction of the larger statue in St Stephen's Green, the director of the company claimed that he was approached by dissidents some time before Armistice Day that year and informed that if he did not remove it, it would be destroyed.¹⁵⁵ He claimed that the explosions at Exchange Court on Armistice Day convinced him of the ability of the IRA to forcibly remove tangible markers of imperialism and so he removed and destroyed the bust himself. The destruction of the bust of George II at Weaver's Hall marks the final statue destroyed or removed from Dublin's urban centre in this period.

¹⁵² *Kerry Reporter*, 17 Nov. 1928.

¹⁵³ *Dublin Penny Journal*, vol. IV, no. 178 (28 Nov 1835).

¹⁵⁴ See various Garda reports in NAI TAOIS/ S 10257.

¹⁵⁵ *Evening Herald*, 25 Feb. 1939.

While these attacks were certainly directed at undermining the ideology of any imperialists or unionists in the Irish Free State, they also served to attack the legitimacy of the Free State government itself. Hanley observes that the anti-Imperial campaign did have popular support and served to give an impression of military prowess and achieved public notoriety for the IRA.¹⁵⁶ However it must be noted that this was not unanimous and some leading figures and community leaders voiced their opposition to the IRA's continued attack on symbols of British imperialism arguing that they were destroying an aspect of Ireland's history, including the then Taoiseach Éamon de Valera in 1938 who argued that to remove any symbols associated with the British regime was undesirable from a historical or artistic point of view.¹⁵⁷ Senior civil servant P.S. O'Hegarty, in a letter to the editor of *The Evening Herald*, declared in 1931 that these statues were trophies left behind by a civilisation that had lost the battle and that 'the hand that touches one of them is the hand of an ignoramus and a vandal'.¹⁵⁸

The monuments that were removed and destroyed in this period were all of British monarchs. At the outbreak of the Second World War the only monarch remaining in a public space was Queen Victoria, towering over the government in Leinster House. The destruction of these monuments, as well as the debates surrounding the removal of those that remained, are exercises in active forgetting practiced by a dissident group with significant popular support for their actions. In doing so, they attempted to curate the narrative of history in the public space and contributed to a more nationalist, Gaelic landscape. In failing to establish a policy on imperial monuments the successive Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil governments failed to recognise the importance of forgetting in forging a common memory that can unite a people. Forgetting in this context needs to be actively managed, but the lack of official policy resulted in the haphazard destruction of British legacies in Ireland. By placing too much emphasis on the active construction of memory in the new Irish state through the erection of monuments and memorials the

¹⁵⁶ Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, p. 75

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 214.

¹⁵⁸ *Evening Herald*, 12 Dec. 1931.

governments failed to control the historical narrative and dissident groups seized the opportunity to shape the Irish monumental landscape.

It must also be noted that these attacks were not limited to the city of Dublin, that although the symbolic power that is wielded by a monument in the urban centre outweighs that of those found in more remote areas reminders of British imperialism were not safe in any public domain of the Irish Free State.¹⁵⁹ While the majority of the removal of remnants of British rule in Ireland were instigated by the IRA, the government was involved in the sale and removal of the statue of King George I in 1937.¹⁶⁰ The monarch was sold to Thomas Bodkin, the previous Director of the National Gallery of Ireland who had left to take up the position as Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Art at the University of Birmingham in 1934. Bodkin had been searching for an appropriate monument to erect outside the institute and personally wrote to W.T. Cosgrave appealing that he intervene in his favour regarding his request for the statue sculpted by renowned sculptor John van Nost the Elder. The survival of the statue of George I can be attributed to his semi-private location in a garden to the rear of the Mansion House; he was neither as accessible nor as offensive as his fellow monarchs. The statue was sold for £500 in September 1937 and the government's involvement in officially becoming involved in the removal of monarchical statues had begun.¹⁶¹

Monuments that remained

Due consideration must also be given to imperial monuments that remained in situ in this period. While the monarchical statues of George I, George II and William III were removed, whether through official means or not, the statues of Queen Victoria, Lord Gough, Prince Albert, Lord Carlisle, Lord Winton, the Wellington Testimonial, and Nelson's Pillar all remained within the urban centre of Dublin during the interwar years. While there were certainly other symbols of imperialism throughout the city many were obscure or less imposing. Not all British iconography could be removed or destroyed, and

¹⁵⁹ For examples see *Belfast Newsletter*, 11 Nov. 1933 and *The Irish Times*, 12 Nov. 1928.

¹⁶⁰ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 194.

¹⁶¹ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*.

the Royal Seal remained in a variety of contexts in the public sphere, featuring on post boxes and public buildings.

Nelson's Pillar was the earliest of these monuments, erected in 1809 to honour Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. The Pillar signified a shift in the monumental landscape of Dublin away from the monarchy and towards military heroes, and later political figures.¹⁶² The Pillar was a prominent feature of the cityscape of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the tower became a tourist attraction from which you could view the city of Dublin. Situated in the centre of the city's main thoroughfare, standing 134ft high, the monument consisted of a pillar complete with a statue of Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, hero of the Battle of Trafalgar, on top.¹⁶³ Erected only four years after Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar the monument was a prominent symbol of British military prowess. A symbol which, many believed, had no place in an independent Irish state. Considerations to remove Nelson's Pillar are recorded as early as 1876 when Dublin Corporation argued that it was a traffic obstruction.¹⁶⁴ Newspaper reports in 1890 and 1925 claimed that the Dublin Corporation had approved to move the pillar to an alternative, less central location.¹⁶⁵ One of the reasons given was that it was an obstruction to modern traffic on the main thoroughfare of Dublin city, but a journalist in the *Belfast Newsletter* wryly observes that the 'real reason' is that the monument is a legacy to British rule.¹⁶⁶ This argument of it causing a traffic obstruction was repeated until its eventual destruction in 1966.¹⁶⁷

The Phoenix Park was a popular location for statues and monuments in the nineteenth century, many of which survived this period of the formation and consolidation of the new Irish states. Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington, was commemorated

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁶³ *Irish Press*, 8 Mar. 1966.

¹⁶⁴ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁵ *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 Nov. 1890; *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Oct. 1925.

¹⁶⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Oct. 1925.

¹⁶⁷ Appeared in various newspaper articles: 'The Proposed Removal of Nelson's Pillar', *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 Nov. 1890, 'The Sackville Street Statues- Remarkable Proposal', *The Irish Times*, 17 Aug. 1922; 'Nelson's Pillar', *The Liberator*, 2 Jun. 1925; 'Call for Removal of Nelson's Pillar', *The Liberator*, 14 Nov. 1931.

in the public space of Dublin in the form of the Wellington Testimonial in the Phoenix Park.¹⁶⁸ At a relative remove from the urban centre of Dublin, approximately five kilometres from where Nelson's Pillar stood, the Testimonial still retained a prominent position within an important public space, sharing the park with the Viceregal Lodge. Wellington, being born in Ireland, was a renowned politician and another British hero of the Napoleonic Wars. Construction on his testimonial began in 1817 but due to trouble with funds was not completed and opened to the public until 1861. It takes the form of an obelisk and is just over 203ft high, which at the time of writing remains the tallest obelisk in Europe. The testimonial dominates the landscape of the park and features plaques cast from cannons captured at Waterloo which celebrate his achievements.¹⁶⁹

In 1880 the Wellington Testimonial was joined in the Phoenix Park by another monument to a celebrated Anglo-Irish soldier, Field-Marshal Lord Hugh Gough.¹⁷⁰ Gough had served under the Duke of Wellington as a young officer in the Napoleonic Wars and went on to hold the office of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in China and India during his career. The statue depicted Gough on his horse in full military dress and, like the Wellington plaques, was cast from iron yielded from canons captured by Gough's troops. His statue was near the Wellington Testimonial, reinforcing the landscape of the park as one associated with an Irish-British military tradition. Gough's statue does not feature strongly in debates in this period, perhaps a result of its relative distance from the urban centre and the fact that Gough, like Wellington, was born on Irish soil and not a member of the British monarchy. Gough remained on his horse until 1957 when an explosion badly damaged the statue, and it was removed from the Phoenix Park.¹⁷¹ The presence of both monuments to Irishmen who achieved fame and success in the British Army in close proximity to one another in the Phoenix Park added to the associations between the space and military tradition. In his detailed study of Dublin, David Dickson

¹⁶⁸ Sometimes called the Wellington Monument, the monument was envisaged as a tribute to a living person when construction began. The Duke of Wellington died before its completion, so it is simultaneously a Testimonial and a Monument.

¹⁶⁹ 'Wellington Monument, Phoenix Park, Chapelizod, Dublin 8', *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage*, accessed on 28 Jan 2021. Accessed at <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/50060116/wellington-monument-phoenix-park-chapelizod-dublin-dublin-city>.

¹⁷⁰ *Nenagh Guardian*, 25 Feb 1880.

¹⁷¹ *Irish Independent*, 23 Jul. 1957.

noted that by the end of the nineteenth century the Phoenix Park had ‘always possessed a strong military flavour’ owing to the buildings in and surrounding it, including the Magazine Fort, the Hibernian Military School, and the Royal Military Infirmary, the training depot for the Royal Irish Constabulary.¹⁷² While not all of those institutions survived the establishment of the Irish Free State, their association with the space perhaps indicates why the Park was chosen as a gathering place for Armistice Day commemorations throughout the interwar period and also why it was suggested as a site for the National War Memorial.

The presence of the monuments to the Duke of Wellington and Lord Gough, in the military space that featured the Viceregal Lodge, had created a space in the city of Dublin within which the Irish experience in the British Army could be expressed and remembered. A monument to a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, George Frederick Howard, seventh Earl of Carlisle, had been erected on 2 May 1870 in the People’s Garden in the Phoenix Park.¹⁷³ The space of the Phoenix Park very much reflected the legacy of the British Empire, and embodied the narrative of Ireland as both colony and coloniser. This space was slower to be contested than that of the more central park of St Stephen’s Green, although from the mid-twentieth century the landscape of the Phoenix Park began to reflect a more nationalist and Catholic identity. A fellow Lord Lieutenant Archibald Montgomerie, Lord Winton the 13th Earl of Eglinton, remained in the more hotly contested St Stephen’s Green during this period, having been erected in 1866.¹⁷⁴ Having survived the first phase of monumental destruction in the interwar period the statue was bombed in August 1958 during the second wave of active forgetting.

The statue of Victoria outside Leinster House, unveiled in 1908 and sculpted by John Hughes, was the only statue of a reigning monarch to survive in the public space. The statue was 24ft high and dominated the front of government buildings.¹⁷⁵ Calls for her removal had come as early as 1922, but her removal was costly and not deemed a priority

¹⁷² Dickson, *Dublin: The Making of A Capital City*, p. 380.

¹⁷³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 3 May 1870.

¹⁷⁴ *The Irish Times*, 24 May 1866.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Commissioners of Public Works to the Department of Finance, 30 Nov. 1937 in NAI OPW9 A25/16/1/37.

for the Free State government.¹⁷⁶ In 1930 Ernest Blythe, Minister of Finance, replied to a query regarding the removal of the monument that ‘it is not thought that its effect on popular taste is so debasing as to necessitate the expenditure of public funds on its removal’.¹⁷⁷ In 1929 the *Irish Times* described the statue as ‘repugnant to national feeling’ and discussed the arguments underway for removing it.¹⁷⁸ Notwithstanding the debates surrounding political ideology (in relation to the symbols of British imperialism being vandalised in this period) and placement of monuments in the vicinity in the late 1920s (in relation to the National War Memorial), there was no action taken to remove the monument until July 1948, a year before the Irish Free State became the Irish Republic.¹⁷⁹ Her removal to storage in 1948 was prompted not by ideological opposition to the symbolism of her presence, but to the practical considerations of additional parking space required on the grounds.

While her presence, already having been established when the Free State was formed, did not prompt immediate removal from the government her incarceration in storage indicates that the government were not inclined to display her in an alternative public space. She remained in storage for almost forty years until in 1987 she was unveiled in Sydney, Australia, having been acquired from the Irish government.¹⁸⁰ While Victoria was removed and sentenced to transportation, her loving husband Prince Albert remained at Leinster House where his statue still stands adjacent to the Cenotaph and facing Merrion Square, the Royal Consort, while slightly obscured by shrubbery, occupying a closer residence near the seat of government than the rejected Irish National War Memorial had ever considered.

Why, then, were the statues of George II and William III constant targets for attack while the Victoria retained her seat? Why were Admiral Nelson, Field-Marshal Gough, and Field-Marshal Wellington permitted to remain in the public sphere while George I was

¹⁷⁶ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, pp. 196-7.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Ceisteanna - Questions. Oral Answers - Queen Victoria Statue - Query Re. Removal Of’, *Dáil Éireann Debate*, vol. 36, No. 10, 11 Dec 1930.

¹⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 10 Aug. 1929.

¹⁷⁹ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 158.

¹⁸⁰ *Irish Press*, 2 Oct. 1986.

ensconced in a semi-private garden, later to be sold from the state? We cannot presume to know for certain, but a number of influential factors may help to explain their survival in this period. A combination of the size of the monuments, the ease at which they could be accessed, and the level of indignation they inspired may have been key to their survival.

A common feature of Nelson's Pillar and the Wellington Testimonial, two monuments that survived in this period, is their sheer scale. Each of them rose above one hundred feet in height, towering over their surrounding landscape. The Wellington Testimonial alone was colossal, measuring over two hundred feet in height.¹⁸¹ Damaging these monuments was no easy task and reports in 1933 note how the Wellington Memorial had withstood being struck by lightning and the granite material, coupled with the design, was making it difficult to carry out repairs.¹⁸² The scale of a monument does not necessarily guarantee its protection, as evidenced with the destruction of the statue of George II in St Stephen's Green, but it does make it more difficult for a would-be vandal. There were numerous attempts to destroy George II before achieving success in 1937.¹⁸³ The statue of Victoria, as well as being located in the ground of Leinster House and therefore afforded greater surveillance than William III or George II, was also large and cumbersome. This was clear by the government's reluctance to spend money on her removal, but perhaps in her case her location was more important than her size.

For those that remained in situ during this period the future was not secure and the majority of monuments that survived the first wave of destruction, which focused on monarchical monuments in the public space, the second wave would prove fatal. The years 1948-1966 would see the removal of many of the lingering symbols of imperialism in Dublin. This second period focused on the perhaps less offensive figures, the less urgent symbols, of British political and military life. The most prominent to survive to the present day is the Wellington Testimonial in the Phoenix Park, a landmark that possesses significant magnitude but lacks personal effigies of the man to whom it is dedicated.

¹⁸¹ *Irish Times*, 13 Jun. 2017.

¹⁸² *Irish Press*, 12 Sep. 1933.

¹⁸³ *Kerry Reporter*, 17 Nov. 1928.

Monuments that never were

Consideration of monuments in this - in any - period often centres around the monuments that were erected and extolled, destroyed and disputed. The monuments that never were, the failures of committees and boards around the country, are testament perhaps to identities and narratives that were not regarded as glorious or as heroic. Their memory remains consigned to notices in newspapers or in private collections, not deemed important enough because of the lack of physical evidence of their endeavour. This research does not focus exclusively on those monuments as much of what we suppose would or would not have been supported, caused controversy, or been debated is conjecture. However, there are traces of monuments that were proposed, and in the case of John Hughes' Gladstone even commissioned and made, that never materialised. These are paradigms of Beiner's theory of social forgetting and offer an example of the more passive form of forgetting that occurs within a society.

A statue of William Gladstone, the Liberal Prime Minister and advocate of Home Rule for Ireland in the late nineteenth century, was commissioned to be erected near the monuments of Wellington, Gough, and Carlisle, in the People's Park in the Phoenix Park. Proposed as one of a series of commemorative statues to be erected in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin the statue was rejected by the nationalist Dublin Corporation in 1898 in favour of a monument to Parnell.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless the statue was commissioned in 1910 and the sculptor John Hughes was given the contract, his lauded statue of Victoria had recently been unveiled outside the Royal Irish Academy buildings at Leinster House. Due to a series of delays owing to the First World War and the 'unsettled' situation in Ireland the statue remained in Hughes' studio in Paris.¹⁸⁵ Soon after the end of the civil war enquiries were made as to when the statue might be sent to Ireland. In March 1924 Lord Crewe, a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, felt that the erection of the statue might 'create difficulties'. Further correspondence reveals a search for a suitable home in Dublin for the monument but ultimately, 'the course of events since Mr. Gladstone's death have so completely altered the situation as to make the placing of a statue to his memory

¹⁸⁴ *Irish Press*, 19 May 1937.

¹⁸⁵ Paula Murphy, 'Modern Ireland in 100 Artworks: 1925 - Monument to William Gladstone, by John Hughes', *Irish Times*, 17 Jan. 2015.

something of an anomaly.’¹⁸⁶ The government deferred any decision on the statue in June 1924 and in April 1925 it was unveiled on the grounds of Gladstone’s estate, Hawarden in Wales.¹⁸⁷ At the unveiling the trustees expressed their hope that if in the future the political situation in Ireland makes it possible to erect the statue in Dublin, ‘it should be released and presented to Ireland as originally intended’.¹⁸⁸ The file on the statue in the National Archives of Ireland simply says ‘Consideration Deferred’.¹⁸⁹

The political situation of Ireland changed so drastically in the twentieth century that the erection of a statue to William Gladstone, a man to some who had ‘saved the tenant farmers of Ireland from the tyranny of landlordism’ but to others was a man ‘who had once been a coercionist’, a reluctant Home Ruler, ‘and who in the end had thrown Parnell over on a non-political issue’, was never a viable (nor, arguably, a desirable) option for the government.¹⁹⁰ There were other, arguably more popular, political figures whose memorials and monuments were proposed but not erected in Dublin. The MP and Nationalist Party leader from Belfast, Joseph Devlin, was a well-respected figure across the island of Ireland. He had been active in politics since being elected in 1902 and for decades represented the nationalist community of West Belfast. After his death in 1934 a Joseph Devlin Memorial Committee was established in Belfast, with a Sub-Committee later established in Dublin, to commemorate the distinguished politician.¹⁹¹ De Valera, President of the Executive, personally subscribed £5 to the appeal, not an insignificant contribution from an individual in 1934, and Seán McEntee, Minister for Finance, acted as the Chairman of the Free State Sub-Committee. Unlike the Countess Markievicz Memorial, de Valera involved himself in this effort while holding the most senior position of leadership in the Free State government. Deputy James Dillon (Ind) noted in the Dáil that there was a concerted effort during the establishment of this Sub-Committee to include men and women from all religious and political persuasions and none, he noted that ‘in

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Lord Crewe to Governor General Timothy Healy, 7 March 1924, NAI TAOIS S/3764.

¹⁸⁷ NAI TAOIS S/3764.

¹⁸⁸ Paula Murphy, ‘Modern Ireland in 100 Artworks: 1925 - Monument to William Gladstone, by John Hughes’, *Irish Times*, 17 Jan 2015.

¹⁸⁹ NAI TAOIS S/3764.

¹⁹⁰ *Irish Independent*, 31 May 1938; *Irish Press*, 19 May 1937.

¹⁹¹ *Irish Examiner*, 12 Dec. 1934 and *Evening Echo*, 8 Apr. 1935.

this purpose there prevailed a unity and an absence of strong political feeling'.¹⁹² In questioning why this attitude could not be adopted for the 1916 memorial due to be unveiled – 'The Death of Cú Chulainn' - Dillon failed to appreciate, or at least acknowledge, the power of the ownership of 1916 and its martyrs. The Devlin memorial in Dublin ultimately took the form of a bronze bust presented to the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery, but there was no commemoration of him or his deeds in the cityscape of the capital.¹⁹³

Conclusion

It is clear that the concern with monuments and their erection, survival, or removal in this period reflects a wider governmental concern about the Irish identity, memory, and historical narrative. Both the Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil governments were aware of the importance of controlling the historical narrative and exerting ownership of memory in consolidating power. Ironically, the importance of controlling the narrative and memory of history has little to do with the past and is more urgent because of how it impacts the future. Memory, particularly the memory of the 1916 Rising, was a powerful force in Irish political life. This is not a phenomenon unique to the governments of the Irish Free State/Éire but is a universal political consideration. Geoffrey Cubitt declares that 'the ability to shape people's understanding of what the nation is and where its interest lies is a crucial level of power in modern societies'. This, alongside the ability to secure credit for particular readings of the national past and to discredit alternative readings, 'is an important aspect of how this power is exercised'.¹⁹⁴ Our readings, then, of monumental memorials and statuary expose contemporary concerns, anxieties, and tensions as well as revealing collective identities and societal priorities.

As with any research on monuments, it must be noted that the actions of the national government in Dublin do not accurately reflect the attitudes and opinions of all the people of Dublin. This can be true for smaller communities as well as cities, and this tension is palpable in the town of Nenagh in this period, which will be explored in Chapter

¹⁹² 'Vote 11 - Public Works and Buildings (Resumed)', *Dáil Éireann Debates*, vol. 55 No. 18, 12 Apr 1935.

¹⁹³ *Irish Press*, 18 Dec. 1935.

¹⁹⁴ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 230.

Four. An aspect of erecting memorials that needs to be recognised in this research is the lack of class diversity amongst the groups who were commemorating in the public sphere. Kirk Savage has noted that ‘public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving: they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent to their erection’.¹⁹⁵ This is evident in the monuments being considered both in urban and rural areas during this period. The nature of these monuments and their funding means that they are erected by people with a disposable income, who have a certain standard of education, and who can utilise their social networks to mobilise support. Monuments that were erected in Dublin in this period were funded either by public subscription, which often featured generous donations from members of the organising committee, or by state funding.¹⁹⁶ The debates over the position of the Queen Victoria statue reveal that the state was not in a position to lavish funds on ideologically important but practically unlucrative projects.¹⁹⁷ These debates further illustrate the magnitude of Cumann na nGaedheal’s commitment to contribute funds of £59,000 towards the Memorial Committee’s £50,000 in order to create a public park and national memorial. A substantial sum for a fledgling government this unprecedented financial contribution was made especially significant by Jenny MacLeod’s assertion that ‘this politically difficult memorial was the only one outside London to benefit from state funding’.¹⁹⁸

This research should not be considered an exhaustive account of monuments erected in Dublin during the interwar years. As with other areas there were communities in Dublin who erected monuments and memorials without the involvement of the national government. The urban centre of Dublin may have been a politically charged space in which the government was anxious to control the historical narrative, but communities both inside and outside the urban centre continued to express their identity through

¹⁹⁵ Kirk Savage, ‘The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument’ in John Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1996), p. 135.

¹⁹⁶ Those that were funded exclusively by public subscription were the Markievicz Bust, the Tom Kettle Bust, the Guillemont, Wytschaete and Salonikan crosses. Memorials that received state funding included the 1916 Cú Chulainn Memorial and the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn (entirely funded by state) and the National War Memorial Gardens (paid for by a combination of public subscription and state funding).

¹⁹⁷ ‘Ceisteanna – Questions. Oral Answers. Queen Victoria Statue – Query re. Removal of’, *Dáil Éireann Debates*, vol. 36, no. 10, 11 Dec. 1930.

¹⁹⁸ Jenny MacLeod, ‘Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 48, no. 4 (Oct 2013), p. 662.

statuary and monuments. The statue of the Irish Volunteer by Leo Broe in Phibsboro erected in February 1939 was a result of cooperation between the memorial committee and Dublin Corporation.¹⁹⁹ The monument, made of Irish limestone, commemorates members of C Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade IRA who died in the Easter Rising and the War of Independence. While asserting their identity in the public sphere, the Sean Flood Memorial Committee (the memorial was originally intended to commemorate Commander Sean Flood, but later changed to include all members of the C Company) confined themselves to commemorating the less contentious events of the revolution, the Easter Rising and the War of Independence. Unlike the North Tipperary Republican Monument, which is discussed in Chapter Four, the conflict of the Civil War was not mentioned. Perhaps this was due to the location of the monument, being in the more politically charged space of the city, or it may have been due to the painful legacies of conflict in the locality and amongst the community. Either way this monument is a reminder that there were physical manifestations of historical identity amongst communities in Dublin that were not coordinated, or endorsed, by national governments.

The debates and controversies, or at times lack thereof, that surrounded the various monuments and memorials reveal the tensions surrounding remembering and forgetting in the public sphere and the influential role that state formation played in determining the monumental landscape in this period. It is these debates and controversies that illuminate this research and while Whelan asserts that landscapes ‘act as a means of articulating discourses and identities’, Beiner’s assertion that ‘memory is not actually stored in these lifeless artefacts’ is pertinent to this analysis.²⁰⁰ The monumental landscape acts as a medium for the articulation of competing identities but the actual remembrance itself, the performance of historical identity, is generated by society’s interactions with the various representations of identity. While O’Higgins spoke on behalf of the Executive Council when he addressed the Dáil to oppose the Merrion Square Scheme in March 1927, he did not represent the personal opinions of each member of the Council. The National War Memorial Committee claimed to have the support of the Minister for Finance, Ernest

¹⁹⁹ *Irish Press*, 20 Feb. 1939.

²⁰⁰ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 24; Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, p. 20.

Blythe, for their scheme in 1924.²⁰¹ Blythe, like Sen William Hickie, may have changed his personal opinion about the scheme in the intervening years since it was adopted and debated in the Dáil, but his support in the early days indicates that some government members were not altogether opposed to incorporating the memory of the First World War into the national narrative.²⁰²

‘History, in other words, is merely officially sanctioned memory’, and however muted these histories may have become their presence in the public sphere is significant.²⁰³ While the exact positioning of the war within the national narrative was contested and uneasy, its presence was less so. The anti-Armistice rallies criticised the imperialist nature of war remembrance, but it must be noted that ‘the IRA denied that religious bigotry or prejudice against ex-servicemen played any role in its objectives’ and that they claimed to be sympathetic to the plight of ex-servicemen.²⁰⁴ Motions of sympathy with the relatives of the Irish war dead were passed at anti-imperialist rallies and by the 1930s Frank Ryan, IRA leader and editor of *An Phoblacht*, was organising alternative Poppy Day commemorations featuring ex-servicemen. Ryan accused the British Legion of ignoring the poverty of ex-servicemen and using them as pawns to promote their ideology every November.²⁰⁵ The magnitude of the First World War could not be ignored. In 2007 John Turpin asserted the memorials to the First World War in the Irish Free State were ‘unwanted reminders of British rule’, but this research has shown that war remembrance in the Free State was done by local communities and the Irish Free State government, the memorials were not legacies of a bygone Empire such as the Fusiliers Arch or the monarchical statues that proliferated the public space of Dublin.²⁰⁶ The allegiances of the thousands of Irishmen who died was at times disputed, but that they should be remembered and honoured was not. While the First World War is sometimes perceived to have been

²⁰¹ *Irish Times*, 1 Apr. 1924.

²⁰² ‘Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution’, *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

²⁰³ McBride, ‘Introduction: Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland’ in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, p. 40.

²⁰⁴ Hanley, *The IRA, 1926-36*, p. 72.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁰⁶ John Turpin, ‘Monumental Commemoration of the Fallen in Ireland, North and South, 1920-60’ in *New Hibernian Review/Irish Éireannach Nua*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Winter 2007), p. 107.

‘forgotten’ by Irish history, this research shows that this was not the case in the early years of the state. Any social forgetting that occurred following this period, particularly after the Second World War, may have partially obscured the place that the war held in public discourse in earlier decades, but the scale of the National War Memorial, while placed outside the urban centre, suggests that it is proportionate to the sense of loss, sacrifice, and tragedy that was felt in this period.

The memory of the Irish revolution was far less contested but faced challenges of its own. While successive governments all engaged with the memory of the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence, to varying extents, the memory of the Civil War remained difficult. It was a dividing force in Irish politics for most of the twentieth century. The deterioration of the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn in this period mirrored the fading of Civil War memory in official memory in the public sphere. Cumann na nGaedheal’s early attempts to shape the memory of the civil war and claim their victory reveal a heightened anxiety around shaping the historical narrative and placing the event in the historical past. As Dolan asserts, civil war challenges notions of collective memory; ‘remembering in common’ is gone.²⁰⁷ She explores the memory of a war that she claims has been assumed, distorted, misunderstood, manipulated, underestimated, but, most of all, ignored.²⁰⁸ State formation generally erases narratives of violence that the state is built on, but memories continue to exist privately.²⁰⁹ Recent research by Síobhra Aiken has brought some private remembrances, in the forms of memoir or biography veiled by fiction or written in the Irish language, to the fore. Her research clearly proves that the memory was certainly there, but she suggests that ‘if the code of silence erected around the Irish Civil War is socially constructed, we might also address how researchers, past and present, have been implicated in its making and its preservation’.²¹⁰ These private, muted recollections are

²⁰⁷ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, p. 446.

²¹⁰ Síobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony and the Civil War* (Dublin, 2022), p. 241.

part of the phenomenon of social forgetting that Beiner explores in relation to the 1798 Rebellion in Ulster, but do not feature in this research.²¹¹

Ultimately, the perpetuation of nationalist identity in the public sphere through monuments and statuary was a narrative endorsed and supported by both governments in this period. The particular memories, especially those of the civil war, were more contested but the identity itself was upheld. It is important to note that the nationalist identity that was perpetuated did not incorporate the more radical republican identities that were present in society and politics. Fianna Fáil's success in the 1932 general election brought about an adjustment in the type of nationalist identity that was endorsed, slightly more radical and anti-imperialist, but republican identities were most effectively expressed through the destruction of imperialist monuments in the public sphere. Both governments failed to effectively deal with contentious, imperialist monuments and republicans monopolised on their hesitation and effectively promoted their Irish identity in the public sphere. Fianna Fáil's approach to monuments and statuary in this period reveals a more confident Irish identity, one that was not threatened by the narrative of the First World War. Perhaps they benefited from a greater distance between their government and the formation of the Irish state, but the anxieties that are evident in the actions of the Cumann na nGaedheal government in the early 1920s are not present.

‘Whatever the perceived nature of the national community, and however strong the emphasis on its supposedly immutable character, representations of its past are always forged in tension with possible alternative conceptions’.²¹² These tensions, and the space in which they were forged, remembered, or forgotten, reveal a crisis of national identity in the interwar, state formation period. The place of Irish involvement in the First World War, the atrocities of the Civil War and the claims laid to the fallen heroes of 1916 all indicate that successive governments were conscious of their role in forging a new Irish national identity - one which emerged as Gaelic, Catholic and nationalist - and were anxious to exert their influence over it. They were conscious that ‘it is in the representations of a nation's past that people find the markers of its present identity and

²¹¹ Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, p. 27.

²¹² Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 201.

future’, and this knowledge ensured that governments maintained a keen interest in the curation of history in the public sphere in this period.²¹³

²¹³ Ibid., p. 175.

Chapter Two: State-supported monuments in Belfast, 1920-38.

Introduction

Unlike the other urban centre under review in this research, the city of Belfast was a relatively new creation at partition and the birth of the Northern Irish state. The town experienced huge growth in the eighteenth century and in 1888 it was granted official city status by Queen Victoria. The city was a world leader in linen manufacturing and shipbuilding, as well as being home to the world's largest tobacco factory. Belfast, as an industrial hub, was a prosperous and busy city. While it could not compete with Dublin in terms of history and heritage, it quickly established itself as Ireland's biggest city and began to establish its own unique history and cityscape.¹ After only thirty-two years enjoying city status, Belfast became the capital city of the newly established state of Northern Ireland following the Government of Ireland Act, 1920.

Belfast in 1920 was in a very different position to Dublin, not just in terms of size, history or industry, but in terms of the role it played in the imagined community of the newly established Northern Ireland. Since the Third Home Rule Bill Crisis of 1912, and arguably before, the unionist community had cultivated an image of Ulster as a province that had always been distinct and separate from the rest of the island of Ireland.² The six counties that were separated from the rest of the island during partition only constituted two-thirds of the province, and so the adaptation of this Ulster identity into one of Northern Ireland, with Belfast at its heart, began.

The narrative of a distinct and separate nation, one that had been cultivated and advocated amongst the unionist community for generations, and the promotion of a distinctly Northern Irish identity throughout the six counties began. There were, however,

¹ For histories of Belfast, see; Brian Barton, 'Northern Ireland, 1920-25' in JR Hills (ed.), *A New History of Ireland VII: Ireland 1921-84*, (Oxford, 2003); Susannah Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39' in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4, 1880 to the Present*, (Cambridge, 2020).

² Brian Walker, *Irish History Matters: Politics, Identity and Commemoration* (Dublin, 2019), pp. 103-18.

a number of more pressing issues for the newly formed Northern Irish government in 1920, not least the devolution of power, the establishment of a civil service system, and threats to the security of the state from within and without. Ulster unionists had, since the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1912, emphasised their willingness to oppose Home Rule within a united Ireland through any means necessary. But in order to create the myth of a province that was always apart, always distinctly separate from the other three, history needed to be rewritten. That new history featured in the speech given by King George V at the opening ceremony of the parliament of Northern Ireland in June 1921. In that speech he expressed his hopes for a peaceful future for Ireland, both north and south, and referred to that day as ‘a great and critical occasion in the history of the Six Counties’.³ The epitome of the rewriting of Ulster’s history as an entity with a distinctly different people and story than the rest of Ireland was realised in 1936 with the publication of Cyril Falls’ *The Birth of Ulster*.⁴ In his publication Falls identified the plantation and colonisation of Ulster as its birth, ignoring the ancient Gaelic cúige of Ulaidh and the native Irish who inhabited it. The Irish were mentioned, namely the O’Neills, O’Donnells, and Maguires who dominated the political landscape, but only in terms of those who rebelled against the new settlers.⁵ The credit for the formation of the province, posited as the precursor to the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland, was awarded solely to the planters. Falls does note that the narrative of Ulster’s history was dominated by the feats of King William of Orange rather than the colonists or the 1641 Rebellion, and this publication could be perceived as one which was attempting to correct the collective forgetting, wilful or not, of the history of Ulster.

Guy Beiner explores this when considering the newly formed Northern Irish government in his seminal work *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* when he states that ‘practically all governments aspire to utilize collective memory as a tool for cementing hegemony’.⁶ This

³ Marie Coleman, ‘King’s speech appealed to “all Irishmen... to forgive and forget”’, *Irish Times*, 25 May 2021. Accessed on 30 Apr 2022 at <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/king-s-speech-appealed-to-all-irishmen-to-forgive-and-forget-1.4558495>.

⁴ Cyril Falls, *The Birth of Ulster* (London, 1936).

⁵ Falls, *The Birth of Ulster*, pp. viii-ix.

⁶ Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and a Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford, 2018), p. 444.

act, practiced around the world, becomes problematic when the issue of partition features. Partition, he argues, complicates matters because ‘it introduces separate, mutually exclusive, memorial rituals into what had formerly been a unified space’, unified politically if not ideologically.⁷ There is a particular anxiety amongst regimes with sizeable minorities in their midst. Partition, then, becomes a framework for social forgetting. This partition enables social forgetting by impacting on the histories written and stories told, evident in histories written of Ireland since partition such as J.J. Lee’s *Ireland 1912-1985*.⁸ In the case of Northern Ireland partition existed for a short time before being legislated for, with Cormac Moore identifying the first suggestion of partition being made during the First Home Rule Bill Crisis in 1886 by Joseph Chamberlain, Liberal MP.⁹ This meant that only select narratives could be used for the state as three of the nine counties of Ulster remained in the Irish Free State. And so, the more recent history of militant opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill and the decimation of the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Battle of the Somme were adopted as foundation myths for the state. There were efforts, particularly from the minority nationalist community, to incorporate wider histories into the narrative of Northern Ireland, such as the history of the United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion, but these histories do not feature in the official historical narrative (that promoted or endorsed by the national government) in the period under review.¹⁰

These narratives are crucial to understanding the history of the island of Ireland and its present condition. Brian Walker explores these narratives in his research on Irish identity. As discussed in the introduction, he argues that these narratives are created from selective versions of history and endow the past with a crucial role in identity creation amongst communities.¹¹ They can often give selective and incomplete versions of history to communities, which can negatively impact relations in the present day.¹² Identifying the

⁷ Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*.

⁸ As discussed in the introduction, historians writing Irish history in the twentieth century tended to be influenced by partition and there was a significant gap in all-island history until research published by David Fitzpatrick (1998) and Diarmaid Ferriter (2005).

⁹ Cormac Moore, *Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019), 7.

¹⁰ See NI Parliamentary Debates, vol. 7 (1927), 1363 & 1472.

¹¹ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 20.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

collective amnesia that Beiner focuses on, Walker notes that for many Protestants in the unionist community, their narrative perpetuates an identity as a constantly besieged people, defending against the common enemy of the Catholic nationalist, but it ignores periods and events when Protestants were divided amongst themselves or when they cooperated with Catholics or nationalists, for example during the 1798 Rebellion.¹³ Divisions amongst the Protestant, unionist community were an urgent concern for the Prime Minister James Craig, who feared that a division of the community would result in weakening support for the Ulster Unionist Party.¹⁴ The concerted effort to forget the periods in history when members of both communities were united against an enemy composed of members of various religious and political communities resulted in the polarisation of identity groups. The Protestant unionists created a narrative of a community eternally united under attack from the Catholic nationalists while the Catholic, nationalist's collective memory of history centred around the idea of a heroic Irish people who suffered invasion and conquest but always survived. As with the Protestant and unionist narrative, this account leaves out divisions amongst Catholic nationalists themselves, and times when they were aligned with Protestants such as during the First World War. Walker discusses how dispelling the myths in community narrative can lead to better cross-community knowledge and empathy in Northern Ireland, and across the island as a whole.¹⁵ The work of Alan McCully and Keith Barton also advocates the pursuit of a cross-community, multiperspective approach to history to promote empathy, based on their research with students in Northern Ireland. They found that students identified stronger with their community history after three years of formal education and contributed to the perpetuation of societal divisions through the narratives being passed to them.¹⁶ These narratives, while having roots long before 1921, were solidified for both communities during the interwar period.

¹³ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 22.

¹⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2005), p. 442.

¹⁵ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, pp. 24-5.

¹⁶ Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives' in *Theory & Research in Social Education*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2012).

There are a number of themes in commemorative events and the raising of monuments in Northern Ireland during this period, namely the proliferation of monuments relating to the First World War and the promotion of Northern Ireland's unionist identity. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it must be noted in any discussion relating to monuments and their erection in this period that they are not reflective of the community at large. Often, they are not erected to reflect consensus and mutual agreement but rather to reaffirm the supremacy of one group or another within the public space.¹⁷ This is true of any society, but especially so in Northern Ireland where the Special Powers (Civil Authorities) Act, first introduced in 1922 and which remained in legislation until 1972, specifically prevented the nationalist community from erecting monuments in public spaces and hosting public commemorative events.¹⁸ The Act was first introduced as a means to re-establish order in the province following the violent upheaval experienced after partition, but the statute continued to be employed even after the threat of political violence dissipated. The Act initially took the form of curfews, internments, road closures, etc., but as society settled into relative peace the Act's aim shifted from preventing violent disorder to preventing the public expression of republican ideals.¹⁹ This shift in attitude towards the Act began in the late 1920s and by July 1931 regulation 8A introduced under this act specifically prohibited the erection of monuments considered 'sympathetic to the aims of a proscribed organisation'.²⁰ However, the failure of the Northern Irish government to distinguish between republicanism and nationalism amongst their own constituents denied the entire minority community the opportunity to express their collective memory through statuary, amongst other things. The Special Powers (Civil Authorities) Act was to have lasting implications on the people of Northern Ireland and has been attributed as one of the main contributors to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.²¹

¹⁷ Cecile Sachs Olsen, "Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art" in *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 43, no. 6 (Dec 2019), pp. 985-1000.

¹⁸ Laura K. Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1998), 1089-1120.

¹⁹ Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland', p. 1093.

²⁰ PRONI SRO 85/1931, 25 July 1931.

²¹ Laura K. Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72', 1115.

As such, this denial of opportunities for public expression of the nationalist community will be borne in mind throughout this analysis.

The promotion of an Ulster identity, the unionist struggle and the memory of the First World War features heavily across monuments erected in this period. Gillian McIntosh, in her analysis of cultural heritage and commemoration in Northern Ireland, identifies clear differentiations between the two decades that were the interwar period. She associates the 1920s with the ‘foundational histories’, which included the First World War and specifically the Battle of the Somme, to legitimise the newly-founded state and the 1930s with the ‘monumental histories’ which celebrated the state’s founding father, Edward Carson, to endorse the actions of unionists in the present and encourage unity in a time of economic, and at times political, crisis.²² Nuala C. Johnson notes that while the geography of remembrance of the First World War caused controversy in the Irish Free State, in Northern Ireland it was far more straightforward.²³ There were even instances of inclusive rituals of remembrance in the public space, as we shall see below. Ultimately, as McIntosh has noted, the diversity of Northern Ireland was intensely problematic for unionists ‘who were promoting an image of the state and its people as a homogenous unit’.²⁴ While Northern Ireland featured a sizeable Catholic minority in this period, much of the scholarship exploring commemoration and memory focuses on the Protestant, unionist response and discussion and analysis is often framed in terms of a political divide.²⁵ This chapter will, while acknowledging the difficulties experienced by the minority to commemorate in the public sphere, seek to explore how the government used (or sought to use) the public space in Belfast in order to platform their memories, histories and identities through stone.

The politics of space in Northern Ireland have changed considerably since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the end of the Troubles. Initiatives such as the

²² Gillian McIntosh, *The Force of Culture* (Cork, 1999), p. 1.

²³ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War, and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 105.

²⁴ McIntosh, *The Force of Culture*, p. 3.

²⁵ Catherine Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918* (Dublin, 2007).

Peace Bridge in Derry, the Memorial Garden and Obelisk in Omagh and the Beacon of Hope in Belfast have not only altered the landscape of Northern Ireland, but have also engaged with the various stakeholders and communities in their conception, commissioning and creation.²⁶ However, as argued by Fran Tonkiss, Cecile Sachs-Olsen, Yvonne Whelan, and others, public space and the question of who asserts dominance in that public space has always been political.²⁷ Cecile Sachs-Olsen observed that creations in an urban space don't necessarily exist primarily to create communal agreement.²⁸ These monuments or statues could be erected to reaffirm the supremacy of one community in a divided society and to belittle, intimidate, or erase the identity of other communities present. An expression of a group identity in a prominent public space can serve either to reaffirm the collective subscription to that identity or as a physical affirmation of supremacy to undermine the validity of other collective identity narratives present. The public space can act as a means of articulating identities and debates. Yvonne Whelan argues that 'the sense of a shared heritage of glorious triumphs and of common suffering is essential in order to maintain communal solidarity and solidify national identity'.²⁹ In the period under consideration the public space was dominated by the unionist, Protestant group identity but this is not to say that other collective identities did not exist. The narrative of a loyal Ulster was perpetuated by the government and other narratives were not permitted to exist in the public sphere. This emphasises the deep anxieties that the Northern Irish government had about the continued existence and legitimacy of their state. Joanne Willett argues that 'to imagine the story of a place as only one story is to deny the multiplicity of competing, contrasting, or complementary stories which are also told in any given context'.³⁰ She continues by defining a singular narrative as 'merely a story which

²⁶ See Nuala C. Johnson, 'The Contours of Memory in Post-Conflict Societies: Enacting Public Remembrance of the Bomb in Omagh, Northern Ireland' in *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2012), pp. 237-258.

²⁷ See Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms* (Cambridge, 2015); Cecile Sachs Olsen, 'Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art', pp. 985-1000; Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, iconography and the politics of identity* (Dublin, 2003).

²⁸ Cecile Sachs-Olsen, 'Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art', 985-1000.

²⁹ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 16.

³⁰ Joanne Willett, 'Culture, Heritage, and the Politics of Becoming' in Angela M. Labrador and Neil Silberman (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Public Heritage Theory and Practice* (London, 2018), 79-92.

has gained dominance', and it is in this period that the narratives of Northern Ireland promoted by the government in the space of the capital city will be considered.³¹

1921

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 partitioned the island into two separate political entities and came into effect on 3 May 1921. The first election in the state took place on 24 May 1921 and it was a triumph for the Ulster Unionist Party which solidified Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom. The Northern Ireland Parliament was officially opened by King George V and Queen Mary on their visit to Belfast in June 1921. The creation of Northern Ireland took place during a particularly unstable period in Irish history in an atmosphere of war, sectarian hatred, and boycotts.³² The years 1920 to 1922 saw some of the most brutal sectarian violence in this period, particularly in Belfast, and there were an estimated 428 people killed and 1,766 people injured in sectarian violence in Northern Ireland alone between June 1920 and June 1922.³³ In these first years of Northern Ireland Catholics suffered disproportionately as approximately two thirds of those who died in the violence were Catholic and an estimated 50,000 left the six counties of Northern Ireland to settle elsewhere.³⁴ In this context, it is little wonder that monuments, commemoration and memory became contested and divisive as each group or community vied to stake their claim on the public space.

The six counties of Northern Ireland occupied uneasy territory in the politics of the United Kingdom. While the later establishment of the Irish Free State defined, or at least sought to assert, the political status of the region in its title, the political status of Northern Ireland was less clear-cut. In Richard English's exploration of the state and Northern Ireland he asserts that in the interwar period the partitioned six counties satisfy neither the Marxist, Weberian, or Hobbesian definition of the state.³⁵ Some historians have referred to

³¹ Joanne Willett, 'Culture, Heritage, and the Politics of Becoming', p. 82.

³² Charles Townshend, *The Partition: Ireland Divided, 1885-1925*, Penguin Books, London (2021).

³³ Barton, 'Northern Ireland 1920-25', p. 183.

³⁴ Moore, *The Birth of the Border*, p. 84.

³⁵ Richard English, 'The State and Northern Ireland' in Richard English and Charles Townshend (eds.), *The State: Historical and Political Dimensions* (Abingdon, 1999), pp. 96-101.

the region as a state, and further discussion of this argument can be found in the introduction to this research.³⁶ The powers awarded to both the governments of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State at their creation were comparable but in the case of Northern Ireland it can be argued that, unlike the Irish Free State, the government cultivated and promoted their relationship with Great Britain rather than their sovereignty. By the end of this period, following the ratification of Bunreacht na hÉireann in 1937 and the decision to remain neutral during the Second World War in 1939, it can certainly be said that the Irish Free State government exercised greater autonomy over their affairs than their counterparts in Northern Ireland.

While the focus of this research is government-supported or sanctioned monuments in the public space of Belfast city, the erection of the Ulster Tower at Thiepval was a notable event in this period that cannot, in any discussion of monuments in this period, be ignored. It will not feature as a main case study, but to overlook its erection and the public support that surrounded it would be to neglect an incredibly important and historic event in the context of monuments and communities in this period. Unveiled and dedicated on 19 November 1921, the Ulster Tower at Thiepval was the first permanent monument to the fallen of the war to be erected on the battlefields of the First World War. Standing at 70 feet high and made of white stone in the midst of what were still mostly intact German trenches at that time, the *Irish Times* correspondent described it as commanding the attention of the whole countryside.³⁷ The monument itself was funded by public subscription as the state and government had not yet been legislated for, but the support from community leaders who would go on to be the state government is clear in their representation at the ceremony, and in the organisation of the monument. The *Ballymena Observer* credits Lord Edward Carson as being ‘the originator of the memorial’ while notices of meetings for subscribers during the planning of a memorial advertise that Sir James Craig, later to be Premier of Northern Ireland, would preside.³⁸

³⁶ See Thomas Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996* (London, 1997); James Loughlin, *Ulster Unionism and British National Identity Since 1885* (London, 1995); Richard English and Charles Townshend (eds.), *The State: Historical and Political Dimensions*.

³⁷ *Irish Times*, 21 Nov. 1921.

³⁸ *Ballymena Observer*, 25 Nov. 1921; *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Nov. 1919.

Carson and Craig were unable to attend due to ill health, an unfortunate circumstance that one article laments as the journalist reflects that ‘the presence of the trusted Ulster leader of the past and the equally trusted Ulster leader of the present would have represented, so to speak, the genius and spirit of Ulster’.³⁹ Lady Craig was in attendance without her husband, and Carson had written a letter to be read aloud during the ceremony praising the bravery of the men of Ulster and expressing hope that future generations will follow the example of those who were being commemorated.⁴⁰ In the absence of the two most significant Ulster unionists the unveiling and dedication ceremony was shared between Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of Imperial General Staff and Colonel of the Royal Ulster Rifles, General Weygand, Marshal Foch’s Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Allen, MP, and the heads of the three Ulster Protestant churches.⁴¹

The monument, from inception to unveiling, was explicitly intended to commemorate the dead of the 36th (Ulster) Division, to whom the Battle of the Somme held a tragic significance. The decision to devote this memorial to a single division was not without its critics, as expressed by many including Emily McKisack in a letter to the editor of the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1918 as she appeals for the monument to be for all Ulster men to include both those who died in other divisions and the doctors, sailors and airmen who also gave their lives.⁴² The singularity of the monument was also lamented by the *Irish Times* correspondent who wrote of the ‘added melancholy’ felt by the people from the south of Ireland at the unveiling ceremony at Thiepval on 19 November 1921, who observed that ‘It was Ulster’s Day, and hers alone. Yet we could not but think of Messines and Wytschaete, where Irishmen from every town in the country fought side by side’.⁴³ This clear division between who was commemorated and who was not is another example of exclusion. Through the mobilisation of the war dead and clearly marking

³⁹ *Portadown News*, 26 Nov. 1921; *Ballymena Observer*, 25 Nov. 1921.

⁴⁰ *Portadown News*, 26 Nov. 1921.

⁴¹ *Ballymena Observer*, 25 Nov. 1921.

⁴² *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 Dec. 1918.

⁴³ *Irish Times*, 21 Nov. 1921.

Ulster as distinct from the rest of Ireland unionists successfully perpetuated their main argument for partition - that Ulster always had been separate and different.

The Thiepval monument has been referred to by Catherine Switzer as Northern Ireland's national monument.⁴⁴ In her research on public war memorials she asserts that the Stormont government were not involved in the erection of any memorial to the fallen of the First World War but her research failed to take into account the public support given by political leaders to this project, and to consider that during the stages of planning and fundraising for this memorial that the parliament of Northern Ireland did not yet exist. The nonexistence of a parliament prevented political leaders from allocating public funds to the scheme, but the enthusiasm with which they subscribed and organised this effort is testament to their support and involvement. Politicians, as seen throughout this thesis, certainly have the capacity to act as individuals in commemorative projects and to use the past for their own personal gain, but the wide level of public support given by the future political leaders of the state to this memorial project warrants its inclusion in the discussion of the wider context in which monuments in Northern Ireland develop in the state-formation years. The Ulster Tower at Thiepval occupies an uneasy space within discussions of national monuments in this period. The speed at which the Ulster Tower, like the Cenotaph at Leinster Lawn, was funded and erected is both a testament to the depth of emotions experienced by those who lived through the event and to the power of historical narratives to consolidating identities in the public space through monuments.

1922-32

The state of Northern Ireland was born in what Cormac Moore describes as an atmosphere of war, sectarian hatred and boycotts in which the Catholic population suffered disproportionately.⁴⁵ The new state had potential for reconciliation, especially with Prime Minister Sir James Craig's declaration in February 1921 that 'the rights of the minority must be sacred to the majority', and his refusal in 1922 to make the 12 July a public holiday.⁴⁶ But the effects of years of polarisation, violent upheaval, and division had left its

⁴⁴ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918*, p. 151.

⁴⁵ Moore, *Birth of the Border*, p. 37.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Moore, *Birth of the Border*, p. 61; NI House of Commons Debates, Vol 2., 15 Jul. 1922.

mark on society and between June 1920 and July 1922 there were 557 people killed in Northern Ireland due to communal violence. Although Catholics made up a quarter of Belfast's population they accounted for 61% of these deaths in the city in this two-year period.⁴⁷ The violence often featured aspects of sectarianism, and as well as those who were killed in this period there were approximately 1,766 people injured.⁴⁸ Historians of the period estimate that in this short period between 8,700-11,000 Belfast Catholics were driven out of their jobs and approximately 23,000 forced from their homes.⁴⁹ Edward Carson denied that these incidents of violence were sectarian and argued instead that it was targeted at disloyal Sinn Féiners, but Major Hugh O'Neill, MP, acknowledged that many ordinary loyalists saw Catholics, nationalists and Sinn Féin as one and the same.⁵⁰ The early potential of the state was quashed by the combination of the establishment of the Ulster Special Constabulary Force in 1920 (and its almost exclusively Protestant membership), the introduction and retention of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act from 1922 throughout this period, and the failed opportunity of Lord Londonderry's 1923 Education Act which aimed to establish non-denominational education. These developments, alongside what Susannah Riordan identifies as the failure of the Northern Irish government to rise above an amateurish and localist approach to politics to develop a degree of statesmanship or civic responsibility, contributed to a society and state that became increasingly divided and hostile as the decade progressed.⁵¹

Both the state of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State were heavily influenced by the other. Developments in each one reverberated across the island. As we have seen in discussions of Dublin during this period there were significant political, economic, and cultural developments that impacted on the commemorative practices. The effects of these developments can be seen, both directly and indirectly, in the attitudes, practices, and policies of the Northern Irish government. While events such as the Great Depression and the rise of unemployment clearly had a significant impact on the Northern Irish state, as

⁴⁷ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920-1996*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Barton, 'Northern Ireland, 1920-25', p. 183.

⁴⁹ Figures quoted by both Barton, 'Northern Ireland, 1920-25', p. 185, and Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920-1996*, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920-1996*, p. 12.

⁵¹ Riordan, 'Politics, Economy, Society: Northern Ireland 1920-1939', p. 315.

already discussed in this chapter, other events such as the centenary of Catholic Emancipation in 1929, the success of Fianna Fáil in the 1932 general election, and the hosting of the 31st International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932 also served to deepen societal divisions in Northern Ireland and contributed to evolution of hardened attitudes and continued discrimination against the minority throughout the inter-war years. Perhaps the most influential development in these years for communities across the island of Ireland was the creation of the Boundary Commission in November 1924, and subsequent solidification of the already existing border in 1925.⁵² Before the decision of the Boundary Commission, there was a very real hope amongst the Catholic, nationalist community that areas in which they were in the majority might become part of the Irish Free State, and a very real fear amongst Protestant unionists that any redrawing of boundaries might make Northern Ireland too small to be economically viable.

Debate and discussion around the erection of a suitable memorial to commemorate those killed in the First World War in the new capital city of Belfast had been under consideration ‘for some time’ already by March 1922, according to Robert Boyd, Secretary of the Ulster Ex-Servicemen’s Association. Belfast city, he opined, had been ‘very lax’ in putting a memorial scheme into action. As evidenced by the lime tree scheme in Limavady in January 1918 (which will be discussed in the following chapter), and other initiatives such as the memorial park in Ballymena fenced off as early as April 1917, communities were engaging in prememory and shaping the narrative of war commemoration before the war was over.⁵³ After the end of the war local memorials began to be planned and erected around the six counties that later became Northern Ireland, but the erection of a monument to commemorate the collective fallen on a larger scale, on home soil, was one which required more debate, discussion, a relatively settled atmosphere, and most importantly a united public body to financially support it.

One particular debate that was not unique to Belfast or Northern Ireland was what the most appropriate form for a memorial to the fallen would be - utilitarian or monumental. This is a debate that was being had across the Empire as evidenced by

⁵² Moore, *The Birth of the Border*, pp. 80-1.

⁵³ *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 March 1922.

Catherine Switzer, Jay Winter, and Nuala C. Johnson.⁵⁴ The function of a monument or memorial is to enshrine the memory of the people or event being commemorated for posterity, however the tension between glorifying the dead and ignoring the very real, and often harsh, living conditions that their families and comrades lived in was tangible. This was especially so as the impact of the economic downturn of the 1930s took hold of society. Letters to the editor throughout the 1920s implored people to consider the living, arguing that they had honoured the dead through the erection of the Ulster Tower at Thiepval so ‘would it not be as worthy to honour those who fought with equal bravery, and whose good hap it was to survive?’.⁵⁵ Another was sure that the dead ‘would be better pleased to see that something was being done for the dear ones they left behind rather than erecting a monument of stone’ which would lay claim to their opinions and wishes to influence the present.⁵⁶ Switzer considers this debate in her analysis of war memorials in the north of Ireland and notes that while these arguments were common in other countries erecting memorials in the post-war years, ‘Ireland had another ingredient to add to the mix: the sectarian nature of its politics’.⁵⁷ It is clear from her research on public monuments in the six counties of Northern Ireland and their forms that the vast majority of memorials

⁵⁴ See Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918*, pp. 58-9; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2014); Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*.

⁵⁵ *Northern Whig*, 3 Sep. 1923.

⁵⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 26 Feb. 1924.

⁵⁷ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918*, p. 70.

took monumental forms, in that they had no practical purpose.⁵⁸ The debate over utilitarian or monumental memorials, for the time being, had been won.

The most central, and significant, monumental memorial in the city of Belfast was erected on the grounds of Belfast City Hall in this period. It takes the form of a cenotaph, but unlike the Cenotaph in Dublin it occupies an open, central space on the grounds of the seat of the local city authority – Belfast Corporation. The War Memorial Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall was unveiled on 11 November 1929 by Viscount Allenby to a large



Photograph 2: The Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall, photograph taken in 2021.



crowd of members of the public and invited guests.⁵⁹ The Cenotaph itself was only part of the proposed memorial scheme which also comprised a Garden of Remembrance in which the monument was situated, on the western side of Belfast City Hall. The monument itself is thirty feet

high, set in a central position in the sunken Garden of Remembrance, and made entirely of Portland stone. It is surrounded by an arc of paired Corinthian columns which form a twenty-five-foot-high

colonnade. The inscription assertively commemorates ‘the heroic sons who made the supreme sacrifice’ in the war.⁶⁰ While it was erected relatively quickly in comparison to

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Nov. 1929.

⁶⁰ Inscription on Belfast War Cenotaph.

the National War Memorial Garden at Islandbridge it seems that there were still delays frustrating eager members of the public, with the *Northern Whig* describing the debacle as ‘the most barefaced and scandalous piece of dilly-dallying that has ever taken place in the history of the Corporation’.⁶¹ Switzer notes that a clear desire for a geographical focus for commemorations was evident even in places where memorials remained absent, and it is notable that from 1921 onwards a temporary memorial was erected annually on the grounds of City Hall for Armistice and Remembrance Days.⁶² The public, eager to commemorate the fallen, were engaging in their own commemorative practice. In much the same way as crowds gathered in College Green in Dublin and erected the temporary Guillemont Cross to commemorate the dead, the public in Belfast attempted to predetermine the site of the monument to their grief. Unlike in Dublin, where the ceremony moved from College Green to the Phoenix Park and eventually to Islandbridge, the local authorities in Belfast facilitated the public gathering and, in doing so, acknowledged the importance of the memory of the war to the larger collective identity and reinforced the war’s position in the narrative of the city’s history.

While the debate raged in the public sphere and the memorial edged closer to completion, there was one crucial aspect about the funding and public support for this memorial that needs to be acknowledged. The Belfast War Cenotaph was funded exclusively through public subscription and supported by Belfast Corporation in the form of the granting of land and hosting of the unveiling ceremony. Unlike the National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, where the Free State government’s involvement in the procurement of the site, their influence on the location and form of the memorial, and their financial contribution to the construction works and laying out of Islandbridge clearly involved them with the monument in a very public way, the Stormont administration were not involved in an official capacity in the commission, funding, or erection of the Belfast War Cenotaph. It is clear, from the involvement of members of the Unionist Party in the Ulster Tower monument through subscriptions that the majority of the MPs would have offered their moral support to the monument. That same important support and public encouragement which was requested of the Nenagh Urban Council by the Nenagh Great

⁶¹ *Northern Whig*, 17 Aug 1926.

⁶² Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918*, p. 103.

War Memorial Committee, a support that could have been granted *in gratis* by local authorities. However, their overall lack of direct influence is striking in comparison to the government of the Irish Free State.⁶³

One of the reasons for the lack of governmental involvement on a national level might be related to a crucial aspect of the Belfast War Cenotaph. It is not, nor does it claim to be, a 'national' memorial for the fallen of Northern Ireland as a whole. It may have been a focal point for commemorative events in the capital city of Belfast, but it remains a memorial to the fallen of Belfast, and not of the other cities, towns, or localities of Northern Ireland. While it might be argued that in the Ulster Tower at Thiepval, Northern Ireland already had her monument to the fallen of the First World War, it remains that the government at Stormont neglected to utilise this opportunity to reaffirm the existence of this, at times precarious, new state.

In 1924 another monument was erected on semi-public space, on the grounds of Queen's University, Belfast, to those staff and students who had died in the service of the British Army during the First World War. Unveiled by the Duke and Duchess of York on their royal visit to Northern Ireland, the unveiling of the monument was one of a number of scheduled events in the city on 21 July 1924.⁶⁴ The monument itself was paid for by subscriptions from students and alumni, which only came to a 'disappointing' total of £650 in November 1920, approximately £2,000 less than the amount required to erect the statue that was proposed.⁶⁵ The final form of the monument, designed by Sir Thomas Brock and executed by Arnold Wright, represents Sacrifice and it consists of a figure of winged Victory supporting a wounded youth and holding aloft a laurel crown. At the foot of the figure is a German shield lying on a helmet to represent the defeated foe. The monument is 24 feet high and consists of a bronze figure atop a granite pedestal.⁶⁶ The inscription is intended to remind readers of the sacrifice that had been made, acting as 'a perpetual example of self-sacrifice and loyal service'. The inscription is clearly influenced by the

⁶³ See further discussion on the moral support requested, and refused, in Chapter Three.

⁶⁴ *Belfast Newsletter*, 22 Jul. 1924.

⁶⁵ *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Nov. 1920.

⁶⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 22 Jul. 1924.

Rev. Dr Hamilton, member of the Queen's Services Club who fundraised for the monument and also Vice-Chancellor of the University until 1923, who wrote that 'it is a sacred duty to keep fresh and living the glorious memories of the time which brought such fame to the University through the devotion and bravery of so large a body of its sons'.⁶⁷ There is no hint here of personal grief or regret over senseless loss of life, only pride in the sacrifices made by the staff and students of the University, whose 253 names were inscribed on the monument itself to ensure that their names liveth forevermore.

While not a public monument funded or organised by the Northern Irish government, the unveiling of the Queen's University Belfast monument was notable for the involvement of the Duke of York, later King George VI, who later that day laid the foundation stone for the Northern Ireland parliament buildings at Stormont.⁶⁸ A member of the royal family, the monarchy that represented the critical Union that unionists defined their politics by, unveiling and supporting this memorial on the same day as officially opening the new parliament buildings suggests official endorsement of the sentiments of the monument itself. There is a clear comparison here between the Hall of Honour in Trinity College, Dublin, and the Queen's University, Belfast, memorial. The Trinity College Hall of Honour, which would in 1937 form part of a new reading room, merged the utilitarian and memorial functions of remembrance.⁶⁹ The memorial at Trinity College was not unveiled by members of Dáil Éireann or the British royal family and so does not feature in the discussion of monuments erected in the Dublin cityscape until the opening of the reading room that housed the Hall of Honour by then Taoiseach Éamon de Valera in 1937, in which (as has already been noted) the Hall of Honour was not mentioned and the emphasis was on a former Catholic provost and Catholic alumni of the college.⁷⁰ At Queen's University links were being made, through individuals, to the Northern Irish government, the monarchy, the Empire, and the First World War. The identity that had

⁶⁷ *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Nov. 1920.

⁶⁸ *Belfast Newsletter*, 22 Jul. 1924.

⁶⁹ *Irish Times*, 17 Nov. 1928.

⁷⁰ *Irish Press*, 3 Jul. 1937.

been forged during the Home Rule Bill Crises of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was being reinforced and linked to the state of Northern Ireland.

The economic situation in Northern Ireland, which had not been particularly prosperous since the foundation of the state, was badly impacted by the Great Depression of 1929.⁷¹ From the late 1920s to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 Northern Ireland gradually became the most economically and socially disadvantaged region in the United Kingdom.⁷² Coupled with the global economic depression was the collapse of industries central to the Northern Irish economy such as shipbuilding, linen, and agriculture. By 1933 the shipbuilding workforce had shrunk to a mere tenth of its 1924 total of 20,000.⁷³ One result of the economic downturn was one of the few instances of inter-community action in 1932 in the form of the Outdoor Relief Workers' Committee. The committee was heavily influenced by the Revolutionary Workers' Group, a radical socialist group opposed to the more moderate policies of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and was established by members of Belfast's working class in opposition to the cuts in outdoor relief during a period of high unemployment.⁷⁴ 'Outdoor relief' was a term for social welfare under the Poor Law system where assistance was given to alleviate poverty without the recipients being required to enter an institution (such as a workhouse). The Committee aimed to bring rates of outdoor relief in line with the rest of the United Kingdom and there were mass demonstrations and strikes held in early October 1932. A demonstration planned for 11 October was banned by the Northern Irish government but went ahead regardless, which led to confrontations between the Royal Ulster Constabulary and protestors and rioting in both Catholic and Protestant areas.⁷⁵

The results of these riots were that two people died, property was damaged and the Poor Law Guardians announced an increase in outdoor relief rates which were accepted by

⁷¹ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*, p. 56.

⁷² Barton, 'Northern Ireland 1925-39', p. 199.

⁷³ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*, p. 56.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁵ Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39', p.319.

workers at a mass meeting on 14 October.⁷⁶ Susannah Riordan notes that these riots are often held up as an example of cross-community class identity in Northern Ireland, something which Tommy Graham of the Revolutionary Workers' Group thought was emerging when he reflected on the 'glorious two weeks in the history of the working class struggle'.⁷⁷ But non-sectarian class unity was short-lived, and Riordan notes that sectarian violence was a far more common response to economic distress in Northern Ireland in this period.⁷⁸ This isolated event has been interpreted by many socialists as evidence for the potential of working-class solidarity in the divided society of Northern Ireland, but Thomas Hennessy argues that it might also be interpreted as 'an aberration in a highly sectarian society'.⁷⁹ The solidarity shown amongst the working class in a time of crisis demonstrates the potential for other identities, rather than those of Catholic nationalist or Protestant unionist, in society in this period. Brian Barton observed that while a substantial working class might have posed a threat to unionism, the Northern Irish government contained this threat with relative ease.⁸⁰

However, the political danger of a united working class and splits within the unionist community haunted the Northern Irish government, and further developments in these years such as the aforementioned centenary of Catholic Emancipation in 1929, the success of Fianna Fáil in the 1932 general election, and the hosting of the 31st International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932 exacerbated the anxieties of the Unionist Party and contributed to continued discrimination against the minority throughout the inter-war years. It was in this context that the parliament buildings at Stormont were officially opened on 16 November 1932. Opened only days after Remembrance Day, which that year fell on 13 November, the buildings at Stormont were an Ulster Unionist Party triumph, mingled with associations with the memory of the war and celebration of Empire.

⁷⁶ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*, p. 61.

⁷⁷ Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39', p. 320; quoted in Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland, the Orange State*, (London, 1976), p. 130.

⁷⁸ Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39', p. 320.

⁷⁹ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*, p. 61.

⁸⁰ Barton, 'Northern Ireland, 1925-39', p. 227.

1932-39

It was in this vein that society in Northern Ireland continued throughout this period. As well as the developments in the Irish Free State as the new decade of the 1930s was beginning, the addition of abstention of Nationalist Party MPs from parliament in 1932 following the abolition of Proportional Representation, and riots and sectarian violence in Belfast in 1935, fed into the Unionists' perception of being under siege from within the state and without. Discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland increased throughout the decade, until 'by the end of the 1930s there was little to suggest even the forms of democratic government'.⁸¹ The General Election in November 1933 was another victory for the Ulster Unionist Party,

The 1930s in Northern Ireland has been described by Gillian McIntosh as 'a period of rituals'.⁸² The rituals that dominated this period were overwhelmingly associated with Edward Carson - the opening of the parliament buildings at Stormont in 1932, the unveiling of his statue at Stormont in 1933, his funeral in 1935 and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to him in 1938. While it is only the statue of Edward Carson at Stormont buildings that features as part of this discussion, to ignore the wider context of the reverence surrounding his person in this period would be misleading. Carson in the 1930s, though never a serving member of the Northern Irish parliament, had come to personify the recent Unionist victory when they had succeeded in having their separateness recognised and enshrined in law. Whereas Michael Collins in the Irish Free State was 'the man who won the war', Carson in Ulster was 'the man who shaped the Province's destiny'.⁸³ Having achieved this heroic status in life it was amplified after his death in 1935.

It is the statue of Edward Carson that is the only memorial that qualifies as a case study for this research. While the monument was funded by 'the loyalists of Ulster' through public subscription, its location at the seat of government affords it the support of

⁸¹ Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39', p. 321.

⁸² Gillian McIntosh, 'Symbolic Mirrors: Commemorations of Edward Carson in the 1930s', vol. 32, no. 125 (May 2000), pp. 93-112.

⁸³ *Northern Whig*, 24 Oct. 1938.

the Northern Irish government and, as such, makes it the only monument to have received such recognition and support in this period. In 1933, towards the end of Carson's life, he found himself in a 'unique and difficult' situation when he was present at the unveiling of a 32-foot high bronze statue of himself outside the newly opened Parliament buildings at Stormont.⁸⁴ The monument itself was unveiled with great pomp and ceremony, with approximately 40-50,000 people in attendance for the event.⁸⁵ Like the opening of the buildings at Stormont, which conveniently coincided with Remembrance Day in 1932, the unveiling of the statue to Edward Carson on 8 July coincided with the period surrounding the highlight of the marching season for many Ulster Unionists - the Twelfth. The significance of the 12 July for the Orange Order since its inception in the eighteenth century, particularly the Ulster branches, has been explored by scholars such as Dominic Bryan and Kevin Haddick-Flynn.⁸⁶ However, as Keith Jeffery and Catherine Switzer have shown the event (known as 'The Twelfth' or 'The Glorious Twelfth') was accorded heightened significance after the heavy losses suffered by the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Battle of the Somme on the 1 July 1916 and the subsequent linking of that sacrifice with the consolidation of the state of Northern Ireland.⁸⁷ By choosing this date for the unveiling of the statue of Carson which would preside over the Parliament of Northern Ireland, the Northern Irish government were once again affirming their strong links with loyalism and Protestantism through the Orange Order. It was reported that there were approximately 15,000 Orangemen from Belfast alone, who were joined by a further 3,000 'from the provinces' (the other counties of Northern Ireland).⁸⁸ The huge attendance of Orangemen, almost half of the reported crowd, formed 'a great band of colour in the foreground' to assert Carson's links to their order and their cause, should any unknowing observer be in doubt.⁸⁹ The ceremony was presided over by Sir Edward Archdale, MP, but it was the

⁸⁴ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul. 1933.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; *Lisburn Standard*, 14 Jul. 1933.

⁸⁶ Dominic Bryan, *Orange Parades: The politics of ritual, tradition, and control*, (London, 2000); Kevin Haddick-Flynn, *A Short History of Orangeism* (Dublin, 2002).

⁸⁷ Keith Jeffery, 'Commemoration: 'Turning the 11th November into the 12th July' in Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, (Cambridge, 2000); Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1918*.

⁸⁸ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul. 1933.

⁸⁹ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul. 1933.

Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Lord Craigavon, who unveiled the monument itself.⁹⁰ The July weather impeded the proceedings, with the heavy rain being noted in more than one newspaper and reportedly delaying the ceremony by half an hour. The ceremony itself was noticeably Protestant in character, opening with a religious service with representatives from all the major Protestant churches of Northern Ireland and the singing of Carson's favourite hymn 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past'. As well as having a distinctively Protestant character the ceremony emphasised the love of Empire and Ulster's commitment to the Union - affirming the Ulster identity as exclusively loyalist in nature. Archdale himself declared to the crowd that 'we are all resolved to stick to the British Empire' and Craigavon paid tribute to his friend and comrade, 'the greatest man in the Empire'.⁹¹ Carson himself addressed the crowd, and while he declared he could not find the words for the unique position he found himself in of seeing a monument to him erected in his own lifetime, he did use the opportunity to reflect that his love of Empire and the Union came before all else, going so far as to declare that he and Craig 'were two of the biggest rebels that ever stood in London' during their fight during the Third Home Rule Bill Crisis 1912-14 to remain within the United Kingdom, when they were abandoned by 'loyal Englishmen'.⁹² This abandonment should not be forgotten by the Ulster people in the future, he warned, lest there be politicians in the future who would be willing to desert them.

Lord Craigavon, Sir James Craig, described Carson as the 'saviour of Ulster' during the unveiling ceremony, a title that reportedly received wholehearted endorsement from the crowd in attendance.⁹³ In a notable departure from the traditional speeches at unveiling ceremonies of the time Craig directly refers to the heightened emotion that he claims to be felt by the entire people of Ulster. Craig asserts that many present were moved by a deep emotion, an emotion that he attributed both to the beauty of the sculpture being unveiled and the presence of Carson himself at the ceremony. He expressed his hope that this ceremony might enable Carson to 'realise the depth of feeling which still lies in the

⁹⁰ *Lisburn Standard*, 14 Jul. 1933.

⁹¹ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul 1933.

⁹² *Lisburn Standard*, 14 Jul 1933.

⁹³ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul 1933.

hearts of the men and women of Ulster'. Another, as he terms 'more cogent', reason for the depth of emotion felt by those present on that day might have been the thoughts of what might have happened to 'our beloved country' had Carson not shouldered the burden of the defender of Ulster in their hour of need. It is in this spirit that Craig classes Carson as 'the greatest man in the Empire'.⁹⁴ Carson's response, which affirms his love of Empire and of Ulster, returns Craig's emotive language when he attempts to articulate the 'that love and affection which have existed between us [himself and the Ulster people] now for so many years', a love which he notes 'is worth all the statues and memorials and fortunes that a man could obtain'. He expresses his difficulty in articulating these particular emotions when he declares that 'it is impossible to describe what one's feelings in having not only that love, but in one's lifetime a memorial erected to it'.⁹⁵

These overt expressions of emotion are attempts to articulate that which has long been explored and understood by historians of emotion, such as Katie Barclay and Rob Boddice.⁹⁶ The language used by Craig and Carson speaks to the emotional community of the Ulster Protestant Unionist. The emotional community, Barclay argues, is generally associated with pre-existing social communities, and it does not always have to be emotional but rather share the same attitudes, ideas and expressions about emotions that matter (such as the love between Carson and the people of Ulster, in this instance).⁹⁷ The strengthening of an emotional community can serve to strengthen bonds in a social community or reaffirm unity. The strengthening of the Ulster Protestant Unionist community in the early 1930s is of particular importance to Craig who was attempting to unify his supporters and prevent splits within the community itself. In employing emotive language and articulating the love between the people of Ulster and Carson, Craig is simultaneously creating a site of emotion for the community at the seat of parliament, the centre of governance of the new state, and excluding the Catholic, nationalist community from the state itself. His refusal to acknowledge that community, one which like the

⁹⁴ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul. 1933.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ See Katie Barclay, *The History of Emotions: A Student Guide to Methods and Sources* (London, 2020) and Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester, 2018).

⁹⁷ Katie Barclay, 'Chapter 4: Communities' in *The History of Emotions: A Student Guide to Methods and Sources* (2020). E-book accessed at Trinity College Library on multiple occasions in April 2022.

Protestant Ulster Unionist exists politically, socially, and emotionally, is indicative of the attitudes of the Northern Irish government towards the sizeable nationalist minority in this period. It is not unusual for emotive language to be employed for political gain, and it is with threats of instability and dissent amongst the unionist ranks and the knowledge of a looming election that Craig appeals to the emotions of the Protestant Ulster Unionist community. It is clear from the language used at this ceremony that the history of emotions, as explored in the introduction of this thesis, plays an integral role in enhancing our understanding of the motivations behind the erection and destruction of monuments and memorials in the public space.

There was, in October 1938, a plaque unveiled to commemorate Carson in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. It was positioned at his tomb and was erected by the Ulster Women's Unionist Association.⁹⁸ The plaque clearly had the approval and support of the Northern Irish government, with the Prime Minister Lord Craigavon unveiling it and Cabinet Ministers, the Lord Chief Justice, and His Majesty's Lieutenant for Belfast all present. The *Northern Whig* remarked that 'all around one caught glimpses of people prominent in Unionist circles'.⁹⁹ The ceremony itself was reported as being well attended with large crowds, however it cannot be considered to be a public ceremony as it was held within the city's Church of Ireland Cathedral. The ceremony took place in the middle of a special Sunday service and while it is clear that certain public monuments in the Irish Free State had religious aspects, such as Catholic prayers being recited at the unveiling of the North Tipperary Republican Monument, for example, the location of this plaque within the walls of the Cathedral excludes it from this research.¹⁰⁰ What is notable about the ceremony is that leaders of the three Protestant churches in Northern Ireland, the Presbyterian and Methodist as well as Church of Ireland, participated in the ceremony and the Dean of the Cathedral commented on the esteem and affection that Carson's Roman Catholic friends in all parts of Ireland held for him.¹⁰¹ There was clearly an attempt to be inclusive in this ceremony, but the inclusiveness was limited to members of the Protestant,

⁹⁸ *Northern Whig*, 24 Oct. 1938.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1931.

¹⁰¹ *Northern Whig*, 24 Oct. 1938.

and presumably unionist, community of different denominations rather than to members of the nationalist and Catholic communities. Whether any attempts at inclusiveness would have been met with enthusiasm cannot be said, but it is clear that by 1938 the rift between the communities was too wide. Years of perpetuating the sacrifices during the First World War and the Battle of the Somme as an exclusively Unionist narrative resulted in the absence of a unifying narrative that the Irish Free State had in the 1916 Rising.

It is notable that there was a suggestion, ‘by a number of friends of the late Mr Joseph Devlin’, that a memorial be erected to a late member of the Northern Irish parliament and leader of the Nationalist Party.¹⁰² Devlin had represented the people of Northern Ireland in parliament, both at Westminster and Stormont, from 1902 to 1932. Following the abolition of proportional representation in 1932 Devlin led the Nationalist Party out of parliament in protest and pursued a policy of abstentionism. He died in Belfast in January 1934 where his funeral was attended by leading members of both the Northern Irish and Irish Free State governments. On Devlin’s death his long-time political opponent James Craig, Lord Craigavon, paid tribute to Devlin and declared that their political differences notwithstanding he had ‘never entertained anything but admiration for his personal character’.¹⁰³ In December 1934 the *Cork Examiner* reported that a meeting had been held to discuss erecting a memorial to Devlin, and the appeal for subscribers was to be ‘nation-wide’ and not limited to the six counties of Northern Ireland.¹⁰⁴ Despite their earlier confidence in public support the *Irish Independent* reported in September 1935 that the public response to the appeal had been disappointing which meant that the memorial could not now be as ambitious as organisers had originally hoped.¹⁰⁵ Up to 9 September 1935 the lists of subscribers included the heads of the Catholic church in both jurisdictions and prominent Free State politicians including the then head of state, Éamon de Valera, as well as Seán McEntee, W.T. Cosgrave and Eoin McNeill, among others.¹⁰⁶ It is clear from the lists of subscribers that, no matter Craig’s personal feelings towards Devlin’s character,

¹⁰² *Cork Examiner*, 12 Dec. 1934.

¹⁰³ *Derry Journal*, 19 Jan. 1934.

¹⁰⁴ *Cork Examiner*, 12 Dec. 1934.

¹⁰⁵ *Irish Independent*, 30 Sep. 1935.

¹⁰⁶ *Derry Journal*, 9 Sep. 1935.

neither the Northern Ireland government nor the Ulster Unionist Party membership would participate in commemorating a member of the nationalist opposition. Their lack of participation is not surprising, but it was undoubtedly a missed opportunity to reflect the Northern Irish nationalist identity in the public space, and for the Northern Ireland government to take steps towards the acknowledgement of the nationalist minority.

A memorial to Devlin, as it was conceived in the planning stage in 1934, was never erected. The funds available to the committee were spent on erecting a memorial over his grave in Milltown Cemetery, establishing yearly prizes for proficiency in the Irish language and technical education for students of the Christian Brothers' Trade Preparatory School in Belfast, and in a grant made to the West Belfast Children's Outing, an annual outing which had been inaugurated by Devlin himself for the children of West Belfast's poor.¹⁰⁷ The raising of the funds for these memorials was done on an all-island basis with a sub-committee being established in Dublin for this purpose.¹⁰⁸ Deputy James Dillon's comments on the concerted effort of this sub-committee to include men and women from all religious and political persuasions and none, as noted in the chapter on Dublin's monuments, suggests a more open and inclusive society in the Irish Free State.¹⁰⁹ Dillon noted that there was an absence of strong political feeling in the organisation of the Devlin memorial, which perhaps was easier to do in a majority nationalist society, albeit of different shades, and was not possible in Northern Ireland due to the deepening rifts between different political and religious communities.

Prevention

The state of Northern Ireland grew increasingly violent and militarised in the period spanning from 1912-1922. That period had seen the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant, gunrunning operations, the outbreak of the Great War, and violent sectarian clashes. The partition of Ireland and the subsequent acceptance of that border by the Irish Free State in 1922 created an atmosphere of tension and frustration. Ministers in the Northern Irish government felt in 1922 that they were 'up against a wall' and that

¹⁰⁷ *Irish Press*, 7 Jul. 1936; *The Catholic Standard*, 17 Jul. 1936.

¹⁰⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 12 Dec 1934; *Evening Echo*, 8 Apr. 1935.

¹⁰⁹ 'Vote 11 - Public Works and Buildings (Resumed)', *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 55 No. 18, 12 Apr. 1935.

civilisation was collapsing.¹¹⁰ To combat the perceived collapse of stability and escalation of violence the government introduced the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act in 1922. This initially took the form of internment, curfew, restrictions of licensed premises, road closures, etc. The introduction of the act, and the regulations that followed it, did contribute to the restoration of order in the state but the Special Powers Act, as it came to be known, remained in use by the government until 1972, and was regularly used and enforced during the period of study.¹¹¹ As violence decreased and the state reached a point of relative stability, the government levied this act against ideas or beliefs at odds with their own. It was used to stifle republican aspirations or expressions of identity, but the government failed to differentiate between republican and nationalist ideals, and in doing so suppressed the political ambitions and identity of a large minority in the Northern Irish state.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the use of the Special Powers Act began to focus exclusively on suppressing threats from within the state. In addition to imposing restrictions and bans on the use of the Irish tricolour flag, seditious publications, and even music, the Special Powers Act was used to regulate commemorations and monuments. Meetings, assemblies, and processions were gradually banned, beginning with a single ban on a ceremony at Milltown Cemetery in Belfast to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising in 1926 and progressing to a state-wide ban on all and any assemblies, marches, or ceremonies for the entirety of Easter Week in 1936.¹¹² Two years later, in 1938, the Prime Minister for Northern Ireland issued an apology for an Orange Order procession that was planned to go ahead on a day that he had outlawed all marches, he acknowledged that he was not aware of their plans when imposing the ban and absolved all the participants of any wrongdoing for defying the law.¹¹³ This clearly illustrates that the Special Powers Act was intended to regulate the nationalist community only, but not exclusively. Another

¹¹⁰ Comments by Mr Lynn, House of Commons Debates Northern Ireland, 21 March 1922, col. 91 and Dr Morrison, House of Commons Debates Northern Ireland, 21 March 1922, col. 104.

¹¹¹ Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*.

¹¹² Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72', p. 1095.

¹¹³ PRONI HA/32/1/467

threat to the wellbeing of the state came in the form of socialism and communism, and a ban was imposed on a meeting of the Irish Unemployed Workers Movement in 1934.¹¹⁴

In July 1931 regulation 8A to the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act was introduced to prevent a group in Carrickmore, East Tyrone, from erecting a monument to fighters of Irish independence in the area. A Royal Ulster Constabulary inspector had submitted a report on 18 July 1931 suggesting that this monument would become a rallying point for local ‘disloyal elements’ and suggesting that the loyal community of the area would be provoked to destroy it.¹¹⁵ The monument was intended to be ‘in memory of Tyrone men who had given their lives for Ireland’.¹¹⁶ Those constructing the monument (privately funded through finances raised by the Tyrone Men’s Association in Philadelphia) were told that if work continued on the monument it would be forcibly stopped. This regulation was applied once more in 1938 to prevent the construction of a monument for those who fell in the Irish struggle for independence in Newry, a monument which had been approved by the majority on the Newry Council and was in response to a planned British Legion monument for the area.¹¹⁷ While only exercised twice, the existence of regulation 8A ensured that the monopoly on monument erection remained in the firm control of the state.

The Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, along with other devices, was used by the unionist government in Northern Ireland to consolidate and maintain control of the state. The exclusion and active suppression of the expressions of nationalist identity reveal a government resolutely committed to the preservation of a unionist state. The control exercised by the government over the commemorative events and monuments, and thus the public history of the state, is problematic for this research. The focus of this thesis is on expressions of identity in stone and while both communities in Northern Ireland used other, sometimes less permanent, mediums through which to express their identity they are not included in this research. While, it might be argued, this could give a skewed or

¹¹⁴ Donohue, ‘Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72’, p. 1101.

¹¹⁵ PRONI SRO 85/1931, 25 Jul. 1931.

¹¹⁶ *Strabane Chronicle*, 1 Aug. 1931.

¹¹⁷ Donohue, ‘Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72’, p. 1106.

unbalanced historical account of the past it actually serves to highlight the discrimination experienced by the minority community in Northern Ireland in this period and provides a platform with which to compare the actions of the Irish Free State government and actions of local communities.

Conclusion

The projection and perpetuation of a 'national identity' in Northern Ireland through the erection and destruction of public monuments in the urban centre of Belfast is, as evidenced by this research, problematic and one-sided. The acceptance, and active pursuit, of partition by unionists who had previously organised themselves in active resistance to it and uncertain future of the border due to the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921, and the Boundary Commission resulted in an uneasy, uncertain atmosphere in the six counties of Northern Ireland. The existence of the Ulster Unionists as a social group was predicated on their relationship to Britain and their promotion of their own Britishness, but at times during the revolutionary period and in the early inter-war period, Britain was perceived as an enemy to the interests of Ulster, which caused a certain level of crisis in the group identity.¹¹⁸ Carson himself later reflected that he and Craig were 'two of the biggest rebels that ever stood in London'.¹¹⁹ When Northern Ireland was forged from six of the nine counties of Ulster, the Ulster Unionist identity was in crisis again and was forced to adapt to the new territory that they governed. Switzer identifies this particular 'confused and uncertain sense of national belonging' as a less than ideal starting point for creating a sense of national identity.¹²⁰ James Loughlin encapsulates this in his discussion on Ulster Unionist identity in 1995 when he states that while Ulster Unionists had succeeded, in 1921, in maintaining their membership of the United Kingdom 'there was a constant concern to consolidate that position and to give expression to their British identity'.¹²¹

This provides an interesting comparison with the Irish Free State, in which a Gaelic Irish identity, one that had been cultivated since the early days of the Gaelic Revival in the

¹¹⁸ David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands 1912-1939*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 24-34.

¹¹⁹ *Lisburn Standard*, 14 Jul. 1933.

¹²⁰ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*, p. 154.

¹²¹ Loughlin, *Ulster Unionism and British National Identity Since 1885*, p. 91.

late nineteenth century and reinforced by the rise in nationalism following the 1916 Rising, was already well established, and promoted through the Gaelicisation policy of the Free State government.¹²² While there were certainly splits and divisions amongst communities in the Irish Free State, they were political in nature rather than ethnic and allowed for a shared foundation amongst different communities.¹²³ The absence of a common unifying narrative amongst the communities in Northern Ireland served to deepen divisions, promote ‘othering’, and in times of crisis contributed to outbreaks of tensions between communities. However, it must be noted that while the majority in the Irish Free State had a common foundation, that of a Gaelic Irish identity, there was of course the Unionist minority in the new state who did not identify with this narrative. It was this community in the Irish Free State that caused anxiety amongst those in government in the Irish Free State, as evidenced in debates surrounding commemoration of the First World War. This anxiety is the same as that experienced by the Northern Irish government but owing to the much smaller minority in the Irish Free State, it failed to exert the same level of influence over the government in this period.¹²⁴ Loughlin tracks this emotional response of the Northern Irish government as spanning the inter-war period;

The adverse conditions in which the northern statelet was established, and the uncertainty over its status that prevailed until the resolution of the boundary issue in 1926, conditioned an anxious state of mind that characterized the Unionist regime, certainly until the outbreak of World War Two.¹²⁵

This research has discussed the lack of official governmental endorsement of monuments and memorials in the state-formation period, but while the Stormont government were not involved in the proliferation of war memorials in an official capacity there is no doubt that the memory of the war dominates the monumental landscape in Northern Ireland.¹²⁶ In relation to the location of memorials and monuments, Switzer argues that the generally prominent location of Northern Ireland memorials cannot

¹²² Michael Laffan, *Judging W. T. Cosgrave: The Foundation of the Irish State* (Dublin, 2014), p. 183.

¹²³ For discussions of the ethnic communities, and why they are defined as such, see Anthony D. Buckley and Mary Catherine Kenney, *Negotiating Identity: Rhetoric, Metaphor, and Social Drama in Northern Ireland*. (London, 1995), pp. 4-24.

¹²⁴ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, pp. 192-221.

¹²⁵ Loughlin, *Ulster Unionism and British National Identity Since 1885*, p. 103.

¹²⁶ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*.

necessarily be viewed as the embodiment of attitudes towards the memory of the First World War, rather that the location is the sum of ‘numerous decisions undertaken at an often very local level’ and that these were influenced by much more ‘mundane factors’ than a desire to display Ulster’s loyalty.¹²⁷ However, the power of public space must not be underestimated and, in this context, the lack of opposition to public monuments and memorials being erected and even the active support of individual members of government indicate a consensus for the memory of the war not replicated in the Irish Free State.

War memorials are only part of the story of Northern Ireland’s commemoration of the war, and of Northern Ireland’s commemoration more generally, but they do occupy a significant space in the landscape of the newly created state. They were physical manifestations of the memory of the war, and they were created as permanent reminders for future generations of those who gave their lives. They also, importantly, provided a physical focal point for public ceremonies of remembrance and commemoration. While the government at Stormont were not involved in the erection of any war memorials in this period, and the Northern Irish state lacked a ‘national’ memorial, it must be noted that the men of the six counties of Northern Ireland were commemorated in three different memorials outside of the state namely at the Ulster Tower in Thiepval, France, the Cenotaph at Whitehall in London, and at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge in Dublin. It is notable that both the Cenotaph at Whitehall and the Ulster Tower at Thiepval were unveiled before the official creation of Northern Ireland (although certainly by the time of the unveiling of the Ulster Tower there was an understanding of the what the territory would be, albeit uncertainty over the finer details) but that the Irish National Memorial Gardens, completed in 1937 but not formally dedicated until 1988, was always intended to commemorate the fallen of the entire island of Ireland. There were Ulster representatives at the inaugural meeting of the Irish Comrades of the Great War, held in Dublin in July 1919 to discuss a national memorial. At that meeting they made it clear that there would be a 36th (Ulster) Division specific memorial erected, but their presence at that first meeting ensured that they knew of the intentions of the Irish National

¹²⁷ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*, p. 88.

War Memorial Committee, and the *Irish Times* noted the ‘zeal with which they threw themselves into the project’.¹²⁸

It is clear from the case studies discussed in this chapter that, as individuals, the leading members of the government endorsed the Ulster Unionist identity in the public sphere, participating in commemorative ceremonies for the First World War and for Unionist leaders. As a government, though, their policy matched that of England and Scotland in their approach to monuments, and it is notable that the Irish Free State were the only government amongst those of the former United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to have financially contributed to their National War Memorial.¹²⁹ The ultimate irony in war remembrance on the island is that the state that embraced the memory of the war and wove it deftly into the narrative of their collective identity, to such success that those who did not identify themselves as belonging to the Protestant, Unionist community actively rejected the war narrative because of its associations with imperialism, unionism and Britishness, were ultimately commemorated in a national sense by the state whose anxiety about the place of the war in the national narrative was palpable.

The dominance of the memory of war in the public space of Belfast, and Northern Ireland more generally, can be attributed to a number of factors. The Special Powers Act (1922) and its continued use until 1972 was in no small way a determining factor for the lack of expression of nationalist identity in the public space, as was made evident in August 1931 when the monument to Tyrone republicans was banned, and for a second time in Newry in 1938 to prevent the erection of a memorial for ‘all who fell in the struggle for Irish independence’.¹³⁰ The use of this Act, usually reserved for periods of great civil unrest and violence, indicates the attitude of the government towards the minority nationalist population. Donohue asserts that the regulations introduced under this Act were used almost exclusively against the minority nationalist population and their

¹²⁸ *Irish Times*, 18 Jul. 1919.

¹²⁹ MacLeod, ‘Irishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland’, pp. 647-65.

¹³⁰ Donohue, ‘Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72’, pp. 1106-7.

existence was supported by the claim of the majority ‘to the right not to be confronted by republicanism’, and this rang true particularly in the urban public space.¹³¹

Ultimately, the use of monumental memorials in Northern Ireland differed greatly to that of the Irish Free State. Not just in the identities being promoted in the public space, but also in the attitudes of respective Free State governments to their role in the promotion of those identities. While the Irish Free State government were, as has already been discussed, heavily involved in debates surrounding monuments, placement, and location of monuments, the government of Northern Ireland left the organisation and erection of monuments to local authorities. With the exception of the permission granted for the statue of Edward Carson to be erected on the Stormont Estate in 1933 the primary involvement the government of Northern Ireland had in the shaping of the monumental landscape of the state was in the prevention of monuments expressing nationalist or republican identities.

As with monuments across the island, and further afield, it must be noted that the erection of monumental memorials is often reflective of the middle and upper classes in any given society. Kirk Savage’s comments on class in relation to monuments in the American South have already been discussed in the previous chapter, but it remains that the identities being expressed through stone in this period are not necessarily reflective of the society as a whole.¹³² Those in the lower classes have different priorities, and as such their presence or absence should be considered in any discussion on monuments and identities in this period. It is notable that the memorial to Joseph Devlin, MP, from the community he represented took more practical and useful forms and focused on young people and education.¹³³ His constituents, being the Catholic, Nationalist community living in the city of Belfast, were more likely to have experienced sectarian violence, hardship, and poverty, than their Protestant, Unionist counterparts and so there was a greater need for practical, utilitarian memorials amongst his followers.¹³⁴ It should also be noted that

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 1113.

¹³² Kirk Savage, ‘The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument’ in John Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1996), p. 135.

¹³³ *Irish Press*, 7 Jul. 1936; *The Catholic Standard*, 17 Jul. 1936.

¹³⁴ For statistics and discussions on Catholic, nationalist community in Belfast see Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*; Riordan, ‘Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39’.

the Catholic, Nationalist community had alternative methods of remembrance such as commemorating in the religious sphere by holding a mass, which served many of the same functions as the erection of a monument by providing an opportunity for the social group to gather and remember. The community continued to foster a strong sense of identity, but their lack of representation in the public sphere is notable for this research. The oppression of their monumental expression is one of many discriminations experienced by the Catholic, Nationalist community in this period and contributed to the civil rights movement that grew in Northern Ireland in the mid- to late-1960s.

While this chapter has discussed monumental memorialisation in Belfast during this period and using government-supported initiatives to compare the situations in Dublin and Belfast, the next chapter will use examples from two rural towns in each jurisdiction. These comparisons will heighten this research through providing all-island examples that lie outside of the capital cities and focusing on the local community groups in each area, rather than the actions of the national government.

Chapter Three: Community monuments erected in the localities of Nenagh and Limavady, 1921-38.

Introduction

Monuments and statues are integral parts of our public space. They are erected by communities as a method of expressing cultural identity. They occupy the spaces of urban centres and rural communities across the globe. It is evident that the life of a monument is not static, monuments that are popular and celebrated in one generation may find themselves torn down or vandalised in the next. They are public expressions of cultural identity, which is fluid and can undergo huge transformations within a short space of time. Cultural memory, defined by Barbara Misztal as ‘remembrance among social groups that manifests itself in multiple forms and relies upon acts of narration’ is an inescapable influence in every individual's life and is transmitted through formal education, folk tales, statuary, murals, monuments, literature, theatre, music, and language, among other means.¹

Friedrich Nietzsche argued that monumental history is inspirational to the living because it persuades people that the greatness of the past is possible again by presenting the past as a succession of great individuals linked across the millennia by their ideas, intellect, or aims.² Nuala C. Johnson declares that following the partition of Ireland and the establishment of the two states, ‘the use of public space to articulate a version of the past and a vision of the future was a highly disputed issue on both sides of the border’.³ The Irish Free State invested a great deal in the erection of monuments and creation of heroes in the early years of its existence, a strategy that Síghle Bhreathnach Lynch links to achieving legitimacy.⁴ Similarly the government in Northern Ireland engaged in similar activity, creating a new pantheon led by the hero of Ulster, Lord Edward Carson. In this construction of heroes both states employed the erection and erasure of monuments to aid

¹ Barbara Misztal, ‘Memory and History’ in Oona Frawley (ed.) *Memory Ireland, Volume 1: History and Modernity* (New York, 2011), p. 18.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*. Translated by Adrian Collins (Indianapolis, 1978).

³ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War, and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 80.

⁴ Síghle Bhreathnach Lynch, ‘Commemorating the hero in newly independent Ireland: expressions of nationhood in bronze and stone’ in Lawrence McBride (ed.) *Images, Icons, and the Irish Nationalist Imagination* (Dublin, 1999), p. 149.

their narrative building. This practice was mirrored by non-governmental organisations to include their heroes and their narrative in the public sphere and to ensure the continuation of their ideals and histories. It must be noted that non-governmental groups often found it difficult to express their identity in a permanent form in the public sphere, particularly in Northern Ireland after the passing of regulation 8A of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, as discussed in the previous chapter. ⁵

The Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act provided the Northern Irish government with an effective tool to prevent the expression of ideas in opposition to their own, namely nationalist.⁶ In the Irish Free State communities expressed identities at odds with the political ideology of the party in government, not without fears of possible interference, but without the legal mechanisms supporting the state's intervention. In order to ensure that this research encompasses as many communities and identities as possible, monuments that were proposed or planned and not erected, and monuments that were removed from the public space in this period, will also be considered.

Focusing on monuments and statues in the public sphere during the period 1921 to 1938, this chapter will analyse the narrative being projected by or onto particular communities in the chosen locations and consider how communities engaged with public history. The monuments are a mixture of initiatives by the national or local governments and community groups. Naturally, there may be some crossover between active community groups erecting these monuments and governmental organisations, particularly in the smaller towns of Limavady and Nenagh. In these towns where there is a smaller population the likelihood of active members of the local community also serving as members of local government or being closely acquainted with those who do is higher. Where possible this research will draw attention to any crossovers in these instances and be aware of the effect that this may have in the construction of a narrative for the community.

⁵ *Strabane Chronicle*, 1 Aug. 1931.

⁶ Laura K. Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-72' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1998), p. 1090.

This chapter sets out the various case studies chosen for this research, comparing them to the other examples chosen and analysing their locations, material, context, image, and conditions of unveiling in order to gain a better understanding of their function and the identity or message being expressed. The research also takes into account any changes made to the monuments or statues within the period of study and consider the impact these actions have on the collective cultural identity. The chapter offers a detailed investigation of each monument using primary and, where available, secondary source material in order to ascertain the context of its concept and creation. While monuments often become focal points for commemorative events within communities or sites of memory that people visit to perform ritual remembrances and are themselves a form of commemoration this chapter does not focus on that particular function. The focus in this chapter is on the erection (or destruction or removal) of the monument itself, its message, and the unveiling ceremonies. Any uses of these monuments in subsequent commemorations are explored later in this thesis.

The case studies explored in this chapter were subject to strict criteria. The monuments had to satisfy the parameters of the greater research project by being erected between the years of 1921 and 1938, and by being situated in one of the four locations chosen for this research. The land area covered by the cities of Dublin and Belfast was naturally much greater than in Nenagh or Limavady, therefore in these cities the monuments chosen for analysis were chosen from a larger pool of case studies. Care was taken to consider the case studies chosen in these cities not to skew the results of this research by focusing on any one narrative or community. The monuments chosen from each of the cities represent the wide range of narratives and communities found within the city, those that were not included in greater details in this research were ones that reflected the same ideas and sentiments expressed elsewhere. While the replication of identity being expressed, where it happens, is acknowledged and informs the research the case studies endeavour to encompass as many expressions of varying identity as possible. The monuments could have been funded and organised by any organisation or body, governmental and non-governmental, and they had to commemorate a historical event or people considered to be of historical significance. Special efforts were made to ensure that all communities and genders in an area were included in this research where possible.

Finally, this chapter compares the prevalent narratives in each location to the ‘official’ national narrative endorsed by the governments as established in governmental records, governmental debates, and newspaper sources. The research also considers the ‘social forgetting’ of a particular community in the pursuit of this narrative and considers the reasons for any elision. In doing so, this chapter analyses the projection of national identity narratives and compares how these narratives, ideals, or values contributed to the creation of identities in the two Irish states. Unlike the larger cities of Dublin and Belfast, the towns of Nenagh and Limavady have small urban centres and were, themselves, the centres of a larger network of rural communities. In these smaller centres it is expected that there would be fewer monuments or statues erected due to the limited physical space available in which to erect them.’

Nenagh

In Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, there were three monuments that fell within the parameters of this research. These three are the only monuments in the town boundaries erected during this period, and archival research and oral history interviews have not revealed any monuments that may have been planned and not executed or were erected and subsequently destroyed or removed. The three monuments are all situated in the town centre, and all are located within 500m of each other with two monuments on Ashe Road and the third situated where Ashe Road meets the central thoroughfare of Banba Square. The three monuments are the Denis Carey Memorial (1922), the Nenagh Great War Memorial (1928), and the North Tipperary Republican Monument (1931). There are monuments erected in the townlands surrounding the town that undoubtedly influence the discussion, debate, and decision making in the town of Nenagh (such as the Memorial Cross at Knigh, erected in 1925, located only 5km from the town centre and involving many of the same figures involved in erecting memorials in Nenagh), but only those within the boundaries of the town form part of this research. Where appropriate, these other monuments and memorials are mentioned, but the focus of this chapter is exclusively on monuments and memorials erected, planned, or destroyed in the public spaces of these towns.

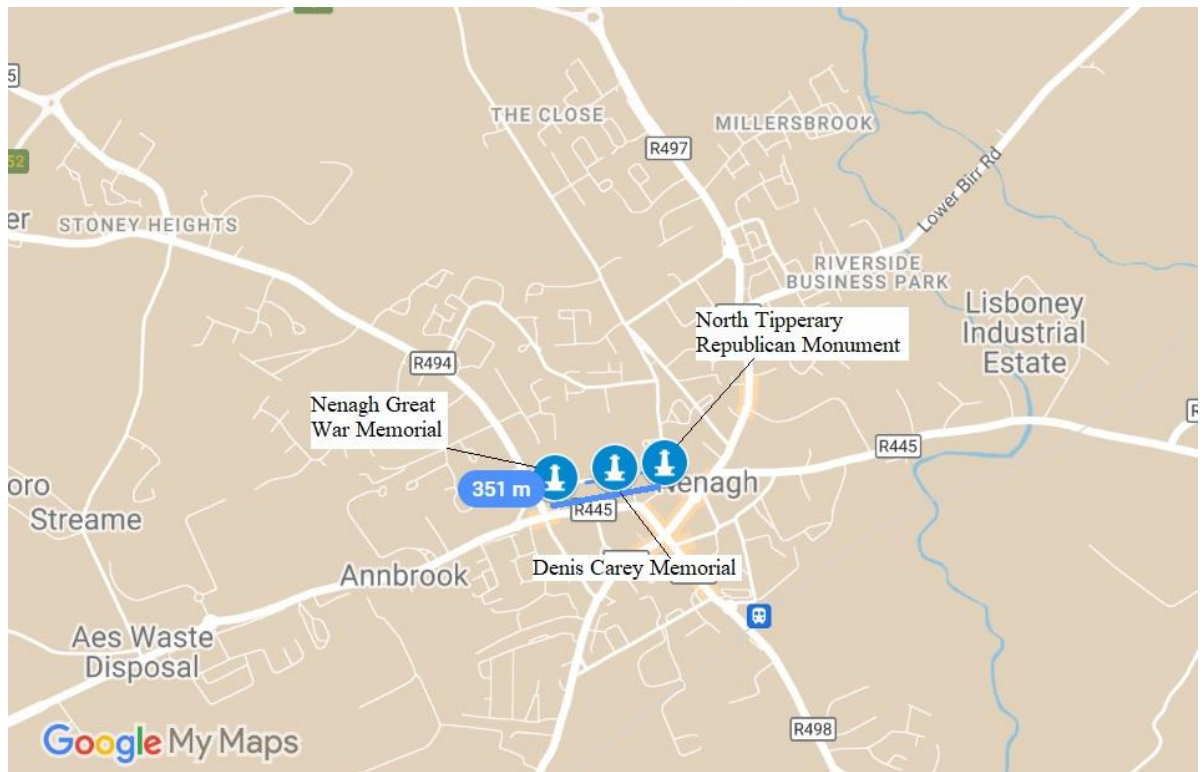


Figure 1: A map of the town of Nenagh indicating the location of each of the three monuments erected in this period, a total distance of 321.5m from the first to the third.

Denis Carey Memorial

Monuments in the urban centre of Nenagh began to be planned, funded, and erected very early in the period of this study. In one case a memorial to Denis Carey, a young man killed in a Black and Tan reprisal attack in November 1920, was erected in the short period between the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 in January 1922 and the commencement of the Irish Civil War in June 1922. The exact date of the beginning of the civil war is disputed, but taking the Free State government's decision to fire on the anti-Treatyites in the Four Courts as the official commencement of hostilities, as John Dorney does in his monograph on the civil war in Dublin, then this memorial was unveiled just days before the outbreak of the 'civil strife' that plagued the country for the following eleven months.⁷ On 25 June 1922, three days before the Free State government fired on the

⁷ John Dorney, *The Civil War in Dublin: The Fight for the Irish Capital 1922-1924* (Dublin, 2017).

anti-Treaty forces holding the Four Courts, a memorial was unveiled at Ashe Road, Nenagh, honouring Denis Carey.⁸

The memorial is made of Irish limestone, and was carved by James Murray, a local stonemason. It is inscribed in the old Irish script and reads:

I ndíl chuimhne Dhonnachadha uí Chiardha, a dunmharbhuigheadh le Gallaibh an
26adh Mí na Shamhna 1920. Ar son na hÉireann d'éag sé.⁹

The choice of language for the memorial was appropriate, as Carey had been actively involved with the local branch of the Gaelic League known as the Nenagh Literary Institute. The Gaelic League, founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893 was (and still is, in the form of Conradh na Gaeilge) a social organisation founded to promote the Irish language, literature and Gaelic culture.¹⁰ The Gaelic League grew in popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with most major towns hosting a branch. As a product and promoter of the Gaelic Revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, members of the League often spoke Irish and took classes, played traditional music, and participated in Irish dancing or drama. Carey was one such young man, and it was his Irish dancing partner that had proposed a memorial be erected in his honour.¹¹ As well as the decision to use Irish on the memorial, the choice of words is significant. 'A dunmharbhuigheadh le Gallaibh' or 'murdered by foreigners' is a phrase repeated on memorials to Irish nationalists around the country and reinforces the portrayal of the British Forces as 'other'. While the choice of language for the monument was fitting, it also serves as an identity marker to indicate that his memory belonged to the group of people in the locality who considered themselves Irish speaking Gaels. It was written by the Gaelic Irish for the Gaelic Irish, simultaneously fostering a sense of belonging and community amongst those who could speak the language while excluding those who could not. The decision to use the Irish language for inscriptions on monuments erected during this period was common for groups promoting a nationalist identity in the public space and

⁸ *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 1 Jul. 1922.

⁹ In English the inscription reads: 'In Loving Memory of Denis Carey, murdered by foreigners on 26 November 1920. He died for Ireland.'

¹⁰ 'The Gaelic League Annual Report (1894)' in Declan Kiberd and P.J. Mathews (eds.) *Handbook of the Irish Revival* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 88-9.

¹¹ *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 1 Jul. 1922.

can be seen on other case studies in this research such as the North Tipperary Republican Monument in Nenagh and the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn in Dublin.

The monument features a Christogram containing the letters 'IHS' surrounded by shamrocks. 'IHS' is an abbreviated form of the Greek word for 'Jesus' and this particular Christogram is present on both monuments financed by the Literary Institute. The strong links with religion do not end at the design of the monument but filter through to the unveiling ceremony and the choice of who would unveil the monuments. Fr O'Halloran, who unveiled the monument, was a senior curate in the parish of Nenagh and was very much involved in all aspects of the public life of his parishioners. Articles in the *Nenagh Guardian* portray an eager, zealous, respected priest relentlessly working for the salvation of the souls of Nenagh.¹² He was hugely involved with the Nenagh Literary Institute, of which Denis Carey was an active member. In 1924 he was acknowledged for having been instrumental in rebuilding the Institute after 'the state of wreck and ruin in which the Black and Tans had left it'.¹³ A man involved in 'the religious, social, and even commercial, life of the town as no other man, lay or clerical, has been', he later publicly supported the Cumann na nGaedheal party by being named as their Treasurer for subscriptions and voicing his support at public meetings, citing economic stability and peace as his justifications in 1932.¹⁴ He was a man who embodied and promoted the belief of a natural and strong connection between Irishness and Catholicism and the article published by the *Nenagh Guardian* on his appointment as parish priest of Mullagh, Co. Clare, in July 1932, described him as a proud priest and patriot, and of 'the Celtic temperament'.¹⁵ This infusion of Irishness, Celticness, and Catholicism as one is a common articulation of Irish identity in the twentieth century amongst those who remained in Ireland and the Irish diaspora.¹⁶

O'Halloran's speech valorised? the young Denis Carey as martyr, declaring that the spot in which the plaque is placed is a sacred, holy place 'for it has drunk the blood of

¹² *Nenagh Guardian*, '18 Jan. 1922.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21 Mar. 1925.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 Mar. 1927 & 6 Feb. 1932.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16 Jul. 1932.

¹⁶ Brian M. Walker, *Irish History Matters* (Dublin, 2019), p. 132.

one who died for Ireland'.¹⁷ In so highlighting the connection between the place that blood was spilled and the holiness and sacredness of that act, Fr O'Halloran is associating the young Denis Carey with images of Christ and his sacrifice. He, an established member of the Catholic Church, invoking this correlation between the two acts confirms the stance of the local Catholic orders in this situation. O'Halloran does not consider Carey's membership of an illegal organisation (the IRA) as a crime.¹⁸ While O'Halloran may have been acting of his own accord, it is not likely that the views he expressed varied much from those of his superiors. When, in January 1916, Fr Michael O'Flanagan delivered a fiery anti-conscription speech in Cork he was censured by Bishop Coyne, Bishop of Elphin, and forbidden from making public speeches, haranguing his congregation, or saying mass outside of his allocated parish.¹⁹ As public opinion shifted in favour of the revolution, so did the Catholic Church. By the War of Independence, the Catholic Church in Ireland generally supported the struggle for independence, and there were instances where members of the Church were targeted by members of the British Army, such as the murder of Fr Michael Griffin in Galway in November 1920. It is clear from his speech that the Roman Catholic Church in the area identified as nationalist Irish. While, three years later at the unveiling of Knigh Cross, he still praised the heroism of the young O'Brien's who were killed by the British Army and laments the tragedy of the loss of such young lives as he did at Denis Carey's memorial in 1922, there was an added dimension to his speech at Knigh. Fr O'Halloran reflects on the 'civil strife' which was 'the most painful part of our Irish history'. It was that war, he reflects, that 'did untold harm' and 'was a huge setback to Irish nationality and to the Gaelic movement'.²⁰ In the three intervening years Irish society had experienced a split that impacted Irish life for many years to come.

A wider context of events in the area influenced the speech given by Fr O'Halloran at the unveiling, who urged people in remembrance of the tragic death of a young man to

¹⁷ *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 1 Jul. 1922.

¹⁸ Applications by Nora Carey on behalf of her son and by Martin Carey on behalf of his brother, Denis Carey, DP1506, Military Service Pensions Collection, Bureau of Military History.

¹⁹ Letter from Bishop Bernard Coyne to Fr Michael O'Flanagan, dated 14 Jan 1916, accessed at <http://carrowkeel.com/frof/brosna.html> on 18/8/2022.

²⁰ *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 Dec. 1925.

come together and forget their differences. In an apparent reference to the gang rape of Mrs Eileen Biggs, the Protestant wife of a member of a well-known landed military family, by local republican men which had been committed in the locality only 9 days previous on 16 June, Fr O'Halloran decried those who now 'take revenge on the beaten foe, a thing which no manly man would do'.²¹ His admonishments were seemingly in vain as that summer there were multiple attacks in North Tipperary on the local Protestant population, a number of them involving sexual harassment of women including a heinous attack on the seventy five year old Mrs McKenna in Roscrea in August 1922.²² Reflecting on the situation in North Tipperary at this time, Church of Ireland Bishop of Clonfert and Killaloe, Sterling Berry, noted that 'there is scarcely a Protestant family in the district which has escaped molestation... altogether a state of terrorism exists'.²³ It should be noted that while Sterling Berry's comments might be construed as having a political agenda he was one of three Church of Ireland bishops who, alongside seventeen Roman Catholic bishops, signed a declaration against the partition of Ireland in 1921.²⁴

The presence of Canon O'Meara, a more senior Church representative, at the unveiling of the Knigh Cross Memorial in 1925 indicates that the support of the Catholic Church in the area was not driven solely by the interests of one individual.²⁵ However, the presence of Fr O'Halloran at both memorials, his interest in the Nenagh Literary Institute, his involvement in local politics, and his signature in Irish in letters to the editor of *The Nenagh Guardian* indicate a man with a keen interest in nationalism and a strong sense of what it meant for him, and for his community, to be defined as 'Irish' - an identity that was at once Gaelic, Catholic, hardworking, moral, and proud.²⁶ As a figure of authority amongst the Catholic community, which made up 96% of the population of Nenagh and its surrounding district, he undoubtedly had a great deal of influence over his parishioners and

²¹ 'The Dromineer Outrage', *The Nenagh Guardian*, 5 Aug. 1922; 'Unveiling of Denis Carey Memorial', *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 1 Jul. 1922.

²² CO 762/137/6, The National Archives, Dublin 2.

²³ Letter from Bishop Sterling Berry, 10 June 1922, NAI JUS/H5/372, The National Archives, Dublin 2.

²⁴ McDowell, R.B., *The Church of Ireland, 1869-1969*, p. 108.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Various articles in the *Nenagh Guardian* on 18 Jan. 1922, 21 Mar. 1925, 5 Dec. 1925, 5 Mar. 1927, 6 Feb. 1932 & 16 Jul. 1932.

their ideas of collective identity.²⁷ With a strong and confident voice of authority in the community expressing such ideals and values, other identities may have struggled to assert themselves in the public space.

Nenagh Great War Memorial

As noted by Guy Beiner in his research on social forgetting in Ulster, changes made to monuments or statues, or their erasure, can indicate a perception of social identity within a community as well as the erection or planning of them.²⁸ In an attempt to fully understand the role that the public had in employing public history practices as part of social identity processes in this period we must consider any changes made to monuments, any changes made in the planning process, and any monuments removed from public space. These monuments do not only represent a past, but their very presence in the public space epitomises the values and priorities of the present. The Nenagh Great War Memorial and debates surrounding its erection indicate how conscious of wider public perception the Nenagh Urban District Council were in this period.

²⁷ W.E Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick. *Irish Historical Statistics: Population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p. 67.

²⁸ Guy Beiner, *Social Forgetting and a Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford, 2018).

The War Memorial Cross, Nenagh's tribute to the dead of the Great War, was erected on 11 November 1928 on privately owned land outside the British Legion's ex-servicemen's hut on Ashe Road, less than 200m from the Denis Carey monument.²⁹ Ex-servicemen's huts were buildings in many towns and cities across the country established for the social and recreational use of British Army veterans. Although the monument was erected on privately owned land, it is accessible and visible to the public and features in public commemorations and ceremonies, as such it has been included in this research. The monument is a limestone cross, 16 feet high and is adorned with Celtic style artwork.³⁰ The inscription reads '1914-1918 At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them', a quote from Laurence Binyon's popular poem, 'For the Fallen'. Published in September 1914 the poem came to symbolise remembrance of all the war dead by November 1918 and by 1928 was a popular choice for monuments commemorating the war dead throughout the British Empire. An appropriate tone for a war memorial, the use of this poem encapsulates a fluid British aspect to certain Irish identities

and links the war dead across nations, prioritising their common sacrifice over national divides.

The cross resembles an ancient high cross, a feature of early Christian Ireland, with reliefs of Celtic knots and Irish greyhounds, motifs also seen on the Carey monument. The design of the cross, made locally with local limestone, visually connects remembrance of the First World War with what was perceived to be Ireland's Golden Age from which many in the arts and crafts movement during the Gaelic Revival took inspiration. In making this connection, the



Photograph 3: The War Memorial Cross, Nenagh. Photograph taken by Caitlin White in May 2020.

²⁹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1928.

³⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1928.

committee behind the Nenagh Great War Memorial Cross were infusing their Irishness with a Britishness, represented by lines from an English poet's pen, to commemorate men who died as Irishmen and British subjects. They were at once Irish and British, and this memorial is a physical manifestation of the complex facets of social identities.

The very centre of the cruciform features the recurring Christogram 'IHS' in a Celtic style. While this symbol had been used by the Roman Catholic community on the monuments to Denis Carey, and Thomas and John O'Brien, it is a Christian rather than a Catholic symbol and is used by a variety of Christian denominations. The symbol, being used again in relation to the First World War and by a committee led by the Protestant Reverend McDowell reaffirms the importance of religion to the communal identity.³¹ The individual names of those who lost their lives were not initially inscribed on the monument, but the committee specified that this would be done once they had collected all the names of the fallen and did attempt to collect these after the erection of the cross.³² Ger Dooley's research on Nenagh estimates between 51 to 66 men from the town itself were killed and that approximately 45% of Nenagh's available males, 20% of Nenagh's overall population, served in the war.³³ Ultimately, the names were never inscribed and instead the monument featured a simple inscription dedicating the memorial to 'those of Nenagh and district who fell in the Great War 1914-1918'.³⁴

The unveiling ceremony on 11 November 1928 was attended by approximately 600 people, the *Nenagh Guardian* later attributed the bad weather to what was considered a poor turnout. The ceremony consisted of a parade of ex-servicemen accompanied by the Nenagh Brass and Reed Band and the Ex-Servicemen's Fife and Drum Band from the memorial cross on Ashe Road to the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland churches (which stand side by side) where services were observed simultaneously, followed by a united march back to the memorial cross and an observation of two minutes silence.³⁵ The

³¹ *The Nationalist*, 12 May 1928.

³² *Nenagh Guardian*, 20 Apr. 1929.

³³ Gerard Dooley, *Nenagh 1914-21: Years of Crises* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 28-9.

³⁴ *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1928.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

simultaneous remembrance services being observed in both of the local churches suggests cooperation between the two and indicates that, at least amongst some war veterans, there was a sense of cross-community unity. The monument was unveiled by the Dowager Lady Dunalley who had lost her son in the war and whose late husband had been influential in the North Tipperary recruitment drive.³⁶ The Dunalley's were local landed gentry who were not known for being popular landlords, and whose house (Kilboy House) was burned in 1922 during the Irish Civil War.³⁷ While the majority of ex-servicemen from Nenagh were labourers rather than tenant farmers, it is possible that the presence of a Dunalley as the guest of honour to unveil the monument alienated some war veterans in the community.³⁸

Mr E. Heeney on behalf of the committee originally requested space in the town's main thoroughfare of Banba Square for the memorial to the dead of the First World War, but the site was refused by the Nenagh UDC in May 1928 on the grounds that it would be an insult to 'their own dead', in a sweeping statement rejecting the young men from the town and district who were killed in the trenches.³⁹ The decision of the Council was not made without discussion and debate, and a number of ideas were put forward to reconcile the erection of the Nenagh Great War Memorial with the nationalist feeling of the town. In their refusal of the site of Banba Square for the erection of a memorial to the dead of the war, the Nenagh UDC were very conscious of their role in the construction of Nenagh's narrative. Councillor Flannery stated that while he believed that the rank and file were sincere in their motivations to honour dead comrades and acknowledged that they had 'every right' to do so, he was suspicious of the motivations of those driving the project and who applied for the public site in the square. He declared that the memorial would become

³⁶ Dooley, *Nenagh 1914-21: Years of Crises*, pp. 30-32.

³⁷ James Gleeson from Cloughjordan said, 'The old Lord Dunalley or the present Lord Dunalley's father is said to have been a very cruel landlord and would not give his tenants permission to keep as much as a goat or kid in the house and when they had a big fire down, he ordered them to have it put out, and the people were often perished.' Recorded by Josie Gleeson in 1938 as part of the Schools' Folklore Project. UCD National Folklore Collection, The Schools' Collection, Volume 0533, 157. However, their grandson Henry Cornelius Prittie later claimed that he spoke to one of the men involved: 'He told me there was no ill feeling and they had nothing against my grandparents, but their orders were to drive them out.', this is quoted in Terence Dooley, *Burning the Big House* (London, 2022), p. 154.

³⁸ Dooley, *Nenagh 1914-21: Years of Crises*, pp. 28-9.

³⁹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 12 May 1928.

a ‘rallying point for the forces of Imperialism’ not only in Nenagh, but in every town in Ireland where this kind of monument was proposed. Flannery appealed to the Council to consider the matter as a public body rather than individuals and suggests that a monument granted permission to be erected on public grounds by local authorities could ‘claim to be regarded as a national one’.⁴⁰ To grant the permission of a public site for such a monument might leave the actions and sentiments of the council - and by extension the community - open to misinterpretation. In agreement, Councillor Gill added that in a few years there may not be prayers for the dead at the base of the proposed monument, but instead ‘you would hear the strains of the British National Anthem’.⁴¹ Only the week before some Councillors had suggested erecting a memorial to those who died for Irish independence and those who died in the First World War side by side, but after consideration the resolution to refuse the site of Banba Square for the erection of a monument to the war dead was unanimously passed.⁴² The ideology behind the Great War Memorial and the implications of what supporting it would insinuate, , would have been too great ‘an outrage on the national feelings of the town’.⁴³ In this debate, the two contesting narratives (private and public) that Keith Jeffery identifies in his research on the memorialisation of the First World War in Ireland are apparent, with the private narrative of individual grief and bereavement side-lined in favour of the maintenance of the public narrative of proud nationalism in the public space.⁴⁴

It is evident from the contemporary newspaper sources reporting on the contents of the meeting of the Urban District Council that the Councillors saw themselves as the gatekeepers or curators of the community’s identity. They treated their roles as curators with earnest pride and were conscious of the image of the locality as perceived through their public monuments. Their reservations and anxieties mirror those of the Irish Free State government who had debated a similar issue the previous year. In March 1927 the site of Merrion Square in Dublin city centre had been deemed too prominent a location for

⁴⁰ *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 May 1928.

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² *The Nationalist*, 2 May 1928.

⁴³ *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 May 1928.

⁴⁴ Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 127.

a memorial to the dead of the First World War, only one of a series of debates, developments and delays in the erection of a national war memorial in this period.⁴⁵ The men who answered the call to enlist in the British Army in 1914, many who were nationalists who fought ‘for a dream born in a herdsman’s shed’, could not be commemorated at the expense of the reputation and honour of the locality.⁴⁶ P. Ryan (Lacken), a member of the North Tipperary Republican Monument Committee, told the Nenagh UDC in 1928 that they had a decision to make, a decision ‘between the men who died in the Great War and those who laid down their lives for the Irish Republic’.⁴⁷ There was little room for complex nuances of collective identity expression in this public sphere. The British Army that men had enlisted in in 1914 was an entity whose contentious legacy continued in collective memory. The uniforms worn by those who died for the cause of small nations were the same as those worn by the enemies of Irish independence, and to wholeheartedly embrace public efforts to commemorate the organisation would be at the expense of the reputation and honour of the locality. Clearly, Nuala C. Johnson’s assertion that ‘while national politicians, local councillors, and members of the churches could all agree that some public marking of remembrance to the fallen was desirable, the use of public space for such activity was constantly contested’ accurately describes the situation in Nenagh in the late 1920s.⁴⁸

What is notable about the actions of the Council is how this decision was made by a group of local representatives which included men who had served and lost family in the British Army during the First World War. John Tierney, a councillor on the Nenagh UDC in this period, had himself served in the British Army during the First World War and lost a younger brother, Michael, in action in March 1915.⁴⁹ His son Martin died in 1923 after complications from prolonged hunger strike while imprisoned in the Curragh by Free State

⁴⁵ ‘Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution’, *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

⁴⁶ Lines written by Irish nationalist soldier Tom Kettle in his poem ‘To My Daughter Betty – Gift From God’, in which he describes his motivations for enlisting in the British Army as being linked to his Catholic faith.

⁴⁷ *The Nationalist*, 2 May 1928.

⁴⁸ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War, and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 111.

⁴⁹ Michael’s death recorded in Tom and Ruth Burnell, *The Tipperary War Dead* (Dublin, 2008), p. 328.

forces during the Irish Civil War, the same forces his other son, John, joined at the outbreak of civil war.⁵⁰ As evidenced by Dooley's research on the demographics of the town and participation in the war, statistically Tierney could not have been alone in the community at having connections with what would later seem to be conflicting narratives.⁵¹ Brian Walker notes that 'official attitudes were ambivalent but generally tolerant in the 1920s' towards commemoration of the First World War, but public opinion became increasingly opposed to commemorative ceremonies and monuments as the decade progressed and into the 1930s.⁵² As a result of this increasing disassociation, the narrative of the Irishman who enlisted in the British Army was not given the public space for consideration and expression in the Irish Free State. We cannot presume to understand what, if any, effect this rejection of narrative had on individuals within the community. The rejection of this narrative starkly contrasts with the more widely accepted and projected nationalist and republican identities in the Irish Free State and highlights the tensions playing out within communities for control of the collective identity.

Leading the committee of the Nenagh Great War Memorial was Rev. McDowell. Religion in this period was closely connected to political affiliation and national identity, so much so that Protestants in the Irish Free State, in particular in North Tipperary, found themselves victims of discrimination and violence because of the strong connections between the Protestant community and a British, unionist identity. Archbishop Gregg of the Church of Ireland declared in 1924 that 'there was perhaps no part of the country more unsettled' than within the boundaries of the dioceses of Killaloe and Clonfert, which included Nenagh and its surrounding areas. Recent research by Brian M. Walker suggests that approximately 40,643 people, accounting for nearly half of Church of Ireland emigration from the Irish Free State from 1911-26, was due to involuntary emigration or the threat of violence, and the Protestant population of Munster alone decreased by 43% in this period.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 12 Aug. 1922.

⁵¹ Gerard Dooley, *Nenagh 1914-21: Years of Crises* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 28-9.

⁵² Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 83.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-21.

On the same day as the unveiling of the Nenagh Great War Memorial, 11 November 1928, the foundation stone was laid for the North Tipperary Republican Monument by Seán MacBride, the then Director of Intelligence for the anti-Treaty IRA and son of executed 1916 leader Major John MacBride.⁵⁴ The laying of the foundation stone was reported to have attracted the attention of a large gathering, ‘despite heavy rain’. It was this same rain that was blamed for the low turnout for the unveiling of the Great War Memorial Cross but republicans, it seemed, did not mind the weather so much. Undoubtedly the presence of Seán MacBride attracted a large crowd, but so too would have been the desire to undermine the other ceremony happening barely 300 metres away. In laying the foundation stone, on the exact spot denied to the Nenagh Great War Memorial Committee, the republicans of North Tipperary proudly relished their triumph. MacBride, in a theme that would be continued three years later by Frank Ryan at the unveiling of the monument, urged those present that the work was yet unfinished.⁵⁵

The relatively late erection of the cross may have played a part in the lack of official support given to the monument. As Walker notes, increasing levels of opposition to Armistice Day commemorations in Dublin led to the main ceremony being moved from the city centre to the Phoenix Park in 1926, and this opposition continued throughout the subsequent years until the Fianna Fáil victory in the 1932 general election resulted in the withdrawal of all official representatives from the Dublin ceremony.⁵⁶ The passing of time since the end of the war had seen remembrance of the war dead become increasingly politicised and there was less and less space for them in the national narrative.

North Tipperary Republican Monument

The Nenagh UDCs' awareness of the consequences of monuments they chose to support or otherwise adds another dimension to the erection of the North Tipperary Republican Monument. Henri Lefebvre's Marxist consideration of space as a form of

⁵⁴ *Anglo-Celt*, 17 Nov 1928.

⁵⁵ *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Nov 1928.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 84.

capital, as discussed in the Introduction, is pertinent to the analysis of these monuments...⁵⁷ As is Fran Tonkiss's assertion that 'urban space is both the object of political agency and its medium'.⁵⁸ The control of public space, in any community, is one of the most visible ways of exercising power. This was triumphantly exercised by North Tipperary Republican Committee on 23 August 1931, when the North Tipperary Republican Monument was unveiled on the exact spot the Nenagh Great War Memorial Committee had requested for a monument to the dead of the First World War.⁵⁹ The organisation had an ability to 'mobilise numbers beyond its immediate membership in displays of support for its politics', which may help to explain the huge support the North Tipperary Republican Monument received when recorded strengths for Tipperary IRA were declining.⁶⁰ In June 1931 the IRA had broken the government ban on their annual commemoration at Wolfe Tone's graveside at Bodenstown Cemetery, staging a 'successful defiance' of the established government and signalling increasing confidence in its position.⁶¹ This atmosphere may have given the local republican organisations confidence to go ahead with the unveiling of the controversial, anti-government monument, and to

⁵⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (New Jersey, 1974) and Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms* (Cambridge, 2015).

⁵⁸ Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory*, p. 63.

⁵⁹ The years 1930 and 1931 had seen a huge rise in membership of the IRA, who asserted that in the period 1926-36 they were not engaged in any military campaign, and so one of the main activities members engaged in was organising and participating in commemorative events. See Brian Hanley. *The IRA, 1926-36* (Dublin, 2002) pp. 14, 50.

⁶⁰ Brian Hanley. *The IRA, 1926-36* (Dublin, 2002) p. 16.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 51; for further reading on Bodenstown Cemetery, see C.J. Woods, *Bodenstown Revisited: The grave of Theobald Wolfe Tone, its monuments and its pilgrimages* (Dublin, 2018)

invite a leading IRA figure to unveil it.



Photograph 4: The North Tipperary Republican Monument, Banba Square, Nenagh. Photograph taken by Caitlin White in April 2021.

The monument was unveiled to crowds of approximately 5,000 people following a procession of a further 1,000.⁶² They were accompanied by the Nenagh Brass and Reed Band and when the procession reached Banba Square a decade of the Rosary was said in Irish, reinforcing the narrative of Gaelic Irishness as intrinsically Catholic. The monument, inscribed in Irish only, again using the Irish language as a political identity marker, states that it is dedicated to the people of North Tipperary from 1916 onwards who gave their lives for the Irish Republic. This monument does not include the soldiers of the Irish Free State's National Army who died during the civil war, only members of the anti-treaty, anti-government side who remained with the IRA. This approach concurs with Anne Dolan's observation that in the aftermath of the civil war 'the republicans maintained their rebel

⁶² *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1931.

air' and their sense of martyrdom.⁶³ The freestanding monument is in the Romanesque style and sits on a plinth in the town's main thoroughfare. It was accompanied by a sculpture of an Irish Volunteer (who became known locally as 'Jamesy'), which was later replaced by an image of Christ the King due to protests about Jamesy's ugly appearance, to commemorate the soldiers who sacrificed their lives.⁶⁴ The monument's prominent position ensures that it dominates the public space and is a central feature of the landscape of the town.

Planning for this monument began relatively soon after the ceasefire which ended the Irish Civil War. After a little over two years since the IRA laid down their arms, on 3 June 1925, permission was sought from the Nenagh UDC to erect a monument in the square to 'those who lost their lives in... the struggle for independence'.⁶⁵ Councillor Michael Bergin requested permission verbally on behalf of the Sinn Féin Executive of North Tipperary, of which he himself was a member. Permission was granted from the Nenagh UDC with seemingly little opposition, with the Chairman adding that it would be 'an ornament to the locality'.⁶⁶ What is unclear when the permission was sought for this monument is the extent to which the Councillors knew about the message it would later convey. If any debate over the ideology of the monument was had at the Council Meeting, it was certainly not reported on in the usually detailed and descriptive *Nenagh Guardian*. It is important to note that while the Nenagh UDC granted the space for the monument, it did not contribute to the fundraising efforts in an official capacity. Through dances, GAA games, flag days and private donations chronicled and advertised in the local press the North Tipperary Republican Monument Committee raised the pounds, shillings and pence required to erect their monument to the dead. In this sense, it is one of the many local

⁶³ Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 123.

⁶⁴ *Nenagh Guardian*, 19 Jul. 1925.

⁶⁵ 'Minutes of Proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Nenagh Urban District Council 3 June 1925', *Nenagh Urban District Council Minute Book 7*, Nenagh Municipal Council Archives, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, pp. 380-4.

⁶⁶ *Nenagh Guardian*, 6 Jun. 1925.

monuments described by Dolan of being far more significant and meaningful to local communities than the grand gestures in Dublin.⁶⁷

While there was no opposition from Councillors to granting the Sinn Féin Executive permission to erect this monument, there was clearly a concern for the monument itself with the Chairman wondering if supervision would be required in the erection of the memorial, and Councillor Flannery suggesting that it would require railings for its own protection.⁶⁸ This concern for the safety of the monument was evidently tangible enough that there were allegedly premises rented with various vantage points of the monument in which lookouts and snipers were placed in the weeks leading up to the official unveiling in 1931.⁶⁹ It should also be noted that on 30 December 1921 the Nenagh UDC voted to urge their county representatives to accept the terms of the Treaty, ‘agreed on by the duly appointed plenipotentiaries of Dáil Éireann’.⁷⁰ Tipperary’s representatives, of which there were four, were split on the matter of the Treaty. The two TDs originating from the North Tipperary region, Joseph McDonagh and Patrick O’Byrne, voted against the Treaty. They were joined in their sentiments by PJ Moloney who originated from the south of the county, while Séamus Bourke from mid-Tipperary was the only Tipperary TD to support the terms of the agreement.⁷¹ After violent upheavals in various forms since 1914, many people were weary of violence and wanted no part in further conflict, reflected in the resolutions passed by local councils throughout the county.⁷² In analysing the economic situation in the aftermath of the conflict, Gavin Foster noted that concerns about

⁶⁷ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, p. 138.

⁶⁸ *Nenagh Guardian*, 6 Jun. 1925.

⁶⁹ This information was told to the researcher in a conversation with P.J. McDonnell, whose father was on the original North Tipperary Republican Committee, in July 2019 at his residence near Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

⁷⁰ *Nenagh Urban District Council Minute Book 7*, Nenagh Municipal Council Archives, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, pp. 67-8.

⁷¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 Jun. 1922.

⁷² In his interview given to the Bureau of Military History, Pádraig Ó Catháin estimated that approximately half of the Carlow Brigade remained neutral in the Anglo-Irish Treaty split. Himself, he admits to not being for the treaty but at the same time not participating in the civil war. (BMH.WS1572 - Pádraig Ó Catháin) This is corroborated by Nan Nolan’s account in which she remembers how many who didn’t want the Treaty would not take sides in the conflict, suggesting an understandable desire to return to normality (BMH.WS1747 - Nan Nolan). Reports on the resolutions passed by Urban District Councils in the county reported in *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 Dec. 1921 and *Cork Examiner*, 3 Jan. 1922.

personal economic security were on the minds of many aging revolutionaries - it had been six years since the Easter Rising and almost a decade since the establishment of the Irish Volunteers.⁷³ Minute Book 7 of the Nenagh UDC illustrates the impact that extreme violence had on the local community, with frequent votes of condolence passed in the revolutionary period.⁷⁴ It is clear that people desired a return to normality, even if that meant accepting a Treaty containing terms disagreeable to their principles.

On the day of the unveiling an eminent anti-Treaty figure, Frank Ryan, was invited to address the crowd and officiate the unveiling of the monument. At this point Ryan was a well-known leading IRA figure, described by his biographer Fearghal McGarry as a man who ‘saw physical force as not only necessary but morally superior to other forms of struggle’.⁷⁵ An avid Irish language speaker and member of the Gaelic League, he was critical of those who entered parliament to negotiate greater freedom for Ireland and believed that a return to the gun would be preferable. McGarry notes that Ryan was opposed to sectarianism and the influence of the Catholic Church on the state. While republicans cited the provocative display of British imperialism as the reason for their opposition, McGarry notes that it is evident from Ryan’s speeches that an intolerance of a non-republican identity was intrinsic to his opposition.⁷⁶ He became editor of *An Phoblacht* (the republican newspaper) in 1929 and was targeted as part of the Cumann na nGaedheal government’s crackdown on IRA members and their activities in the early 1930s. At the time of his appearance in Nenagh, he had recently been released from prison where he had been held for printing seditious material in *An Phoblacht* and would be arrested a few months later in December 1931 for his membership of the IRA.⁷⁷

‘Ryan’s popularity was also partly due to the fact that he was invariably the most bloodthirsty speaker at any meeting’, and in Nenagh he did not disappoint.⁷⁸ Delivering his

⁷³ Gavin Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class and Society* (London, 2015), p. 172.

⁷⁴ *Nenagh Urban District Council Minute Book 7*, Nenagh Municipal Council Archives, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

⁷⁵ Fearghal McGarry, *Frank Ryan* (Dublin, 2010), p. 13.

⁷⁶ McGarry, *Frank Ryan*, pp. 16-7.

⁷⁷ *Irish Press*, 9 Dec. 1931.

⁷⁸ McGarry, *Frank Ryan*, p. 18.

speech first in Irish, then in English, he asserted that the people of Nenagh ‘have the right spirit in you, and that you know by raising a monument you have done a good thing’.

However, in line with the message of the monument, Ryan went on to say:

you have not done enough. There is one monument which you in conjunction with the people of Ireland must raise – the one and only fitting monument you can raise – an independent and undivided Irish Republic

which was met with applause. The monument, he believed, should not only be a source of inspiration for those present, but also a source of shame. It was to serve as a reminder that they were ‘living still in the slavery which brave men died rather than endure’.⁷⁹ His criticism extended to the policies of the Free State government which he believed was the cause for the mass emigration of young people from the state. His incendiary speech was typical of Ryan’s speeches in this period. The opening of the monument was mentioned in multiple local and national newspapers all reporting on the content of Ryan’s oration.⁸⁰

The choice of Ryan as the guest of honour was in itself a political act and indicates that even amongst communities in Nenagh who were commemorating the very same people, the treaty split was manifesting in the public space. Ryan does not speak of tolerance or reconciliation in the same vein as Fr O’Halloran but gives voice to a more radical republican identity which was finding expression during this period through the establishment and growth of the Fianna Fáil party, the Republican Party, which went on to secure electoral victory the following year in the 1932 general election.

In this same month, August 1931, the nationalist community in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, was prevented from erecting a monument outside Carrickmore ‘in memory of Tyrone men who had given their lives for Ireland’.⁸¹ This action was possible due to regulations passed by the Minister for Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, on 27th July 1931 under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act. This regulation outlawed the erection of any monument or memorial ‘calculated to promote the objects of an illegal association or prejudicial to the preservation of peace and the maintenance of order’ in the six counties of

⁷⁹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1931.

⁸⁰ *Evening Herald*, 24 Aug. 1931; *Irish Independent*, 24 Aug. 1931; *Donegal Democrat*, 29 Aug. 1931.

⁸¹ *Strabane Chronicle*, 1 Aug. 1931.

Northern Ireland. This regulation has a huge impact on the research of monuments and memorials in Northern Ireland during this period, as any erected after this regulation was passed in July 1931 were required to conform to the ‘official’ or endorsed narrative of the state.

The approach to memorialisation of the anti-Treaty IRA, the ‘losing’ side in the civil war is markedly different from a parallel situation in Finland in the decades following their civil war. The civil war in Finland, which took place in 1918, claimed the lives of approximately 1.2% of the population. While research indicates a more balanced approach between memorials to both the socialist Red and non-socialist White sides in the civil war, the physical manifestation of the memory of the losing side, the Reds, became widespread from the 1960s onwards. The Red memorials are primarily scattered throughout the countryside, occupying peripheral locations rather than taking central public space in town centres or squares, space reserved for the White memorials.⁸² In the case of the North Tipperary Republican Monument the position is reversed, with the anti-Treaty IRA commanding the town square and the pro-Treaty fallen, like the well-known National Army Colonel (and former prominent North Tipperary IRA Brigadier) Austin McCurtin, relegated to the sphere of silences.⁸³ In this case the anti-Treaty side in Nenagh is reflective of the movement’s ‘stubborn counter-memory’, as described by Gavin Foster, and the freedom they were afforded indicates an air of, if not conciliation, then perhaps a begrudging acceptance of the need to move forward.⁸⁴

The monuments in Nenagh and the controversies, or lack thereof, that surrounded them gives an indication to the identities wished to be expressed by local communities and groups, or at least by the most dominant communities and groups in the area. It is clear from all three monuments that the people of Nenagh, through committees and local representatives, took a proactive role in shaping their public space, and in engaging with public history practices in monumental form. It is evident that the life of a monument is

⁸² Oula Seitsonen, Paul Mullins & Tim Yilmaunu, ‘Public memory, national heritage, and memorialization of the 1918 Finnish Civil War’, *World Archaeology*, vol. 51, no. 5, (2019) p. 751.

⁸³ For information on Austin McCurtin, killed in action in Laois in July 1922 see Military Services Pensions Collection, file 2D495.

⁸⁴ Gavin Foster, ‘The Legacy and Memory of the Irish Civil War’, *Irish Examiner*, 13 June 2022.

not static; they are public expressions of collective identity, which is fluid and can undergo huge transformations within a short space of time. They represent the remembrance of past events or people of perceived significance.

Limavady

Limavady is a town in the electoral district of Londonderry, approximately eighteen miles outside of the city of Derry. It was chosen to feature in this research alongside the town of Nenagh in Co. Tipperary due to a number of similarities between the communities. The importance of including these case studies in research such as this has already been discussed in the introduction, and their contribution to our understanding of communities across the island and the identities and historical narratives being expressed in this period should not be underestimated.

In this period Limavady had a population of just under 3,000 people in the urban area, with an extended community of approximately 15,000 people in the surrounding townlands.⁸⁵ According to the 1926 census, 40% of the urban and 49% of the rural communities were Roman Catholics, with Church of Ireland members consisting of 31% of the urban population and 16% of the rural population, and Presbyterians making up 26% of the urban and 32% of the rural populations.⁸⁶ It was important that a town was chosen that was not dominated by any one religious community during this period, so that identities being promoted in the public space were not unduly influenced by one community or another. Research revealed that the town of Limavady erected one permanent monumental memorial in this period, that of the War Institute and the Roll of Honour contained within. While there are less monuments to examine and consider than the other town under review in this research, the distinct changes in the treatment of the

⁸⁵ The urban area recorded a population of 2,801 in 1926 and 2,772 in 1937, Vaughan, W. E. and Fitzpatrick, A. J., *Irish Historical Statistics, Population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p. 48.

⁸⁶ 'Londonderry County and Borough – Religious Professions', *1926 Census*, NI Statistics and Research Agency, p. 62. Accessed online on 3 Apr 2019 at www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/1926-census-londonderry-county-borough-report.pdf.

memory being promoted in Limavady reveals insights into the development of communities, identities, and divisions during this period.

Limavady War Institute

In Limavady plans to commemorate the fallen of the First World War began before the war itself was over. In January 1918 there were two lime trees planted in the town in memory of those who had died, with the intention, according to the local paper the *Northern Constitution*, that ‘at the close of the war a tablet giving all the names of the local men who have fallen will be put up’.⁸⁷ When the war finally ended the townspeople decided that a more fitting tribute was required and a public meeting was held on 5 December 1918 to consider what steps should be taken ‘to perpetuate the memory of the noble band of volunteers’ from the area ‘who fought and fell in defence of our homes, and who helped to save the British Empire’. The meeting was presided over by the chairman of Limavady Urban District Council (UDC), Robert Douglas. Douglas said that it was right that they should commemorate their soldiers, and added that ‘all Irishmen did their part, and did it well’.⁸⁸ There was a significant crowd at the meeting and the resolution to erect a memorial was passed, as was a second resolution that the memorial should take the form of a building with a library, reading and recreation rooms.⁸⁹

The erection of a memorial was something which had huge support amongst the local community, with a general committee of thirty-six members elected at the first meeting and a significant sum of £600 being raised ‘within a few minutes’, resulting in a total of approximately £4,500 being raised within eighteen months.⁹⁰ This is especially impressive when one considers that the Irish Free State government spent £833 8s. 4d. on the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn to commemorate the fallen leaders of the civil war in

⁸⁷ *Northern Constitution*, 5 Jan 1918.

⁸⁸ *Northern Constitution*, 7 Dec 1918.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 3 March 1922. £650 in 1922 is the equivalent of approximately £37,000 GBP in 2019, with £4,500 in 1922 equalling approximately £257,000 GBP in 2019, according to the Bank of England, on 21/1/2020.

1923.⁹¹ The pattern of contributions in Limavady followed that which was seen broadly across Northern Ireland, the donors were largely local and that the contributor lists were large as most donated small amounts. In Limavady there were only 13 people out of the initial 108 who donated who gave addresses outside of the town and its surrounding townlands, and of those 13 only 3 had addresses outside of Northern Ireland.⁹² The committee consisted of men and women from the local community, and also featured members of the Limavady UDC, ex-servicemen, and representatives of the Catholic and Protestant churches in the area. Of the thirty-six general committee members, eight were listed as Justices of the Peace, three were men of the cloth, and two held the rank of commissioned officer in the British Army.⁹³ This would indicate that the organisation and oversight of the memorial to the fallen soldiers featured considerable influence from the middle classes of the locality, a pattern we have already seen in the consideration of monuments in this period.

The Memorial Institute was founded on the Western outskirts of the town, the property having been sold to the Committee for a small sum by Mr. E. M. F. G. Boyle on the death of his father. Boyle was also one of three secretaries on the War Memorial Executive Committee consisting of six members at the opening ceremony in 1922.⁹⁴ This Executive Committee was appointed to oversee the business of the erection of the monument and to report back to the general committee on a regular basis. It was intended that the institute should be used by men of all classes and creeds, veterans of that war which was being commemorated. However, the hardening of attitudes on both sides of the border as the decade progressed and moved into the tumultuous and uncertain 1930s made a venture such as this, a truly cross-community institution, increasingly unlikely. Even two years after the War Memorial Institute was opened in Limavady, at the unveiling of the Roll of Honour, the atmosphere at the ceremonial event is in stark contrast with that of the opening ceremony in 1922.

⁹¹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, pp. 10 & 82.

⁹² Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*, p. 66.

⁹³ *Northern Constitution*, 7 Dec 1918.

⁹⁴ *Belfast Newsletter*, 29 Mar. 1922.

Notably, the *Belfast Newsletter* did not report on the inclusive and encompassing language used in the 1922, in which the hope that this place might help the community ‘to reach the ideal which all true Irishmen had at heart [...] a united and happy Ireland’.⁹⁵ Rather, it reported on the words of the Chairman of the War Memorial Committee, Mr. Robert Douglas, J.P., who stated that their ‘aim was not to have an ornamentary memorial, but one which would be serviceable, especially to those who had fought [...] in Flanders and France’.⁹⁶ Focusing on the utilitarian aspirations of the committee, this statement certainly encompasses members of both communities who fought in the conflict but it fails to outline any cross-community aims.

The War Memorial Institute was opened in May 1922 by Major General Oliver Nugent. Although the ceremony was presided over by the Dean of Londonderry, it was not intended as a ceremony exclusively for the Protestant community. On the contrary, the *Northern Constitution* reported on the words of the Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education, Sir Alfred T. Davies, praising that the Institute was to be a place ‘free from sectarian, party, political, or class control’, a place where ‘the men and women of the district could meet for social, recreative, educational, or utilitarian purposes and in which the spirit of comradeship can be fostered and find full expression’.⁹⁷ Maj.-Gen. Nugent was a British Army Officer, and during the majority of the First World War he commanded the 36th (Ulster) Division, leading them in the renowned Battle of the Somme.⁹⁸ Hailing from a landed, Protestant family from Cavan, Nugent had been involved with the training of the Ulster Volunteer Force in Cavan, renaming his division the Cavan Volunteer Force because of his unease with the ‘Ulster’ title. Unlike some more ‘Orange’ officers in the army, Nugent disliked the UVF and came to regret his early involvement with the organisation. He had ‘little sympathy with the narrow-minded outlook of the extremists up in the North’, and little time for the militant Irish nationalism which had

⁹⁵ *Northern Constitution*, 11 May 1922.

⁹⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 3 March 1922.

⁹⁷ *Northern Constitution*, 11 May 1922.

⁹⁸ Pauline Mitchell, ‘I do wish we were not the “Ulster” division but just the 36th’, *History Ireland*. 4,22 (July/August 2014). Accessed online at <https://www.historyireland.com/volume-22/wish-ulster-division-just-36th/> on 27/3/2020.

gained popularity after the 1916 Rising.⁹⁹ After the war Nugent returned to his native Cavan where he lived until his death in 1926. He became active in projects that focused on the post-war legacy of the 36th Division and opened many monuments and memorials throughout Ulster. Philip Orr observed that he was ‘always at pains to point out the need for an inclusive approach to commemoration, despite the political chasm which had opened between many battlefield comrades’, which undoubtedly influenced the events he spoke at and monuments he unveiled which may or may not have been representative of the majority of people in the community.¹⁰⁰

In this troubled and uncertain period, the community of Limavady embraced its own diversity and celebrated freedom of expression and an individual’s right to belong to different religious and political groups while commemorating those they had lost. The narrative being perpetuated by the committee and the War Memorial Institute they opened was one of solidarity, and a community united in grief. Like the Denis Carey Memorial, the planning for this monument had begun very soon after the end of the war. Before the war had even ended, the locality had attempted to perform their remembrance in the public space by erecting two lime trees to the local victims of the conflict.¹⁰¹ Merely a month after the end of the First World War a public meeting was held in the district to consider how the community might best commemorate the ‘noble band of volunteers from the town and district who fought and fell’. The chairman of this meeting acknowledged that ‘all Irishmen did their part’ in defending the British Empire, making no differentiation between the Irishmen of Ulster and those of the remaining three provinces and the opening ceremony of the Institute echoed this tone.¹⁰²

For a monument erected and unveiled so soon after the cessation of the war the collective outpouring of emotion is palpable and directly impacts the form of the monument and its aspirations. An emotionally charged community who had suffered loss and witnessed severe trauma were reluctant to glorify violence and perpetuate divisions. The bereaved had formed an emotional community in their grief, and in this opening

⁹⁹ Philip Orr, ‘Maj Gen Oliver Nugent: The suspect unionist’, *Irish Times*, 18 May 2016.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Northern Constitution*, 5 Jan. 1918.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1918.

ceremony it is that emotional community, rather than a political or religious one, that is paramount.¹⁰³ As the situation in the two states progressed this utopian ideal moved further from reach, but this optimism and hope that was expressed in 1922, that created a possibility for a future that did not come to pass, should not be disregarded or ignored because it was not realised. Historians should be cognisant of the question posed in James Joyce's *Ulysses* by Stephen Dedalus, 'can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass?'¹⁰⁴

The memorial function of the institute was completed, however, its tone shifted with the unveiling and dedication of the Roll of Honour two years after the institute itself was opened. Rolls of Honour were particularly important in war remembrance of the First World War because as well as serving to quantify the contribution of specific communities, they also served as records of those whose bodies were not returned home.¹⁰⁵ The official unveiling ceremony of the Roll of Honour was held on 16 October 1924 and was unveiled by Major Henry H. F. MacDonald-Tyler.¹⁰⁶ MacDonald-Tyler, who had been serving as a civil servant in India before the war, was a native of the Limavady area. He was sent to the front during the war and awarded a CIE of the Order of the Indian Empire on his return. He would go on to receive a knighthood in 1930 and retire to the Limavady area in 1931, later becoming High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant of Londonderry.¹⁰⁷ He did not have as high a profile as Major General Nugent, who had been the guest of honour at the opening of the institute, but he was clearly well known in the area and had served as a political officer in Mesopotamia during the war. The Roll of Honour took the form of three dark oak panels placed in the lobby of the town's War Memorial Institute. The ceremony was presided over by Robert Douglas, and he took the opportunity to outline the strong financial position of the institute, claiming that £80 per annum was generated in

¹⁰³ Katie Barclay, *A History of Emotions: A Student Guide to Methods and Sources* (London, 2020), 'Chapter Four – Communities'. E-book, accessed via www.tcd.ie/library.

¹⁰⁴ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Penguin Books, London (1972, originally published in 1922), p. 31.

¹⁰⁵ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ Imperial War Museum, 'Limavady War Memorial Institute and Roll of Honour'.

¹⁰⁷ Brian Stoddart, *A People's Collector in the British Raj: Arthur Galletti* (New Delhi, 2011), p. 182.

War Bonds, and further revenue was generated through the letting of rooms in the Institute.¹⁰⁸

Major MacDonald-Tyler praised the men from the district who fought in the war, noted that the memorial featured ‘no fewer than 533 names on the roll’, a number which he described as ‘a record which spoke highly for the patriotism and courage of the men of Limavady and district’.¹⁰⁹ From the newspaper reports available for both ceremonies, it is clear that the tone for this ceremony had shifted slightly. Another speaker at the unveiling of the Roll of Honour in 1924 was Rev. Canon H. G. Warren, who reflected that on more than one occasion in the past Ulster had been the turning point for the history of the British Empire, and he rhetorically asked if Ulster would be prepared to do this again. Using the Limavady War Memorial Institute as an indicator, and the ‘hundreds more like it scattered throughout Ulster’, he concluded that the answer was yes, Ulster would be prepared to play her part in any future defence of the Empire.¹¹⁰ Like Fr O’Halloran and the nationalist community in Nenagh, the people of Limavady were undoubtedly influenced by the impact of partition and the Irish Civil War on their own sense of identity. The presence at many memorial ceremonies of a leader of the local church indicates an integration of the church with local communities and illustrates the centrality of religious institutions in this period. Walker explores ‘evidence of initial efforts to create inclusive societies and identities and to encourage north-south cooperation’ in Northern Ireland in the early 1920s, but by the end of the decade this attempt to embrace a more inclusive society had failed and identities became sharply polarised.¹¹¹ Although the panel was inscribed with the aim to aspire to ‘forge, by the memory of valour and self-devotion, a fresh bond of union and friendship among all who dwell in this district’, the unveiling ceremony itself seems to have lacked that conciliatory and unifying tone that was struck only two years previously

¹⁰⁸ *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Oct. 1924.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Oct. 1924.

¹¹¹ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 107.

at the opening of the institute. Already, the initial wave of grief (that private narrative that Jeffery identified) was being side-lined in favour of a more public, political narrative.¹¹²

The Institute was used as the location for the celebration of Remembrance Day services from 1928, as first reported in the *Northern Whig* in November 1928. This first commemoration at the institute was coordinated by the ‘recently re-organised local branch of the British Legion’.¹¹³ It is important to note that the use of the memorial became more secular as the years passed. Although a Roman Catholic priest had been on the original general committee for the memorial in 1918, there was no official participation from the local branch of the Catholic Church in the first Remembrance Day commemoration held at the memorial ten years later.¹¹⁴ Groups represented at the commemoration included the British Legion, the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Guides, all of which had associations with Protestant, unionist culture. Even though Catholics made up between approximately 40-50% of the urban and rural communities of Limavady and the surrounding areas in this period, they are not represented in this monument.¹¹⁵ Whether that is by exclusion or boycott is not clear, what is clear is that the identity narrative of the community of Limavady mirrored the pattern seen in the rest of Northern Ireland, and was one focused on the sacrifices made by the men of Ulster during the First World War. Switzer comments that this ‘apparent withdrawal of many nationalists’ from remembrance ceremonies and commemorations of the First World War resulted in the unionist claims to the broader public memory of the war going left ‘unchallenged’.¹¹⁶

The Limavady War Memorial Institute survived the period under consideration for this research, but the violence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland was felt when, in March of 1972 a bomb exploded outside the RUC station, killing two people, the 57-year-old

¹¹² Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 127.

¹¹³ *Northern Whig*, 17 Nov. 1928.

¹¹⁴ *Northern Constitution*, 7 Dec. 1918.

¹¹⁵ ‘Londonderry County and Borough – Religious Professions’, *1926 Census*, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 62. Accessed online on 3 Apr 2019 at www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/1926-census-londonderry-county-borough-report.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939*, p. 153.

Joseph Forsythe and 27-year-old Robert McMichael.¹¹⁷ It was evident from the outset that there was greater involvement from the local Church of Ireland and Presbyterian communities, judging by the amount of Protestant Ministers in the general committee and the Dean of Londonderry presiding over the opening ceremony, but Catholic involvement and ideas of cross-community partnership had been a feature of the memorial in the early stages. This shift coincides with what Brian Walker describes as an official alignment with the British, unionist identity by the Northern Irish parliament towards the end of the 1920s.¹¹⁸ Initially the Northern Irish government, much like the Free State government, tried to encompass the conflicting identities and narratives within the Northern Irish communities with Sir James Craig rejecting calls to make 12 July a public holiday in 1922 and not speaking at or attending any Orange demonstrations until 1927.¹¹⁹ This attempt at disassociation with any one community came to an end in the late 1920s when the Unionist government feared their position owing to splits within unionist ranks, as discussed in the previous chapter. In uniting all unionists against a common opposition, the government ensured that the unionist movement remained united in the face of internal divisions over social and economic issues.

Although Robert Douglas, chairman of the executive committee of the Limavady War Memorial, had asserted in 1924 that the Memorial Institute was in a strong financial position, by the mid-1930s the institute was struggling. In October 1935 a proposal to sell the War Memorial Institute was raised and rejected. It was revealed that the trustees had been worried about the institute ‘for some time’ due to the cost of upkeep and repairs for the building.¹²⁰ A rural institute was proposed for the town of Limavady, which if came to fruition would take some of their revenue from the letting out of rooms to local government bodies. The trustees of the institute had proposed to sell the War Memorial Institute, donate the proceeds to the construction of the rural institute, and relocate the Roll of Honour Memorial to the rural institute’s new premises. The trustee’s proposal does not seem to have been a popular one, with Rev. J. Godfrey Macmanaway writing to say that he

¹¹⁷ *Derry Journal*, 31 March 1972.

¹¹⁸ Walker, *Irish History Matters*, p. 114.

¹¹⁹ NI House of Commons Debates, Vol. 2, 15 Jul. 1922; *Belfast Newsletter*, 13 Jul. 1927.

¹²⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 Oct. 1935.

‘protested most strongly against any such thing’, he added that ‘he felt confident, too, that the people of Limavady would never consent’ to the sale of the institute.¹²¹ He was correct, as the proposal was defeated unanimously by a show of hands of those present at the meeting.

Conclusion

It is clear that in both Nenagh and Limavady the monuments erected served to honour the memories of men (and only men) who had died in service to an ideology and who were still within the living memory of a community. These communities sought to establish their narratives, their versions of the past, in their public space. These acts of memorialisation and commemoration are never solely focused on the past and are examples of groups attempting to influence the actions, thoughts, and emotions of people in the future. Paul Connerton’s argument that smaller settlements, such as villages and small towns, have less gaps in the communal memory and thus less need to present the self in the public space does not take into account the need for smaller communities to assert dominance in their public space to the same extent as larger ones.¹²² Perhaps, in a smaller physical space, the need for communities to assert dominance can be as urgent as in their larger urban counterparts. If there is complete unity amongst a community in a smaller space then, as Connerton suggested, perhaps the desire to present the communal identity in the public space is lessened. However, where differences in identities or values arise then the need to assert ownership of the public space is as compelling in Nenagh in the 1920s as in Bristol in 2020.¹²³

The focus in both communities throughout all the monuments erected was on remembrance. This was a theme that can be seen throughout Europe in the aftermath of the Great War, and the two Irish states were no different. In Nenagh, unlike Limavady, the focus was not on the dead of the war, but on those who had died in the fight for Irish freedom. The parents, widows, siblings, children, and comrades of those who had been lost

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 17.

¹²³ See ‘The Irish Times view on historical monuments: The statues keep falling’, *Irish Times*, 13 Jun. 2020, for discussion on the statue of Edward Colston being thrown into the harbour in Bristol in June 2020.

in service to their cause and country erected monuments in their grief to ensure that their sacrifices and sufferings had not been in vain, and to legitimise the violence exacted in the name of the country. The purpose of the monuments, as well as commemorating the past, was as Nietzsche had said - to inspire the living and shape the future. It is clear that through their performance of unveiling a monument to their dead, the community aspired to create links between their past and their future.

The monuments erected in Nenagh were indicative of a community of different ideologies and identities. Perhaps most insightful and revealing in the analysis of all three monuments is the debate amongst the Nenagh UDC on the decision not to grant public space to the monument of the First World War. The acceptance of the desire to honour the dead conflicted with an increasing rejection in the Free State of the ceremonies associated with the erection of monuments to or commemorations of the war and the Union Jack flags, poppies, and renditions of 'God Save The King' that accompanied it.¹²⁴ These suspicions were not entirely unfounded, as discussed in Chapter One in relation to reports made by An Garda Síochána following Armistice Day ceremonies.¹²⁵ These tensions echo wider, national tensions as expressed in 1927 by O'Higgins in relation to the proposed location for a Memorial Park to the First World War; 'This state', he reasoned, 'has particular origins, and particular roots, and we should not suggest either to ourselves or to people coming here amongst us that it has any other roots'.¹²⁶ The Nenagh UDC declined the request to grant either a public space or the moral support that was sought for this monument, disassociating themselves with the narrative of the fallen soldiers.¹²⁷ While the refusal of a site could be shrouded by reasons of practicality, the refusal to give moral support to the project indicates a definite rejection of the ideologies and identities being proposed by the Great War Memorial Committee by the local authorities.

The Denis Carey Memorial and the North Tipperary Republican Monument highlight the disparity between nationalist and republican groups in Nenagh. The Denis

¹²⁴ Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, pp. 71-2.

¹²⁵ See reports and correspondence between members of An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice, NAI JUS 8/684.

¹²⁶ 'Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution', *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

¹²⁷ *The Nationalist*, 12 May 1928.

Carey Memorial reflects a community united in their mourning of their fallen family, friends, and comrades, and one entreating an end to further conflict and violence.¹²⁸ It lacks the political and emotional weight of the Irish Civil War, the ‘most painful part of our Irish history’, as Fr O’Halloran later described it.¹²⁹ The memory of the Irish Civil War tainted everything that came after. O’Halloran’s comments also suggest that the ‘beaten foe’ he had referred to in 1922 were not only those who had served in the British Army during the War of Independence, but those communities who considered themselves Irish but maintained links with their British identity. These views were generally adopted by the community at large in the majority of the Irish Free State regarding commemorations of the First World War, according to Brian Hanley.¹³⁰ The general support for more radical nationalist sentiment intensified as the 1920s progressed and surged with the election of Éamon de Valera and Fianna Fáil in 1932. This is reflected in the final monument erected in Nenagh in this period, in August 1931.

Unlike with the Nenagh Great War Memorial, there was no debate reported amongst councillors when the North Tipperary Republican Monument was proposed. As already acknowledged it is unclear as to the extent of the council’s knowledge regarding the anti-Treatyite sentiment expressed, but there was unanimous support for a monument to those who died as Irish nationalists fighting for Irish independence.¹³¹ While the North Tipperary Republican Monument was at odds with the ideology of the Cumann na nGaedheal Free State government it was erected and unveiled without issue or government interference. This is less likely to be attributed to the liberal attitude of the Cumann na nGaedheal government, and more likely to be a result of its location in a small town in the rural midlands of the country, growing public support for Fianna Fáil’s republicanism and its alignment with the wider nationalist narrative of honouring the Irish struggle for independence.

¹²⁸ *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, 1 Jul. 1922.

¹²⁹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 Dec. 1925.

¹³⁰ Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, p. 73.

¹³¹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 6 Jun. 1925.

Sachs Olsen's observations on the potential to assert dominance, rather than express unity, through erecting these monuments is pertinent to this research.¹³² In the cases of Nenagh, the variety of communities expressing themselves in the public space in such quick succession indicates that they each sought recognition and a display of authority within their sphere. Like the prospectors in the Californian gold rush of the nineteenth century, communities competed to stake their claim on a visual presence for their identity. The public space was a commodity which they all sought to exert ownership over. In less than a decade the urban landscape of the town had been altered in light of the changing political situation to reflect the local community. These counter-narrative collective identities had greater freedom here than in Dublin, where they were expressed subversive destruction of symbols of imperialism.¹³³

The situation in Limavady was markedly different. There is no suggestion that any other monuments had been planned or attempted to be erected in the area during this period. The regulations introduced in July 1931 to the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act ensured that any monuments that might be attempted that were at odds with the official position, which at this point was markedly Protestant and unionist, would not be tolerated in the public space. The establishment of the War Memorial Institute and the subsequent unveiling of the Roll of Honour record a journey of identity in this small town in Northern Ireland.

The 11 November 1928 was an important day for both of the case study areas under review. On the same day that the Limavady War Memorial Institute hosted its first Remembrance Day ceremony, the Great War Memorial Cross was being unveiled in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. As already discussed, debates surrounding the links between the memory of the war, imperialism, the desire to commemorate fallen comrades, and the public narrative were to the fore of the ceremony in Tipperary, but an important comparison to note between these two localities was that while memory was being politicised in both states, the ceremony in Limavady was, by this point, exclusively Protestant in character while in Nenagh the ex-servicemen formed a procession to march to

¹³² Sachs Olsen 'Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art', pp. 985-1000.

¹³³ Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin*, p. 159.

both the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland churches (conveniently located side-by-side), where services were observed simultaneously before the group reconvened.¹³⁴ Greater tolerance and co-operation between the two religious communities was being shown in Nenagh, a co-operation that was absent from Limavady by this point. Nenagh was not, however, a utopian ideal in which conflict was absent.

It was also on the 11 November 1928 that the foundation stone for the North Tipperary Republican Monument was laid and a variety of ‘outrages’ were committed in Dublin, namely the bombing of the statues of King William III in College Green, a fountain dedicated to King Edward VII in Herbert Park and a statue of King George II in St Stephen’s Green.¹³⁵ In his report to Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy, Chief Superintendent David Neligan warned that ‘the continuance of exhibitions of this kind [Armistice Day commemorations] which are hateful in the eyes of nine tenths of the people will undoubtedly court trouble’. Neligan does, however, clarify that the event to which he refers to ‘was a definite Imperialistic display, and not a Commemoration to the War dead, as it ought to have been.’¹³⁶ Earlier that same month Neligan had been critical of the planned activities when writing to O’Duffy, declaring that ‘the attached programme gives these men far too much scope, and certainly if the Irregulars adopted these tactics they would be arrested under the Treasonable Offences Act, 1925.’¹³⁷ The tensions playing out on the streets of Dublin during Remembrance Day ceremonies and commemorations have already been discussed in detail, but they should be viewed not solely as a catalyst for the actions taken in Nenagh, or the polarisation of political and religious communities in Limavady. While they certainly act as a catalyst for these developments, they are also the consequences (perhaps in some cases unknowingly so) of the debates, actions, and events of towns such as Nenagh and Limavady throughout the island. Influence does not flow in only one direction, and this has highlighted the importance of including case studies

¹³⁴ *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1928; *Northern Whig*, 17 Nov. 1928.

¹³⁵ Letter from Chief Superintendent David Neligan to Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy, 12 Nov 1928, NAI JUS/8/684.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Letter From Chief Superintendent David Neligan to Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy, 7 Nov 1928, NAI JUS/8/684

outside of capital cities and large urban areas in research in order to create a more robust, nuanced account of the past.

While these case studies reveal an analysis of the evolution of identities in this period in areas outside of the capital cities and seats of central government and allow for a nuanced and detailed understanding of the complexities of identity expression during this period, they also offer a deeper understanding of societies in this period. The hope epitomised in the Denis Carey Memorial and the Limavady War Memorial Institute hints at another future that might have been, that was possible at a point in time. The deterioration of this hope is evident in the attitudes of the Nenagh UDC in refusing a site or support for a monument to the Great War and in the move of the Limavady War Memorial Institute's committee away from a conciliatory approach towards a more exclusively Protestant, unionist one. Finally, the erection of the North Tipperary Republican Monument in 1931 within a few weeks of the passing of regulations prohibiting the erection of monuments conveying ideas at odds with the government under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act in Northern Ireland further evidence the polarisation of identities and the objection to include opposing narratives in the public space. The remainder of the decade saw no further monuments erected in either area, but the commemorative events and the spectacles that accompanied them demonstrate that the identities created before partition were solidified and performed in the public space through intense ritualisation and displays of devotion in the state-formation period. While monuments are markers of identity, the commemorative events that surround them and the identities that claim ownership over them continue to interpret and manipulate their meanings.

Section II

Chapter Four: Workshop Design Process

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the research undertaken was both an academic analysis of how public history was used in various locations to promote identities on the island of Ireland during the state-formation years and a public history initiative itself. The research that was undertaken for chapters one, two, and three, forms the historical core of this research but in order for it to be a sincerely public history project workshops were then devised to use this research to engage with the public. These workshops were designed using scholarship from public history, sociology, business, and pedagogy. The content of the workshops was drawn from the historical research undertaken and their design and implementation adhered to the rigorous code of ethics for researchers at Trinity College, Dublin. The monumental memorials and debates being promoted in the public sphere during this state-formation period were engaged with in new and novel ways with students in second-level education during these workshops to investigate the impact that engaging with these public histories can have on an individual.

What follows in this chapter is a record of the design process and methodology of the workshops that comprise a significant section of this research. Using focus groups of students from each of the case study locations the workshops will focus on exploring the history of a local monument, contextualising this in terms of the wider history of the period and, finally, discussing issues of social identity and historical bias with the focus groups. This chapter details the process of designing these workshops as well as considerations undertaken, and decisions made in that process. This is essential in order to achieve dependability in the research, to allow other researchers to audit the process and to demonstrate validity.

At the time of writing, in September 2022, the island of Ireland remains divided into two entities - the Northern Irish state which is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and no longer a member of the European Union, and Ireland, the sovereign 26-county republic which remains within the EU. Debates and public discourse in recent years have reflected a growing conversation in the public sphere about

the prospect of constitutional change for the two states on the island of Ireland.¹ Developing and devising research focused on all-island concerns and projects, and promoting reconciliation on the island of Ireland is an active pursuit within both states.² While this research project will be hugely beneficial to communities across the island and communities in post conflict areas around the world, it will be especially invaluable to the Irish, Northern Irish, and British governments, communities, and organisations in the event of a change of constitutional statuses of the states and the composition of political governance on the island of Ireland in the future.

A study undertaken during a workshop by John Garry, Brendan O’Leary, John Coakley, James Pow, and Lisa Whitten suggests that while participants felt that the EU Referendum of 2016 in the United Kingdom, which resulted in a decision for the UK to leave the EU, had increased the chances of a border poll in Northern Ireland, many felt that the people of Northern Ireland were not yet ready to undertake such a referendum.³ Working towards this possible outcome may be perceived as premature, but recent indicators such as the creation of a Shared Island Unit in the Department of An Taoiseach, an allocation of €530 million for ‘Shared Island’ cross-border projects in the Irish 2021 Budget, independent cross-border studies on how a border poll might be approached, and these all indicate that society is shifting towards a different political model for this island.⁴ The 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

¹ For example, in 2021 the Department of An Taoiseach announced the establishment of the Shared Island Unit, an initiative intended to support cross-border co-operation; in April 2021 Fine Gael TD Neale Richmond delivered a paper ‘Towards a New Ireland’ to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, calling for a citizens’ assembly to be convened on the issue; a company called Ireland’s Future have hosted a number of events around the country on the constitutional future of the island, one due to be held on 1 October 2022 will feature the leaders of Sinn Féin and Fine Gael; see books such as Malachi O’Doherty, *Can Ireland Be One?* Merrion Press, Dublin (2022) and Brendan O’Leary, *Making Sense of a United Ireland*, Sandycove Press, Dublin (2022).

² For example, the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (Wicklow), Corrymeela Centre (Antrim), The Ireland Funds (Dublin), numerous projects funded by the Shared Island Initiative, Department of An Taoiseach (Dublin).

³ John Garry, Brendan O’Leary, John Coakley, James Pow & Lisa Whitten, ‘Public Attitudes to Different Possible Methods of a United Ireland: Evidence from a Citizens’ Assembly in Northern Ireland’ in *Irish Political Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Sep 2020).

⁴ ‘Public Consultation on Format of Any Future Border Poll Begins’, *Irish Times*, 22 Jul. 2020. Accessed on 3 Sep. 2021 at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-consultation-on-format-of-any-future-border-poll-begins-1.4310688>; ‘Programme for Government: New Unit to Seek Shared Island Consensus’, *Irish Times*, 15 Jun. 2020. Accessed on 3 Sep. 2021 at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/programme-for-government-new-unit-to-seek-shared-island-consensus-1.4279602>.

leaving the EU, also known as the Brexit Referendum, has accelerated public discourse on alternative political models for the island of Ireland. In April 2021 results of a poll commissioned by the BBC indicated that the majority of people in both Irish states did not believe that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom in twenty-five years, while a separate poll carried out by LucidTalk, published in August 2022, revealed that 51% of voters support a united Ireland within the next 15 to 20 years, with support strongest among younger voters.⁵ This is an opportune moment for academic research to engage with communities and individuals across the island and to demonstrate the merit, significance, and potential of academic research when coupled with public engagement. Taking these developments into account it was decided to use the existing research to design and implement workshops that would investigate the potential impact that public history engagement has on individuals, and subsequently to explore potential roles that it could play in promoting reconciliation and historical critical thinking.⁶ Acutely informed by research undertaken by Alan McCully, Keith Barton, Alan Smith, Clare Magill, and others, the potential that history teaching has in reconciliation projects was recognised and the workshops were designed in line with their developed theories and recommendations.⁷

The workshops developed for this research were developed as tools of public history, intended to utilise public history to engage with the wider public. Building on research already undertaken by a number of scholars in fields of pedagogy and sociology there was reason to believe that these workshops, and a deeper engagement with history in general through primary sources and case studies, would promote multiperspectivity and critical thinking skills. These skills, as discussed in the scholarship below, are considered to be crucial in developing empathy and promoting reconciliation and understanding

⁵ LucidTalk and Ireland Thinks - Republic of Ireland (ROI)-Wide BBC SPOTLIGHT 'Tracker' Poll April 2021: Data Results and LucidTalk - Northern Ireland (NI)-Wide BBC SPOTLIGHT 'Tracker' Poll April 2021: Data Results, accessed 31 May 2021 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-56777985>; 'NI Survey Shows Half of Voters Support A United Ireland Within 15-20 Years', *Irish Times*, 21 Aug. 2022.

⁶ 76% of people polled in Northern Ireland in 2021 agreed that there is still a potential for a return of violence in the future, as did 87% of people polled in the Republic of Ireland. Polls carried out by LucidTalk (Northern Ireland) in association with Ireland Thinks (Republic of Ireland) for the BBC in Apr. 2021.

⁷ See Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives' in *Theory & Research in Social Education*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2012); Clare Magill, Alan Smith and Brandon Hamber, *The Role of Education in Reconciliation - The Perspectives of Children and Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Ireland*, UNESCO (2009), accessed on 5 Sep. 2020, available at <https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/en/publications/the-role-of-education-in-reconciliation-3>; Alan Smith and Clare Magill, 'Reconciliation: Does Education Have A Role?' in *Shared Space: A Research Journal on Peace, Conflict and Community Relations*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2009), pp. 5-15.

between different groups or communities. Analysis of the responses of participants also found that these workshops promoted an interest in and connection to one's local area and history amongst participants, which can contribute to a more engaged and involved citizenry. The literature upon which these workshops were devised and designed, and the process of that design itself, is detailed in this chapter. The design and rationale for the workshops is heavily influenced by the work of educationalist Alan McCully, who has carried out extensive research in this area from an educational and pedagogical perspective. It is hoped that this chapter will provide guidance for academics in the field of humanities for adapting their research for the public and provide evidence of the benefits that historical engagement can have for individuals and societies.

The application of the theories of agonistic memory were central to the development and implementation of these workshops. Cento Bull and Hansen discuss the application of this political theory to memory in their 2016 article 'On Agonistic Memory' in which they assert that 'the quest for a central narrative that placates everyone has meant that certain, challenging issues of the past have been avoided with the aim of reducing the tension they risk exposing'.⁸ Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr advocated for an agonistic approach in order to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Outside of the conflict in the North, an agonistic approach can be beneficial to students in any society. This approach acknowledges the central role of difference and conflict and provides grounds for such tensions to be a constructive part of the process where multiple perspectives are encouraged, creating 'conflictual consensus'.⁹ These multiple perspectives, and multiperspectivity as a theme, is explored in detail by educationalists such as Alan McCully and Keith Barton, whose works are discussed below. As initiatives that promote and encourage an agonistic mode of remembrance, these workshops situate themselves within the most contemporary research being undertaken on this topic.

, Nick Vaughan-Williams' article discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, 'Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a

⁸ Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, 'On Agonistic Memory' in *Memory Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2016), pp. 390-404.

⁹ Chris Reynolds & Connal Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights' in *Contemporary British History*, vol. 35, no. 1 (July 2020), pp. 12-3.

Problem’, has been central to the development of these workshops.¹⁰ In this article Vaughan-Williams proposes applying Derrida’s theory of deconstruction. This aims for research to show **how** something is what it is rather than **why** it is what it is. In this our attention is diverted from the ‘search for a cause or ultimate problem needing to be solved [...] towards an analysis of the creation and political implications of different representations in any given empirical context’.¹¹ There is a suggestion here from Vaughan-Williams that researchers should resist the temptation to attempt to convince people that they hold the non-existent magic key to a peaceful future. This reminder is crucial to the carrying out of workshops in Northern Ireland and is something which has influenced the design of the research when considering engagements with the public.

Deconstruction, Vaughan-Williams argues, is not a theory, concept, method, or philosophy - it is just what happens. No matter how something seems to be settled or a given ‘it is always produced in a limitless context of interpretation and re-interpretation, which, necessarily, denies the possibility of any sort of closure, finitude or totalisation’.¹² As an approach, deconstruction leads to extreme complication - not for the sake of obscurity, but to refuse the urge to simplify or pretend that there is simplicity where there is none. It ‘intervenes critically’ by dislodging, disjoining, displacing, and disarticulating the authority of the ‘is’. This approach is crucial to moving towards an agonistic remembering of Irish history, particularly in areas such as Northern Ireland where that contested history is loaded with the potential to initiate violence. Deconstruction represents an attempt to thaw perspectives frozen within a past way of life, and this thawing of perspectives and fluid understanding of the past is critical for a society to move on from the events of the past.

Most importantly in his deconstructive approach Vaughan-Williams interrogates the authority of the historical narrative and from where it is told. References to ‘beginnings’ and ‘endings’, he explains, presuppose a sovereign voice telling us where it is

¹⁰ Nick Vaughan-Williams, ‘Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem’ in *Critical Review of International and Political Philosophy*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Dec 2006), pp. 513-26.

¹¹ Vaughan-Williams, ‘Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem’, p. 519.

¹² Ibid., p. 520.

we are now.¹³ Its authority can only ever derive from its own authorisation and to invoke or to remain uncritical of this voice is ‘to legitimise the very authority it rests upon’. A deconstructive ethos calls for questioning and probing of the past. It is neither pro- nor anti-foundationalist, but rather it urges a teasing out of the way in which all foundations are less stable than we are led to believe. Again, we are reminded that deconstruction is not a theory, and that to deconstruct is to aspire to change and intervene.¹⁴ In terms of Northern Ireland this approach intervenes by resisting, questioning, and challenging the dogmatism of established identities and frozen regimes of thought represented by the understanding of the Troubles in terms of competing ‘sides’ in the first place.¹⁵ Vaughan-Williams summarises his aim in applying a deconstructive approach to Northern Irish history as follows;

The aim is not to privilege one side over the other, or to privilege a reading of the conflict that is even framed in terms of sides, but rather to privilege the possibility of politics: in other words, to aid and abet the creation of openings for ethico-political interventions while simultaneously resisting the competing forms of totalisation and depoliticisation at all costs.¹⁶

This research employs the approach of deconstruction in practical terms to encourage an agonistic approach to memory and remembering in an Irish context. By approaching history with a view to deconstruct the authority of the ‘is’ is dissolved and both history and memory can embrace the multiplicity of perspectives and avoid the two communities, good-vs-evil narrative that has pervaded discussions of Irish history. Vaughan-Williams asks how is it possible to intervene critically in representations of the Troubles and their legacy so far?¹⁷ Engaging with the complexities of history through workshops promoting an agonistic mode of remembering is one place to start.

In 2005, Drs Keith Barton and Alan McCully reported the results of an empirical investigation of secondary student’s conception of history and identity in Northern

¹³ Ibid., p. 521.

¹⁴ Vaughan-Williams, ‘Towards A Problematisation of the Problematisations That Reduce Northern Ireland to a Problem, p. 523.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 523.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 524.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 514.

Ireland.¹⁸ They interviewed 253 students from a range of backgrounds and analysed the results to investigate how students in the first three years of secondary education in the state related to history and identity. Barton and McCully discussed Northern Ireland as their choice for carrying out this research and stated that many people in the state felt deeply committed to their political and/or religious communities and this identification was often credited with perpetuating disputes. History, they maintained, forms an integral part of that identity.¹⁹ The authors stated that ‘among the most important forms of knowledge in history are the overarching concepts people use to bring order to the events of the past and patterns of change over time’.²⁰ People, they argued, do not construct their understanding of history as a series of facts, but rather confer meaning upon them by connecting facts to each other and to broader patterns or themes. This kind of thinking was identified as often being regarded as especially characteristic of historical perspectives in Northern Ireland, where past and present events repeatedly are interpreted as recurrent manifestations of an underlying theme such as ‘subjection’ or ‘siege’. This process allows history to be viewed as a single, coherent series of events that was always going to form the present, which is in itself problematic. Identifying two separate research traditions investigating identity in Northern Ireland, the psychological and historical approaches, the authors noted that both quantitative and qualitative approaches were beneficial to approaching this question in different ways.²¹ Based on their overview of the approaches, the workshops designed for this research combined quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to generate data that can both provide insights comparable across multiple groups and allow scope for greater understanding of the complex ways these students engage with their public history.

Their study, similar to my own, was grounded in a constructivist and sociocultural perspective on historical understanding. Participants were not regarded as passive consumers of history, but as active constructors of historical narratives which are understood to be rooted in the social and cultural contexts of participants. While Barton

¹⁸ Keith Barton and Alan McCully, ‘History, Identity, and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary student’s ideas and perspectives’ in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2005), pp. 85-116.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 86

²⁰ Ibid, p. 90.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 87-89.

and McCully addressed a different question to that posed in this research, there were striking similarities to their approach and their findings offer foundations on which to build upon. Their cross-sectional study provides a wide sample of society and their conclusions, while not representative of each individual, can be taken into account when considering students in Northern Ireland, and possibly further afield, as a whole.

They concluded from their findings that while community conflict in Northern Ireland was a strong influence on historical perceptions, it was by no means the only significant one.²² Their research actually suggested that ‘in many classrooms, history is presented in a chronological format that addresses events relevant to the current political situation, but students have little opportunity to engage directly the relationship between past and present’.²³ The interviews suggested that students do make such connections on their own, however, without a mediator these connections have the potential to be uncritical and selective, and could consequently lead to the production of partisan narratives and the perpetuation of conflict.²⁴ They called for educators to ‘develop clearer and more explicit links between history and citizenship’ for the students at second-level, an objective which would be fulfilled by the further implementation and expansion of these workshops.²⁵ By engaging with local public history on a deeper level with students from a range of backgrounds, these workshops aimed to link the past and the present and encourage students to explore the multiperspectivity of the past in a controlled and safe environment. They aimed to answer the call made by Barton and McCully when they suggest that ‘more directly addressing connections between past and present might help students develop the alternative, contextualized, and evidence-based views that form the rationale for history education’, in an attempt to approach and promote a mode of agonistic remembrance in Northern Ireland.²⁶

²² Barton and McCully, ‘History, Identity, and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary student’s ideas and perspectives’, p. 107.

²³ Ibid., p. 108.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 108.

In a later article, 'History teaching, conflict and the legacy of the past', McCully urged the move away from a single narrative in history teaching and towards a multiperspective approach. Multi-perspectivity, he asserted,

can help students to understand that they [conflict situations] often arise, persist and are shaped by conflicts of interpretation where each party to the dispute assigns motives and intentions to each other's actions which are not founded on any specific evidence but which reflect long-established assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes.²⁷

Written before Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr's article on the potential role of agonism in remembering Northern Ireland's past, McCully seems to advocate an agonistic approach to history teaching and education.²⁸ The single narrative approach, he argued, 'is of restricted value in any educational context', but particularly so in divided societies such as Northern Ireland.²⁹ McCully added that the impact of history teaching in schools is limited unless links are created between the history being taught, and how it impacts present day political, social and cultural discourse. A crucial component of history education being constructive in shaping present-day society and aiding the Peace Process is empathy, which he also touched on in another jointly authored article with Keith Barton, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'.³⁰

In this article, Barton and McCully used the recordings of semi-structured interviews they conducted in schools throughout Northern Ireland with small groups of pupils to analyse how students engaged with alternative historical perspectives. Responses suggested that rather than helping students see things differently, school-taught history may only have equipped them with the vocabulary to talk about balance, neutrality and alternative perspectives rather than actual engagement.³¹ Barton and McCully found that students consciously and explicitly understood that one purpose of the school curriculum

²⁷ Alan McCully, 'History Teaching, Conflict and the Legacy of the Past' in *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2012), p. 152.

²⁸ Reynolds and Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights'.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁰ Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

was to provide them with a more balanced perspective, yet student identification with community history actually became stronger after three years of formal history education.³² Students interviewed explicitly viewed the history of Northern Ireland as a history of a society comprising two opposing groups divided on sectarian lines, which is an oversimplification of history and actually contributes to the perpetuation of societal divisions in the state.³³

While students expressed hopes that school-taught history might help them to move beyond the divisions that had affected society in the past, Barton and McCully found that, in actuality, they found it difficult to do so. They found that students failed to meaningfully comprehend the perspectives of the ‘other’ community which they attributed to a lack of empathy.³⁴ This, they suggested, is due to an approach in formal education of presenting a balanced, unbiased history as opposed to encouraging deeper engagement with stories and perspectives of communities other than their own. These workshops embraced the proposed pedagogy of Barton and McCully outside of the formal school curriculum in order to engage deeper with local public history and encourage students to think beyond the dichotomy of ‘two irreconcilable communities’ and confront the gaps in their community narrative, the conflict in Northern Ireland, and develop historical empathy.

McCully also addressed these possible benefits of history education in a chapter written with Fionnuala Waldron in *Teaching History and the Changing State* in 2016 in which they explored the development of history teaching in the emerging states of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland throughout the twentieth century.³⁵ They observed that ‘the contemporary relevance of history has been heightened by the politics of commemoration’.³⁶ This heightened relevance, a product of the Decade of Centenaries programme on this island, was important contextual information that was acknowledged

³² Barton and McCully, ‘Trying to “See Things Differently”: Northern Ireland Students’ Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives’, p. 377.

³³ Ibid., p. 373.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 396.

³⁵ Fionnuala Waldron and Alan McCully, ‘Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: Eroded Certainties and New Possibilities’ in Robert Guyver (ed.), *Teaching History and the Changing Nation State* (London, 2016). E-book accessed at Trinity College Library on various dates between Feb. and Apr. 2021.

³⁶ Fionnuala Waldron and Alan McCully, ‘Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: Eroded Certainties and New Possibilities’.

during the workshops and while engaging with the students. The authors acknowledged that the curricula both north and south aspire to multiperspectivity, but question whether the narratives taught take account of communities beyond the traditional unionist and nationalist divide or whether enough attention on the curriculum is given to issues and questions which pertain to all of humanity in the twenty-first century. They questioned the focus on the local in history education and whether this focus on the local might fall short of what is required to meet the challenges of modern life. To this approach I argue that these workshops used local history as a microcosm to examine the wider questions of social theory, critical thinking, and identity, and highlighted the value of the local perspective. Using research undertaken in each of the four case study areas being analysed these workshops explored wider national and global issues and encouraged students to consider how these issues influenced developments in their local areas. In this way, they engaged with the local history aspects of both curricula while also making connections between the information that was presented to them and their knowledge of wider national and global developments. For second level students, these workshops also developed their historical research skills which is a key aim of the curriculum.³⁷

In 2017 Alan McCully partnered with Jacqueline Reilly to produce an article which discussed the potential of interdisciplinary research between historians and psychological theorists in reconciliation.³⁸ They noted that interdisciplinary collaboration between history educators and social psychologists was a fertile area for further research and consideration.³⁹ History, they acknowledged, can contribute to the perpetuation of myth by partisans in conflict situations, but it also has the potential to contribute towards reconciliation and lasting peace.⁴⁰ However, McCully and Reilly acknowledged that while history education had the potential to contribute to peacebuilding, ‘reaching a consensus on an agreed common narrative is highly problematic’, a point acknowledged by Reynolds

³⁷ ‘Leaving Certificate History Syllabus’ (Dublin, 2003), p. 3.

³⁸ Alan McCully and Jacqueline Reilly, ‘History Teaching to Promote Positive Community Relations in Northern Ireland: Tensions Between Pedagogy, Social Psychological Theory and Professional Practice in Two Recent Projects’ in Chris Psaltis, Mario Carretero and Sabina Cehajic-Clancy (eds.) *History Education and Conflict Transformation: Social Psychological Theories, History Teaching and Reconciliation* (London, 2017), pp. 301-20.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 303.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 304.

and Parr in their research on agonistic memory.⁴¹ Instead, they argued, history education should be employed to impart the subject's disciplinary process and give students access to the contested and provisional nature of historical knowledge. This is an approach that, they believe, can provide greater understanding of the conflict, challenge prevailing ideological certainties, develop ethical faculties in students, and open possibilities for greater mutual understanding. While advocating this approach, the authors acknowledged that general advocacy for 'enquiry-based multi-perspective history has tended to run ahead of research studies that confirm its efficacy in bringing personal and group transformation'.⁴² They suggested that perhaps confidence in a constructivist approach more generally contributes to endorsement of the enquiry-based multi-perspective approach. While not explicitly mentioned, the authors seemed to argue for an agonistic approach to historical inquiry in an educational context. The proposed workshops for this research employed this approach and provided empirical data, discussed in the next chapter, for the viability of an enquiry-based multi-perspective approach in promoting reconciliation and developing critical thinking skills, and also on how engaging with history impacts the individual.

McCully and Reilly lamented the very little attention given to theories of social cognition in Northern Irish history education. The theories they identified as potentially being the most relevant are Social Identity Theory (Tajfel), Stereotype Threat (Steele) and Attribution Theory (Heider). They believed that the potential for the use of social theories in this arena is promising and they map the presence (or lack) of these theories in two education initiatives, *Facing Our History, Shaping The Future* (FOHSTF) and *Teaching Divided Histories* (TDH).⁴³ The authors concluded that both projects might be accused of drawing on, but yet failing to fully exploit and utilize the potential for improved intergroup relations through social psychological theories. They observed that while these theories are employed to secure funding in various applications, their practical application in projects can be lacking.⁴⁴ 'History teaching with social purpose', they asserted, 'should challenge

⁴¹ Ibid.; Reynolds and Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights'.

⁴² Alan McCully and Jacqueline Reilly, 'History Teaching to Promote Positive Community Relations in Northern Ireland: Tensions Between Pedagogy, Social Psychological Theory and Professional Practice in Two Recent Projects', p. 304.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 306-11.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 315.

the certainty of identity positions shaped by uncritical versions of the past, inherited from the community'.⁴⁵ It is the gaps that they identified in historical education that my workshops exist in, combining historical education with social psychological theories in order to best apply it to the present and to use it as a tool for reconciliation and critical thinking.

It is not being suggested that these workshops, or any public history initiative of this kind, have the potential to completely reconcile groups in conflict in any community. However, the research available suggests that they may certainly contribute to greater understanding and empathy amongst communities in conflict. Alan Smith explored the role of education in post-conflict societies, such as Northern Ireland, in *Education and Peacebuilding: From 'Conflict-Analysis' to 'Conflict-Transformation'?*.⁴⁶ In this report he outlined the role that education can and has played in post-conflict societies, and as a humanitarian response to conflict in countries experiencing prolonged and continuous violence and as a tool of conflict-analysis in countries recently affected by violent conflict. He advocated for a third role that education can play in countries emerging from conflict, as a tool for peacebuilding. Education has the potential to deal with legacies of conflict and violence, and his report suggests that programmes that go beyond formal education can have the biggest impact in this area. Another report commissioned by UNICEF explored the role of education, youth agency and peacebuilding, and in the course of the research by teams in Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, and Uganda, they 'noted that non-formal interventions that addressed the micro and community rooted realities and priorities of youth were able to draw on greater flexibility and openness to change in their operational strategies than nationally driven macro level formal interventions'.⁴⁷

This project is firmly a public history project and sets itself in literature and research on public history as a subdiscipline of historical research and practice. However, by nature public history is interdisciplinary and this research draws on sources from a range of disciplines across academia, including the social sciences, education, and

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Alan Smith, *Education and Peacebuilding: From 'Conflict-Analysis' to 'Conflict-Transformation'?*. (Bonn, 2011).

⁴⁷ Mieke T.A. Lopes Carolo, Sean Higgins, Marielle L.J. Le Mat, *Youth Agency and Peacebuilding: An Analysis of the Role of Formal and Non-Formal Education*, UNICEF (February 2016).

psychology. Public pedagogy is one such area that this project has both drawn on the research already undertaken and contributed in an indirect way to the existing literature. A term first mentioned in 1894, public pedagogy has been widely used as a theoretical construct in education research to focus on processes and sites of education beyond formal schooling.⁴⁸ Sandlin, O'Malley, and Burdick provided a comprehensive overview of public pedagogy to date in their 2011 article and offered insights into the existing scholarship and suggestions for considerations for future research. In their analysis of over 420 publications the authors identified five primary categories of public pedagogy research; Citizenship Within and Beyond Schools, Popular Culture and Everyday Life, Informal Institutions and Public Spaces, Dominant Cultural Discourses and Public Intellectualism and Social Activism.⁴⁹ Of these categorisations various aspects of these workshops are relevant to multiple themes, thus positioning the project within the realm of public pedagogy.

Public pedagogy has been widened beyond popular culture by scholars in a range of disciplines to include other informal yet institutionalized sites as spaces of learning. These sites include monuments, museums, cemeteries, and public artworks.⁵⁰ In these informal sites, learning often takes a 'subtle, embodied mode, moving away from the cognitive rigour commonly associated with education and towards notions of affect, aesthetics, and presence.'⁵¹ Although not necessarily affiliated with 'official' institutions, these spaces produce a specific educational space. Scholars of these spaces develop and analyse the pedagogies of these spaces and their role in developing learners' relationships to their world and their lives. The monuments that feature in this research fulfil public pedagogical functions through their very existence, and this function is an integral part of the reason that they were chosen as case studies to investigate the perpetuation of identity narratives. These 'educative sites of memorialization' are described as a vibrant subgenre of public pedagogy by the authors and are manifestations of an overlap between public pedagogy and public history.

⁴⁸ Jennifer A. Sandlin, Michael P. O'Malley and Jane Burdick, 'Mapping the Complexity of Public Pedagogy Scholarship: 1894-2010' in *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 81, no. 3 (Sep 2011), pp. 338-75.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

Another common feature of both public pedagogy and public history is the emphasis in both to convey academic research to non-academic audiences.⁵² ‘Such pedagogy’, the authors observed, ‘is linked to democracy and social change’, aspects shared with these workshops.⁵³ These public pedagogies and workshops aim to, among other things, democratize knowledge and contribute to the development of an informed citizenry.⁵⁴ While the participants in the workshops for this research were, as discussed later in this chapter, all students at second level, these workshops are intended to be carried out with a variety of audiences. In further description of these functions and aspects of public pedagogy, it is clear that these workshops employ these pedagogical practices.

Crucially for this project, the authors mapped the existing literature in public pedagogy on the role of a facilitator in the process of critically engaging with public pedagogies and concluded that ‘a majority of the literature posits that the work of engaging in critical transformational learning from sites of public pedagogy occurs most optimally with the help of an educator of some kind’.⁵⁵ Educators, or facilitators, are crucial to the process because they foster critical dialogue and help learners to understand the power and politics at work within culture. This research echoed the findings by Barton and McCully that students require a mediator or facilitator in order to make the connections between past and present, and to truly engage with history and reckon with its centrality to the present.⁵⁶ Britt Andreatta, in her LinkedIn Learning course on Workshop Facilitation identified a facilitator’s role as creating and leading a group process that moves people forward together and fostering an environment in which this is possible.⁵⁷ For this reason, the workshops surrounding sites of public history and public pedagogy are crucial to encourage and foster debate and critical thinking surrounding the role of the monument in the perpetuation of polarising identity narratives and how the history of these sites, or the

⁵² Ibid., p. 355.

⁵³ Sandlin, O’Malley, and Burdick, ‘Mapping the Complexity of Public Pedagogy Scholarship: 1894-2010’, p. 355.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 357.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 360.

⁵⁶ Barton and McCully, ‘History, Identity, and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary student’s ideas and perspectives’, p. 108.

⁵⁷ ‘Workshop Facilitation’ with Britt Andreatta, accessed at LinkedIn Learning in October 2020.

people and events they commemorate, may or may not be misrepresented in public discourse.

Design

While much of the literature justifying the need for these workshops and their potential was drawn from the fields of history and pedagogy, sociological methods were incorporated into the design process to ensure the integrity and validity of data collection and analysis.

In beginning to design this research the choice was made to engage in non-experimental, rather than experimental, study. In an experimental study the researcher would impose an intervention on some of the participants and measure the effects.⁵⁸ This is perhaps more suited to a more scientific study, such as trialling new medicine and measuring their effectiveness. This research is concerned with gathering data, both quantitative and qualitative, for analysis and as such a non-experimental approach was taken to the entire project. While these types of studies have advantages, such as allowing us to gain a detailed understanding of a particular person, setting or event, they have a number of disadvantages that were taken into account before the decision to pursue a non-experimental research project was made. Namely these disadvantages are that findings may not apply more widely and that findings cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship. For the purpose of this research the non-experimental method had far more advantages to the kind of data that was sought.

While a longitudinal study, in which researchers repeatedly examine the same individuals to detect changes that might occur over a period of time, would have been an interesting aspect of the research it was not possible to include it in the design owing to the time constraints of the project and the setback in access to schools experienced as a result of Covid-19. It is envisaged that in the future these workshops will be carried out again as part of cross-border reconciliation initiatives, educational workshops, or a postdoctoral research project and in that case, it might be possible to conduct longitudinal study over a number of years.

⁵⁸ Clare Rutterford, 'Research Design' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture* (London, 1998).

A decision was made in the research design process to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to gather the type of data suitable for answering the research question. Quantitative data was gathered through the use of surveys filled out at the beginning and end of each workshop. These surveys gathered information on students' attitudes towards the past, the future, and their critical thinking skills using an MVAS (Modified Visual Analogue Scale) with a Likert-type scale. A PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) was used to collect data on their emotional responses to the workshop. This quantitative data has provided information for useful points of comparison not only between the participants of different workshops, but also between the attitudes of participants before engaging with the workshops and immediately after.

Quantitative data has many advantages in generating fixed, comparable data but in order to fully explore the effects of this historical engagement on participants qualitative data is required. Qualitative research methods, while producing data that is harder to categorise and analyse and more time-consuming to gather, has the distinct advantage of providing better access to interviewees' views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences, and opinions.⁵⁹ This in particular was identified as a crucial approach to this research and, as such, a semi-structured interview with each of the participating groups was designed, and intended to be held following each workshop. As discussed in Chapter Five these semi-structured interviews proved problematic with the larger groups of participants than intended and the school setting in which the workshops were conducted, and so while they did not feature in the data analysed for this thesis, they remain a feature of the design to be incorporated into future iterations.

Employing mixed methods can improve the quality of the research, but the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods can often be overemphasised.⁶⁰ Neil Spicer argued that there is considerable overlap between the two methods in social research despite critics arguing that the differences between them are too great for a mixed method approach to produce cohesive data.⁶¹ He suggested that the methods share more common ground in practice than conventionally held dichotomy would suggest. The

⁵⁹ Bridget Byrne, 'Qualitative Interviewing' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 209.

⁶⁰ Neil Spicer, 'Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods', in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 479.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

approach to mixed methods in this research was a triangulation of methods. This involved combining more than one method in looking at a particular research question (or questions) to cross-check results for consistency and enhance confidence in the research findings. For the purposes of this research the results of the surveys (quantitative methods) were used in conjunction with analysis of the semi-structured interviews (qualitative methods) to address the research questions. The quantitative methods produced hard data on opinions before and after the workshops, while the qualitative methods assisted in elaborating on participants' opinions.

Spicer, in his chapter on mixed methodology, asserted that in order for research to influence policy the level of generality or relative significance of findings is required as part of a research study.⁶² This was an important consideration for this research because it was accepted from the design phase that it was not possible to deliver these workshops to a wider audience due to restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent time constraints on the project and, as such, this research did not aspire to generality in opinions of young adults, but rather it aimed to investigate whether engagement with history through these workshops might have positive effects on individuals and societies and, as such, might provide the basis for a larger research project in the future.

The research of Philip Seitz has been hugely influential in the design of these workshops. Seitz reported on his project 'History and Reconstruction', in which they investigated the effects of studying history on men who had previously been incarcerated.⁶³ Results were based on quantitative psychological testing and qualitative feedback provided by the participants. The research showed that the study of history had huge benefits for the cohort. While it was difficult for participants to engage with some of the history that they were presented with, 'the global proliferation of truth and reconciliation commissions shows that the study of the past can promote healing as well as pain'.⁶⁴ The results from the study are highly encouraging. Some areas evaluated included autonomy, self-mastery, self-acceptance, satisfaction with future life, happiness, and

⁶² Neil Spicer, 'Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 487.

⁶³ Philip Seitz, 'History Matters: What Happens When African Americans Confront Their Difficult Past' in *The Public Historian*, vol. 38, no. 2 (May 2016), pp. 10-22.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

personal growth.⁶⁵ The participants were reported as making important connections between their past and present throughout this programme, and their analytical skills improved. Several reported an increased understanding of the present, based on their engagement with the past, and it was reported that their view of the world around them became more nuanced.⁶⁶ Seitz's research provided a rationale for these workshops and suggested that the aims, which were to improve participants' critical thinking skills and to foster multiperspectivity in historical thinking, were achievable and even probable.

As discussed in the Introduction, the work of Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen was very influential in the design of these workshops. Their publication, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, stemmed from a desire to know more about how publics used and constructed their pasts.⁶⁷ Analysing the results of their groundbreaking research, Rosenzweig and Thelen found that overall, the people who were surveyed 'did not view the past as distant, abstract or insignificant'.⁶⁸ They were very much aware of the past and pursued it actively (through hobbies, etc.) and made it a part of their everyday lives. However, when asked about how connected they felt with the past in different scenarios, only 27.8% of respondents felt a close connection with the past when studying history at school.⁶⁹ Considering that this is where most people first encounter formal study of the past, this is quite a low percentage. Even more concerningly, when asked about the trustworthiness of sources only 35.5% of respondents rated high school teachers as very trustworthy.⁷⁰ This statistic may not reflect the views of the participants in the workshops as there are significant differences between the participants in Rosenzweig and Thelen's survey and my own research), including the age difference (their research focused on adults, while this research focused on students aged 15-16), the geographical differences and the time period in which the research is carried out, but it highlights the importance of engaging with participants on the trustworthiness of sources, including those

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁶ Seitz, 'History Matters: What Happens When African Americans Confront Their Difficult Past', p. 20.

⁶⁷ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, 1998).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

that will be presented to them in the course of the workshop, and in discussing sources they deem to be credible and how these might be deemed trustworthy or untrustworthy.

Very significant findings from Rosenzweig and Thelen's survey were their findings around how people use the past to inform their present.⁷¹ Firstly, they found that people brought their own experiences of the past to the present, and that their past often informed their understanding of their present. This intersects with an important theory used in this research, that of prememory.⁷² Secondly, they found that people also often developed different ways of thinking about the past than they learned in history class - rather than beginning with larger circumstances and events (e.g. wars, depressions) and assuming that individuals reflected and adapted to initiatives from institutions and cultures, respondents saw themselves as actors with capacities to influence and be influenced by larger developments.⁷³ This is significant for this research because it provides a basis to discuss our own biases and our experiences in workshops, prompting students to consider how their past experiences might influence how they perceive an event, and also because it suggests that perhaps the participants might perceive themselves to have the capacity to influence the future rather than being completely guided by 'official' institutions.

Rosenzweig and Thelen's research proved that, for the people interviewed, 'the past exists not as a distant land but in the here and now'.⁷⁴ People, they found, looked to the past not only to understand the present, but also to envision tomorrow. They used the past to recognise patterns to interpret the future through trajectories and patterns. The immediacy of the past in people's lives is encouraging for this research as it suggested that participants would be familiar with engaging with the past and the present and using both to make sense of the other, which is something that was engaged with in the course of the workshops.

People want unfiltered, untainted accounts of the past when possible. Through engaging with primary sources, artefacts, or historical sites people felt that their

⁷¹ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 38.

⁷² Guy Beiner, 'Probing the boundaries of Irish Memory: From postmemory to prememory and back' in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 34, no. 154 (Nov 2014), p. 300.

⁷³ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 38.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

connection to the past was heightened, and crucially they felt that these were less managed or manipulated than other sources about the past. Rosenzweig and Thelen observed that ‘only by getting close to experience could they see the ambiguities, multiple perspectives, and transformative potential they had learned to expect in their intimate worlds’.⁷⁵ In other words, engaging with these sources promoted empathy with the people of the past and encourages an individual to critically analyse and interpret the evidence. People were more wary of interpretation when presented with the past in school or on the television, they were aware that these sources exist to advance their creator’s agendas. This is essential to critical thinking and will be incorporated into the workshops through an activity where participants will collectively list places they encounter the past in everyday life, the creators of the past they encounter, and then together we will discuss possible agendas. This is a crucial skill for thinking historically, thinking critically, and engaging with sources in the twenty-first century.

Thelen advocated for a participatory historical culture, one in which different uses of the past introducing different perspectives and different individual voices is promoted rather than a single, ‘correct’ narrative.⁷⁶ In doing so, he seemingly advocated for an agonistic approach to the historical past. Thelen sets out three suggestions for how a participatory historical culture could help people reach from the personal to the collective past:

- 1) Historians can find where people are and how they want to be heard by listening hard to the voices and styles they select as they use the past.
- 2) People can imagine how to improve their present circumstances by turning to the past for alternatives.
- 3) Historians can use the past to develop institutions and programs that better reflect the needs of the public.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 90.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 190.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 204.

‘Everyone’, Thelen asserted, ‘uses the past for similar and fundamentally human purposes - such as to establish identity, morality, immortality and agency’.⁷⁸ If this is how we, as humans, use the past then these workshops are a vehicle to encourage participants to engage with, and use, that past while critically analysing where that past came from.

In particular reference to history education, Thelen suggested that students engage creatively with the past in a process that would encourage them to face the challenges of history to civics.⁷⁹ This, of course, speaks to the calls made by Barton and McCully that more explicit links be made between history education and citizenship.⁸⁰ Thelen suggested that students could write and compare accounts of experiences and study autobiographies to truly expose them to a myriad of accounts and to foster an appreciation for multiple perspectives. This, he argued, would encourage them ‘to seek the core, the commonality, the singularity of processes that recur and then to contrast that core with individual and group variations shaped by particular moments and contexts’.⁸¹ While the time constraints for a single workshop did not allow for this level of engagement, his suggestions for that type of activity, exposing the multiperspectivity of a single event, formed the basis for the activities undertaken in the workshop to expose participants to a wide range of perspectives on a single issue.

Workshop Structure

The technical details of workshop facilitation and design are not areas that are engaged with extensively in academic discourse and so in an attempt to improve practical skills and to design these workshops LinkedIn Learning was consulted. LinkedIn Learning courses taken were ‘Workshop Facilitation’ with Britt Andreatta, ‘How to Create and Run A Brilliant Remote Workshop’ with Dave Birss, and ‘Critical Thinking For Better Judgement And Decision Making’ with Becki Saltzman. All courses were taken in October 2020. These courses are designed for those in business training and education rather than

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 205.

⁷⁹ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 205.

⁸⁰ Barton and McCully, ‘History, Identity, and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary student’s ideas and perspectives’, p. 111.

⁸¹ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 205.

for education practitioners but there was a wealth of practical advice on running workshops that was applicable in this instance.

The most important considerations that informed the structural design of these workshops were the research objectives. The initial brainstorming and designing stage involved writing down all and any questions that I was interested in investigating that related to this research. These brainstorming questions were compared to the previously established research questions for the overall project, and correlations and relationships were established between both sets. This step enabled me to focus the purpose of these workshops and to scale down the questions being asked in order to facilitate the production of superior, more in depth data. Ultimately the number of questions that were brainstormed was reduced to a final shortlist in order to create workshops that were focused and purposeful.

Following this process, it was decided that the workshops would be designed to address the following questions:

- What effect or impact does engaging with history have on an individual?
- How might this engagement impact their understanding of the past and their present?
- Can an engagement with public history, primary sources, and academic research improve critical thinking skills, multiperspectivity, and empathy in students?

While these workshops were designed for the purposes of research and in gathering data for analysis, there were clear benefits to participation and there were defined learning objectives for the participants. By participating in these workshops, students gained new knowledge and developed their critical thinking skills. It is this knowledge and skill development that resulted in measurable effects at the end of the workshop, so they were integral to the design process.

The learning objectives for participants are as follows:

- Learn about local history case studies in their area and be able to contextualise their local area's history within the wider context of national and global history.

- Identify grand narratives and foundational myths for the Irish states and be able to critically analyse them.
- Develop historical thinking by engaging with primary and secondary sources and cultivate empathy with peoples of the past.
- Learn to critically engage with representations of the past in the public sphere and how to ‘read’ these representations.

Once these Learning Objectives were decided upon, they, alongside the Research Questions for this thesis, were used to inform the design, content, and structure of the workshops. Together the Learning Objectives and Research Questions became the basis for the Learning Plan. Every workshop undertaken for this research aspired to achieve transformative learning in participants. Transformative learning is learning which drives real change and can be psychological, convictional, or behavioural.

The Learning Plan, as with any lesson plan in classroom teaching, is designed to ensure that the workshop achieves its objectives within the time constraints and that the activities planned further the goal of transformative learning for the participants, keep their attention focused on the content, and ensure that they remain engaged with the material. The first step in creating the Learning Plan was to consider the content of the workshops. To achieve transformative learning and for participants to experience the change in knowledge, understanding, and skills required to generate quantifiable results there was a range of content that needed to be included, such as theory, historical context, and local public history case study. The content included needed to satisfy my conviction that it would provide insight for students and drive transformative learning.

All slides used in the workshops undertaken can be found in Appendix 10 of this thesis.

Theory

In order to ensure as much consistency as possible throughout the workshops, the content of this section remained the same across all iterations of the workshops for all participating schools. Drawn from research undertaken for this PhD the most relevant theories were explained to and discussed with students. These theories include Social

Identity Theory, Commemoration Theory, and Agonistic Memory Theory.⁸² Each theory was defined, explained, illustrated by examples, and discussed with students to ensure their thorough understanding of the concept. As we could not spend any longer than ten minutes per theory it was accepted that the theories would be simplified, and students would not be expected to understand each theory in depth. A further ten minutes (five minutes before engaging with theories and five minutes after) was spent discussing what theories are, why they are relevant, whether they are important, and how to apply them to research. It is crucial that this section of the workshop was accessible to the varying levels of understanding and ability within the group and that the facilitator ensured that students understood these theories before moving to the next section.

Historical Context

While it was assumed that students at Transition Year/Year 10 level had an understanding of the context of the historical period under discussion, based on the contents of the curricula for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the level of familiarity or knowledge could not be taken for granted.⁸³ A recap exercise was conducted on the historical context of this period. This was integrated with an interactive activity where students worked together, and with the facilitator, to create a timeline of key events (the facilitator had a selection of key national events to include with scope to add notable events from the locality). Due to the curricula in both jurisdictions, it was expected that participants would have been aware of these national historical events such as WW1, 1916 Rising, War of Independence, Government of Ireland Act 1920, Irish Civil War and the outbreak of the Second World War.

Following the creation of this timeline students then discussed in groups what life might have been like for ordinary people in this period and tried to imagine how they might have felt. For this exercise students were put into groups and assigned one of eight

⁸² These theories were drawn from readings such as Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge, 1981); John Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1996); Brian Walker, *Irish History Matters: Politics, Identity and Commemoration* (Dublin, 2019); Reynolds and Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights'.

⁸³ 'Junior Certificate History Syllabus' (Dublin, 2003); 'Statutory Requirements for History at Key Stage 3' at CCEA Website, accessed on 4 July 2022 at <https://ceea.org.uk/key-stage-3/curriculum/environment-society/history#section-4146>.

possible characters. The characters spanned a wide range of ages, occupations, religions, class, and education. The characters were inspired by actual people found living at these addresses in the 1911 Census, but details of their lives were fictionalised to aid students to imagine their lives more vividly.⁸⁴ Using the timeline they had helped to create they identified which events might have most impacted their character, for example groups identified Herbert Simms's appointment as Housing Architect for Dublin Corporation as more important to Catherine Ennis, while the outbreak of the First World War and the Irish Civil War were identified as important to Sir Henry Cornelius O'Callaghan Prittie. The eight characters used are included in Appendix 8.

Local Public History Case Studies

The importance of providing participants with a local case study, through which to learn about, consider, and discuss national and global developments, is reflected in the results of the surveys that were collected at each workshop. Participants responded well to case studies that they were already familiar with and were engaged with historical photographs in which they recognised the streetscape of their own town or city. Each workshop included a section in which the local public history case studies were introduced and considered. Each case study chosen was to be relevant to the group in which the workshop was taking place, and this is the only section of the workshops that will continuously change. The changes in content for this section might have contributed to variation amongst the responses gathered in the survey results, which will be discussed in the following chapter. The information about these monuments was taken from research carried out by the researcher prior to the workshops taking place and discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis. The following case studies were identified as being those which would feature in workshops:

Dublin – The Statue of William of Orange, College Green, and the National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge

Nenagh – The North Tipperary Republican Monument

Belfast – Statue of Edward Carson, Stormont

⁸⁴ All were found on the 1911 Census, which can be accessed at www.census.nationalarchives.ie.

Naturally other monuments and commemorations were discussed in relation to these monuments (for example, the debate amongst the Nenagh Urban District Council regarding the placement of the War Memorial and the North Tipperary Republican Monument was provided to students), but these were the focus of each workshop designed for each locality. While these monuments are considered and analysed in detail in this thesis, due to time constraints participants engaged with a selection of these monuments and sources about them. Every effort was made by the researcher to present participants with a representative example of opinions and attitudes that has been encountered in the course of the research and to encourage participants to engage with different opinions and perspectives.

In the context of selecting case studies for students in urban areas, the chosen monuments were in close proximity to the schools identified for the research. They were situated in urban centres and easily accessible. However, it is important to consider what qualifies as a 'local' monument in future iterations of these workshops. Chapter Five discusses the results, particularly in relation to the first and second questions on the MVAS scale, which focus on local history. In urban centres, where communities often have a stronger sense of attachment and interest in the history of their specific locality, whether it be a suburb or distinct urban community, the categorization of government-supported statues in the urban centre as representative of 'local history' needs to be re-evaluated. By revisiting the classification of these statues, a more accurate reflection of the local history can be attained. It is necessary to take into account the unique dynamics of urban societies and their connections to specific symbols and narratives. This understanding will provide a more comprehensive perspective on the significance of historical monuments in shaping the collective identity of urban communities.

Ethical Considerations

There was extensive consideration given to ethics of undertaking this research in the planning and design process. An application was made to the Trinity College School of History Ethics Committee in March 2021 and following their recommendation that it be referred to the Trinity College Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Ethics Committee (due to the age of the proposed participants) an application was made in April

2021. Ethical approval was required because of the data being gathered and stored on participants in these workshops. Both the survey sheets, providing the quantitative data, and the audio recordings of semi-structured interviews, providing the qualitative data, necessitated the application be made to the School Ethics Committee, and later the Faculty Ethics Committee.

It was crucial for this project that ethical approval be granted for the following reasons:

1. Sensitive or personal data of minors may be identifiable in the research - in relation to this, all responses by students were anonymised and identified by school and sorting code only. In the case of audio recordings, where an individual might be identified by their voice, the recordings were stored in a password protected, encrypted file and backed up to a secure, password-protected cloud server. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and identifying information was omitted. These transcripts were the only versions of the data collected used in research and these minors will not be identifiable.
2. The workshops aspired to challenge students to think about and discuss difficult themes, such as recent conflict, sexual violence, or discrimination. In relation to this consideration, the information sheet provided to participants set out the themes under discussion without revealing the content. Each workshop also featured a section at the beginning detailing what students can do if they feel uncomfortable with the material (ranging from phrases to equip them to express their discomfort without embarrassment to permission to leave the classroom during discussions).

While the application was initially refused, on the grounds of absence of parental consent forms, inconsistencies in the length of time the data will be stored, and lack of detailed risk assessment and contingency planning documents for issues relating to COVID-19 and school policies relating to site visits, the resubmitted application was approved by the committee in May 2021. This research was conducted as per Trinity College's Policy on Good Research Practice and the Ethics Policy, and the full ethics application can be seen in Appendix 1.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Both policies can be found on the Trinity College website at <https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies>.

Further Development

Identifying Focus Groups

The identification and participation of focus groups was a crucial aspect in the workshop design process. As Fran Tonkiss states, ‘a focus group is, quite simply, a small group discussion focused on a particular topic and facilitated by a researcher’.⁸⁶ This research was intended to be undertaken with one focus group in each of the participating schools, however practicalities owing to year size resulted in two groups from each of the participating schools. The groups that participated in the workshops will be discussed in the following chapter, but the concept of focus groups and their importance to this research will be explored here. Focus groups are a practical means of generating data quickly and reasonably conveniently.⁸⁷ They have also been argued to provide an especially useful method for sociological research, allowing the researcher to explore how collective identities are formed and reproduced through communication and interaction.⁸⁸ Jennie Munday’s research is particularly pertinent to this research as she asserted that focus group research revealed how members articulated and reinforced group identities.⁸⁹ Focus groups, she argued, are well suited to the purposes of generating data on collective identity in particular.⁹⁰ Tonkiss furthers Munday’s point and identifies the focus group as a preferable unit of analysis for generating qualitative data on social groups as they capture social actions and meanings in ways that are inaccessible to research methods that take the individual as their basic unit of analysis.⁹¹ Finally, focus groups as a unit of analysis work well in multi-method approaches to data collection, the methodology of which is employed in this research.

It must be noted that focus groups also have disadvantages in generating data for research. They create an artificial environment in which people are brought together to discuss a topic and offer their opinions or experiences. Focus groups do not allow the

⁸⁶ Fran Tonkiss, ‘Focus Groups’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 228.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁸⁸ Jennie Munday, ‘Identity in Focus: The Use of Focus Groups to Study the Construction of Collective Identity’ in *Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 1 (February 2006), pp. 89-105.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

⁹¹ Fran Tonkiss, ‘Focus Groups’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 236.

researcher to observe natural conversations, interactions, or reactions. The data collected offers no guarantee about what people say or think outside the research context. They also confer more control of the conversation and ensuing results to the participants than a survey or structured interview method. Researchers have less control over the data that emerges and therefore may not generate data entirely relevant to their project.⁹² Finally, they provide an insecure basis for generalisation and cannot be claimed to be representative of the wider population. However, this is not a cause for concern for this research as the data does not need to be representative of a larger group, but rather it will suggest patterns, commonalities, and differences that may be investigated further in later research. The disadvantages identified here are all relevant to this research and were carefully considered before focus groups were chosen as a unit of analysis. In this case the advantages outweighed the disadvantages for the research that was being undertaken and the research questions being asked. Ultimately, Tonkiss' assertion that

Beyond their status as a practical strategy for generating data, then, focus groups involve a stronger methodological assertion that the group context is important (and not just handy) for exploring the way social and cultural knowledge, opinions and meanings are produced.⁹³

identified them as the model units for analysis for these workshops.

In sampling and selection of these focus groups, there is a significant difference between this research and the more traditional focus group research, namely the involvement of the school and the hosting of these workshops in an education setting. This setting determines that method of selection for the groups which is that of purposive sampling. This is where participants are selected on the basis of having a significant relation to the research topic, in this case their residing near the local monument (by virtue of their attendance at a local school). This sampling generates results that are broadly reflective but not representative of the entire cohort of students aged 14-16 years old on the island of Ireland and that will be taken into account during the data analysis stage. Tonkiss identified an important element of focus groups, that being that participants should be generally homogenous but unknown to each other to avoid established relations of power,

⁹² Ibid., p. 242.

⁹³ Fran Tonkiss, 'Focus Groups' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 228.

disagreement or consensus being brought into the research setting.⁹⁴ Munday, in her research, challenged this notion and acknowledged that while participants are usually unknown to each other, academic focus groups will often contravene this convention owing to the research being carried out.⁹⁵ This can often be one of the key differences between market research focus groups and academic research focus groups. Munday's caveats echo Tonkiss's anxieties about pre-established power structures and she warned researchers working with pre-established groups to be sensitive to hierarchical structures within. Participants being completely unknown to each other is not possible when working within a school setting and so these factors were borne in mind when briefing the lead teacher ahead of student selection, during the workshops themselves, and in the data analysis.

Participants were intended to be in Year 10 or Transition Year (aged approximately 15 years old). A crucial consideration for this age requirement is the level of engagement with Irish, British, and world history students have had up to this point. History is studied as a compulsory core subject up to Key Stage 3 in Northern Ireland (approximately 14 years old) and Junior Certificate level in Ireland (approximately 15 years old), and so participants should not be younger than this to ensure consistency and fair results.⁹⁶ It should be noted that curricula in both states vary, and so answers and responses reflect this variation. The aim of these workshops was to place local public history case studies into historical context and to encourage students to create links between this history and more recent history or even the present day, so the variety in curricula should not have skewed the results. The workshops focused on students developing the skills to enable them to investigate the past through the examination of primary and secondary evidence and to treat any narrative of the past as provisional and open to question. Thus, they were encouraged to view history as process orientated, to recognize that actors in the past often

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 240.

⁹⁵ Jennie Munday, 'Identity in Focus: The Use of Focus Groups to Study the Construction of Collective Identity', p. 97.

⁹⁶ 'Junior Certificate History Syllabus' (Dublin, 2003); 'Statutory Requirements for History at Key Stage 3' at CCEA Website, accessed on 4 July 2022 at <https://ccea.org.uk/key-stage-3/curriculum/environment-society/history#section-4146>

saw events differently, and to evaluate differing (and conflicting) interpretations in the light of available evidence.

In an effort to identify schools in each area to participate in this research I conducted an online survey of secondary schools in each of the four areas using school websites, directories, and Google maps. In the smaller areas of Nenagh and Limavady there were fewer schools, so compiling this list and finding the schools was straightforward but for both Dublin and Belfast stricter parameters were required to limit the identification of second-level schools. For both cities a focus on areas within the confines of the urban centre was required, which is where the monuments in this research are located. I chose four areas in each of the cities to survey that represented a mixture of class, religious communities, and population demographics.

The towns of Nenagh and Limavady, being smaller areas than Dublin and Belfast, offered less choice of secondary schools available to contact. This ensured that the choice of schools was narrower but therefore more straightforward. Having personally attended St Mary's Secondary School in Nenagh, one of three in the town, I began by reaching out to the staff and discussing proposals with them. Through contact with local historians and the local arts centre in Limavady the schools in the area were identified and a list was created that detailed their religious affiliation, if any, and their status as a grammar, controlled, integrated, gaelcoil, or private school. In the Northern Ireland education system the type of school can often indicate religious affiliations and so this information is crucial to the analysis. This information was compiled and used to ensure that there were a variety of types of schools that featured in the research.

Using the Dublin City Council Socio Economic Profile created in 2015 a number of areas of varying levels of education and income were identified.⁹⁷ While the data when compiling this research was published seven years previously it was the most recent data available and, where possible, information was corroborated with the Trinity Access Programme's more recent data on progression to third level from Dublin's various suburbs. The areas chosen in Dublin were Rathmines (part of the Pembroke-Rathmines constituency where over 71% of the population completed third level education) and Finglas (part of the Ballymun-Finglas constituency where less than 25% of the population

⁹⁷ Dublin City Socio-Economic Profile Indicator Catalogue, Dublin City Council (Dublin, 2015).

completed third level education).⁹⁸ Larkin Community College, in the North Inner-City constituency was also chosen due to its proximity to many of the monuments under discussion. Considerations were also made as to schools in affluent and disadvantaged areas. As a result, both Beaumont (part of the Artane-Whitehall constituency which was marginally above average in affluency) and Inchicore (which marginally below average in affluency and located in the Ballyfermot-Drimnagh constituency) were chosen as areas within which to carry out this research to ensure that results were amassed from focus groups from varied and wide-ranging backgrounds.

Once these areas were identified a list of secondary schools in the area was compiled using internet search engines. A table was then created which listed the name and address of the school, alongside information on whether it had a religious affiliation, whether it was a private fee-paying or DEIS school and whether it was a grammar, controlled, integrated or Irish-medium school. This information was to ensure balance in the research, and to prevent workshops being undertaken with similar schools across the city.

In Belfast there were additional considerations taken into account when identifying areas in which to carry out workshops. Certain areas in the city are more associated with nationalist or unionist communities, and some areas were disproportionately affected by the Troubles. There was also the issue of the researcher not having as many personal connections in the city, and so there was a reliance on some peacebuilding organisations to assist in identifying schools that would be willing to participate. This is problematic as it involved a higher level of self-selection than the schools in other areas. It might be assumed that schools that already engage with peacebuilding organisations and initiatives may be more willing to interrogate the narratives of history and may not be representative of all schools in the city. As such, a considered effort was made to identify schools (through internet searches) outside of those recommended. Through contact with the History Teachers' Association of Northern Ireland (HTAI) through their Secretary James McBride schools that satisfy the criteria were identified and contact was made. Naturally the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact both on when workshops could be held in person with students and, once restrictions were lifted in this regard, the school schedule.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

There was considerable, unforeseen, difficulties experienced in establishing contact with teachers and in confirming schools' participation in the programme. As a result, the schools identified in the research did not ultimately participate, and workshops were held in two schools (one in Nenagh, and another in Dublin), but it is hoped that the research undertaken might inform future iterations of this project.

The workshops conducted in secondary schools played a pivotal role in the research project, and it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of this particular setting. While the original intention was to involve members of the public from various backgrounds, the decision to focus on secondary schools proved to be advantageous for multiple reasons. Notably, by selecting schools as the primary venues, the project ensured a level of comparability among the participants that would facilitate robust analysis of the findings.

The choice of secondary schools as workshop sites was driven by careful considerations. The disruptive effects of the Covid-19 pandemic had made it challenging to organize public workshops effectively. However, schools were gradually reopening, offering a controlled and accessible environment to carry out the sessions. Moreover, conducting the workshops within schools allowed for a greater degree of consistency in terms of the participants' age range and educational background. This comparability across student groups would enable researchers to draw meaningful comparisons and delve deeper into the data collected.

While the workshops in secondary schools provided a valuable opportunity to gather focused and comparable data, it is important to recognize that future iterations of the project will expand beyond this setting. The inclusion of a broader range of participants, encompassing different geographic areas and demographics, will undoubtedly enrich the analysis and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Nonetheless, the secondary school setting served as an invaluable starting point, allowing for a more concentrated exploration of the research questions and fostering a solid foundation upon which to build future iterations.

Survey Design

A variety of research methodologies were employed in order to ensure a high standard of investigation, rigour in research, and a deep and wide-ranging result analysis.

Some of these methodologies are traditionally practised in the social sciences and may not be associated with the academic study of history, but as discussed in the introduction to this thesis and at the beginning of this chapter the area of public history is highly interdisciplinary and incorporates approaches and theories from a variety of aforementioned disciplines.

There were a number of steps followed when designing these surveys, as identified by Constantinos N. Phellas, Alice Bloch, and Clive Seale.⁹⁹ They were as follows:

1. The information to be sought was determined - for this research this was identified through analysis of the research questions.
2. The population to be studied was defined - this was informed by two factors - geography and education. The location of the schools was determined by the monuments that featured in the research (in the areas of Dublin, Belfast, Nenagh and Limavady) and the school year was decided on by surveying the curricula set by the Departments of Education for students in Ireland and Northern Ireland and identifying an appropriate year. Efforts were made to ensure diversity in class and gender but, owing to difficulties in conducting research due to the Covid19 pandemic the schools were self-selected and there was an overrepresentation of female participants. The decision to work with secondary school students rather than the general public was already discussed and was a major factor in identifying the participants.
3. The questionnaire was constructed, and methods of administration were decided - this was informed by the information sought from participants and in turn influenced the structure of the workshops.
4. A representative sample of the population was drawn - as an external facilitator, this information was given to the lead contact in each of the participating schools. While in these cases the sample chosen may not be entirely representative of the entire year group, in each instance the teacher expressed a desire to have the whole year group participate in the workshop. This was significantly more participants

⁹⁹ Constantinos N. Phellas, Alice Bloch & Clive Seale, 'Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 185.

than had been anticipated in a single setting and impacted on the kinds of activities we engaged in but was a condition of gaining access to the school. It should also be noted that even then participants were not considered to be representative of the year group across the island as a whole, and further research is needed with a wider variety of participants in order to generate data that can be applied to the year group more generally.

Following these steps ensured that surveys were designed and constructed in an organised and ethical manner, and that correct procedures were followed.

Dr Faye Sayer at Manchester University has conducted research on the effects of community archaeology on wellbeing and happiness.¹⁰⁰ Her research, while not in the area of public history and focusing exclusively on happiness and wellbeing, has contributed greatly to the construction of workshops for this research, and determined how data was collected. In her 2015 article, 'Does Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage', Sayer set out a methodological framework for analysing heritage well-being, providing guidelines for future evaluations of the cultural value of heritage. This methodology is currently being used by Sayer on her international project Heritage and Well-Being: Creating Healthier Societies Through Heritage to generate and collect quantitative data that Sayer can then compare and analyse. Sayer used both PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) and MVAS (Modified Visual Analogue Scale), with a Likert Scale range, in surveys distributed at the beginning and end of the three-week community archaeological project to attempt to measure well-being.¹⁰¹ The methodology employed by Sayer was implemented in this research as a robust method to gather information from participants.

Both PANAS and MVAS (with a Likert Scale range) methods were utilised in surveys distributed at the beginning and end of each of the workshops conducted. This provided detailed quantitative data to measure participants' responses to the workshop material and their personal feelings towards the exercise. In the collection of qualitative

¹⁰⁰ Faye Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage' in *Arts & Health*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2015); See also current project 'Heritage and Well-Being: Creating Healthier Societies Through Heritage', <https://mcphh.org/heritage-and-well-being-creating-healthier-societies-through-heritage/>.

¹⁰¹ Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage', pp. 251-2.

data, however, a semi-structured interview approach, as detailed by Barton and McCully, was intended to be used to ascertain further detail on the effectiveness of the workshops.¹⁰² In addition to this quantitative data, qualitative methods including participant's observations and conversations were also collected. When analysing the responses, Sayer concludes that the use of both MVAS and PANAS together created more robust data and offered greater insight into how participants felt about the effects of the project than using one in isolation would have done.¹⁰³ Sayer's qualitative approaches were incorporated into the workshops, but with a greater emphasis on organised collection of qualitative data than Sayer employed. The survey used during these workshops, in its entire form, can be seen in Appendix 2.

In terms of gathering and evaluating the qualitative data, the TACT framework developed by Ben K. Daniel and detailed in his 2019 article 'Using the TACT Framework to Learn the Principles of Rigour in Qualitative Research' was crucial.¹⁰⁴ This framework was developed to assist in both the analysis of qualitative research already undertaken and to provide researchers with a framework or checklist to ensure rigour in their own qualitative research. Daniel, writing in 2019, observed that the adoption of general guidelines for evaluating qualitative research studies has been criticised because such standards were thought to likely ignore the complexity of the individual project.¹⁰⁵ While the TACT framework is a general guideline, it is constructed in such a way that allows individual application and interpretation.

TACT stands for Trustworthiness, Auditability, Credibility, and Transferability — individual concepts that together provide a framework for ascertaining levels of rigour. Daniel sets out what each concept means in terms of carrying out qualitative research, and how to ensure that each is met in qualitative research and analysis. Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence readers have in research findings and is an essential element in

¹⁰² Barton and McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'.

¹⁰³ Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage'.

¹⁰⁴ Ben K. Daniel, 'Using the TACT Framework to Learn the Principles of Rigour in Qualitative Research' in *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2019), pp. 118-29.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118

understanding and interpreting results.¹⁰⁶ Auditability requires the application of a systematic procedure for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data.¹⁰⁷ Credibility, similar to trustworthiness, requires both showing how reflexivity was achieved and a careful description of sources of data. Transferability in qualitative research suggests that findings from one study can be applied to other settings or groups of people.¹⁰⁸ There are a number of recommendations made to ensure that these requirements are met, and to guide researchers to ensure a high standard of rigour, all of which will be considered when designing, delivering, and analysing the workshops. Daniel was careful to state that these markers are not necessarily measures of rigour, but rather important indicators for researchers to think about how they can best increase the quality of the research outcome. Rigour is an important quality to strive towards in research because ‘it ensures the integrity of the research and increases the authenticity of research outcomes’.¹⁰⁹ In following this framework, this research has been ensured to achieve the highest standards of rigour and can be used in various settings and applied across communities on either side of the border in Ireland.

¹⁰⁶ Daniel, ‘Using the TACT Framework to Learn the Principles of Rigour in Qualitative Research’. p. 119.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

Semi-Structured Interview Design (Qualitative Interviewing, Structured Methods)

The semi-structured interviews that were designed to take place at the end of the workshops were intended for groups of 12-15 participants, however in reality the groups were much larger (owing to practicalities of conducting the workshops in a school setting) and so, while they were not particularly fruitful in this instance, their design and methodology is detailed here for future iterations of these workshops, or for other researchers applying these methods to adapt their own research.¹¹⁰ A discussion on the interviews and suggestions for how they might be improved to yield results, can be found in Chapter Five. The semi-structured interviews were attempted during the course of the workshops but owing to a number of factors discussed in the following chapter the results were not included in the final analysis. And so, in the discussion that follows the interviews were undertaken, but they were not analysed and nor do they contribute to the results.

Designing these semi-structured interviews required a different approach to that detailed previously in this chapter. Qualitative interviews need to be open enough for the participants to respond and give their own opinions but standardised enough to be able to generate data comparable to other responses. Bridget Byrne identified this method as particularly useful for accessing attitudes and values and she argued that they allow for more complex analysis.¹¹¹ The most compelling advantage to qualitative interviewing is that ‘when done well, it is able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to other, particularly survey-based approaches’.¹¹² Thus, it was chosen to feature in this research in order to complement the data that would be collected from the surveys aforementioned. Qualitative interviews offer access to attitudes, feelings, and opinions of the participants and can serve to illuminate and enhance our understanding of the topic and how engagement with history can affect an individual.

¹¹⁰ In all instances of conducting these workshops they had to be conducted with a full class rather than with a smaller group and so, in an effort to ensure that workshops were carried out, they were conducted with larger groups than had been designed for.

¹¹¹ Bridget Byrne, ‘Qualitative Interviewing’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 209.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 210.

In surveys and interviews wording the questions in the same way for each respondent is called standardising while asking questions in the same order is called scheduling.¹¹³ However, interviews can be non-scheduled and partly standardised, which is sometimes known as a semi-structured interview, and is the method of qualitative interviewing that was chosen for this research. In these interviews the researcher works from a list of topics that need to be covered with each group, but the order and exact wording of the questions is not important. These topics are identified in the topic guide and elaborated on with subsection extensions later in this chapter. Example questions were devised from this list but as previously stated the exact wording will not be rigorously adhered to, rather the list would act as a guide to ensure that all topics are addressed. This approach contributes to a more natural interview situation in which the topics and questions are introduced as part of a continuing conversation rather than a formal presentation of assigned questions. The researcher acknowledges that all such settings for semi-structured interviews with focus groups are, by their nature, artificial and so are not representative of conversations that happen in real life but by positioning the questions and interviews in this way it is hoped that students would feel more comfortable expressing their opinions.

As with other aspects of this research both the advantages and disadvantages of this method were considered. Incorporating semi-structured interviews alongside structured surveys would not only have enhanced the quality of data generated, but it would have allowed for more depth and nuance to be expressed by participants. Disadvantages of this method, as identified by scholars in the field, include the financial costs associated with travelling to the various locations and the increased time spent per group means that less people can be surveyed.¹¹⁴ However, owing to the nature of this project and the incorporation of workshops this disadvantage was not applicable as the researcher would be visiting all schools involved. It did extend the duration of the workshops, but it was decided that the high-quality data that these interviews would help to generate was worth the additional time. Another disadvantage of this method is that the interviewer can introduce their own bias which may affect the reliability of responses. This bias is not

¹¹³Constantinos N. Phellas, Alice Bloch & Clive Seale, 'Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 183.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 183

present in surveys or questionnaires and might emerge from the way questions are asked, personal characteristics of the interviewer, or in the respondents' wishes to give socially desirable responses.¹¹⁵ It is accepted that this approach, in which the researcher accepts that their own bias cannot be avoided but should be acknowledged and consciously reflected on throughout the process, is a postmodernist approach. This risk will be mitigated in this research by discussing the topics and possible wordings of questions with the PhD supervisor, Dr Anne Dolan, but it is not possible to completely negate all traces of bias.

With this acknowledgement, it is crucial for a researcher to bear in mind that a degree of reflexivity is required to combat possible bias. Reflexivity involves critical self-scrutiny on the part of researchers and a move away from the neutral, detached observer that is implied in much classical survey work.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, it involves an awareness that the researcher approaches this topic from a specific perspective and that this will impact the research undertaken, the questions asked, and the analysis produced. This reflexivity is crucial to achieving Credibility, an essential component of the TACT framework for ensuring rigour in qualitative research that will form an integral part of the methodology for this research.¹¹⁷

Topic Guide & Subsection Extensions

The following topics were identified as being integral to answering the research questions of this project and these topics need to be addressed during the semi-structured interview with all focus groups in order for this research to satisfy requirements for both Auditability and Transferability as part of the TACT framework.¹¹⁸ If interviews with various focus groups are not comparable to one another, the data generated will not have the required credibility either to pursue further research or to inform future research.

The topics to be addressed in each interview are as follows:

¹¹⁵ Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 'Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*.

¹¹⁶ Bridget Byrne, 'Qualitative Interviewing' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 213.

¹¹⁷ Ben K. Daniel, 'Using the TACT Framework to Learn the Principles of Rigour in Qualitative Research', p. 121.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.

1. Attitudes towards public history.
2. Understandings of group identity expressions
3. Attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and critical thinking skills.
4. Attitudes towards history as an agent of reconciliation.

Each of these topics are elaborated on in the following subsection extensions, which list questions, of which at least two from each topic should be asked. These questions are non-scheduled and partly standardised, as discussed previously in this chapter.¹¹⁹ A full list of the subsection extensions can be found in Appendix 11.

Preparing Data for Analysis

Once the data had been gathered from the workshops it needed to be prepared for further analysis, the first step of which is coding through which data is selected and grouped. Some sections of the data would be deemed more relevant to this project than others. The data needed to be coded using thorough and rigorous methods to identify patterns.¹²⁰ It is these patterns that formed the basis for deeper analysis of the responses to the questions answered by participants. In questionnaires and surveys data is often pre-coded to a certain extent by the format of fixed-choice questions. The mixed methods approach designed in this research ensured that there will be a certain degree of pre-coding in place but the open nature of the semi-structured interviews would have generated data that would require coding. For the quantitative data generated fixed, interval, and ordinal variables will be used to analyse the information. This would have been analysed with bivariate or multivariate analysis to explore the relationship between the variables (age, gender, ‘extremely positive’, etc.) and to gain a greater understanding of the data.

For qualitative data that would have been produced thematic coding would have been used to reduce the volume of original data and turn the raw data into something more meaningful and usable. Carol Rivas, in her chapter on analysing qualitative data, described two levels of analysis that she makes from data. One level of analysis is surface level, but

¹¹⁹ Constantinos N. Phellas, Alice Bloch & Clive Seale, ‘Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 183.

¹²⁰ Clive Seale, ‘Preparing Data for Statistical Analysis’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 317.

the other is deeper and provides true understanding and new insights.¹²¹ This is the level of analysis that is required for this project, and so thematic coding would be employed in the future as it involves looking across the data set rather than within one case and enables a full analysis of the data set as a whole. Rivas cautioned researchers undertaking thematic coding to be aware of their own theoretical sensitivities to topics, concepts, meanings, and relationships within the data.¹²² These sensitivities, if not identified and considered, could have significant negative impacts on the analysis. As part of a wider practice to achieve objective, though not entirely unbiased, data analysis the researcher reflected on her own sensitivities and in identifying themes and groupings was conscious of gender, class, religious, or political bias. The approach taken for this research was a postmodernist one in which the researcher accepted that she cannot be unbiased but in accepting that fact and being aware of bias can strive to be objective in discussing the content of workshops, participants' opinions, and analysing data. Munday, in her discussion of focus groups as a research tool, asserted that the researcher never plays a neutral role in the process of data generation, particularly in the case of focus groups where the researcher generally leads the discussion.¹²³ The aforementioned TACT framework developed by Ben K. Daniel, which has been employed in the design of this research, helps to mitigate the bias of any individual researcher particularly in its guidance on how to ensure credibility throughout the research.¹²⁴ Part of the analysis and reflection after each workshop would have included a reflection on my own participation in the discussion and whether or not I perceived myself to be unduly influencing the discussion in the audio recordings.

When analysing data Rivas suggested complete immersion in the data before formally coding it.¹²⁵ This is to avoid data from the earlier workshops to unduly influence the final analysis. If the researcher begins the formal coding process before all workshops are completed, she may begin to form conclusions before all the data is gathered. This

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 367.

¹²² Clive Seale, 'Preparing Data for Statistical Analysis' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*.

¹²³ Jennie Munday, 'Identity in Focus: The Use of Focus Groups to Study the Construction of Collective Identity', p. 97.

¹²⁴ Ben K. Daniel, 'Using the TACT Framework to Learn the Principles of Rigour in Qualitative Research', p. 121.

¹²⁵ Carol Rivas, 'Coding and Analysing Qualitative Data' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 369.

would be bad practice and could skew the results of the workshops. While there would certainly be patterns or themes that recur throughout the process, these can be observed, noted, reflected upon before being formally identified.

In the first step towards thematic coding, it had to be decided whether to use deductive or inductive coding. Deductive coding is used when at least some of the themes are developed before analysis begins (from previous research, theory, or experience). Inductive coding is used for studies that begin with very broad research questions in which the final research question and themes are derived from the data.¹²⁶ The decision was made, based on the research project, to employ a combined inductive-deductive coding approach. This combined approach means that while many themes are developed from research previously undertaken for this project, such as collective identity expression, engagement with public history, multiperspectivity, and critical thinking, that the researcher immerses themselves in the raw data and is open to other themes that might emerge.¹²⁷ In the first stage of analysis with the raw data open coding would be used to create labels for chunks of data. This would result in a long list of codes created by listening back to the audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews. These lists would be far too long to be used as they are and would require further grouping in what is known as preliminary categorisation.

This preliminary categorisation is the second of three stages used in inductive or combined inductive-deductive thematic analysis.¹²⁸ It involves grouping similar codes from the list created by open coding to be used to form analytic categories. Once categories are established and the open codes have been categorised the next step is to operationalise them by defining them further to ensure transparency in the research process. These definitions for categories will enable the researcher, subsequent researchers employing this process, and third parties to understand the process of categorisation and how these categories, which will have a significant impact on the final analysis produced, were created. Categories are fluid, they can change as the data is being analysed and more observations are made by the researcher. They should never be fixed as this may result in

¹²⁶ Rivas, 'Coding and Analysing Qualitative Data' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 368.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

data being forced to fit into a category and subsequently the categorisation process is compromised. Rivas defines the function of this stage of the process as ‘to systematically group multiple fragments of unconnected literal codes into something meaningful and more analytical and digestible’.¹²⁹ While some interpretive work may naturally occur at this stage this should be reserved for the third, and final, stage - theme development.

Theme development and theme categorisation is usually a larger concept than the preliminary categories already produced. Rivas suggested that researchers use concept maps to help to see whether there are any gaps in the data or any codes or preliminary categories that do not ‘fit’, in which case the themes will be expanded to incorporate all of the findings. For these concept maps she suggested choosing a theme that is significant to focus on, label this theme and put it in the centre of the map, and then consider its qualities and features according to a set of questions, namely ‘who?’, ‘what?’, ‘where?’, ‘when?’, ‘why?’, ‘how?’, ‘consequences/significance?’.¹³⁰ Once these themes are identified and have undergone the process of concept mapping and none of the preliminary categories have been excluded the final stage of theme development is to present them. In thematic content analysis, themes are typically written as lists, careers, or typologies. After consideration it was decided to present the themes for analysis as typologies in order to facilitate the most meaningful analysis of the data and address the research questions. Typologies are a system of groupings of which members have identifying attributes that are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Categorising themes in this way would have enabled the researcher to highlight differences between events, behaviours, or people, for example comparison can be made between participants in different areas, participants that identify with particular religions, or participants of different genders. This would have enabled a fuller and more meaningful understanding of how the participants view history engagement, the effects it has on an individual, and its potential for wider application across this age cohort. It is imperative that the data passes through all stages of this process of coding to ensure credible, reliable, high-quality results.

While the workshops that were designed, as detailed in this chapter, experienced some changes between the design phase and final implementation it is crucial that the

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 376.

¹³⁰ Rivas, ‘Coding and Analysing Qualitative Data’ in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, p. 378.

process of design is recorded here in this chapter, and that the record of and rationale behind the decision-making process is recorded. The changes that were introduced following the pilot programme and due to logistical concerns, such as school scheduling are listed and discussed in the following chapter. It is worth noting that the workshops, as they were designed, were intended to be tools of public history engaging the public with history. They aimed to foster multiperspectivity, empathy, and critical thinking among participants – skills which, according to scholars such as Alan McCully, Keith Barton, David Thelen, and Jacqueline Reilly, have the potential to promote historical thinking and reconciliation, and contribute to building an informed citizenry.¹³¹ It is hoped that these workshops will also be vehicles of an agonistic mode of remembrance, as advocated for explicitly by Reynolds and Parr, and also by David Thelen, Keith Barton and Alan McCully, albeit without the term ‘agonistic remembrance’ – their writings predate the emergence of the theory, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis.¹³² These non-experimental, mixed methodological workshops that aspired to combine the MVAS and PANAS scales to generate quantitative data with semi-structured interviews to provide qualitative data with focus groups of Transition Year/Year 10 students in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland still have the potential to be carried out as they were designed in the future. As discussed in the following chapter even in their more limited capacity they were crucial in generating data for this research and for providing insights into the potential that public history has within society.

¹³¹ See Alan McCully and Jacqueline Reilly, ‘History Teaching to Promote Positive Community Relations in Northern Ireland: Tensions Between Pedagogy, Social Psychological Theory and Professional Practice in Two Recent Projects’ in Chris Psaltis, Mario Carretero and Sabina Cehajic-Clancy (eds.), *History Education and Conflict Transformation: Social Psychological Theories, History Teaching and Reconciliation*, p. 304; Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 90; Barton and McCully, ‘Trying to “See Things Differently”’: Northern Ireland Students’ Struggle To Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives’, p. 399.

¹³² See Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 90; Barton and McCully, ‘Trying to “See Things Differently”’: Northern Ireland Students’ Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives’, p. 399; Reynolds and Parr, ‘Northern Ireland’s 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights’.

Chapter Five: Workshop Implementation and Results

The implementation of these workshops produced exciting results that will be discussed in this chapter. It was clear that the detailed planning and thorough attention to detail in the design of these workshops formed a solid foundation for their implementation. The data gathered from the workshops is indicative and suggestive, it cannot be taken to be representative of the entire population of Transition Year students as a whole. There were a number of considerations taken when analysing the results, including considerations of gender which are not reflected in the discussion due to the nature of the surveys and the small sample size. While, due to the nature of the two schools that participated in these workshops (as discussed below) and the anonymisation of the surveys, it is not possible to observe any differences in responses of students of different genders, it should be noted that this is a category worthy of further consideration. An analysis of the responses linked to engagement, multiperspectivity, and the connection to local area would have benefitted from the ability to analyse them through the prism of gender. It has been shown in multiple studies that females perform better than males in educational settings such as schools and universities, but how might this impact the level of engagement from the different genders, and the impacts that this engagement might have on them?¹ There is scope to expand this research and to incorporate considerations of gender into the analysis, contributing to a more robust understanding of the impacts that engaging with history can have on an individual.

Another category that would be beneficial to the analysis of these results is ethnicity or nationality. These workshops, by their very nature, engage with the public history of a local area. The island of Ireland is increasingly diverse, with the 2016 Census carried out in the Irish republic reporting that 11.5% of the population identified as non-Irish nationals, and a further 2% of the population hold dual nationality.² The results,

¹ See Carl O'Brien, 'Girls outperform boys in most Leaving Cert subjects at higher level', *Irish Times*, 15 Aug 2019; 'A-Level data shows record grades and biggest gender gap in a decade', *The Guardian*, 10 Aug 2021; Raza Ullah and Hazir Ullah, 'Boys versus girls' educational performance: empirical evidences from global north and global south', *African Educational Research Journal*, 7, 4 (Oct 2019), 163-167.

² 'Census 2016 Profile 7 Migration and Diversity', *Central Statistics Office*, 21 Sep 2017, accessed at <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile7-migrationanddiversity/>.

discussed later in this same chapter, show that engagement with workshops such as these can increase an individual's interest in their local area's history. While some feedback from one individual student indicated that they were less interested in these workshops because they did not identify as Irish, the results suggest that participating in these workshops increases interest in a local area and so introducing ethnicity or nationality as a category of analysis would be hugely beneficial to future research on this subject.

The workshops that were designed went through a pilot, in an attempt to identify any issues with the content or the running order, and then three workshops were undertaken with groups of students with fifty-five participants in total. The first of these groups consisted of twenty-two students from St Mary's Secondary School in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, (hereafter referred to as the St Mary's Group). St. Mary's Secondary School is one of three secondary schools in the town of Nenagh, it is a Catholic all-girls school with approximately 600 students. It has been educating young women in the town since 1854, when it was founded by the Sisters of Mercy. Today it is under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education in Irish Schools Trust) and runs a strong Transition Year programme, with an estimated 95% of students from Junior Cycle opting to do Transition Year.³ The pilot workshop took place here in October 2022, and then another workshop took place in January 2022. These both focused on the case study of the North Tipperary Republican Monument and included mention of the Great War Memorial in the town, both discussed in Chapter Three.

The second and third groups consisted of thirty-three students from St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School in Dublin 8. This is a smaller school, with approximately 220 students in total. It is a co-educational, mixed secondary school governed by a Board of Governors. The school site claims that students come from all over the greater Dublin area, and further afield.⁴ The students at St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School were divided into two separate groups for these workshops, the first happening in the morning and the second in the afternoon (hereafter referred to as St Patrick's Group A and St Patrick's Group B). Their case study was the statue of King William of Orange in College Green

³ Information accessed at <https://stmarysnenagh.ie/about/school-structure>, accessed on 7 Jul 2022.

⁴ Information accessed at <https://spcgs.ie/>, accessed on 7 Jul 2022.

and included mention of the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, both discussed in Chapter One. Both the St Mary's Group and St Patrick's Group B had workshops scheduled in the morning, with only St Patrick's Group A held in the afternoon. A larger sample size was envisaged in the planning and design of this project, but due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and the disruptions that schools experienced over the past few years it was increasingly difficult to get access to students or a slot in a school for a project such as this. It is hoped that, with the research undertaken to date and the promising results discussed in this chapter, schools and cross-border agencies will be more receptive to these workshops in the future and they will be undertaken on a larger scale. This would lead to a greater number of participants and an increased level of robustness in the data generated.

The vast majority of the participants had completed the Junior Certificate curriculum at the time of these workshops.⁵ The Junior Cycle curriculum for Irish secondary schools aims to foster multiperspectivity amongst students, provide them with an understanding of historical developments nationally and internationally, and develop historical skills amongst students.⁶ The curriculum, in advocating for multiperspectivity, argues that

understanding the actions of people in the past and understanding how we come to know about these actions helps us to develop positive values about history. These include a respect for truth and evidence, *a commitment to being open and seeing the past from different perspectives* and a regard for the integrity of the past.⁷ [my emphasis]

This multiperspectivity is what these workshops sought to promote and foster, and so the direct links between the curriculum and the workshops themselves were evident. The curriculum also aspires to promote and develop empathy amongst students,

By exploring the past from a historical perspective, students also develop an interest and enthusiasm for history and acquire values and attitudes that shape their view of people in the past, including a regard for heritage and their cultural inheritance, and

⁵ One student in St Patrick's Group A had joined the school the morning of the workshop. She was a refugee from Ukraine, and the effect that her presence had on the discussion is noted later in the chapter. It is possible that other students might not have joined the Irish education system in the middle of the Junior Cycle and not completed it fully, but this is not information that was gathered in the surveys distributed.

⁶ Department of Education and Skills, *Junior Cycle History*, Dublin (2017).

⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

a sense of historical empathy, where people are judged in the context and values of the time in which they lived.⁸ [my emphasis]

The promotion of empathy amongst participants was another aspiration of these workshops. The acknowledgement given to both of these skills, as well as the importance of the skills of critical thinking which featured in the introduction to this thesis, in the Junior Cycle curriculum is testament to both their links with history education and their importance in the development of an engaged, contemporary citizenry. Their presence in the curriculum suggests that the majority of students who participate in these workshops will have engaged in three years of history education that aims to promote multiperspectivity and critical thinking skills, and foster empathy. These are exactly what the results of the surveys, discussed later in this chapter, found that the workshops promoted amongst participants. The links between the workshops and the school curriculum, and how this might influence the responses collected, are given consideration in the analysis of the results.

Pilot Workshop

In line with best practice guidelines for undertaking research of this nature a pilot workshop was planned and carried out on 4 October 2021 at St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. St Mary's had agreed to provide two groups for these workshops, one to conduct the pilot with and a second to generate viable data for use in my research. For ethical reasons, in order to adhere to the TACT framework for gathering and analysing qualitative research, consistency across all workshops is required for auditability. To ensure auditability, the researcher is required to apply a systematic procedure for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. Without a planned pilot workshop in which to test ideas, activities, timings, and concepts with a group representative of future participants, ensuring auditability in the collection of data would be impossible as the researcher could not ensure that workshops would not be adjusted to better address the research questions after its first trial run. Pilot studies are commonly used in science to evaluate risk, feasibility, and improve on the study design prior to the implementation of the research project. Their main objective is to improve the likelihood of the success of the

⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

main study through providing the researcher an opportunity to identify risks and take corrective action. A pilot group should be representative of the research participants in order to generate the most insightful and valuable data for the researcher. For this reason, the pilot workshop was undertaken with a school who were already chosen as a host for these workshops and who were willing to provide two groups of participants. The pilot participants were in the same year group as future participants and so can be understood to have had similar experiences of history as an academic subject in school.

There were a number of key lessons and minor adjustments to be made to these workshops following the pilot.

Key Lessons

- Face masks are a barrier in communication.
- Block of passive learning needed to be revised.
- Timing issue.
- Survey – question four.
- Survey coding.

Key Lessons and Adjustments

Face masks

At the time of carrying out the pilot workshop, October 2021, it was a requirement for school visitors to wear face masks where it was impossible to maintain a physical distance of two metres from school staff, students, parents, and other visitors. This impacted the workshop negatively as it served as a barrier to communication - the facilitator found it difficult to ascertain whether students were comprehending the information being relayed, or whether they needed further elaboration. As a result, some of the feedback at the end of the workshop reflected some students not fully understanding terminology, concepts, or key points which wasn't flagged at the time. The requirement to wear face masks in education settings had been lifted by the implementation of the workshops in January of 2022, and so this did not cause further issue. It did, however,

highlight the difficulties involved when wearing face coverings in education and this should be borne in mind for future engagement with publics.

Block of passive learning

The workshop began with what was quite a significant block of passive learning - the introductory, theories, and historical context sections as identified in the learning plan featured two activities throughout these three sections, but the pre-workshop survey was a minor activity in terms of time, and the historical person and timeline activity was towards the end of this block rather than featuring earlier and serving to break up the sections. As a result, the first block of the workshop was extremely passive for students and relied heavily on the facilitator imparting information. I observed that students seemed to be getting distracted towards the third section of the learning plan (historical context) and their attention spans lapsed significantly. Feedback from the students after the pilot reflected this, with 60% of students expressing preference for the activity-based section of the workshop and a desire for more practical exercises.

This experience and feedback had a significant impact on the shape of the final workshops as it resulted in sections two and three being swapped - the historical context section took place directly after introductions. This section featured the historical person and timeline activities which served to interrupt the passive learning process and encourage students to engage in active learning, before returning to passive learning for a discussion on theories and concepts. In terms of the flow of the workshop the revised structure did not interrupt the flow of information and it actually enhanced learning through the variation of learning processes.

Timing issue

A significant issue faced in the pilot workshop was time management. Specific time had been allocated for each section and activity, but this was found to be insufficient to allow for genuine reflection and transformative learning. As a result, one of the practical activities remained incomplete and the time remaining at the end of the workshop (after the visit to the monument) was very little. For the pilot group this was less of an issue as each individual student had feedback forms and had time to write down their feedback. While the number of students in the group would ideally be approximately fifteen (with a

minimum of twelve and maximum of twenty), as specified on the document circulated to teachers in advance of these workshops, this depends entirely on the class sizes in a host school or the willingness of the participating schools to create a subgroup. In this case for the pilot workshop, the entire class (twenty-six students) had to be involved for the workshop to take place. A large group such as this made it difficult for each student to be heard, and the written feedback was invaluable because it gave each student an opportunity to convey their opinions. Depending on the dynamics of the participating group and the personalities of individual students, there is a very real possibility that there may be students whose opinions would not be heard in a conversation.

In order to further address the issue of timing the activities were considered in terms of what they contributed to the learning experience and how they furthered the aims of the workshop, and the ‘Blurb’ activity was removed.⁹ While the ‘Blurb’ activity served to act as a reflective activity in which students could reflect on the differences between their initial perceptions of the monument and then their understanding of it following the workshop, it ultimately achieved the same aims as the reflective discussion. It was acknowledged that the ‘Blurb’ activity certainly acted as a prompt for students to reflect and provided more time for reflective thinking, but overall, it was not as crucial as other activities such as the primary sources or the timeline.

One aspect of the timing of the workshop that was significantly longer than expected was the site visit to the monument. St Mary’s Secondary School in Nenagh is 300 metres, or four minutes’, walk from the North Tipperary Republican Monument on Banba Square. However, the twenty minutes allocated to this section in the learning plan was insufficient due to a number of delays in moving a group of such a significant size. This school is, out of all the schools in the area, located closest to the monument, which presented problems when planning future workshops. The likelihood is that for all other schools the visit to the monument will take significantly longer (for the CBS Secondary school at least another fifteen minutes longer overall, and for Nenagh College at least

⁹ The ‘Blurb’ activity was an interactive activity designed to encourage students to think about the meaning of their local monument and express it concisely. It involved students writing a 2-3 line ‘blurb’ about the monument to include in a guidebook for tourists visiting the area. This activity was intended to be undertaken twice, once at the beginning of the workshop and again at the end of the workshop to allow students to compare how their understandings changed and reflect on the meaning of the local monument.

twenty minutes). This was, however, an aspect of the workshops that students responded well to (according to their responses on the feedback sheets), and it offered students the opportunity to experience their own tangible local history. As with the workshops in cities, where a visit to a monument is not possible due to time constraints, the decision was made to take detailed photographs of the monument to disseminate to students. It is hoped that in future iterations of these workshops, when it might be possible to extend the time allocation, that a physical visit to a monument will be reinstated. There is a real risk that the loss of the visit would impact on the results of the workshop, but it would be logistically impossible to achieve all the learning outcomes in the time allocated if a monument visit was also included.

An option that was considered to prevent the cut of any substantial material or activities, and to allow more time for each student to reflect and express themselves was to adjust the timing of the workshop by adding an additional hour and running it as one four-hour long workshops or two two-hour long workshops held on consecutive days. These options would allow the facilitator to become more familiar with the students and give them ample time to reflect and form their opinions. However, owing to difficulties in scheduling workshops with schools, it was decided to alter the content of the workshops (by removing activities and reviewing the site visit) rather than extend the workshops. These variations to the workshops are an aspect that should be revisited in a later iteration of the workshops, once the benefits to participants are clearer.

Survey adjustments

There were surveys distributed to students to complete at the beginning and the end of the pilot workshop, and while the results of these surveys are not included in the data for the research project, they were very useful in indicating the understandability of the surveys. Following the methodology of Faye Sayer, as discussed in the chapter on workshop design, both MVAS and PANAS methods were used on the survey to gather quantitative data, as Sayers argues that together these create more robust data than using one in isolation. Following initial analysis of the data it is clear that the PANAS survey (containing a list of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ words and asking students to number how they felt beside each word, on a scale of one to ten) posed more of a challenge for students and needs to be explained better by the facilitator. Out of a total of twenty-four surveys,

fourteen students completed the PANAS survey and ten students either did not complete at all, or only partially engaged with the PANAS survey. The decision was taken to reduce the number of words on the PANAS scale (from eighteen words to ten) and to insert a slide explaining how to complete the survey at the beginning of the presentation to be displayed while the facilitator explains clearly how to complete it.

Another adjustment to the survey that was made was the wording of question four on the MVAS survey. When the results were analysed there was a significant increase amongst most students for questions one, two, and five (question three was considered invalid due to a printing error) but on question four analysis of the valid surveys (three were considered null due to being incomplete or suspected of not being filled out by the same student) the average increase on the scale was only 0.16 points. This low change could have indicated either a misunderstanding of the question, or a low engagement with this theme. Upon further reflection and discussion with the supervisor of this research project, it was concluded that the wording of question four was too broad and vague, so it was decided to refine the question and make it clearer for students. The original question had been ‘Thinking about the present, how useful is history in promoting reconciliation, understanding and empathy?’ In the workshops implemented, that question became two questions, as follows:

- ‘Thinking about the present, how useful do you think history is in promoting understanding between conflicting groups or communities?’
- ‘In your opinion, does an understanding of history help us to understand the motivations and actions of the people of the past?’

Separating the previous question four into two separate questions has afforded greater precision in my questioning and should generate more accurate and detailed data. By replacing terms such as ‘reconciliation’ and ‘empathy’ with more detailed phrases, I hope to make the question more accessible to a range of participants, including those whose first language is not English or who may have learning difficulties.

Survey coding

After distributing the surveys to the participants and collecting the completed ‘pre’ and ‘post’ workshop surveys, it became clear that a system of coding was required in order

to identify the school, the student, and which survey each sheet was. While one option was to allow students to keep the pre-workshop survey with them until the end of the workshop and to collect all items together to ensure that each set of surveys was from the same participant, this was decided against in order to preserve the credibility of the data generated. There was a danger that, by having access to the pre-workshop survey, students would feel as though they should score higher on the scale, and this would impact the viability of the findings. By carrying out both surveys at different points of the workshop, the data will more accurately represent how a student ranks their reaction to each statement at a point in time and without any reference to how they previously felt about each of the statements.

However, for ethical reasons, the surveys should be completely anonymous and should not be able to be identified with any one particular student. As such, a code was created for each survey to denote the school, student, and which survey they were carrying out. For example, codes for the surveys that will be given to the participants will be as follows:

SMN01.1(St Mary's, Nenagh, Student 1, pre workshop survey)

CBSN12.2 (CBS, Nenagh, Student 12, post workshop survey)

The workshops were carried out with three groups of students, one group from Nenagh and two smaller groups from Dublin, in January and March of 2022. The adjustments from the pilot workshop were made and the lessons were incorporated into what became the finished workshops. The researcher acknowledges that workshops such as these change and adapt to every different group that participates in them, and that they are constantly evolving. The workshops, as carried out for the purposes of this research, became more standardised and focused following the original pilot workshop but at present they are considered to be part of a larger group of multiple pilot workshops. These will be adjusted and built upon to create a more refined and robust series of workshops which will build upon the research undertaken for this thesis. As such, there are suggestions in this chapter for the future iterations of workshops. It is not to say that any of these workshops carried out were not undertaken with the strictest observance of the TACT framework and the code of ethics of Trinity College, but that in an analysis of the data the researcher can see where improvements might be made in the future.

Implementation

The workshops all had identical features, aspects, and running orders. Following the feedback collected from the pilot survey the running order of workshops was adjusted to break up large blocks of passive learning for the participants and to heighten active learning and engagement. Each workshop was divided into the following sections, and had defined aims and activities:

1) Introduction

Aims: Complete pre-workshop survey, introductions, set out objectives for the workshop to create a focused learning environment.

Activities: Surveys.

2) Historical Context

Aims: Establish common foundation for understanding of the wider history of the period - local, national and global.

Activities: Historical timeline, discovering the life of a person in history.

3) Theories

Aims: Introduce the concept of theories in research, and the theories being used in this research.

Activities: Watching video clip - scene from *Derry Girls* (Season Two, Episode One).¹⁰

4) Public History Case Study

Aims: Introduce the chosen case study from the local area, engaging with that case study through media and primary sources.

¹⁰ The scene from which a clip is shown during the workshops is from the highly acclaimed television series, *Derry Girls*, with which many of the participants were familiar. The scene in question became a cultural phenomenon after its original airing, with the series exploring stereotypes and social identities through farce. The blackboard used in the scene has since been recreated and put on display in an exhibition entitled Culture Lab: Don't Believe the Stereotypes at the Ulster Museum in Belfast, see <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/tv-radio-web/derry-girls-blackboard-goes-on-display-as-a-museum-piece-1.4180762>.

*Activities: Discovering the Past.*¹¹

5) Interview & Conclusion

Aims: Reflect on the significance of what has been discovered, conclude the workshop.

Activities: Semi-structured interviews with groups.

Surveys were distributed to the group pre- and post-workshop, as already discussed in Chapter Four. These surveys aimed to collect data that could then be statistically analysed to reveal patterns or regularities. While these can sometimes produce information that may be less detailed it can usually be applied over a broad area. The surveys used in this study were fixed range responses, in that participants chose from a scale of zero to ten and were asked to rank their feelings from one to five. The decision to use such surveys was drawn from the work of Faye Sayer in her project on research links between wellbeing and public archaeology, a project which has similarities to this in many ways.¹² While the advantages and disadvantages of this method have been discussed in the previous chapter, it must be acknowledged once more that while some sociologists are critical of this method because ‘an appearance of precision can be given to findings whose accuracy may be dubious’ they were chosen for this research because of the nature of the workshops, which it is hoped will be the beginnings of a wider and more extensive all-island project.¹³ It is hoped that this broad data collected will provide a basis for further research, and it was decided that this method of collection was best suited for these purposes.

It is clear that even after conducting an initial pilot workshop (with St Mary’s Secondary School, Nenagh, on 4 October 2021) and making adjustments to the workshop content, survey and delivery, there are some further adjustments to be made to the delivery of these workshops in the future following the completion of this thesis. Each group of students have different views, biases, and characteristics that result in them approaching the topic, and the facilitator, differently. As a result, some of the aspects of the survey, the

¹¹ This activity is described in more detail below, as it was the main activity of the workshop.

¹² Faye Sayer, ‘Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage’, *Arts & Health*. 7, 3 (2015); See also current project ‘Heritage and Well-Being: Creating Healthier Societies Through Heritage’, <https://mcpbh.org/heritage-and-well-being-creating-healthier-societies-through-heritage/>.

¹³ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (Fourth Ed., London, 2001), p. 649.

concepts being explained, and historical context that had not presented difficulties in the initial pilot later presented difficulties to different groups.

Primarily, the site visit that featured as an integral aspect of the workshop design did not feature as part of the finished workshops due to complications that arose from the visit during the pilot workshop. Timing became an issue in the pilot workshop because of the site visit, leading to the disruption of the rest of the aspects of the workshop. When working with schools, particularly in a research capacity, allotted time slots are fixed, and the researcher found it incredibly difficult to secure one morning or afternoon session with schools. An extended session, to include a visit to the site, was not possible. However, the researcher observed that the workshop content suffered due to less physical engagement with the sites of history. The sites were extensively engaged with using PowerPoints and media, but it lacked the immediacy of being present at the site and being able to physically touch and explore it. For future iterations of the workshops a site visit would be advised, which would perhaps extend the workshop itself to a full day and require additional content but would have the potential to increase how interested in and connected to their area's local history participants would become. In the pilot workshop carried out in October 2021, participants reported an overall increase of 13% for both questions one and two, while the average increase for the participants in the workshops without the site visit for these questions was 8% and 12% respectively.¹⁴ Further work is required to establish the veracity of that hypothesis, but it remains a compelling finding for future research.

The activity that elicited a positive response from most participants remained the primary source activity for all participants, though at times depending on the quality of the reproduction there was difficulty in deciphering the print. This was an issue that first arose during the pilot workshop and although steps were taken to mitigate difficulties experienced by participants and create a more equitable activity for those with learning or visual difficulties, the sources still presented problems for some individuals. This may have been a difficulty experienced by a minority of individuals because of their personal circumstances, or it might indicate an issue with historical engagement more generally. With more students engaging with information in digital formats or more standardised

¹⁴ See Appendix 7 of this thesis.

newspapers or print media, there may be a difficulty amongst younger generations in engaging with this twentieth-century style newspaper formatting. In future workshops these documents will be reproduced on larger paper and perhaps be edited in a PDF editing software to sharpen the text and images. Finally, a transcript of each source will be available in plain type for participants who continue to experience difficulty engaging with the primary sources. Notwithstanding the difficulties experienced by participants, this was undoubtedly the most engaging part of the workshop for many and was the part that prompted the most lively and engaging discussions. An opportunity for students to engage with these documents without the filter of a summary or explanation allowed them to interpret the information being presented to them for themselves.

Each group had between one and three sources, depending on their length, and the facilitator had a list of all the primary sources being consulted in chronological order. Each group was asked to write a two to three sentence summary of each source, and the facilitator then called on the groups to produce their summaries sequentially, from earliest to latest. Following the summary of each source, the facilitator drew a timeline (created in conjunction with the group) on the whiteboard. This allowed easy comparison of local events to national and international events on the timeline created at the beginning of the workshop, encouraging students to make connections between developments and reflect on relationships between both timelines. It was through this process that participants became aware of details such as the politics of the memory of the First World War memorial in both Dublin and Nenagh, the contested history of men named on monuments, and the systematic destruction of reminders of the imperial past. In *The Presence of the Past*, Rosenzweig and Thelen asserted that people want unfiltered, untainted accounts of the past when possible. Through engaging with primary sources, artefacts, or historical sites people felt that their connection to the past was heightened, and crucially they felt that these were less managed or manipulated than other sources about the past. They observed that ‘only by getting close to experience could they see the ambiguities, multiple perspectives, and transformative potential they had learned to expect in their intimate worlds’.¹⁵ In other words, engaging with these sources promotes empathy with the people of the past and encourages an individual to critically analyse and interpret the evidence. This is a key

¹⁵ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, 1998), p. 90.

activity that will, in future research, be adjusted and improved but should not in any instance be removed from the workshop design.

The most significant adjustment that will be made to future iterations of these workshops will be in the semi-structured interview held at the end of each workshop. With each of the three groups participating, the participants were reluctant to contribute to recorded discussions at the end of each workshop. A list of broad questions had been prepared (see Appendix 33) prior to the workshops to encourage discussion and feedback, but participants were reluctant to engage. It was envisaged that these workshops would be held with much smaller groups of participants but owing to practicalities within the schools the groups all consisted of between sixteen and twenty-two students. The researcher observed that reluctance to engage in this reflective discussion stemmed from a combination of anxiety and lack of confidence. Participants seemed to be anxious of being too vocal in front of their peers, and while they were reassured that there were no ‘wrong’ answers and that this exercise was for the purposes of gathering their opinions they were still reluctant to engage on a group level. Some participants left unprompted written notes on surveys, which indicates a level of engagement with the material even if, like one student who left a note, they claimed to be disinterested. These comments suggest that these students had thought about the questions but were perhaps not confident enough to speak in front of the group.¹⁶

In Keith Barton and Alan McCully’s research on secondary level students in Northern Ireland, they interviewed students in small groups of two or three and introduced interview aids - pictures of people, places, or historical events - that prompted conversation with the students.¹⁷ While this method was initially envisaged for these workshops it proved not to be feasible due to logistics and practicalities of scheduling these small group interviews following the workshops. Should these workshops be used in future as part of a programme to promote multiperspectivity, empathy, and critical thinking it may be possible to schedule these interviews as part of the future of this project.

¹⁶ The unprompted written comments can be seen in Appendix 6 of this thesis.

¹⁷ Keith Barton and Alan McCully, ‘Trying to “See Things Differently”: Northern Ireland Students’ Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives’ in *Theory & Research in Social Education*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2012).

It is hoped that by discussing all aspects of the implementation of these workshops in this thesis, other researchers who use this work to build their own public engagement initiatives might benefit from the knowledge both of what was used in the final workshops, and what was designed but did not feature due to practical reasons. This design process and subsequent adjustments will contribute to the literature on adapting academic historical research for public engagement, and thus encourage more historians to use their research in this way.

Results

The surveys distributed pre- and post-workshop to the participants provided unprecedented insight into the effects experienced by the participants and suggest exciting opportunities for further research. The full survey distributed to participants can be found in Appendix 2 of this thesis. For the purposes of this research, points on the scale have been rounded to one decimal point, while percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Each survey contained two elements, firstly an MVAS (Modified Visual Analogue Scale) with a Likert-type scale, used to gather information on participants' attitudes towards their area's local history, the potential for history in the future, and their critical thinking skills. A PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) was used to collect data on their emotional responses to the workshop, which can indicate what emotional effects engaging with history can have on an individual.

MVAS

Below are preliminary results from the MVAS survey taken from completed questionnaires from students at St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh, and St Patrick's Grammar School, Dublin 8 (both group A and B). There was a total of 45 completed surveys, and a further eight surveys disqualified due to incompleteness. As described in Chapter Four, for this section of the survey participants were asked to rate their responses to a range of statements between zero and ten. In order to better understand and analyse the results, the responses from each group were divided into three bands, these bands were as follows:

- 0-3: low
- 4-6: moderate
- 7-10: high

Each cohort of participants were divided into these three bands and ranked according to their responses. This allowed the researcher to make groupings in the responses and better compare responses between the different groups. The difference between the pre- and post-workshop surveys were noted and the total difference was divided by the total number of participants in each band to give the average increase or decrease. This provided a much more robust system of analysis than dividing the group into two bands of those who ranked 0-4 and 5-10 as it allowed for another layer of nuance in both the responses and the analysis of those responses. A complete report on each cohort and their responses divided into the three bands, as well as the total for the entire study, can be found in Appendix 4.

Question 1

The first question was ‘Thinking about yourself, how interested are you in your area’s local history?’, the scale ranged from ‘Completely Disinterested’ to ‘Completely Interested’.

This question aimed to ascertain whether students felt interested in their area’s local history, and whether their feelings about this changed from the beginning of the workshop to the end. Places, specific spatial locations, connect people across time and provide humans with a sense of belonging. In choosing to use local case studies with each group undertaking this workshop, the project aimed to enhance an individual’s sense of connection to the locality (regardless of a student’s nationality), but before asking about senses of connection students were asked to rank their interest in the history of the area. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Irish society has become increasingly diverse and globalised, with 13.5% of the population in 2016 holding dual citizenship or non-Irish citizenship.¹⁸ Each group of students who participated in these workshops consisted of

¹⁸ ‘Census 2016 Profile 7 Migration and Diversity’, *Central Statistics Office*, 21 Sep 2017, accessed at <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile7-migrationanddiversity/>.

students whose families had deep roots within the communities and those whose families had immigrated to Ireland. As already acknowledged, data was not collected on participants’ nationality or ethnicity, and so exact information on the number of students whose families immigrated to the country is not available. Nevertheless, these workshops aimed to foster a greater sense of connection between all participants and the area in which they live.

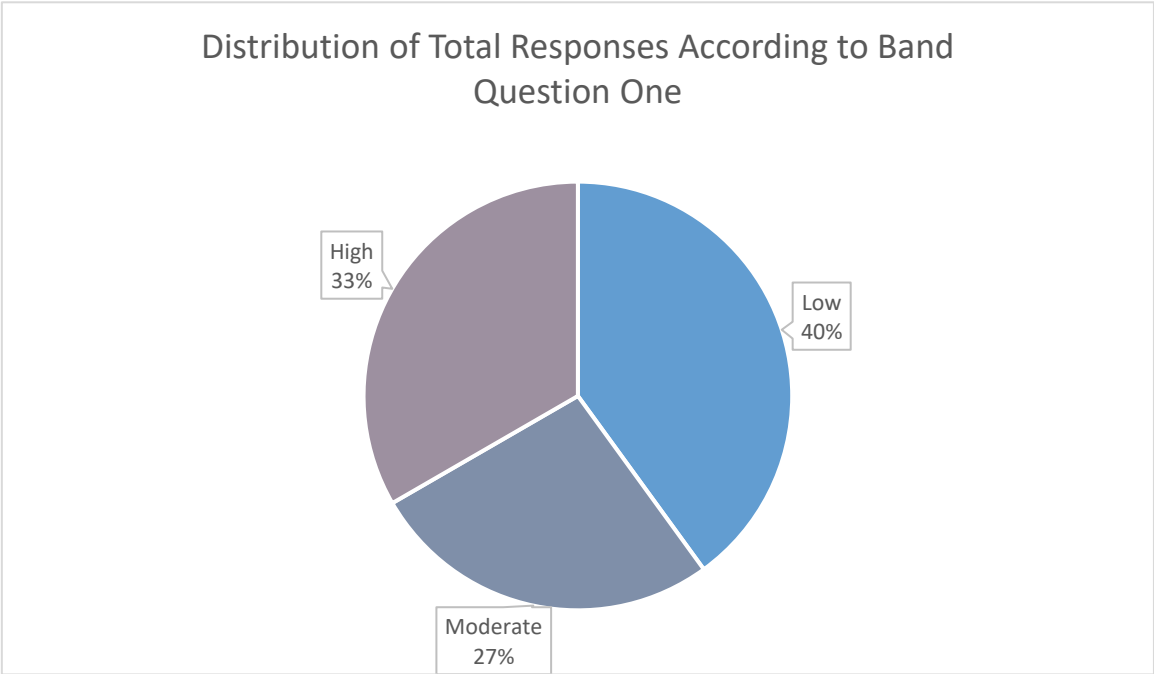


Figure 1: A distribution of how participants ranked themselves before the workshop began.

As represented in Fig. 1, the overall results showed that a large number of respondents, a total of 40%, ranked themselves low on the scale before the workshop began. These 40% ranked themselves between zero and three on the scale, indicating that they were generally disinterested in their area’s local history. This was the largest group of responses for this question, but there was not a huge disparity between all three cohorts. 33% of students ranked themselves as moderately interested in their area’s local history, placing themselves between four and six on the scale, and 27% ranked themselves as being close to ‘Completely Interested’ before the workshop began.

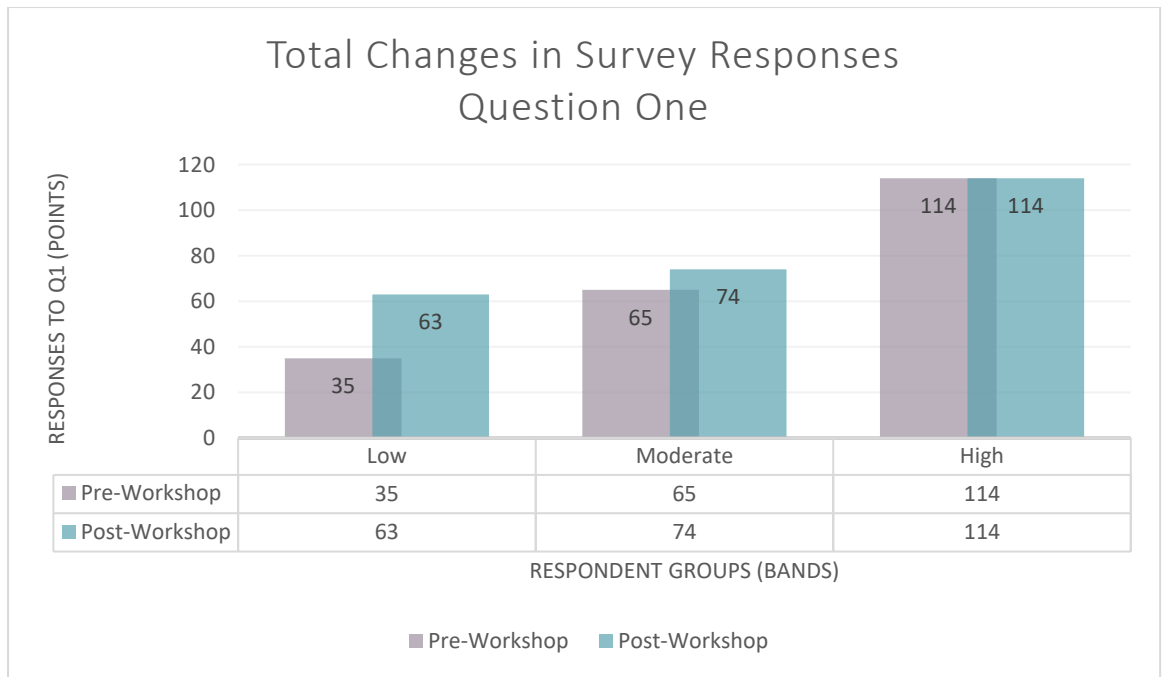


Figure 2: A comparison of total results pre- and post-workshop divided by bands.

On average, overall, these workshops resulted in students feeling more interested in their area's local history by 8% (per student). An increased interest in the local history of an area can result in a stronger connection between the individual and their locality. While an 8% increase across the board is quite significant, it should be noted that amongst those participants who ranked low or average before the workshops, interest in their area's local history increased by 12%. These results are represented in Fig. 2, which illustrates the level of change experienced by those across the different bands.

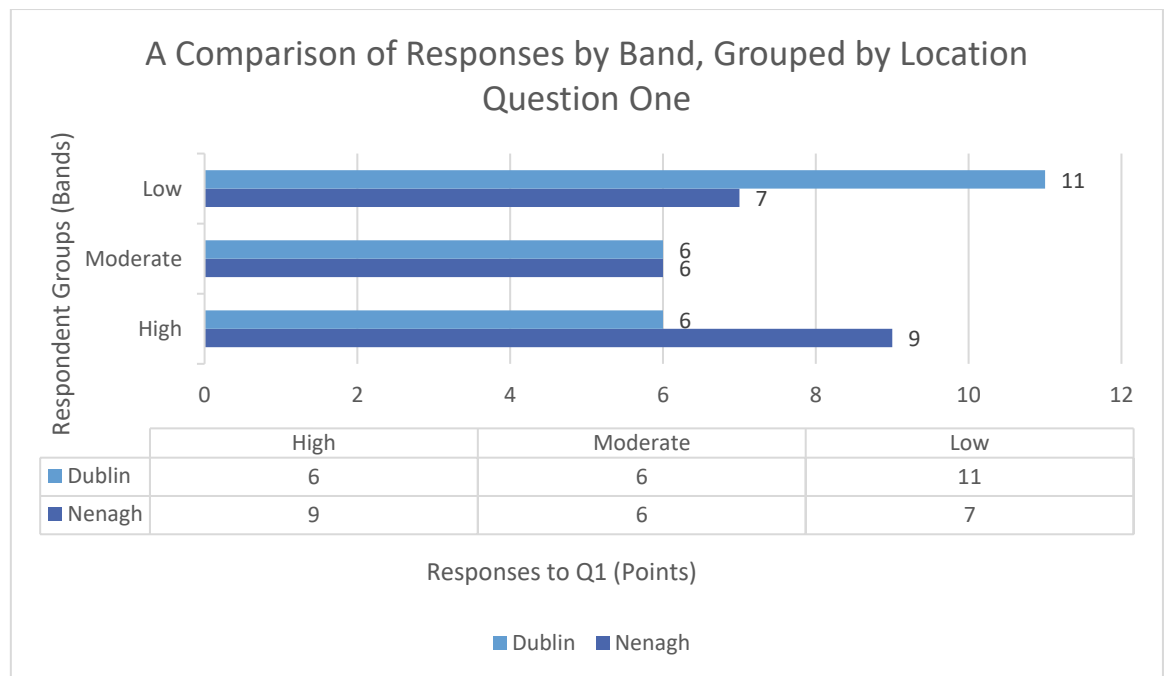


Figure 3: Total responses from participants to Question One, grouped by band and divided by location.

As Fig. 3 illustrates, students in rural and urban areas differed slightly in their attitudes towards the history of their local areas. 48% of all students surveyed in Dublin ranked themselves low on the scale before the workshop, in comparison to 32% of students in Nenagh. 39% of students in Nenagh rated themselves between seven and ten on the scale, compared to just 26% of Dublin students. While reasons for the lower level of interest amongst students in Dublin in their area's local history could be attributed to a higher proportion of first and second generation immigrants in the city, these results indicate a greater need for engagement with local history in schools in this urban area to nurture feelings of connection with the locality and contribute to the maintenance of the established urban communities alongside growing populations. Communities in urban centres and smaller, more rural areas fulfil many of the same functions in different settings. Paul Connerton argued that the constant construction and reconstruction of the urban landscape contributed to the erosion of cultural memory in cities, that the cultural memory relied on the building blocks of the city and as they are torn down the memory fades.¹⁹ However David Garrioch and Mark Peel have discussed the development of urban neighbourhoods and communities across the world and argued that while recent scholarship that they charted discussed urban communities in terms of their disappearance,

¹⁹ Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 120.

this continuous decline and recreation of urban communities is a feature of their existence.²⁰ As a result, participants in Dublin experienced a 13% increase in interest in locality's history, and those who initially ranked themselves as low or average on the scale judged themselves to be 15% more interested after the workshop had taken place.

It is notable that for one participant from the St Mary's group who responded positively to this question, rising from four to five points in the rankings (or in other words increasing their interest in the area's local history by 10%), they wrote a note on their survey to the facilitator that articulated that they felt they 'weren't as interested' in the content of the workshop because they don't identify as Irish ('I am not Irish though, so I do not relate to the topic of Irish history').²¹ The researcher was conscious that participants would have a range of backgrounds and was considerate of that, but perhaps this highlights that more time in the workshops should be spent constructing a history of the locality and talking about how it links to wider national and global concerns and developments. Another student, whose response to question one rose by a mark (or 10%) from the pre- to post- workshop survey didn't comment on their background, but expressed a disinterest in the workshop material in general ('I don't really have any interest in history or monuments'), this would suggest that even though some students who participated in these workshops still felt themselves to be disinterested, that perhaps their interest was piqued, more than they were prepared to admit or even aware of themselves.

While knowledge of local history is not a requirement for the history curriculum at either Junior or Senior Cycle for Secondary Level students in Ireland, it is labelled as a 'major concern' of the Primary Level Curriculum. Local studies, it is argued on the curriculum, enriches a student's historical understanding and an exploration of local heritage sites (like statues or monuments) can enrich the study of the discipline for the student. Investigating and discussing local case studies can provide a platform for students to explore the broader history of the nation, and even make links to global developments. For example, the study of the North Tipperary Republican Monument and Frank Ryan's speech provided an opportunity to link to contemporary concerns and global

²⁰ David Garrioch and Mark Peel, 'The Social History of Urban Neighbourhoods', *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 32, no. 5 (Jul 2006), p. 671.

²¹ See comments in Appendix 6.

developments. His speech discussed the loss of Ireland's young people through emigration; he also commented on the economic situation and unemployment in the country (blaming the Cumann na nGaedheal government). At the workshop we discussed this speech in the context of Ryan's later life, as well as discussing who was not mentioned in his speech. This led to discussions around emigration, the global recession, the rise of fascism and dictatorship, and the role of women in the twentieth century.²²

Question 2

The second question was 'Thinking about yourself, how connected do you feel to your area's local history?', the scale ranged from 'Completely Disconnected' to 'Completely Connected'.

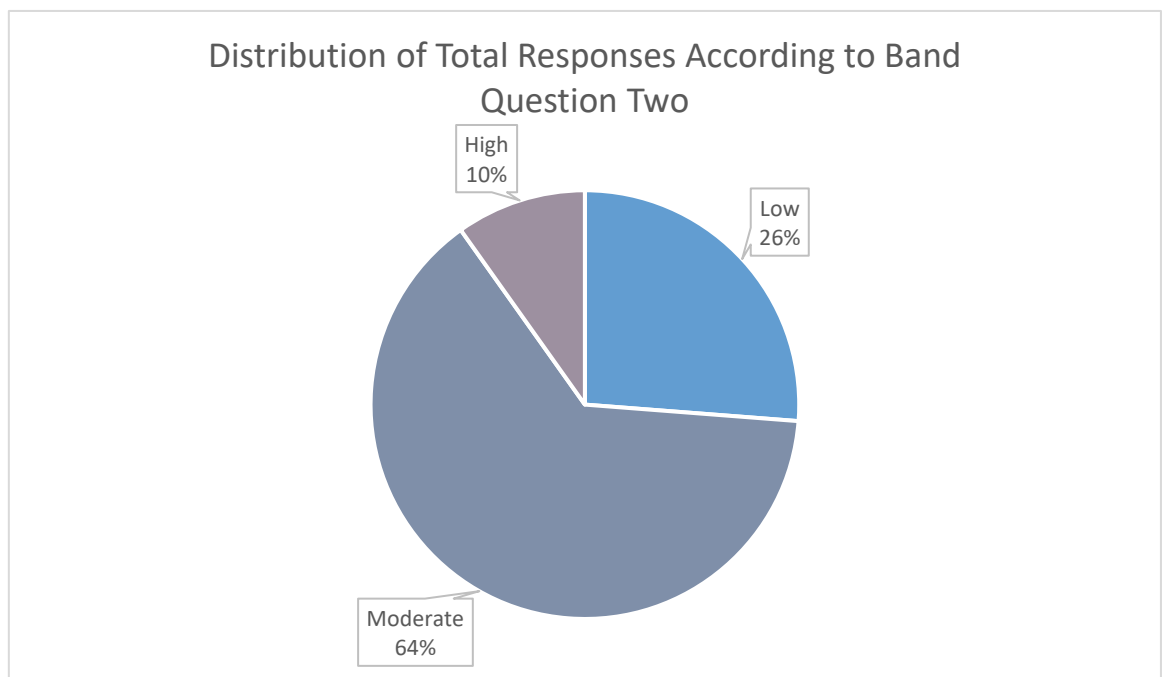


Figure 4: A distribution of how participants ranked themselves before the workshop began.

This question was designed to gauge how connected the participants felt to their area's local history. 2626% of students overall ranked themselves low on this question, with a further 6464% ranking themselves as moderately connected. Combined, this means that before the workshop 9090% of students ranked themselves between zero and six in

²² *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 August 1931.

response to this question. The importance for individuals to feel a sense of connectedness to their local area cannot be overstated, it can contribute to individual satisfaction and contentment as well as benefiting wider society. This connection can serve to foster a stronger sense of community and can encourage civic engagement among participants. The rural/urban divide is not as pronounced in responses to this question, with 87% of Dublin students ranking themselves low to moderate (with the majority, 52%, in the moderate band) and 91% of students in Nenagh in the same range (again, the majority of 50% were in the moderate band). These results indicate, as illustrated in Fig. 5, that even though students in Nenagh were more likely to be interested in their local area's history, the sense of connectedness they feel with the history is on par with their urban counterparts.

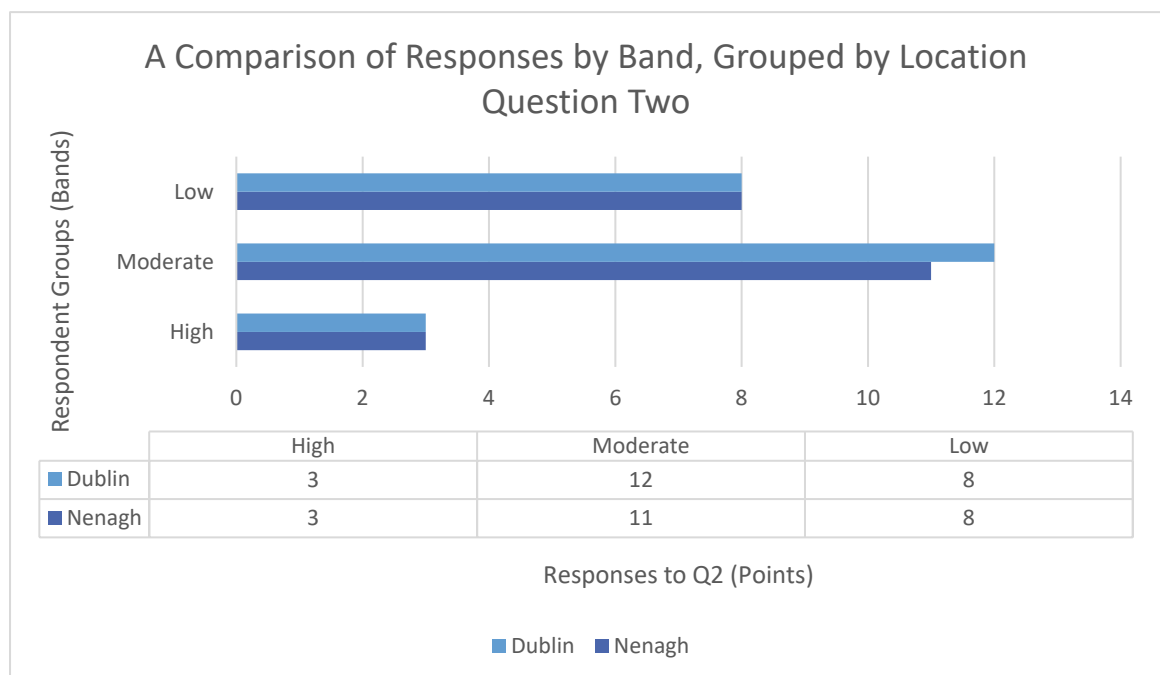


Figure 5: Total responses to pre-workshop survey from participants to Question Two, grouped by band and divided by location.

Following the workshop participants reported a 12% increase overall in their sense of connection with the history of their area. In these responses the rural/urban divide was far more pronounced as Dublin students reported an 18% increase in their feeling of connectedness, while students in Nenagh reported only 5%. The numbers of students in each of the successive bands were almost identical for both groups, so the smaller increase cannot be attributed to more students ranking themselves higher on the scale to begin with

and therefore having less room on the scale to increase their ratings.²³ There were a total of four participant surveys from the Nenagh group that actually reported a decrease in a sense of connection to their area's local history, while only one survey from the Dublin group reported any decrease at all. Factors that may have contributed to this significant decrease among participants in the Nenagh group could be the performance of the facilitator, the material and content of the workshop, or the collective feeling of the group overall.

It should be noted that amongst all three groups that participated in these workshops, the response to question two on the pre- and post-workshop surveys was the most consistent across all bands. All three bands in each of the three groups saw an increase of between 0.5 and 2.6 points on the scale, which averaged for the overall group in 1.3 for the low band, 1 for the moderate band, and 0.75 for the higher band. While individuals, particularly in the Nenagh group, reported a decrease in their sense of connectedness to the area's local history it was a question in which the average in each group didn't decrease, unlike some average decreases seen in questions one, three and five across the various groups. Each group's median ranking rose by at least one point for this question, with the St Patrick's Group B rising by three points.²⁴ This indicates that these workshops undoubtedly foster a sense of connection between the participants and their area's local history, whether they already feel very connected prior to the workshop or not.

On reflection, in future iterations of this workshop this question will be slightly revised to better ascertain the sense of connection that a participant feels to their local area, rather than the history of the local area specifically.

Question 3

The third question was 'Thinking about the present, how useful do you think history is in promoting understanding between conflicting groups or communities?', the scale ranged from 'Extremely Useless' to 'Extremely Useful'.

²³ There were 22 surveys in the Nenagh group, and 23 in the Dublin group. For Q2 the numbers in the low band were 8/8, the moderate band were 11/12 and the high band 3/3.

²⁴ St Mary's median rose from four to five, St Patrick's Group A rose from five to six, while St Patrick's Group B rose from four to seven.

This question was one of two questions that had been modified following the pilot workshop held in January 2022. The intention of this question was to investigate participant's attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and as a tool of conflict resolution. The overall changes in response to this question from pre- and post-workshop surveys was relatively low, with students reporting that overall, their attitudes on history's ability to promote understanding between conflicting groups increased by just 2%.

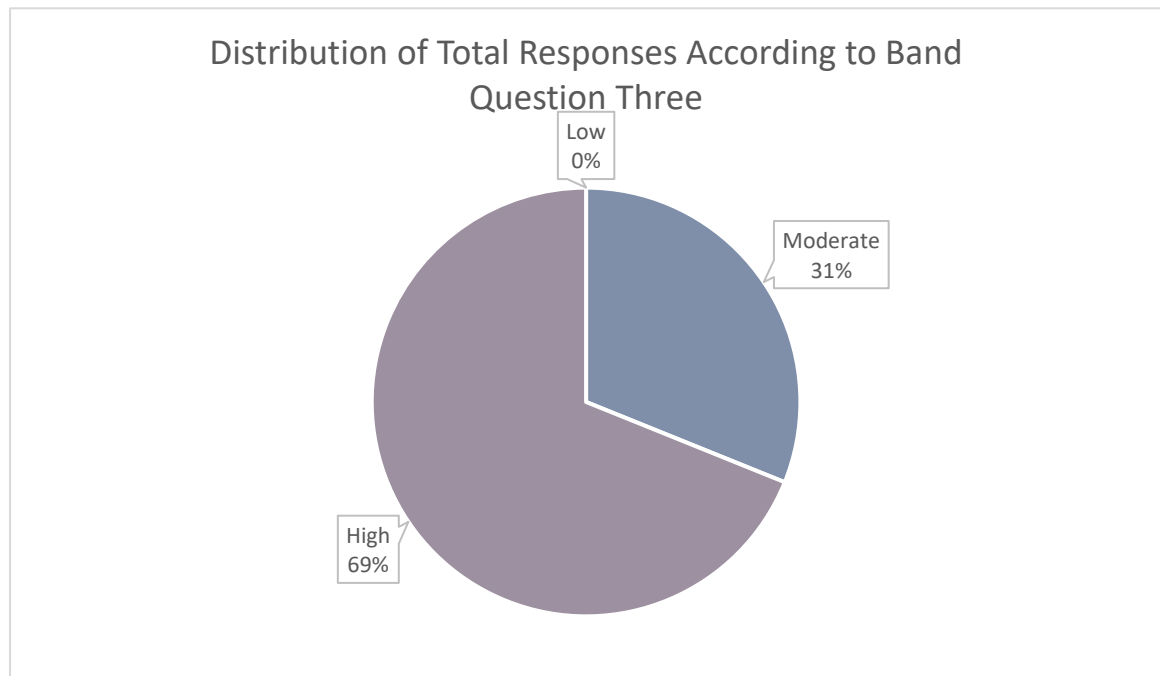


Figure 6: A distribution of how participants ranked themselves before the workshop began.

It is worth noting that there is a striking parallel between the responses in questions three and four (the two questions that had been created following the pilot workshop) in that no students in any of the three participating groups ranked themselves low on the scale for this question. Of all the students surveyed, a striking 69% ranked themselves as high on this scale before the workshop took place, with the overall median ranking being seven. It is possible that the aims of the Junior Cycle curriculum are reflected in the responses of the group, with a significant majority believing in the potential of history to promote multiperspectivity before engaging in these workshops. There was very little variation between the groups in their responses, however there was a stark contrast between the number of participants who felt that history would actually not be useful in this instance from the pre- to post-workshop surveys. While ten surveys out of the total of forty-five reported a decrease in the perception of the usefulness of history, seven of those ten were

in the Nenagh group alone. It should be noted that a decrease in responses does not indicate that the workshop was not effective or engaging. These responses are more difficult to interpret without context, but the large number of decreases amongst the Nenagh group might suggest a frustration at the misuse of history. This group discussed the presence of Martin Hogan’s name on the North Tipperary Republican Monument as part of the workshop, a discussion that elicited an animated and charged response from the students.²⁵

What these responses do indicate is a heightened awareness of students for the potential of history to promote understanding between conflicting groups and communities. The groups most likely to experience a change in their ranking of this question were those who ranked themselves moderately pre-workshop, with both cohorts in St Patrick’s Group A and St Mary’s group indicating that they were 20% more likely to agree that history could be useful in reconciliation following the workshop.

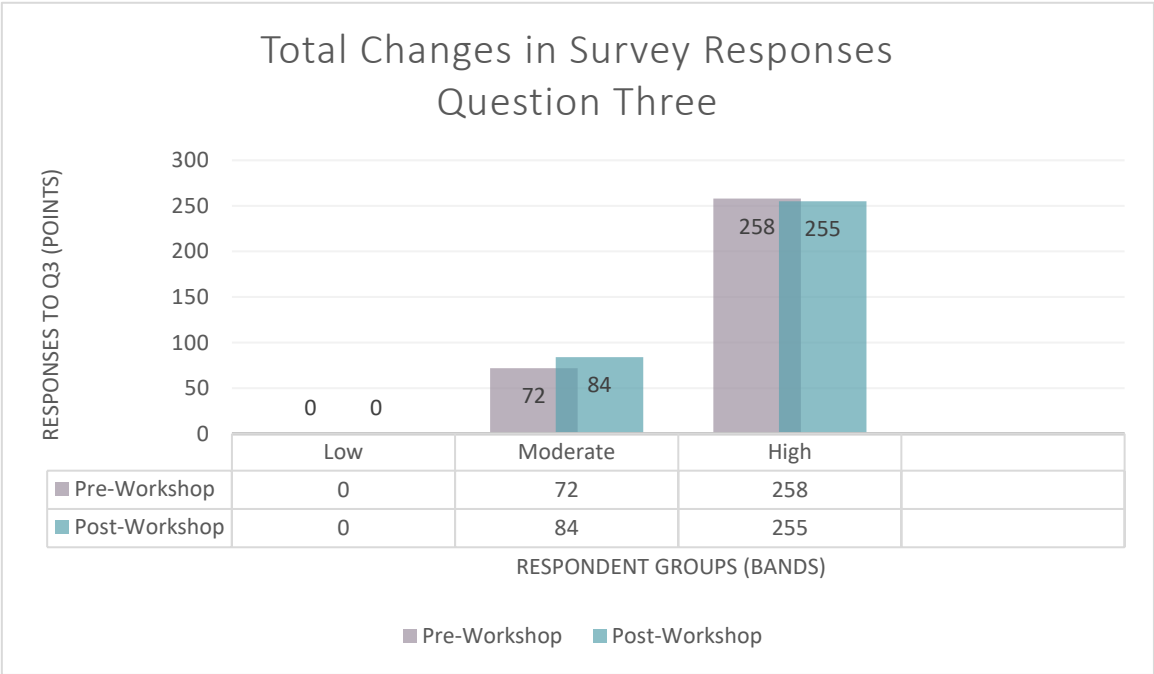


Figure 7: A comparison of total results pre- and post-workshop divided by bands.

²⁵ As discussed in Chapter Three, Martin Hogan was wanted at the time of his murder in connection to a case of violent sexual assault against Mrs Eileen Biggs in Dromineer in June 1922. He was never brought to trial, but part of the workshop featured an examination of sources relating to the trial, to his disappearance from the community, and his death the following year in Dublin in April 1923.

External factors affecting the workshop, and the context in which it is held, always have an influence or bearing on the results. It should be noted that for St Patrick's Group B, a group which returned fourteen completed surveys, the presence of a young Ukrainian refugee whose first day in the school it was had a huge impact on the discussions and the students' attitudes towards history and conflict. Many of the conversations and debates that stemmed from the case study of the statue of King William III in College Green naturally became linked with the misuse of history for political gain and the struggle between groups in power to control the historical narrative. The recent outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine and the use of history in propaganda was explicitly mentioned regularly by students. As such, the researcher does not believe it is a coincidence that this group experienced the least amount of change, either positively or negatively, in their attitudes towards the use of history for promoting understanding between groups in conflict.

Question 4

The fourth question was 'In your opinion, does an understanding of history help us to understand the motivations and actions of the people of the past?', the scale ranged from 'Extremely Unhelpful' to 'Extremely Helpful'.

For this question, participants were asked to rank their response to the statement above and to rank their opinions on a scale from zero to ten, zero being 'Extremely Unhelpful' and ten being 'Extremely Helpful'. This question was designed to measure participants' empathy towards the people of the past, or at least their own understanding of whether history can promote this empathy.

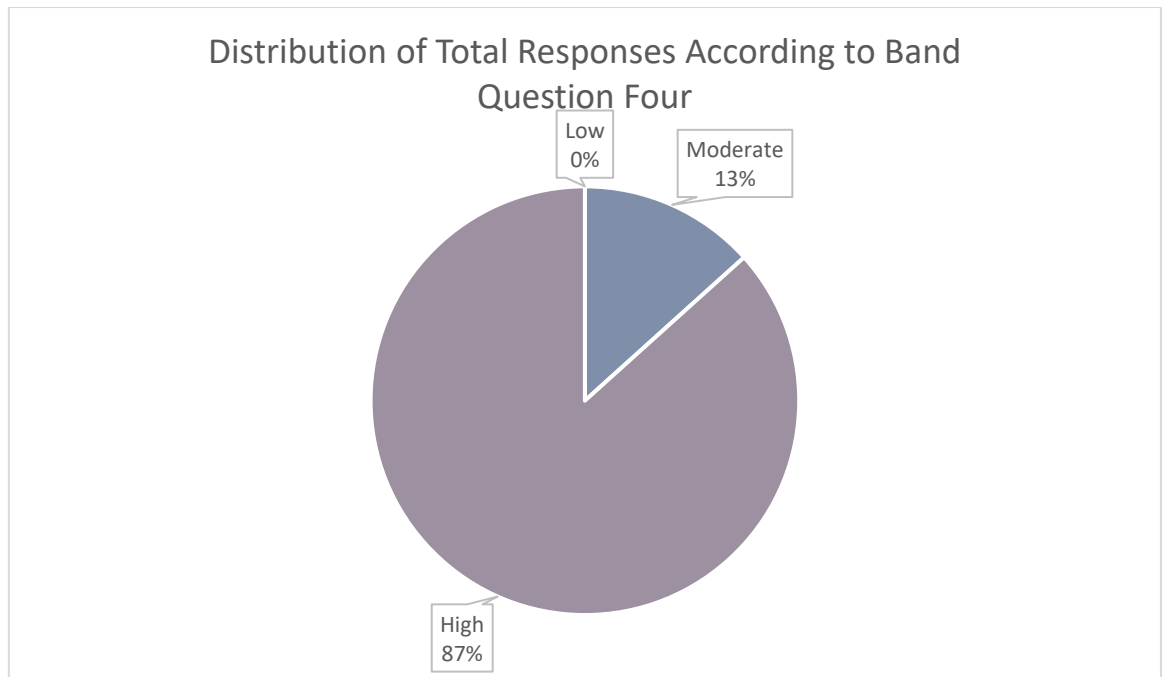


Figure 8: A distribution of how participants ranked themselves before the workshop began.

As previously stated, no students ranked themselves low on the scale pre-workshop for this question. Like question three, it is clear that this cohort of students at Transition Year level in secondary schools believe that studying history can improve historical empathy and multiperspectivity. On average, students reported an increase of 7% agreement with this question. Alone, that doesn't seem like a particularly significant increase but on closer inspection the results are far more impactful than they first appear. Of the fourteen students surveyed in St Patrick's Group B, thirteen ranked themselves high in agreement with this statement, with the median ranking being nine (out of a possible ten). For the participants from St Mary's in Nenagh, 86% of students ranked themselves as high with a median ranking of eight amongst the group. Even with the final group, St Patrick's Group A, a lower but still significant percentage (77%) ranked themselves high in their response. It is clear that all three participating groups strongly believed in the power of history to promote multiperspectivity and historical empathy. Clearly, with a group who already highly regard history's capacity for promoting multiperspectivity and empathy there can be very little change between the pre- and post-workshop surveys.

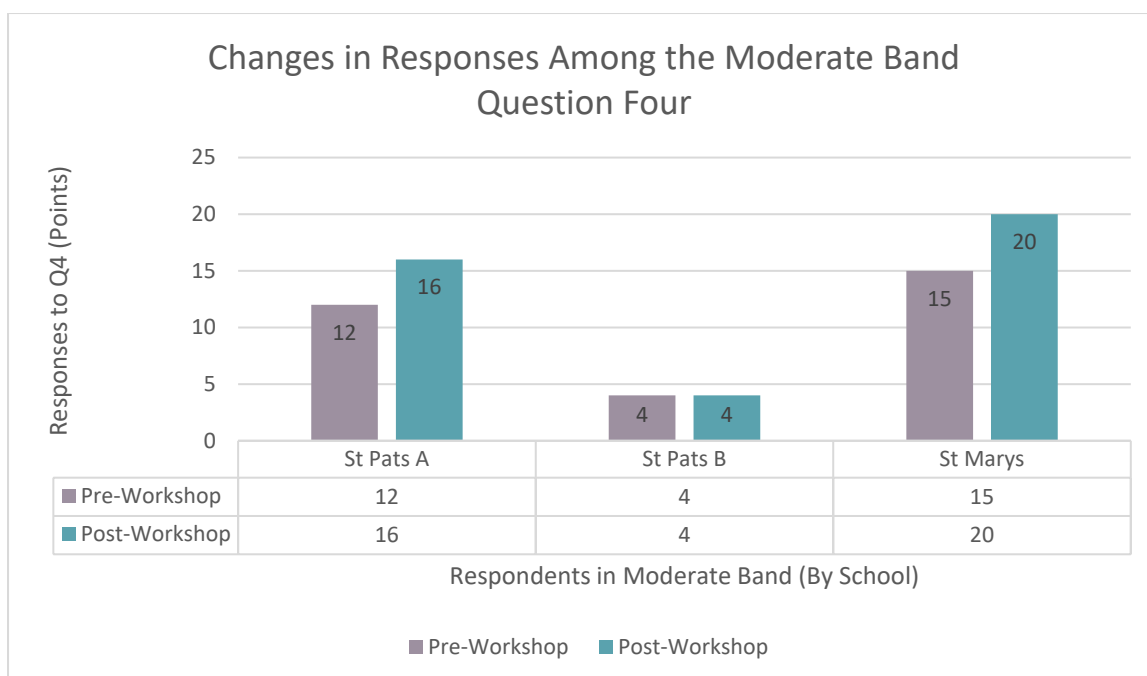


Figure 9: A comparison of the average changes amongst the moderate band from pre- to post-workshop.

When the cohort who ranked themselves high on this scale prior to the workshop is removed, the average increase in endorsement of history to aid us in understanding the actions and motivations of the people of the past rose by 15%. However, this cohort only makes up 13% of the overall group, with a remarkable 87% ranking themselves high on the scale for this question. There was no noticeable difference between the rural and urban groups participating in these workshops, indicating that perhaps Junior Cycle history curriculum has fostered a strong sense of the potential of history amongst students. Clearly the aims of the curriculum are having a significant impact, as evidenced by the responses in this workshop. The importance of fostering multiperspectivity has been discussed by scholars such as Alan McCully, David Thelen, Clare Magill, and Keith Barton.²⁶

However, it should be noted that just because students are acutely aware of the potential for history to promote historical empathy and multiperspectivity, this does not mean that workshops such as these are not required. The importance of fostering these traits amongst participants is still, as discussed by McCully, Barton, Smith, and Magill, as

²⁶ See Alan Smith and Clare Magill, 'Reconciliation: Does Education Have A Role?' in *Shared Space: A Research Journal on Peace, Conflict and Community Relations*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2009), pp. 5-15; Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'; Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 190.

acute as ever.²⁷ It should also be noted that while workshops were run with students for the purposes of this research they are designed to be run with members of the wider public, ranging in ages, backgrounds, education, and nationality. These potential future participants may not have experienced the Irish history curriculum or may have done so some time ago and might not be surrounded by history in that context, as the students currently attending school are. As such, the reaction of the moderate-ranking cohorts of a 15% increase in the opinion that history can successfully promote multiperspectivity and historical empathy is crucial in promoting these workshops to the wider public and encouraging a wide variety of groups to participate.

For future iterations of these workshops, this question may be revised or modified to have more of a focus on the feelings of empathy within the participants to the people of the past rather than on measuring their attitudes towards the use of history to promote this. While these differences are subtle, the former would provide an opportunity to gather more nuanced and detailed data in relation to the actual feelings experienced, rather than on the attitudes towards history being used in this way. These proposed modifications for improving the data being gathered and making the surveys clearer to students all build on the work done thus far in this project to enhance the experience of historical engagement and the lessons learned from that engagement.

Question 5

The fifth question was 'How likely are you to question the truthfulness of sources presented to you about the past?', the scale ranged from 'Extremely Unlikely' to 'Extremely Likely'.

This question aimed to ascertain whether a participant's critical thinking skills were improved by their participation in these workshops, or at least whether they thought they were. One of the aims of the workshops was to present an account of history that was not completely unbiased, as achieving a state of complete neutrality is impossible for any individual, but an account that is highly transparent and acknowledges the presence of

²⁷ See Alan Smith and Clare Magill, 'Reconciliation: Does Education Have A Role? (2009); Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'.

these biases. As a result, participants were made aware of where bias might be and encouraged to reflect on this when considering the case studies in question. Even the acknowledgement of bias in the work being presented to them, and a heightened transparency in relation to the researcher's own flaws, should have encouraged participants to improve their critical thinking skills by thinking critically about everything being presented to them over the course of the workshop. In addition to this, comparisons were made between the history in school textbooks and the primary sources presented to the students and they were encouraged to identify potential bias in school textbooks throughout the workshop.

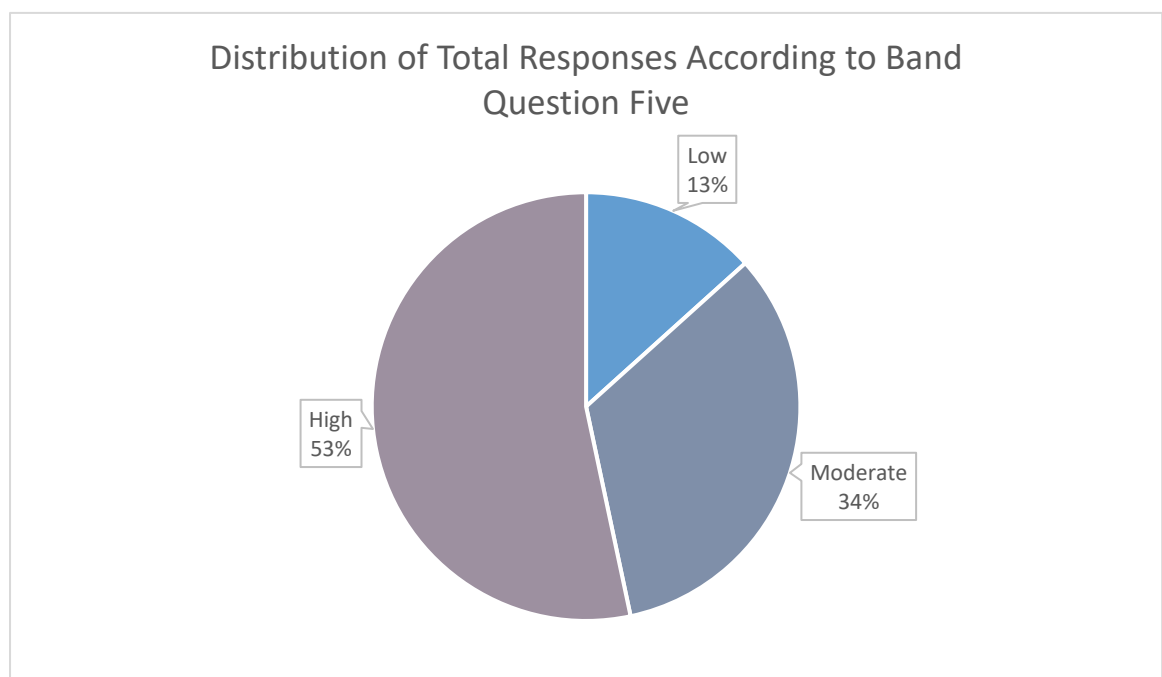


Figure 10: A distribution of how participants ranked themselves before the workshop began.

As with the previous two responses, the majority of participants ranked themselves high in their likelihood of questioning the truthfulness of sources with 53% scoring themselves between seven and ten for their pre-workshop survey, as illustrated in Fig. 10.

Overall, the responses to this question varied with the group 10% more likely, on average, to question the truthfulness of sources presented to them about the past. As with previous responses, those who initially ranked themselves high in their likelihood of questioning these sources before this workshop took place had less room to increase their ranking and already believed themselves to be critical thinkers. However, the results

amongst those who ranked themselves low or moderate were encouraging with these cohorts 16% more likely to question the truthfulness of sources after the workshop had taken place.

There was a marked difference in the responses of rural and urban participants to this question, with varying levels of distribution amongst the different cohorts. In Nenagh 68% of the students in St Mary’s ranked themselves highly on the scale in their pre-workshop survey, while only 39% of Dublin participants ranked in the same group. Dublin students were more likely to rank themselves as moderate in response to this question, with 49% of students placing themselves in this category. This is significant, as the previous two responses did not highlight any significant differences between the rural and urban groups and suggests a higher level of confidence amongst the students of St Mary’s in their critical thinking skills. This should not be taken to indicate that students in rural areas are generally more confident in their critical thinking skills, this may have been influenced by a particular teacher in either of the schools or other external variables, which is why the flaw in analysis that is highlighted below is important for the researcher in the analysis of this data.

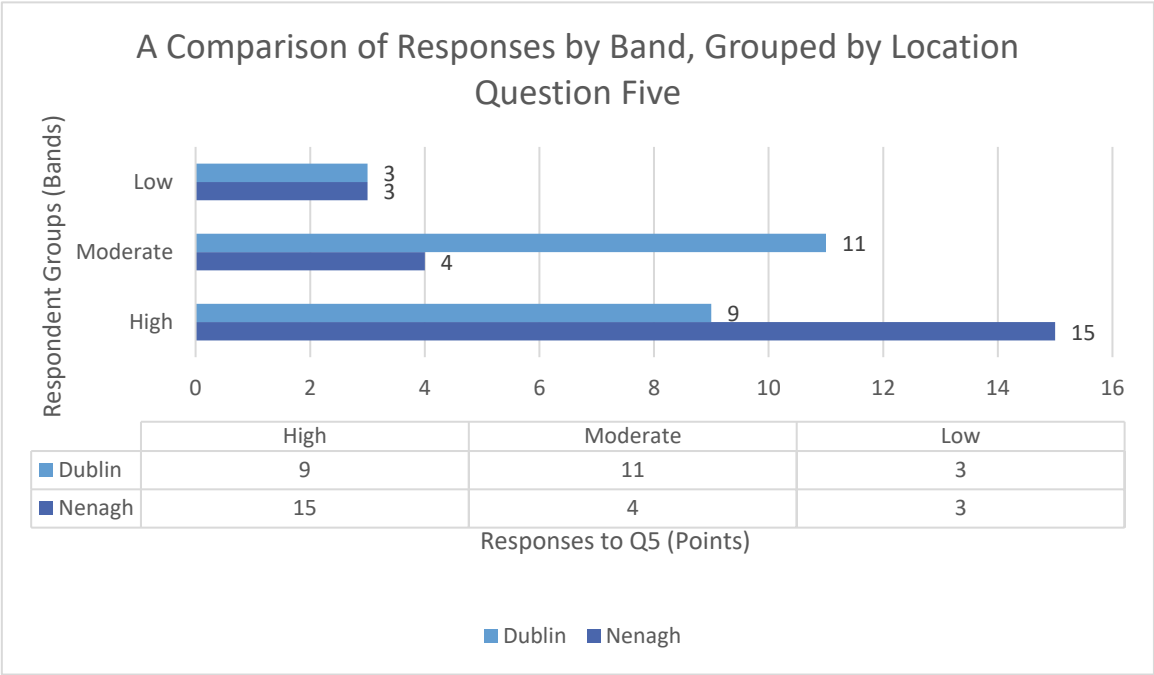


Figure 11: Total responses from participants to Question Two, grouped by band and divided by location.

The flaw in the analysis was most evident in the responses to Question Five. There was a sizeable difference between the lower ranking cohort of St Patrick's Group A and the other two groups, the significance of which has implications for the study. The low-ranking cohort of St Patrick's Group A, which consisted of one person (or 2.2% of the participants), reported a decrease of one point on the scale in their likelihood of questioning the truth of sources presented to them about the past. This individual reported an increase in their response to question one, no difference in their response to question two, and a decrease in their responses for all subsequent questions. While it is not best practice to discount responses that do not support your thesis, this highlights a weakness in the analysis of the data. One student, out of a small sample size of forty-five, ranking themselves one point lower in the scale can unduly influence the results. Had that individual's survey not been included in the data the average increase amongst members of that cohort would have been 34% (rather than the 26% that it stands at currently), and the overall increase amongst all participants would have been 11% (rather than 10%). It is clear that this individual has more impact on the smaller cohort (those who ranked between zero and three in the pre-workshop surveys) which consisted of only six people in total. It must be noted that this can also be said for participants who might unduly influence results in the other direction, but the only other cohort that consists of one person in which any difference between the pre- and post-survey results are different is for those who ranked themselves highly for question two. As stated in the introduction to this thesis and to this chapter, the sample size of participants for these workshops was too small to draw any general conclusions. It is clear that a bigger sample size is needed for more stable, robust results that can provide the basis for generalisations and more nuanced insights into the effects that history can have on an individual. It is also clear, from the results discussed, that these findings contain exciting suggestions and indications for the impact that history can have and provide groundwork for future research on this topic.

PANAS

It was clear to the researcher following the pilot programme that more emphasis on completing the PANAS scale and engaging with that section of the survey was required. There was a level of uncertainty surrounding the PANAS scale and how it should be approached. Students voiced confusion and asked for more clarity on this section of the survey than on the MVAS scale. The confusion stemmed not from how to fill out the survey and rank themselves on a scale of one to five, but rather from the abstract nature of the emotion words they were asked about. Students asked whether 'pessimistic' meant pessimism about history, or about life in general. Some of the emotion words were too vague or seemed to be unrelated to the content they were expecting, a history workshop, and so there were definite difficulties surrounding this section. They were encouraged to answer and rank themselves according to how they felt in a more general sense. The researcher felt that too much preparatory work might unduly influence the rankings and the final results, but it is clear that more preparatory work is needed before this section of the survey.

A total of forty valid surveys were collected, in which both the pre- and post-PANAS survey was completed in full. The total number of students who participated in the workshops was fifty-five, so fifteen surveys (or 27%) were returned incomplete or not returned at all. Some students who failed to complete the PANAS survey did manage to complete the MVAS survey, and vice versa, but it is clear that the presence of two surveys caused a level of confusion amongst the group. Out of the fifteen that were returned incomplete, or not returned at all, it was significant that ten of these were from St Patrick's Group B. This was a group that the researcher observed to be particularly engaged, attentive, and alert. This particular group felt, on average, 9.5% more interested in their area's local history and 14% more connected to their area's local history following the workshop. It is evident that clearer instructions on this section need to be given to participants, both orally via the facilitator and in writing on the survey itself. There were a total of seventeen students in St Patrick's Group B, and only seven surveys could be used in this data analysis. As a result, the final data that was collected and will be used to make comparisons between the participating groups will not be as robust as it might have been had all surveys been returned completed.

The PANAS scale ranged from one to five, one being ‘Very Slightly or Not At All’ and five being ‘Extremely’. This range was chosen based on Faye Sayer’s research into the emotional effects of archaeology on volunteers, but on reflection the scale is too limited to capture slighter changes and nuances in the participant’s emotions and in future iterations of these surveys a wider scale will be used, for example ranging from one to ten.²⁸ The limitations of the scale and the small sample size of the group means that an individual can have inordinate influence just by moving up or down one point, which changes their response by 20%. Following adjustments made to the survey after the pilot workshop in October of 2021 the range of emotions were adapted and adjusted to be simpler and more

²⁸ Faye Sayer, ‘Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage’, *Arts & Health*. 7, 3 (2015); See also current project ‘Heritage and Well-Being: Creating Healthier Societies Through Heritage’, <https://mcphh.org/heritage-and-well-being-creating-healthier-societies-through-heritage/>.

concise. The following is what students received in each of the three workshops carried out with participants in 2022.

However, as previously noted, even reducing the emotion words to ten (from the eighteen that featured in Sayers’s example) caused a level of confusion and uncertainty among the participants, and in future workshops this might be reduced further and the scale increased to rank between one and ten. The overall results of the PANAS survey may perhaps reflect the aforementioned confusion amongst participants.

1)

The following scale consists of a number of different words that describe different feelings and emotions.

Please read each item carefully and then list the appropriate number from the scale next to each word.

_____1. Interested

_____2. Distressed

_____3. Hopeful

_____4. Despairing

_____5. Curious

_____6. Unconcerned

_____7. Proud

_____8. Pessimistic

_____9. Optimistic

_____10. Ashamed

1

2

3

4

5

Very Slightly or
Not At All

A Little

Moderately

Quite A Bit

Extremely

Figure 12: The PANAS survey given to participants in their surveys.

Out of a total of ten words that participants were asked to rate according to how they felt, only two of the total averages for all participants had more than 0.2, or of a change of 4%. For the majority of responses, the emotions experienced following the

workshop were similar to those felt before. Of course, individual participants all experienced varying levels of change so these results should not be taken to suggest that there were little to no differences experienced by individual participants. For example, one participant in St Patrick's Group A reported feeling 80% less interested, distressed, and optimistic, 60% less curious and 40% more unconcerned following the survey than they had beforehand. This same student wrote a note explaining that 'personally [they] don't care for Irish history', which might explain some of the apathy experienced.

There was a significant difference between the urban and rural students in responses to these emotions, with the minimum difference between both groups being four points in response to emotion six ('unconcerned'), which averaged a decrease of 1% for the students in St Mary's and an increase of 0.05% for the students at St Patrick's Grammar School. There is a much wider variety between the groups on all other emotion words, with students in Dublin noticeably lower on the scale for emotion two ('distressed') than their rural counterparts. Dublin students reported being 12% less distressed, on average, compared to the Nenagh students who were 3% more distressed following the workshop. Dublin students were significantly less despairing following the workshop, by an average of 6%, compared to Nenagh students who experienced, on average, no change in relation to this emotion. As has been mentioned previously in the discussion of the results of the MVAS scale the content in the workshops that were carried out in Nenagh, and the discussions had around the names on the North Tipperary Republican Monument, including that of Martin Hogan and his alleged involvement in the violent sexual assault against Mrs Eileen Biggs, the animated and charged responses of the students undoubtedly contributed to the differences in emotions felt here.

Nenagh students were a significantly 8% less curious following the workshop in comparison to Dublin students, who felt 5% more curious, on average. Overall, across the entire group of participants the two answers that had changes greater than 4% were for emotion seven (pride) and emotion nine (optimism). Emotions two (distress) and four (despair) were the only two that resulted in a decrease on average. Emotions eight (pessimism) and ten (shame) had, on average, no change at all.

The highest average increase overall was in pride felt by students, with students reporting a 10% increase in their feelings of pride after the workshop compared to how

they felt before. Students in Nenagh felt their pride increase, on average, by 16% while Dublin students only experienced an increase of 3%. Considering the increase in feelings of shame amongst the Nenagh cohort, which are discussed below, this 16% increase in feelings of pride is significant, and unusual. The second highest average increase was experienced in optimism, with participants reporting that, overall, they experienced an 8% increase in their feelings of optimism. Dublin students experienced an average increase of 12% in feeling optimistic, while students in Nenagh felt 5% more optimistic following the workshop.

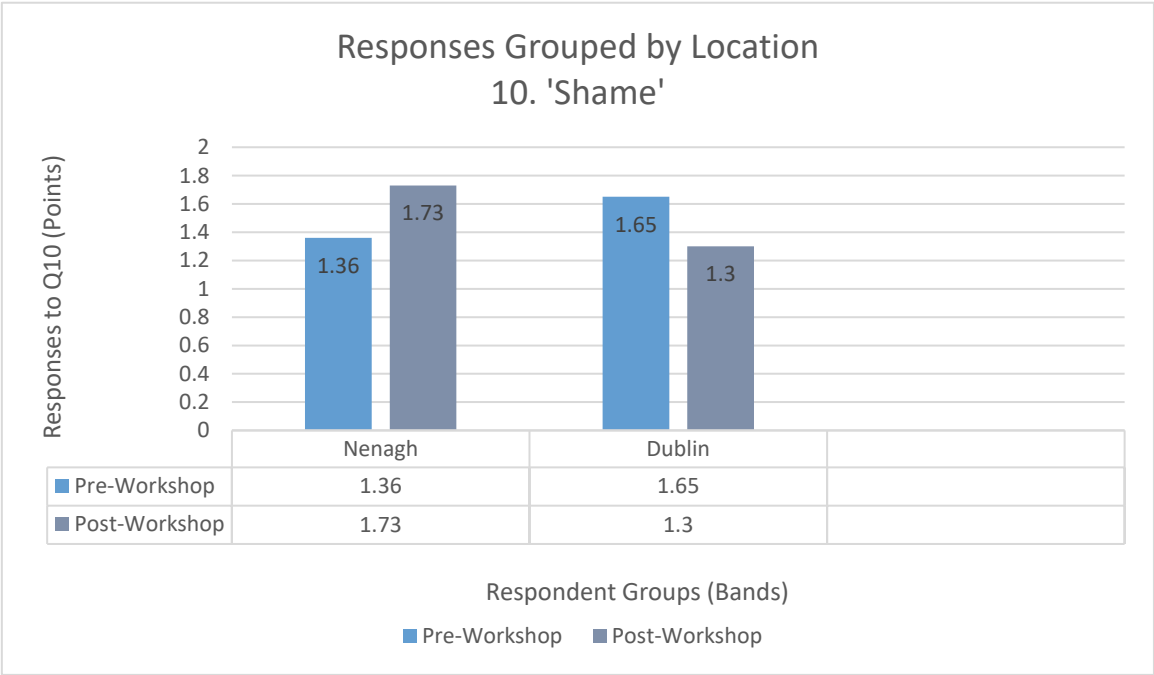


Figure 13: Responses to 'Shame' grouped by location.

The two emotions that, on average overall, participants did not experience change in were shame and pessimism. These findings are positive for this study as they suggest that participants did not increase their feelings of either of these more negative emotions following the workshops, however it should be noted that like other responses in this survey the difference between the urban and rural groups was significant, with students in St Mary’s reporting an increase of 36% in feelings of shame while both of the St Patrick’s groups reported a decrease of 32% in that same emotion. While both groups experienced similar changes in emotions, they were on opposite trajectories. Again, these results highlight the need for a larger focus group for future workshops as when the results are examined on closer inspection, 77% of participants in St Mary’s group experienced no

change in their feeling of shame between the pre- and post-workshop surveys, but one participant who experienced significant increases in shame unduly influenced the final results.²⁹ This detail is not reflected in a simple visual representation of the results, such as in Fig. 13, and is a prime example of the disproportionate effect an individual can have on the PANAS results. For this group, the median for the pre-workshop responses was one and this remains the median number for the post-workshop responses, which is perhaps a better indicator of the group overall.

These results have been reported as they appear in this discussion, but due to their fragile nature they have not been subject to the same level of analysis as the results of the MVAS survey. While conclusions could be drawn from the information provided, they would, in any case, not be robust enough to provide a foundation for any hypothesis. It would be irresponsible of the researcher to attempt to draw any definite conclusions from these results. What they do indicate is that students engaged with the material and that, on a variety of different levels, engaging with history in such a way as was done in the workshops elicits a range of emotional responses amongst participants.

Conclusion

Overall, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, it is clear that these survey results indicate what effects and impacts these kinds of workshops can have on individuals. However, with a small sample size, caution must be applied as the findings may not be representative of all individuals, or even of all students at Transition Year level. It is clear that further research is needed in this area building on the research carried out for this project to progress and for a more accurate insight into the impacts and effects of historical engagement on individuals.

The methodology for creating these workshops, as discussed in the previous chapter, was developed using a range of methodologies from the field, but in particular drawing on the works of Faye Sayer, Alan McCully, Keith Barton, Neil Spicer, Roy

²⁹ See Appendix 5.

Rosenzweig and David Thelen.³⁰ They were designed as tools of public history and aimed to foster multiperspectivity, empathy, and critical thinking among participants. They were also designed as tools of an agonistic mode of remembrance, as advocated for explicitly by Reynolds and Parr, Thelen, Barton, and McCully.³¹ These non-experimental, mixed methodological workshops had a number of aims and aspirations. They aspired to generate quantitative and qualitative data with focus groups in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. They were implemented in a limited capacity and confined to Ireland, rather than encompassing Northern Ireland as well. But it is clear from the results provided that, even in this more limited capacity, they were crucial in generating data for this research and for providing insights into the potential that public history has within society.

The advantages of using two scales (the MVAS and PANAS), a methodology promoted by Faye Sayer in her research, became apparent when gauging students' level of interest in their area's local history.³² Question 1 for the MVAS scale aimed to ascertain how interested students felt about their area's local history immediately before and after the workshop, and it found that while interest among students increased by 8% overall that more students in the urban groups ranked themselves in a 'low' (scoring between zero and three) band before the workshop than their more rural counterparts. As a result, the interest amongst Dublin students in their area's local history rose by, on average, 12%. The average increase for participants based in Nenagh was just 4%. These findings correlate to the ratings beside 'Interested' on the PANAS scale. On this scale, students in Nenagh's feelings of interest rose by 1% while students in Dublin's interest rose by a marked 6%. While the results on each survey are not an exact match, the minor discrepancies indicate honest answers responding to the statement or emotive word in front of students at the time, and the general correlation between the two scales reinforces the findings that indicate a definite general increase in interest following the workshop, with a more

³⁰ See Neil Spicer, 'Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods', in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture* (London, 1998), p. 479; Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives'; Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*; Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage'.

³¹ See Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 90; Barton and McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives', p. 399; Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights' in *Contemporary British History* (July 2020).

³² Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage'.

significant increase experienced by urban participants. These findings are significant because, as shown in the responses to the MVAS scale, an increase in feelings of interest in the history of one's local area can also result in a greater feeling of connectedness to one's area, which in turn has proven to contribute to general wellbeing and improved civic responsibility.³³

In her research on the links between archaeology and wellbeing, Sayer identifies five actions that, if present in a project, promote wellbeing. They are listed as follows; Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.³⁴ Based on this understanding, a voluntary project which provides opportunities to connect and be active, and which encourages curiosity and learning, is likely to make people happy and improve their wellbeing. These workshops were neither voluntary nor active, owing to the confines of participants being in formal education and the time constraints, but it is clear that even a project featuring three of those aspects (Connect, Take Notice, and Keep Learning) can have positive impacts on an individual's wellbeing.

While PANAS results were perhaps not as robust as they might be in the future, which was a flaw in the workshop design that was not identified in the pilot workshop, they still provide some tentative indications of how a deeper engagement with history can impact individuals. These workshops suggest that, overall, an engagement with history in this format - with local topics, using primary source documents - can improve more positive emotions felt by participants and decrease negative ones. Of the ten emotive words chosen to be featured in the survey there were five with more positive associations (interest, hope, curiosity, pride, and optimism) and five with more negative associations (distress, despair, unconcern, pessimism, and shame). Overall, out of the five more positive emotive words, only curiosity experienced an average decrease amongst the group as a whole (of 2%, or -0.1 on the scale) while two negative emotions (distress and despair) had an overall average decrease (of 4%, or -0.2 points, in both respects) and a further two (pessimism and shame) had no average change, as discussed previously.

³³ As discussed in Barton and McCully, 'History, Identity, and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary student's ideas and perspectives' in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2005), p. 111.

³⁴ Sayer, 'Can Digging Make You Happy? Archaeological excavations, happiness and heritage', p. 248.

The results also suggest that engaging with history in this format, as discussed above, can promote an agonistic form of remembrance. The agonistic approach to memory, as explored by Cento Bull and Hansen, and Reynolds and Parr, is an approach that has been central to the development of the arguments for this research and has been a driving force behind this project.³⁵ To engage in an agonistic mode of remembrance is to bring this public history project firmly into the most recent and innovative developments in the field, and builds on the findings and the research of intentional promoters of agonistic memory, like Reynolds and Parr, and unintentional promoters of the approach, such as Barton and McCully. The results reported in this chapter were generated using workshops built and designed on the foundations laid by these researchers and provide evidence that the suggestions they made for the potential of history to further multiperspectivity and empathy were well-founded and legitimate.

To continue this research and gather more robust, nuanced, and detailed data in the future the scale will be increased to one to ten (rather than one to five), the bank of words to be ranked will be decreased to six words, and like the correlation between emotion one on the PANAS scale ('Interest') and question one on the MVAS scale (gauging interest in the local area's history) the PANAS emotive words chosen will directly correspond to the MVAS survey. Some of the questions on the MVAS survey will be slightly revised, such as the wording of question two, in order to refine the focus and avoid generalisations or broad statements.

These workshops have been invaluable in gathering data on the effects and impacts that engaging with history can have on an individual, and to a greater extent in indicating how this research might develop in the future. In this instance workshops were focused on statues and monuments, however the workshop design, implementation and results can be applied to any aspects of public history, depending on the skills and background of the researcher facilitating the session. To develop a full picture of the effects and impacts of historical engagement, additional studies will need to be undertaken that have a larger sample size, a wider variety of participants, and a more diverse geographical range. It is

³⁵ Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, 'On Agonistic Memory' in *Memory Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2016), pp. 390-404; Reynolds & Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights', pp. 12-3.

envisaged that this research will provide the basis for future workshops investigating this question, and that this study can be adapted to a range of different situations. This chapter has discussed and compared the survey results from workshops, and suggested possibilities for future research. The next chapter will evaluate the significance of these findings in relation to the research carried out on public history and identity in the four case study areas and consider the possible applications of this research in the future.

Conclusion

In the wake of the establishment of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland the threat of violence, upheaval, and political change in these jurisdictions was ever present. Both governments on the island grappled with violence and armed resistance from sizeable minorities of their citizenry. For the Irish Free State government, the Civil War ended with the order to dump arms in May 1923, but the threat of violence lingered, as evidenced with the assassination of Vice President of the Executive Council and Minister for Home Affairs Kevin O'Higgins in July 1927. However, the state lacked the threat of large-scale violence and riots seen in Northern Ireland, in Belfast in particular, that manifested in the 1932 Outdoor Relief Riot and the 1935 Riots.¹ This continued threat of violence in Northern Ireland was a significant influence on the reactions of the Northern Irish government, the Unionist Party representatives, to the nationalist community in the state. The reactions of the Northern Irish government in the state-formation years have had a lasting impact on the modern state of Northern Ireland and in no small way contributed to the Troubles in the latter half of the twentieth century.² In discussing the role of memories and identities in the Troubles, Brian Walker reflects on contemporary identities on the island, asserting that they are important in 'developing a shared sense of history' between all the communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland.³ It is increasingly evident that more research on all-island and cross-community histories is needed, and histories which challenge narratives of division and elision.

This research set out two main aims in the Introduction. The first was to investigate how public history was employed in the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland to promote 'national' identity narratives after partition, and to compare these narratives to the situation in communities outside the capital cities. By researching the four case study areas of Dublin, Nenagh, Belfast, and Limavady) in both jurisdictions, there was an opportunity to explore the identity narratives being promoted in the public space by local communities (in

¹ See Thomas Hennessy, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996* (London, 1997); Cormac Moore, *Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019); David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939* (London, 1998).

² Susannah Riordan, 'Politics, Economy and Society: Northern Ireland 1920-39' in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4, 1880 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2020).

³ Brian Walker, *Irish History Matters: Politics, Identities and Commemoration*, (Dublin, 2019), p. 44.

the rural urban centres of Nenagh and Limavady) and to compare these with those being promoted by the national government in the capital cities (of Dublin and Belfast). The debates and controversies, or lack thereof, that surrounded these monuments and memorials were considered to give a more nuanced insight into communities and national governments, and how they navigated these issues in the state-formation process.

The second aim was to investigate what effects a deeper engagement with the public history, through workshops, can have on the individual. The research undertaken on monumental memorials was used to create, design, and implement workshops on these case studies and engage the public with these findings. This provided an opportunity to engage with theories and methodologies in a range of disciplines and brought this research from the realm of academia to the public. It was this aspect that rooted this research firmly in public history and provided an opportunity to explore how historians might adapt all types of historical research to engage with the public in an engaging, ethical, and effective manner.

This thesis achieved these by following a two-part approach. First, using primary sources from newspapers, archives, and personal collections, it analysed the four case study areas under review and the memorials or monuments erected and destroyed during this period. A literature review was conducted to identify possible gaps in the research and to frame this research in the wider historiography of the state-formation period and the discussion on monuments, which was detailed in the Introduction. Through this discussion, the thesis explored themes that arose during the research and compared aspects between the case studies themselves.

For the second section of this research, using the research undertaken on memorials, monuments, identity, and memory, workshops were designed using methodology from pedagogy and sociology to engage the public with this research. The design process and the theories and methodologies applied during this process was detailed in Chapter Four in order to provide a framework for future public historians designing workshops to engage the public. Surveys, to gather quantitative data, were conducted with participants before and after these workshops to ascertain what impact and effect this workshop, and by extension engaging with history, had had on them, and the results of these surveys were presented and analysed in Chapter Five.

This chapter concludes this thesis by discussing the findings of the research, considers the possibilities for future research in this area, and suggests possibilities for future applications of these workshops.

This research did not set out to provide an exhaustive account of every memorial or monument erected in the public spaces of the four case study areas. Rather, it aspired to compare community-erected monuments outside of the capital cities, in Nenagh and Limavady specifically, with those in the capital cities explicitly supported by the government. This was done in the first three chapters and the destruction of monuments was also taken into account as being a form of expression by those without the power, influence, or support to shape the public space in other ways. The monuments that are erected in the public space and the monuments that are destroyed or vandalised in the public space aren't necessarily completely on par in terms of comparison. While both actions influence the public space and the identities being projected in that space, there is little consensus required for an individual to destroy a monument. This action can often lack the level of debate, bureaucracy, and public consultation required to erect monuments. On the other hand, the consistent public debate in Ireland about the position of imperial monuments and the high level of support outside the official ranks of the IRA that supported the removal of these monuments is noteworthy.⁴ Clearly the destruction of imperial monuments had wider support than the individual, or even the organisation, carrying out the vandalism. This imbues the destruction of these monuments with significance beyond those of the acts of any individual and allows these acts to be discussed with and compared to the erection of monuments in this same period.

The public space became the battleground for memory in the newly formed states. In the Irish Free State the memory of the revolutionary period, in particular the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence, was a uniting memory that the majority of people could rally behind. The memory of the Civil War was more contested, but not silent and forgotten as some have argued.⁵ Síobhra Aiken argues that the myth of silence that surrounds discussions of the Irish Civil War was a silence perpetuated by those she calls

⁴ Brian Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, (Dublin, 2002), p. 74.

⁵ See Síobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony, and the Irish Civil War* (Dublin, 2022), pp. 1-19, for discussions on the historiography of the assumed silence on the Irish Civil War.

the ‘architects of official memory – journalists, historians, politicians’, rather than any code of silence amongst the veterans.⁶ As her research shows, veterans of the Irish Civil War attempted to communicate their experiences of the war, albeit sometimes in less ‘traditional’ forms. Civil wars have, internationally, been contentious events to commemorate and discuss. The memory of the Spanish Civil War was, until as recently as the 1990s, was ignored and treated with ‘indifference’.⁷ But in Ireland even those in officialdom engaged with the memory of the war, to varying extents. The claim of a silence surrounding the contentious events rings hollow in the face of the triumphalist Cenotaph erected on Leinster Lawn in August 1923.⁸ Hollow too was that same Cenotaph, which had started to show signs of disintegration and decay by 10 December 1923, mere months after its grand unveiling.⁹ At a local level, the North Tipperary Republican Monument, unveiled eight year after the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn in August 1931, also emphasises the memory of civil war by excluding those of the pro-Treaty forces from the area killed in that conflict.¹⁰ Erected by the committee and funded by public subscription, the local authorities were central to the final site of the North Tipperary Republican Monument and so were, to a lesser extent, engaged in the memory of the war.

The governments in both jurisdictions had different attitudes towards monumental memorials and statues. While the government of the Irish Free State were certainly more lenient regarding the counter-government narratives being promoted in the public space, not having passed any legislation equivalent to regulation 8A of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (1922 in the six counties of Northern Ireland.¹¹ The Northern Irish government’s increasing anxiety as the decades progressed resulted in stricter controls on one portion of the citizenry, and in the belief of an acute need to consolidate unionist control of the state by denying the rights of the nationalist minority in their midst.

⁶ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, p. 2.

⁷ Unai Belaustegi and Xabier Irujo, ‘The Public History of the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist Dictatorship in the Basque Country (1936-2015)’, *The Public Historian*, vol. 44, no. 2 (May 2022), 82-95.

⁸ *Irish Independent*, 14 Aug. 1923.

⁹ Anne Dolan, *Commemoration the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 13.

¹⁰ *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1931.

¹¹ *Strabane Chronicle*, 1 Aug. 1931.

However, it is notable that another major difference between the governments of both states is that while the government of the Irish Free State, at a national level, were very much involved in the conversations about monuments, their funding, erection, and at times their removal, their Northern Irish counterparts were only involved, in an official capacity, in one monument - that of Edward Carson that was erected outside the Stormont Buildings to commemorate the Unionist leader in 1935.¹² Individuals from the government were involved in erecting, funding and unveiling monuments throughout the state - such as when Prime Minister Lord Craigavon unveiled the plaque commemorating Edward Carson in St Anne's Cathedral in October 1938 - but as a body the government followed the example of Westminster and memorials, monuments, and statues were largely the reserve of communities and local authorities.¹³

Memory of the First World War was awkward for the Free State government in the fledgling state, and though the period started out being more accommodating and open to war memory, as evidenced by the Armistice Day ceremony in 1924 and the crowd of approximately 70,000 who assembled in Dublin to attend.¹⁴ The monopolisation of war memory by pro-Imperialists created a correlation in the public mind between commemoration of the war and glorification of the Empire. The war had impacted hundreds of thousands, if not millions, across the country and many, including leading members of the IRA, expressed their wishes to remember the fallen of the First World War. Motions of sympathy with the relatives of the Irish war dead were passed at anti-imperialist rallies and by the 1930s Frank Ryan was organising alternative Poppy Day commemorations featuring ex-servicemen, accusing the British Legion of using the veterans to promote their own imperialist ideology.¹⁵ Hanley concludes that there was 'undoubtedly a section of those taking part in Remembrance Day ceremonies who used the occasion to demonstrate unionist sentiment', something which was perhaps intolerable to the newly-independent Irish people.¹⁶ They were not, as defined in the meeting of the

¹² *Lisburn Standard*, 14 Jul. 1933.

¹³ *Northern Whig*, 24 Oct. 1938.

¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 12 Nov. 1924.

¹⁵ Hanley, *The IRA 1926-36*, pp. 72-3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Nenagh Urban District Council in 1928, ‘their own dead’.¹⁷ P.J. Ryan (Lacken) framed the decision between the two proposed monuments in Nenagh (that to those who died for independence and the other for the victims of the First World War) as a decision ‘between the men who died in the Great War and those who laid down their lives for the Irish Republic’.¹⁸

The connection between the glorious Empire and the First World War was not confined to the Irish Free State (or the island of Ireland) in this period. The situation in Belfast and Limavady illustrates how the memory of the war, initially expressed in grief and mourning, grew to merge with marches of the Orange Order and commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne to form a foundation myth for the unionist community in Northern Ireland.¹⁹ In Limavady alone, two ceremonies held within two years of each other at the same place reflected the changing atmosphere of society. The War Memorial Institute was opened in May 1922 in a conciliatory and united atmosphere, to be a place ‘free from sectarian, party, political, or class control’.²⁰ The unveiling of the official Roll of Honour at the Institute only two years later in October 1924 struck a very different tone, with strong pro-Empire sentiments expressed and the glorification of the war dead.²¹ This sharp change in attitude is almost certainly reflective of the wider societal tensions in the lead up to the start of the Boundary Commission’s work, beginning the following month in November 1924.²² The unionist community were a majority in a society with a sizeable nationalist minority and were anxious to consolidate their new territory to ensure that they would not be abandoned by the United Kingdom and forced to be part of a thirty-two county all-island state. Their anxiety manifested in strict controls, such as regulation 8A, being exercised over memorials, symbols, statues, monuments, and commemorations in

¹⁷ *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 May 1928.

¹⁸ *The Nationalist*, 2 May 1928.

¹⁹ Gillian McIntosh, *The Force of Culture* (Cork, 1999), p. 1; Keith Jeffery, ‘Commemoration: “Turning the 11th November into the 12th July”’, in Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, 2000).

²⁰ *Northern Constitution*, 11 May 1922

²¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Oct. 1924.

²² Cormac Moore, *The Birth of the Border* (Dublin, 2019), pp. 80-81.

the public space, with pro-union sentiments (which implicitly corresponded to the Protestant community) being the only sanctioned sentiments permitted in the public space.

In the Irish Free State, there are remarkable comparisons to be made between the two case study areas, as discussed in Chapters One and Three. The capital city of Dublin was seen as the canvas of the nation, decisions made there would impact on the state's image at home and abroad, with Minister for Home Affairs Kevin O'Higgins asserting that if the 'wrong' monument were to be erected in the public space of central Dublin - outside the seat of government itself - a 'wrong twist' could be given to visitors and tourists as to the origins of the state.²³ Outside of the capital city, however, considerably more freedom was allowed to communities. In North Tipperary the Republican Monument that was erected in the town of Nenagh prompted debate, but the basis of that debate (as reported in local newspapers) focused on the tension between the memory of the revolution and that of the First World War. The focus of this monument on the anti-Treaty dead did not feature in any discussions, responses, or letters to the editor in the local media. This example is not unique to North Tipperary, as historian Tony McGrath has shown in this survey of monuments and memorials around the country approximately 65% of monuments erected after independence that commemorate the revolutionary period are anti-Treaty.²⁴

As already noted, the situation in Belfast and Limavady was quite similar and both areas followed the general pattern of memorialisation and commemoration seen across Northern Ireland. The sectarian violence that defined the early years of Northern Ireland created a crisis for the Ulster Unionist identity and an atmosphere of uncertainty, noted by Catherine Switzer as being a less than ideal starting point for creating a national identity.²⁵ The War Memorial Institute in Limavady struck a hopeful, optimistic tone with Major-

²³ 'Private Business - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution', *Dáil Éireann Debate* - Tue. 29 Mar. 1927, vol. 19, no. 5.

²⁴ Tony McGrath presented his research as part of the National Civil War Conference in UCC on Friday 17 June. His survey of monuments and memorials is not exhaustive, but his sample size for Civil War memorials is 235 which allows for a general indication to be accepted from the findings. His presentation can be accessed at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/theirishrevolution/irish-civil-war-national-conference-june-2022/full-conference-proceedings/>.

²⁵ Catherine Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland, 1914-1939* (Dublin, 2007), p. 154.

General Sir Oliver Nugent as the guest of honour.²⁶ The unveiling of the Roll of Honour was, however, a reflection of the hardening of attitudes in these years. This only intensified over the following years so that the unveiling of the Carson statue in Belfast in 1933 was an exclusively Orange, Protestant, Unionist affair.²⁷ As the 1930s progressed both states moved from the conciliatory tones, suggested in February 1921 by Sir James Craig's declaration that 'the rights of the minority must be sacred to the majority', towards more conservative and exclusionary ones.²⁸ The fault lines that had long run deep beneath the surface of Irish society were revealing their cracks under the weight of economic recession, emigration, and the threat of another European war. It was in this decade that both de Valera and Craig made their now infamous boasts (respectively) of Ireland, or Éire, being a Catholic state and Northern Ireland being a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people. Craig declared himself to be 'an Orangeman first and a politician and Member of [the] Parliament afterwards', while de Valera afforded a 'special place' to the Catholic Church in the Bunreacht na hÉireann in 1937.²⁹

It should be noted that it was not within the scope of this thesis to encompass temporary expressions of identity within the public sphere, or to include considerations of commemorations and ceremonies. For the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, who were restricted by the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, temporary expressions such as commemorative religious ceremonies, membership of the GAA, and funerals were crucial in promoting their identity and fostering a sense of community.³⁰ The nationalist community were inordinately impacted by the introduction and continuation of this act. While other temporary expressions of identity, such as murals, represent both the unionist and nationalist communities in Northern Ireland at the time of writing, this was not the case in the period under review. Scholars such as Lyell Davis and Maggie O'Connor have noted, in their research on murals in Northern Ireland, that while unionist and loyalist

²⁶ *Northern Whig*, 11 May 1922.

²⁷ *Northern Whig*, 10 Jul. 1933.

²⁸ Made by Craig in a speech to the Reform Club in Belfast in February 1921, quoted in Moore, *Birth of the Border*, p. 61.

²⁹ Parliamentary Debates, Northern Ireland House of Commons, Vol. XVI, Cols. 1091-95; Bunreacht na hÉireann, 1937, Article 44.

³⁰ For discussions on temporary expressions of identity in this period see Brian Walker, *A Political History of the two Irelands: From partition to peace* (London, 2012).

murals first appeared at the start of the twentieth century, nationalist and republican murals did not feature in the streetscape until the 1970s and 1980s.³¹ This is not to suggest that the identity amongst the nationalist community was not as keenly felt as the unionist identity, but rather that the group identity lacked promotion in the public space in this period, due to decisions made in the wider political context.

The thesis used these four case study areas to consider the question of identities being promoted and expressed in the public sphere through memorials and monuments. Each area had different focuses and emphases, and as expected each case study contributed something unique and different to the research. As discussed in the Introduction and subsequent chapters, while there was already substantial literature exploring memorials, monuments, and statuary in Dublin during this period there was no study which brought together the different aspects of state-supported memorialisation in the city in the decades following the partition of the island. While some books or articles discussed the memory of the First World War in the public space, the destruction of imperial monuments, or the ‘figurative scramble for the bones of the patriot dead’, there is a dearth of research on the cityscape, and monumentalisation of memory, as a whole in this period.³² There was considerably less literature exploring the topic in Belfast city. There was no literature exploring the promotion of identities in the public space in either Nenagh or Limavady, and no scholarly work using case studies such as these and comparing them to what was happening in the urban centres of capital cities. This research addresses that gap and has highlighted the possibilities of using these approaches as another prism through which we might understand the actions and motivations of the people of the past, and the environments and societies in which they lived. The advantages of undertaking a comparative, all-island approach using microstudies through which to compare the situation between governing political parties and communities outside of the capital cities have been manifold. This innovative approach has allowed this research to expose nuances

³¹ Lyell Davis, ‘Artworks: Republican Murals, Identity, and Communication in Northern Ireland’ in *Public Culture*, vol. 131, no. 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 155-158; Maggie O’Connor, ‘Symbolic landscapes: Exploring what markings, murals and memorials reflect about interculturism on Belfast’s Ormeau Road’ in *Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2019), pp. 762-780.

³² For some discussion of the monumental landscape of the city as a whole during some of these years, see Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, iconography and the politics of identity* (Dublin, 2003).

and intricacies in how groups promoted their identity, and which identities were permitted and omitted, in the public sphere in the state-formation period. Future research building on this topic might use these same case studies and encompass commemorations, ceremonies, monuments on religious grounds, funerals, or temporary expressions to build a fuller picture of identity expression and narratives in this period. It might also focus on monuments and statues in other case study areas to build a wider and broader sample size from which more comparisons might be made.

Of course, this was not the only innovative approach employed in this thesis, and the inclusion of public engagement workshops added a public history dimension which has proved invaluable, rewarding, and beneficial. These workshops, which transformed this research into a project that embodies the principles of public history, have generated significant data that suggest what impact engaging with history can have on individuals. Before discussing the most significant findings from these workshops in relation to this research the setting of these workshops in secondary schools must again be acknowledged, as in Chapter Four. These workshops were intended to be carried out with members of the public and were designed and intended to be undertaken with the public. While elements of the design reflected the national curriculum it was always envisaged that the workshops would be undertaken with a variety of participants. The decision was taken to focus on secondary schools as sites for these workshops due to a number of factors including the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring comparability across the focus groups, and securing a group of participants for what was, by the time restrictions had sufficiently eased to allow the organisation of workshops, then a time-sensitive research project. It is expected that, in future iterations of these workshops, the results will vary owing to the geographic range of the participants and the demographic difference, and that the results will reflect the wider pool of participants, creating more robust analysis.

This thesis has shown that activities, where participants can actively engage with the historical material, are crucial to the design and development of workshops on history. The feedback from the pilot workshop carried out in October 2021 indicated that participants enjoyed the activities and the site visit. Opportunities to step away from passive learning and engage with unfiltered (as much as possible) accounts of the past improved engagement with and enjoyment of this workshop. As Rosenzweig and Thelen observed in their 1998 publication, people want unfiltered access to the past and, with

these workshops, it was proven to still be very much the case.³³ While the site visit did not feature in the workshops carried out for this research in 2022 due to time constraints, it is an aspect that should be reintroduced in future iterations of this project if time constraints and logistics allow. It is possible that a site visit would have an impact on responses to questions one and two on the survey (measuring interest in and a connection to the area's local history), questions that already elicited positive responses from participants with participants feeling more interested by 8% on average and more connected by 12% on average.³⁴

These findings in particular have been incredibly important for this thesis as, when conducting research into workshops and engagement, there was a significant gap in the literature that explores the practicalities of implementing and creating workshops. Pedagogy and sociology provided the literature on creating surveys, analysing results, and ensuring that this was done in a transparent and ethical manner, but there was a lack of literature exploring the practicalities of creating workshops and the system that researchers undertake in that process.³⁵ This thesis has provided a basis for any public historian undertaking further research on this topic and may serve as a guideline for public historians designing workshops based on their own research.

The surveys that were given to participants before and after each workshop yielded insightful results that have significant implications for future research. The MVAS section of the survey, where participants were asked to rank their responses to five questions on a scale of one to ten, was the section that participants responded best to and that yielded the best quality data for this thesis. The other section of the survey, the PANAS section, has potential to yield data equally as nuanced and insightful if it were slightly revised, as detailed in the previous chapter. The results overall indicated that these workshops have

³³ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 90.

³⁴ See Appendix 4.

³⁵ Courses taken were courses taken were 'Workshop Facilitation' with Britt Andreatta, 'How To Create and Run A Brilliant Remote Workshop' with Dave Birss, and 'Critical Thinking For Better Judgement And Decision Making' with Becki Saltzman. All courses were taken in October 2020. All accessed at LinkedIn Learning.

the potential to increase a participant's multiperspectivity, critical thinking skills, and a feeling of connectedness with their local area.

The importance of fostering these skills in participants cannot be understated in the current climate, both in Ireland and internationally. As discussed in Chapter Four, there are numerous scholars who advocate for multiperspectivity in historical education such as Alan McCully, Keith Barton, Clare Magill, and Alan Smith.³⁶ They suggest that multiperspectivity fosters empathy, which in turn encourages greater understanding between conflicting groups in the present day.³⁷ Writing before the aforementioned scholars, and on the other side of the Atlantic in a different context, David Thelen concluded in the afterword that his research with Roy Rosenzweig provided evidence that academic history differs from everyday history — a finding that he described as both exciting and troubling.³⁸ Thelen advocates for a participatory historical culture, one in which different uses of the past introducing different perspectives and different individual voices is promoted rather than a single, 'correct' narrative.³⁹ Historians and scholars of education have been urging research such as this for decades, as discussed in Chapter Four. These workshops responded to their calls and investigated whether their belief in the power of historical engagement to promote multiperspectivity, empathy, and understanding could be substantiated and as discussed in the previous chapter, the data generated suggests that they are.

The most consistent result was in response to question two, which was 'Thinking about yourself, how connected do you feel to your area's local history?'. This result was unexpected, but not surprising. The aim of this question was to ascertain a sense of how many of the participants felt connected to their area's local history before the workshop began so that this could be used to better understand how that sense of connectedness

³⁶ See Alan Smith and Clare Magill, 'Reconciliation: Does Education Have A Role?' in *Shared Space: A Research Journal on Peace, Conflict and Community Relations*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2009), pp. 5-15; Keith Barton and Alan McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives' in *Theory & Research in Social Education* vol. 40, no. 4 (2012).

³⁷ Barton and McCully, 'Trying to "See Things Differently": Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives', p. 399.

³⁸ Rosenzweig & Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, p. 190.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

might impact on the overall results in each cohort. However, as it was the question that received the most consistent response across all three cohorts it was necessary to examine and analyse what participants were expressing when responding to this question. As discussed in the previous chapter, the emphasis on incorporating elements of local history into the history curriculum ends after primary level education, but for an increasingly diverse population workshops such as these could serve to build on levels of interest and feelings of connectedness. A more interested and connected community can have benefits for wider society and all individuals in that community through the cultivating of an engaged citizenry. The findings that indicate an increase in a feeling of connectedness are significant and could indicate that these workshops may have a place in fostering a sense of belonging and connection amongst immigrants in a community. Humans, as social beings, benefit from a stronger sense of belonging and connection. These workshops, through increasing interest in and a sense of connectedness to a local area, have the potential to increase wellbeing and levels of civic engagement in a community. It was not within the scope of this thesis to investigate these questions, but they are suggestions for future research on this topic and a possible effect of engaging with local historical case studies.

Crucially, this thesis employed theories of agonistic memory, as promoted by Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr. Reynolds and Parr argue that an agonistic approach would best serve the Peace Process in Northern Ireland.⁴⁰ As discussed throughout the thesis, and particularly in Chapter Four, an agonist approach acknowledges the central role of difference and conflict and provides grounds for such tensions to be a constructive part of the process where multiple perspectives are encouraged, creating ‘conflictual consensus’. Agonism does not aim to create a single master narrative of events but rather encourages multiperspectivity to facilitate the co-existence of contesting narratives of the past. This thesis contributes to both the discussion on the future of remembrance and employs principles of agonistic memory in the workshops.⁴¹ While the questions on the survey distributed to participants were not focused on measuring the impact of an agonistic mode of remembrance, future research might investigate the possibility of measuring this

⁴⁰ Reynolds & Parr, ‘Northern Ireland’s 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights’, p. 12.

⁴¹ Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, ‘On Agonistic Memory’, p. 401.

through quantitative or qualitative research. The scope of this research focused exclusively on employing that mode of remembrance in the design and implementation of the workshops, but a consideration of how it impacted participants would be hugely beneficial to the field.

These workshops were tools of public history and transformed the thesis from one which was an academic study on public history to one which embraces public history and exemplifies public history research. They are examples of public history in practice, and the results they have yielded are encouraging for the future of historical research. The design and implementation of these workshops, and the subsequent incorporation of theories and methodologies from a range of disciplines, has changed the face of this thesis drastically. Cauvin and O'Neill, writing in 2017, claimed that the term 'public history' in Ireland related specifically to commemorative events, or to a series of 'controversial and contested historiographical debates'.⁴² The Decade of Centenaries programme, which is coming to a conclusion on the island of Ireland, has undoubtedly influenced the understanding and practice of public history on the island of Ireland, but the focus during this period has been on the commemoration of events a century ago. It is imperative for the future of public history on the island of Ireland to look beyond commemorations and anniversaries, and for public historians to continue to champion engagement with history outside of this programme.

These workshops encouraged the researcher to fully embrace interdisciplinary principles and theories and transformed the researcher's idea of what a thesis should look like and incorporate. While they yielded results that are significant to this research, they also illustrated the importance of this research to the future of public history, particularly in the context of a potentially contentious conversation around the future of Northern Ireland and a society experiencing a rise in 'fake-news' media. These workshops have potential to contribute to current research projects being undertaken, such as the Network for Education in Divided Societies project at Queen's University, Belfast, as well as

⁴² Cauvin, Thomas and O'Neill, Ciaran, 'Negotiating public history in the Republic of Ireland: collaborative, applied, and usable practices for the profession' in *Historical Research*, vol. 90, no. 250 (Jul. 2017), p. 810.

potentially contributing to projects in the future.⁴³ While the concept of activist pedagogy has not been sufficiently engaged with in this research, recent publications describe it as a form of critical pedagogy, ‘empowering students to develop political agency and political literacy towards a more humane, just, democratic and multicultural social order’.⁴⁴ The research undertaken on these workshops will connect public history to other disciplines across the humanities and social sciences, contributing to truly interdisciplinary and collaborative future projects. Other researchers, with other areas of focus, may well identify other possibilities for these workshops in their own research and these insights will be welcome collaborations with the research undertaken for this thesis.

This thesis, while offering an original contribution to this field, is not the last word on this topic. It is expected, and very much hoped, that it is just the beginning of a conversation on the potential possibilities for future public history initiatives throughout the island of Ireland. Numerous avenues for future studies have been highlighted throughout this conclusion, and any of these suggestions would enhance the findings of this research and build upon the sturdy foundation outlined in this thesis.

It is clear from the research undertaken that the erection, or destruction, of a monument or a memorial is an act very much rooted in the present in which it occurs. And by studying those past presents, what emotions were driving people to act, and what impacted people’s decisions in those key moments, we as historians can better understand the actions and reactions of the people of the past. By incorporating fresh and novel approaches to historical research, such as considering examples from across the island and using local histories as microstudies through which to consider how ordinary people and communities responded to events, historians can continue to excavate the nuances of the past. The advantages of the blended approach taken in this thesis have been discussed at length, but it should be highlighted that this blended approach is highly innovative and will, it is hoped, encourage future historical research to take new forms and reach new heights. Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr claimed, in 2019, that ‘enquiry-based multi-

⁴³ For information on the Network for Education in Divided Societies project, see <https://pure.qub.ac.uk/en/projects/network-for-education-in-divided-societies-development-award-aht0>.

⁴⁴ Dafne Yitzhaki, Tony Gallagher, Nimrod Aloni and Zehavit Gross, *Activist Pedagogy and Shared Education in Divided Societies: International Perspectives and Next Practices*. (Leiden, 2022), p. 2.

perspective history has tended to run ahead of research studies that confirm its efficacy in bringing personal and group transformation', but this thesis directly addresses that gap in order to allow for future research to build on these findings.⁴⁵ By adapting our research into projects and initiatives, using interdisciplinary frameworks that engage with the wider public, historians can use their knowledge and research to have significant impact. Their impact will not be on the object of their study, the past, but rather on that which will be studied by historians in generations to come, our present.

⁴⁵ Chris Reynolds and Connal Parr, 'Northern Ireland's 1968 at 50: Agonism and Protestant Perspectives on Civil Rights', p. 304.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Application to Trinity College Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The following application was submitted to the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Ethics Committee in April 2021, and was approved in May 2021.

FAHSS Research Ethics Committee 2020-21 Declaration and Data Protection Form

Part A: Lead Researcher Declaration
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Please complete project details:

Project Title:	Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical engagement.
Name of Lead Researcher (student in case of project work):	Caitlin White

I confirm that I will (where relevant):

- Familiarize myself with the Data Protection Act and the College Good Research Practice guidelines http://www.tcd.ie/info_compliance/data-protection/legislation/
- Tell participants that any recordings, e.g., audio/video/photographs, will not be identifiable unless prior written permission has been given. I will obtain permission for specific reuse (in papers, talks, etc.)
- Provide participants with an information sheet (or webpage for web-based experiments) that describes the main procedures (a copy of the information sheet must be included with this application)
- Obtain informed consent for participation (a copy of the informed consent form must be included with this application)

- Should the research be observational, ask participants for their consent to be observed.
- Tell participants that their participation is voluntary.
- Tell participants that they may withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty.
- Give participants the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer if a questionnaire is used.
- Tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identified as theirs
- On request, debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e., give them a brief explanation of the study)
- Verify that participants are 18 years or older and competent to supply consent.
- If the study involves participants viewing video displays, then I will verify that they understand that if they or anyone in their family has a history of epilepsy then the participant is proceeding at their own risk.
- Declare any potential conflict of interest to participants.
- Inform participants that in the extremely unlikely event that illicit activity is reported to me during the study I will be obliged to report it to appropriate authorities.
- Act in accordance with the information provided (i.e., if I tell participants I will not do something, then I will not do it).

I confirm that the materials I have submitted provide a complete and accurate account of the research I propose to conduct in this context, including my assessment of the ethical ramifications.

Signed:

X

Caitlin White

Date: 27/04/2021

/

Part B: Supervisor Signature

If the research is proposed by an undergraduate or postgraduate student, please have the below section completed by the supervisor.

I confirm, as an academic supervisor of this proposed research that the documents at hand are complete (i.e., each item on the submission checklist is accounted for) and are in a form that is suitable for review by the FAHSS Research Ethics Committee

Supervisor Name:

Signed:

Date:

Part C: Approval from other Research Ethics Committees

If external or other TCD Ethics Committee approval has been received, please complete below.

External/TCD ethical approval has been received and no further ethical approval is required from the FAHSS Research Ethics Committee. I have attached a copy of the external ethical approval.

Signed:

Date:

Lead Researcher/student in case of project work:

If this has been referred from a School Ethics Committee, please provide rationale:

Dr. Daniel Geary of School of History Ethics Committee referred this application to the Faculty Ethics Committee because it involves minors (10 March 2021)

Part D: Other Jurisdictions

If the research includes jurisdictions other than the Republic of Ireland, please complete the section below.

Specify the jurisdiction	Northern Ireland
Specify the Ethical body giving consent	Trinity College Dublin
Who will be conducting the research in the jurisdiction (name of partner body and lead researcher, if appropriate)	Partner:
	Lead researcher: Caitlin White
Confirm that a copy of the Ethical application and consent for this jurisdiction is attached	

Part E: Confidentiality and Data Protection

1. Does this study involve collecting, using, accessing or sharing personal data⁸⁰⁰?

Yes/ No

If YES, please list⁸⁰¹ all categories of personal data below.

Please see checklist on secure storage available [here](#).

[Take the GDPR training module here](#).

2. Does the study involve collecting, using, accessing or sharing sensitive data⁸⁰²?

Type of Data	Justification: Why do you need the data?	Data Format	Technical and Organisational Controls	Identifiable coded, or anonymized
Consent Form	Evidence of consent from an ethical perspective	Hard copy form	Stored in locked cabinet, in locked office with access limited to PI.	Identifiable

Yes/ No

If YES, please list all categories of the sensitive data collected.

800 Personal data is information which can identify a person. In particular: a name, address, email, telephone number, an identification number, location data, an online identifier, an IP address, an audio or video recording, a code key linking back to identifiable data etc. Please note that pseudonymised data is personal data under GDPR. Pseudonymised data means data which cannot be attributed to an individual without the use of additional information which is kept separately. (i.e., a key). It is sometimes referred to as 'coded data'. Please note that in order to be considered personal data in our hands, Trinity must hold the key.

⁸⁰¹ If using Personal data. Records must be kept pursuant to Article 30, GDPR; <https://gdpr-info.eu/art-30-gdpr/>

802 Sensitive personal data means personal data, which poses a higher risk to the individual. It includes personal data revealing racial and ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or ideological convictions, trade union membership, criminal convictions and offences, genetic, biometric (photos, videos, audio etc.) data concerning physical or mental well-being, information relating to education, professional training employment and career history, questionnaires, Information relating to the family of the individual and the individual's lifestyle and social circumstances.

Please see checklist on secure storage available [here](#).

Type of Data	Justification: Why you need the data?	Data Format	Technical and Organisational Controls	Identifiable coded, or anonymized
Survey sheet	Method of research – collecting quantitative data	Hard copy form	Scans stored in encrypted format on local machine which is also encrypted. Hard copies stored in a locked folder and shredded when digital files are made.	Pseudonymized (code given to each individual). PI has the key
Audio Recordings	Method of research – collecting qualitative data	Digital form	Digital files stored in an encrypted, password-protected folder on laptop and backed up to secure Cloud folder.	It is probable that names will be used in these recordings as they will be with a group. Transcripts of these files will be anonymized, and any identifying factors will be removed.

3. Who determines how and why the personal and/or sensitive data is used?

(Data Controller⁸⁰³ or Joint Data Controllers)

Provide Details: Trinity College Dublin

⁸⁰³ Employees and students of TCD are not data controllers. TCD is the data controller for the institution. However, if other institutes jointly decide how and why the data will be used, they should also be noted as controllers here.

4. Will the personal and/or sensitive personal data be shared with any third parties⁸⁰⁴?

If **YES**, provide details including information on the contractual arrangements in place.

This list should include all Data Processing Agreements with external laboratories, Cloud-based Solutions Agreements etc., and any and Data Sharing Agreements with Collaborators.

Please contact researchDPO@tcd.ie if you need assistance with agreements and/or for any transfer outside EEA (including England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland).

NO

5. How long will you retain the personal data?

Please see good [research practice guide](#) for guidance on retention of research data. Your school should be able to advise on best practice.

Provide Details: The personal data will be retained for 7 years, in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines. All data will be anonymized.

6. Will the personal data be fully anonymised or deleted after it is no longer necessary? See [advice](#) on secure data disposal.

Provide Details: All data will be anonymized at point of collection.

7. How will you inform participants of their rights under GDPR⁸⁰⁵:

⁸⁰⁴ Third parties could be collaborators (institutes/industry) or service providers (transcribers, cloud storage etc.)

⁸⁰⁵ Under GDPR, these include:

- right of access.
- right to rectification.
- right to erasure.
- right to object to processing based on legitimate or public interest.
- right to data portability.
- right to object to profiling or making decisions about individuals by automated means?

All participants will be given an Information Leaflet and asked to sign a Consent Form, of which they will keep an unsigned copy, to confirm that they understand their rights in relation to their data. The Information Leaflet contains a summary of their rights under GDPR and the contact details of the Data Protection Officer at Trinity College.

INFORMATION LEAFLET

NAME OF STUDY: Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical engagement.

You have been asked to be involved in this research study because we are trying to find out what effects engaging with history has on an individual.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in the study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what taking part involves.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact your lead teacher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Background information to the study

In this study we will be looking at a local public history case study (a monument from your local area) and engaging with it through newspaper articles, class discussions and (where possible) a physical visit to the monument.

Following activities based on the monument you will be asked a series of questions as a group and asked to complete a survey. Your personal data will not be recorded on the survey, and nor will there be any identifying information on the group audio. Your voice and opinions will be recorded and used in my PhD thesis.

Benefits

There are believed to be a number of benefits to participants of this research study. Participation in this study will improve your critical thinking skills, promote historical empathy with the people of the past and will enhance your knowledge of your own locality's history.

We hope the results of this study will help us to understand to what extent history engagement benefits the individual, and there may yet be more benefits associated with taking part.

Disadvantages

The discussions in the study within the group may challenge your own beliefs and truths. This may be uncomfortable for some participants but will contribute to the benefits listed above by challenging assumptions. The workshops will take approximately 2 hours.

Do I have to take part?

It is your choice whether you would like to take part in the study or not. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to give a reason and you can change your mind at any time. If you decide that you do not wish to be part of the study, now or later, you can withdraw. Please contact whitec9@tcd.ie if you wish to withdraw from the study at any time.

What happens if I take part?

Participation in this study will involve your participation in an individual survey, group discussions and group activities relating to the local monument.

Some of the topics under discussion will be:

Politics of memory

Social Identity Theory

Links between history and identity creation

Critical analysis of historical sources

The audio recordings of our semi-structured group discussion towards the end of the workshop will be kept in a secure, encrypted folder and backed up to Trinity College's secure Cloud software Microsoft OneDrive. These recordings will not be accessed by anyone except the lead researcher, Caitlin, who will be present at the workshop. Any responses or opinions that are included in the final PhD thesis or any publications arising from that thesis will be anonymized and will not be accompanied by any identifying information.

Personal data will be kept on file for seven years, the recommended length of time by the Trinity Research Ethics Committee and destroyed in 2028. There will be no identifying information in the audio files. They will be deleted from their original encrypted folder and the backup Cloud storage.

If participants are based in Ireland, their data will not leave the state. In the case of participants from Northern Ireland their data will travel to the Irish state for purposes of storage and analysis.

Will my records remain confidential?

Your privacy is important to us. Any information that leaves Trinity will have the name removed so that your identity remains confidential.

We will never share your audio files with third parties.

Anonymised data may be shared with the academic community and industry.

Original audio recordings will be retained in the personal computer of the lead researcher (Caitlin), enclosed in an encrypted folder. Nobody except the lead researcher will have access to this data. This file will be retained for seven years after the interview takes place. A transcript of interviews (in which all identifying information has been removed) will be retained for a further ten years after this.

Please note that by law we are obliged to report any inadvertent discovery relating to illicit activities (e.g., physical, emotional or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, suicidal intent or criminal activity).

What will happen to the results of this research?

The information from this study may be published in academic papers and presented at academic conferences. It will feature in my PhD thesis, of which any participant can obtain a digital copy by emailing me at whitec9@tcd.ie. It may feature in publications arising from my PhD thesis. If this is the case, your identity will remain confidential, and no one will know that you took part in the study.

This material will not be used in future unrelated studies/publications without further specific permission being obtained.

What do I do if I have any further questions?

Please ask the researcher that gave you this information sheet if you have any questions, I am happy to answer any questions you might have before we start the workshop. Should you have any questions after the workshop has taken place, I can be contacted at whitec9@tcd.ie.

THANK YOU

DATA PROTECTION INFORMATION

Data Controller	Trinity College Dublin
Data Protection Officer	Data Protection Officer Secretary's Office Trinity College Dublin Dublin 2 Dataprotection@tcd.ie

What is the lawful basis to use my personal data?

We will use the information you provide to us for this research study which is historical in the public interest⁸⁰⁶.

What are my rights in relation to your use of my personal data?

You are entitled to:

- The right to access to your data and receive a copy of it.
- The right to restrict or object to processing of your data.
- The right to object to any further processing of the information we hold about you (except where it is de-identified)
- The right to have inaccurate information about you corrected or deleted.
- The right to receive your data in a portable format and to have it transferred to another data controller.
- The right to request deletion of your data.

unless the request would make it impossible or very difficult to conduct the research. You can exercise these rights by contacting the Trinity College Data Protection Officer (contact details above).

⁸⁰⁶ (Article 6(1)(e))

Please note that these rights relate to data which could identify you (personal data). If your data has been anonymized, we will not be able to access or delete it, as we will have no way of being able to link the data to you.

CONSENT FORM



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

STUDY NAME: Engaging with the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical engagement.

Centre ID:

Identification Number for study:

Consent Form

There are 9 sections in this form. Each section has a statement and asks you to tick the box if you agree. The end of this form is for the researchers to complete.

Please ask any questions you may have when reading each of the statements.

Please leave the box blank if you do not agree.

Thank you for participating.

General

Tick box

I confirm I have read and understood the **Information Leaflet** for the above study. The information has been fully explained to me and I have been able to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that this study is **entirely voluntary**, and if I decide that I do not want to take part, I can stop taking part in this study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I **will not be paid for taking part in this study**⁸⁰⁷.

⁸⁰⁷ Amend as appropriate.

I agree to take part in this research study having been fully informed of the risks, benefits and alternatives which are set out in full in the information leaflet which I have been provided with.	
I know how to contact the research team if I need to.	
I agree to take part in an audio recorded focus group interview as part of this research study	
I understand that any identifiable information about me (personal data) will be protected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	
I understand that anonymous information from this study may be shared with third party academics worldwide for research and learning purposes	
I understand that the audio recording of my interview will be retained by Trinity College Dublin for 7 years for use solely by Trinity College Dublin, and then destroyed	

X

Participant's Name (Block Capitals)

X

Participant's Signature

Date: _____

To be completed by the Principal Investigator or nominee.

I, the undersigned, have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant, the nature and purpose of this study in a way that they could understand. I have explained the risks and possible benefits involved. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

I have given a copy of the information leaflet and consent form to the participant's parents or guardians with contacts of the study team.

Caitlin White

PhD Candidate, School of History, Trinity College.

X

Date: _____

2 copies to be made: 1 for participant, 1 for PI.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

STUDY NAME: Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical engagement.

Centre ID:

Identification Number for study:

Consent Form

This consent form relates to a workshop taking place in your child's school in which your child has been invited to attend.

The accompanying information sheet will provide further information on the research being undertaken and what participation in the workshop will entail for your child.

Should you have any concerns or queries about these workshops, Caitlin White (the lead researcher) can be contacted at whitec9@tcd.ie and is happy to answer any questions.

There are 9 sections in this form. Each section has a statement and asks you to tick the box if you agree. The end of this form is for the researchers to complete.

Please ask any questions you may have when reading each of the statements.

Please leave the box blank if you do not agree.

Thank you for participating.

General	Tick box
I confirm I have read and understood the Information Leaflet for the above study. The information has been fully explained to me and I have been able to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.	
I understand that this study is entirely voluntary , and I decide that I do not want my child to take part, I can stop them taking part in this study at any time without giving a reason.	

I understand that I will not be paid for my child taking part in this study ⁸⁰⁸ .	
I agree for my child to take part in this research study having been fully informed of the risks, benefits and alternatives which are set out in full in the information leaflet which I have been provided with.	
I know how to contact the research team if I need to.	
I agree for my child to take part in an audio recorded focus group interview as part of this research study	
I understand that any identifiable information about my child (personal data) will be protected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	
I understand that anonymous information from this study may be shared with third party academics worldwide for research and learning purposes	
I understand that the audio recording of my interview will be retained by Trinity College Dublin for 7 years for use solely by Trinity College Dublin, and then destroyed	

X

Parent/Guardian (Block Capitals)

X

Parent/Guardian (Signature)

X

Child's Name (Block Capitals)

⁸⁰⁸ Amend as appropriate.

Date: _____

To be completed by the Principal Investigator or nominee.

I, the undersigned, provided the participant's guardian a detailed information leaflet detailing the nature and purpose of this study in a clear and straightforward manner. I have detailed the risks and possible benefits involved. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them and provided them with my email address.

I have given a copy of the consent form to the participant's parents/guardians with contact details of the study team.

Caitlin White

PhD Candidate, School of History, Trinity College.

X

Date: _____

2 copies to be made: 1 for participant, 1 for PI.

Research Project Proposal - Faculty Ethics Committee Application

Title of Project

Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical engagement.

Purpose of Project Including Academic Rationale

This research aims to investigate how public history was employed in the Irish states to promote national identity narratives after partition, and what effects a deeper engagement with the public history of this period can have on society.

The utilization of public history to promote national identity narratives will be examined on both an urban and rural level, noting the similarities and differences between the various groups engaging with public history. Particular attention will be given to non-governmental groups operating in these jurisdictions and whether or how they used public history. I will consider the impact of the Irish Civil War, partition and sectarian divisions on the use of public history and whether identity creation was more urgent because of the legacies of the divisions.

This research aims to contribute to the growing field of all-island history and also to the study of Irish public history. It is envisaged that this research will be used to create workshops for public groups in each of the four case study areas (Nenagh, Limavady, Dublin and Belfast) and these workshops will be used to collect data on the effect of a deeper engagement with public history.

Brief Description of Methods and Measurements to be Used.

A combination of traditional sources, such as state and newspaper archives, will be used alongside private archives, monuments, and of course the workshops included in this project to gather the information and data required for this research.

In researching the public history in each of the four case study areas a comparative analysis will be conducted into all examples of public history chosen for inclusion in order to draw similarities and differences. A desk research approach has been, and will continue to be, crucial to this aspect of the project.

In conducting workshops and gathering data on the effects, if any, that they will have a combination of approaches will be used to yield the most comprehensive results. Using a cross-sectional study with two, or more, groups from the areas being researched I intend to carry out a survey using both PNAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule), measured with a Likert-type scale, and MVAS (Modified Visual Analogue Scale) in surveys distributed at the beginning and end of the workshop to gather quantitative data. Workshops will rely heavily on primary sources

and will encourage students to learn about a monument in their locality. A semi-structured interview with the group will be conducted at the end of the workshop to gather qualitative data and gain a greater insight into the opinions of the study participants.

Relevant Participant Details

Participants will be approximately 15-16 years of age. They will be in Year 12 (NI) or Transition Year (ROI), as students in these years will have completed Key Stage 3 (NI) and Junior Cycle (ROI) curricula. Ideally there should be between 15-20 participants as from personal experience this is the optimal number of students to work with to ensure quality engagement. The workshop will be bookended by surveys to collect data on how their understanding of history was impacted, their understanding of collective identities, and (ultimately) the effects that engagement with public history can have on individuals.

Schools in the case study areas of Nenagh, Dublin, Belfast and Limavady will be contacted to participate. In both Belfast and Dublin there will naturally be a larger cohort of schools, too many for the researcher to carry out workshops in all, so a representative sample will be identified and chosen (conscious efforts will be made to include secular schools, schools of different denominations, private and public schools, designated disadvantaged schools and mixed and single sex schools).

All students in Year 12/Transition Year will have studied history in formal education as it is compulsory up to this point. Participants will not need to have achieved any particular grade to participate, nor should all of them be chosen because they intend to keep the subject on. Students chosen should be a representative sample of the year group. In each case teachers will be facilitating the organisation of the workshops and participants, so this will be explained clearly to them. Students from a range of ethnic backgrounds will be encouraged to participate.

Debriefing Arrangement

The researcher will provide an opportunity for informal discussion by arranging for a post-workshop snack with the participants, researcher and lead teacher. This will take place before the formal debrief and is based on research undertaken by Philip Seitz in which he observed that participants in workshops, when given the opportunity to decompress in an informal environment, gave participants the opportunity to engage more fully with the material. This will also provide them with an opportunity to think about questions raised, analyse them and even discuss them with their peers.

Following this break the second survey will be conducted to ascertain whether or how participants were impacted by the workshop and material. Following this I will undertake a formal debrief with the participants where they will be given information on how and where their data will be stored, how to contact the lead researcher should they need to, and the contact details for the Data Protection Officer at Trinity College.

I will also ensure to debrief the lead teacher in the case of any student concerns or queries. Teachers will be sent a copy of the completed thesis should they wish to view the results.

Statement of Ethical Considerations Raised by Project

(And how you plan to deal with them, including consent)

As part of the structured PhD programme at Trinity College I have completed a module in research ethics entitled 'Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era'. This module introduces students to existing and emerging challenges and opportunities connected with researching, presenting, and publishing in an open scholarship era and makes participants aware of obligations under intellectual property and data protection laws, and proper management of research data.

For the workshops with secondary school students there were a number of ethical considerations raised which I will detail below

3. Sensitive or personal data of minors may be identifiable in the research - in relation to this, all responses by students will be anonymised and identified by school and sorting code only. In the case of audio recordings, where an individual might be identified by their voice, the recordings will be stored in a password protected, encrypted file and backed up to a secure, password-protected cloud server. The semi-structured interviews will be transcribed and identifying information will be omitted. These transcripts will be the only versions of the data collected used in research and these minors will not be identifiable.
4. Workshops may challenge students to think about and discuss difficult themes in relation to conflict and the Troubles in Northern Ireland in particular - in relation to this consideration, the information sheet provided to participants sets out the themes under discussion without revealing the content. Each workshop will also feature a section at the beginning detailing what students can do if they feel uncomfortable with the material (ranging from phrases to equip them to

express their discomfort without embarrassment to permission to leave the classroom during discussions).

This research will be conducted as per Trinity College's Policy on Good Research Practice and the Ethics Policy, both of which are freely available at <https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies>.

Legislation Relevant to the Project

- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Ireland's ePrivacy Regulations
- The Law Enforcement Directive (LED)

Questionnaire

PANAS

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word.

Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly or Not at All	A Little	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely

_____ 1. Interested	_____ 10. Despondent
_____ 2. Distressed	_____ 11. Determined
_____ 3. Excited	_____ 12. Nervous
_____ 4. Upset	_____ 13. Inspired
_____ 5. Hopeful	_____ 14. Ashamed
_____ 6. Despairing	_____ 15. Optimistic
_____ 7. Enthusiastic	_____ 16. Pessimistic
_____ 8. Hopeless	_____ 17. Unconcerned
_____ 9. Proud	_____ 18. Anxious

MVAS

- 1) Thinking about yourself, how interested are you in your area's local history?

Completely Disinterested										Completely Interested									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐									

2) Thinking about yourself, how connected do you feel to your area's local history?

Completely Disconnected										Completely Connected									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐									

3) Thinking about the future, how positive do you feel about the prospect of continued peace?

Extremely Negative										Extremely Positive									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐									

4) Thinking about the present, how useful is history in promoting reconciliation, understanding and empathy?

Extremely Useless										Extremely Useful									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐									

5) Thinking about the present, how likely are you to question the sources presented to you about the past?

Extremely Unlikely										Extremely Likely									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐									

RISK ASSESSMENT

COVID 19

At the time of this application, April 2021, all schools in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland had safely reopened following the third wave of Covid19 infections on the island. Vaccination programmes in both jurisdictions are well underway with Northern Ireland having surpassed one million doses administered in recent weeks and the Republic of Ireland aiming to have 80% of adults vaccinated by the end of June 2021.

Acknowledging the optimism and hope that the vaccine brings, planning for possible Covid19 related risks is prudent. Below are the following steps taken to ensure that this research adheres to health and safety guidelines. These may be adjusted in line with individual school policies (e.g., on specific classroom arrangement, the wearing of masks or visors, etc.)

- All workshops taking place will strictly adhere to the latest public health guidelines in each jurisdiction. The researcher is familiar with where to find this information (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-accompany-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-regulations-northern-ireland-2021> for Northern Ireland and <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/> for the Republic of Ireland) and will monitor the latest advice leading up to each workshop.
- A folder will be prepared and kept detailing the public health guidelines in each jurisdiction and will be brought to workshops in case of any uncertainty. These will be printed from a personal printer belonging to the researcher, and so this step will not be interrupted by any closures or lack of access to college campus. This folder will also list the guidelines adhered to in each workshop at each different school.
- The researcher will discuss school-specific requirements and policies with the lead teacher in advance of the workshop taking place and ensure that any special equipment required (own markers, visor, mask, sanitiser, etc.) is purchased and brought to the school by the researcher.
- The researcher will ensure when scheduling workshops that there is a gap of 2 weeks **minimum** between workshops in different areas, e.g., schools in Nenagh might all be visited within the same week, but there will be a gap of two weeks before workshops are undertaken in Dublin, and so forth).
- Where available, the researcher will take Covid 19 tests if offered by the host school or if walk-in testing centres are available. Contact will be made with Trinity College Health Service in Summer 2021 to enquire about the possibility of availing of tests prior to workshops.
- The researcher will adhere to travel advice, which may result in the postponement or cancellation of workshops.
- The researcher will not attend any workshops if she feels unwell or experiences any symptoms associated with Covid 19.
- If for any unforeseen reason the researcher travels abroad, she will not attend any workshops for a **minimum** of two weeks after her return.

In addition to consideration of the risk to health of the researcher and participants posed by the Covid 19 virus, consideration was also given to the risk that Covid 19 poses to the progression of the research for this PhD project. The Dean of Research at Trinity College Dublin has implemented a procedure for students impacted by the public health and safety measures associated by Covid 19. In the event that the research cannot continue as planned the researcher

will apply for an extension to the university. If, for any reason, the research cannot proceed as planned for longer than six months then the final thesis will contain the historical research with the design and methodology for the workshops for them to be implemented during a postdoctoral programme.

It should be noted that lengthy consideration was given to the delivery of exclusively online workshops, but this was decided against by the researcher following her experience in delivering both in-person and online workshops for the Scholars Ireland programme in association with the Trinity Access Programme. While we don't yet have research on the effectiveness of online vs. in person teaching for students, it is the personal opinion of the researcher that online workshops are less engaging for students and lack the establishment of a personal connection that encourages students to explore their own opinions and voice them confidently. This is a significant disadvantage for these workshops. Another crucial disadvantage is that the quality of engagement and delivery is heavily dependent on the school's technology, internet connection and ability to facilitate online workshops. Without consistency in this across all the participating schools the results of the workshops may not be comparable.

Sites of Interest

Visiting a local monument or memorial with participants of these workshops is an important feature that I aspire to include in the implementation. It is hoped that by engaging with these physical sites of memory in their locality participants will make connections between local and national histories and learn to critically engage with these sources.

In relation to the Health and Safety of participants when visiting these sites, the following considerations were undertaken:

- In accordance with Child Protection policies in both jurisdictions (the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995) the participants and the researcher will always be accompanied by the lead teacher.
- Any groups that can facilitate visiting sites of interest will be discussed with the lead teacher in advance and organised through the school. This will be undertaken where the monument is within walking distance from the school. For schools in city suburbs which are not in as close proximity to the physical sites of memory a thorough digital engagement will be facilitated by the researcher using facilities such as Google Earth and detailed images taken by the researcher of the monuments and surrounding areas. It should be noted that digital engagement has some advantages in a city context as it facilitates engagement with the overall monumental landscape rather than focusing on one – for example, it would not be possible in the time allowed to visit the War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge and the Cenotaph on Leinster Lawn.
- All parental consent forms will be accompanied by a note indicating whether their child is part of a cohort that will physically visit these sites or not to ensure that parents and guardians are informed.

- The monuments under consideration may be contentious or might serve as sites of protest on occasion. Particularly in Northern Ireland these sites of memory may become focal points for frustration and all due consideration will be taken before bringing participants to any site where there might be a threat of danger. This will be assessed in the weeks and days before the workshop with the lead teacher who will be aware of the situation locally and if it is deemed to pose any threat to participants then they will be engaged with digitally. The researcher will have detailed pictures of all monuments on a USB stick and stored in cloud storage for all workshops, even when the plan is to physically visit the site, so as to allow for a last-minute change of plan and to respond to changing situations.
- The researcher will request copies of all relevant school procedures and policies from the lead teacher when arranging these workshops and keep hard copies in a secure folder and saved to a secure cloud storage for reference.

Appendix 2: Survey distributed to workshop participants.

Student Surveys

This form contains **two** surveys, please fill out **both sides** of this sheet.

If you have any questions, *please ask Caitlin.*

1)

The following scale consists of a number of different words that describe different feelings and emotions.

Please read each item carefully and then list the appropriate number from the scale next to each word.

_____ 1. Interested	_____ 6. Unconcerned
_____ 2. Distressed	_____ 7. Proud
_____ 3. Hopeful	_____ 8. Pessimistic
_____ 4. Despairing	_____ 9. Optimistic
_____ 5. Curious	_____ 10. Ashamed

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly or Not At All	A Little	Moderately	Quite A Bit	Extremely

2)

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, your responses to each of the following questions:

1) Thinking about yourself, how interested are you in your area's local history?

Completely Disinterested											Completely Interested
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

2) Thinking about yourself, how connected do you feel to your area's local history?

Completely Disconnected											Extremely Connected
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

3) Thinking about the present, how useful do you think history is in promoting understanding between conflicting groups or communities?

Extremely Useless											Extremely Useful
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

4) In your opinion, does an understanding of history help us to understand the motivations and actions of the people of the past?

Very Unhelpful											Very Helpful
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

5) How likely are you to question the truthfulness of sources presented to you about the past?

Extremely Unlikely											Extremely Likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview questions

The topics to be addressed in each interview are as follows:

5. Attitudes towards public history.
6. Understandings of group identity expressions
7. Attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and critical thinking skills.
8. Attitudes towards history as an agent of reconciliation.

Each of these topics are elaborated on in the following subsection extensions, which list questions, of which at least two from each topic should be asked. These questions are non-scheduled and partly standardised, as discussed previously in this chapter.⁸⁰⁹ The subsection extensions are as follows:

Attitudes towards public history

- Can you identify examples of public history in your own life?
- Can you discuss an example of public history being used in either a harmful or a beneficial way?
- How do you feel about public history and history in school? Are there differences/similarities?

Understandings of group identity expressions

- What is group identity? When can it be harmful or beneficial?
- What function do group identities play in society?
- Does a better understanding of group identity theory help you to understand the world around you?

⁸⁰⁹ Constantinos N. Phellas, Alice Bloch & Clive Seale, 'Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation' in Clive Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, 183.

Attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and critical thinking skills

- Are there any skills you feel you have improved after today's workshop?
- Do you think any differently about the 'myths' of history or the importance of independent research and source verification?
- Where in your own life might you use the skills you have improved today?
- How do you feel towards the people of the past? Has your attitude towards them changed since participating in this workshop?

Attitudes towards history as a promoter of multiperspectivity

- Has anything today changed your perception/improved your understanding of the past? How?
- What is your opinion on history's potential role in society?
- Having engaged in this programme, are you more or less likely to be open to listening to members of opposing groups, or does this remain unchanged?

Appendix 4: Survey Results – MVAS

Overall Results

There were a total of forty-five students whose surveys were deemed valid for analysis.

		Total number	Total pre	Total post	Total Change	Avg. change
Q1	0-3	18	35	63	28	1.55
	4-6.	12	65	74	9	0.75
	7-10.	15	114	114	0	0
Q2	0-3	16	22	43	21	1.3
	4-6.	23	114	138	24	1.04
	7-10.	6	44	52	8	0.75
Q3	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	14	72	84	12	0.85
	7-10.	31	258	255	-3	-0.1
Q4	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	6	31	40	9	1.5
	7-10.	39	337	361	24	0.6
Q5	0-3	6	14	30	16	2.6
	4-6.	15	74	92	18	1.2
	7-10.	24	193	206	13	0.5

Results (by school)

St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh – there were a total of twenty-two students whose surveys were deemed valid for analysis.

		Total number	Total pre	Total post	Total Change	Avg. change
Q1	0-3	7	18	24	6	0.85
	4-6.	6	32	37	5	1
	7-10.	9	68	65	-3	-0.3
Q2	0-3	8	13	18	5	0.6
	4-6.	11	54	59	5	0.5
	7-10.	3	22	24	2	0.7
Q3	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	6	31	43	12	2
	7-10.	16	137	125	-12	-0.75
Q4	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	3	15	20	5	1.7
	7-10.	19	164	167	3	0.15
Q5	0-3	3	8	15	7	2.3
	4-6.	4	22	24	2	0.5
	7-10.	15	118	123	5	0.3

St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School, Dublin, Group A – there were a total of nine students whose surveys were deemed valid for analysis.

		Total number	Total pre	Total post	Total Change	Avg. change
Q1	0-3	6	6	19	13	2.1
	4-6.	1	6	6	0	0
	7-10.	2	15	17	2	1
Q2	0-3	3	1	9	8	2.6
	4-6.	5	23	31	8	1.6
	7-10.	1	7	9	2	2
Q3	0-3	0	0	0	0	
	4-6.	4	20	28	8	2
	7-10.	5	44	44	0	0
Q4	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	2	12	16	4	2
	7-10.	7	59	72	13	1.8
Q5	0-3	1	2	1	-1	-1
	4-6.	5	23	36	13	2.6
	7-10.	3	25	28	3	1

St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School, Group B - there were a total of fourteen students whose surveys were deemed valid for analysis.

		Total number	Total pre	Total post	Total Change	Avg. increase
Q1	0-3	5	11	20	9	1.8
	4-6.	5	27	31	4	0.8
	7-10.	4	31	32	1	0.25
Q2	0-3	5	8	16	8	1.6
	4-6.	7	37	48	5	0.7
	7-10.	2	15	19	4	2
Q3	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	4	21	25	4	1
	7-10.	10	77	86	9	0.9
Q4	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	1	4	4	0	0
	7-10.	13	114	122	7	0.5
Q5	0-3	2	4	14	10	5
	4-6.	6	29	32	3	0.5
	7-10.	6	50	55	5	0.8

Appendix 5: Survey Results – PANAS

	1 (Pre)	1 (Post)	Diff.	2 (pre)	2 (post)	Diff.	3 (pre)	3 (post)	Diff.
St Mary's	72	73	1	34	37	3	71	70	-1
St Pats A	43	47	4	28	18	-10	35	38	3
St Pat's B	28	31	3	11	9	-2	21	23	2
Dublin	71	78	7	39	27	-12	56	61	5
Total	143	151	8	73	64	-9	127	131	4
Average	3.6	3.8	0.2	1.8	1.6	-0.2	3.2	3.3	0.1

	4 (pre)	4 (post)	Diff.	5 (pre)	5 (post)	Diff.	6 (pre)	6 (post)	Diff.
St Mary's	30	30	0	87	79	-8	72	70	-2
St Pats A	24	20	-4	43	46	3	33	34	1
St Pat's B	9	7	-2	26	28	2	12	12	0
Dublin	33	27	-6	69	74	5	45	46	1
Total	63	57	-6	156	153	-3	117	116	-1
Average	1.6	1.4	-0.2	3.9	3.8	-0.1	3	2.9	0.1

	7 (pre)	7 (post)	Diff.	8 (pre)	8 (post)	Diff.	9 (pre)	9 (post)	Diff.	10 (pre)	10 (post)	Diff.
St Mary's	52	68	16	35	37	2	70	75	5	30	38	8
<i>St Pats A</i>	34	32	-2	23	20	-3	40	43	3	18	16	-2
<i>St Pat's B</i>	14	19	5	14	13	-1	20	29	9	15	10	-5
Dublin	48	51	3	37	33	-4	60	72	12	33	26	-7
Total	100	119	19	72	70	-2	130	147	17	63	64	1
Average	2.5	3	0.5	1.8	1.8	0	3.3	3.7	0.4	1.6	1.6	0

Appendix 6: Student Comments

Below are comments that were written, unprompted, on the survey sheets distributed to participants at the beginning and end of each workshop. Both comments were written on the post-workshop survey.

Survey	Comments
SPGS_A.03	"I think Kaitlyn was a great presenter and made it as interesting as it could be but personly [sic] I don't care for Irish history."
SMSSN_ANON	"I thought it was a well organised and put together workshop. I am not Irish though, so I do not relate to the topic of Irish history as much as others and I wasn't as interested. I learned that there are many details in history you have to know/learn."

Appendix 7: Pilot Workshop Results

Below are the total results from the Pilot Workshop, carried out in October 2021. Note results for question three are not included due to an error in printing which caused the question to be omitted from the survey.

		Total number	Total pre	Total post	Total Change	Avg. change
Q1	0-3	6	9	19	10	1.7
	4-6.	10	53	65	12	1.2
	7-10.	5	38	44	6	1.2
Q2	0-3	11	20	34	14	1.3
	4-6.	9	43	55	12	1.3
	7-10.	1	7	9	2	2
Q4	0-3	0	0	0	0	0
	4-6.	7	39	37	-2	-0.3
	7-10.	14	111	117	6	0.4
Q5	0-3	6	8	33	25	4.2
	4-6.	9	44	66	22	2.4
	7-10.	6	48	54	6	1

Appendix 8: Historical People for Workshop Activity

1. Katie Tierney. Clare Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

Occupation: Housewife.

Born: 1880.

Religion: Roman Catholic.

Additional Information: She had 11 children, two of her sons fought in the IRA War of Independence and were subsequently on opposing sides of the Civil War. Jack would go on to have a successful career in the National Army while Martin died as a result of prolonged hunger strike in 1924. Her husband, John Tierney, had been a general servant before the war, now an injured ex-serviceman. He was an active Urban Councillor throughout the 1920s and 1930s with the Comrades of the Great War Association. His injury made him unable to undertake full-time employment and his family struggled to survive on his army pension. Katie takes on odd jobs throughout this period to supplement their income.

2. Henry Cornelius O'Callaghan Prittie. Kilboy House, Dundrum, Co. Tipperary.

Born: 1877.

Occupation: Landowner, Landlord, Member of the British Peerage.

Religion: Church of Ireland.

Additional Information: The Pritties had been an influential family in the North Tipperary area since the eighteenth century. They considered themselves Anglo-Irish and members of the family had sat in the House of Commons and House of Lords in British Parliament. His parents were heavily involved in the erection of a war memorial cross in the town of Nenagh, his brother Francis Reginald Denis Prittie having been killed on 9 December 1914. Their family home was burned down by the IRA in 1922 and the compensation later paid to them by the Irish state was insufficient to restore the house to its former glory, so the family left the area and moved to England.

3. William Marshall. Linen Street, Limavady, Co. Derry/Londonderry.

Born: 1905.

Occupation: Carpenter.

Religion: Church of Ireland.

Additional Information: One of eleven children born to William and Annie Marshall, they lived in a five-roomed house on Linen Street, Limavady. A lower middle-class family who were in various trades, William and his elder brother Matthew were too young to enlist in the army when WW1 broke out. Linen Street was home to Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic families with some mixed marriages on the street. William followed his father into the carpentry trade and was badly impacted by the financial downturn in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He became a supporter of the Labour Party in Northern Ireland.

4. Elizabeth Morrison. 8 Methodist Lane or Connell Street, Limavady, Co.

Derry/Londonderry.

Born: 1899.

Occupation: Linen Weaver.

Religion: Presbyterian.

Additional Information: Elizabeth is 15 at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Her older brothers George and James enlisted, as did her sweetheart who lived at 17 Methodist Lane, the Catholic Thomas Donaghy. Her eldest brother George is killed in the war, but James and Thomas return safely. Elizabeth and Thomas married in 1921 and live in Limavady. James was awarded medals of bravery for his service and is promoted to the rank of officer and later colonel, carving a great career for himself in the military throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Thomas returns but, as a veteran Catholic, struggles to find employment in their region. Elizabeth works as a linen weaver, but her income does not match what her husband might make. She cannot work a full-time job after giving birth to her first child due to lack of state welfare support. After the final decision of the Boundary Commission in 1925 they move to the Irish Free State to find work where Thomas is discriminated against as a Northerner and veteran British army soldier and Elizabeth as a Northerner and Presbyterian.

5. Robert Briscoe. 58 Leeson Street Upper, Dublin.

Born: 1894.

Occupation: Politician.

Religion: Jewish.

Additional Information: Robert was born to Lithuanian emigrants Abraham and Ida Briscoe in Dublin. His father was the proprietor of Lawlor Briscoe, a furniture making company on the Dublin Quays. Robert joined the IRA and was active during the War of Independence accompanying Éamon de Valera on trips to America to raise funds. He took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War and abstained from the government of the Irish Free State, later joining as an elected TD of the newly formed Fianna Fáil. Following his election as TD in 1927 he remained in office until 1961 and his family prospered as a result of his involvement in the Anglo-Irish war.

6. Catherine Ennis. 14 Henrietta Street, Dublin.

Born: 1918.

Occupation: Scholar/Fruit Seller.

Religion: Roman Catholic.

Additional Information: Catherine, only a baby at the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, lives with her parents Patrick and Mary, and her six siblings in a tenement at 14 Henrietta Street in Dublin city. She is the youngest in her family and attends a local school until 14 years of age, after which she works as a seller on Moore Street with her older sister Jane. Her father is a general labourer whose work is sporadic and her mother mends clothes for additional income. When she is eight two of her older brothers are sent to an industrial school until they come of age because they were caught stealing from the local market. Catherine marries in February 1937 and she and her husband are allocated a house in Inchicore under Herbert Simms' and Dublin Corporation's social housing scheme. She gives birth to her first child in July 1937.

7. Ellen Donnelly. 22 North Queen Street, Belfast.

Born: 1859.

Occupation: Housewife.

Religion: Roman Catholic.

Additional Information: Ellen has been twice widowed before the age of 51, both husbands having died of natural causes - one of tuberculosis, another of a heart attack. Ellen lives on North Queen Street with her two sons, two daughters, grandson, and a

boarder. Ellen is not employed, but her children support her. They all have various occupations in the linen industry. Her sons Charles and Hugh enlisted in the army and fought in the war with the 16th (Irish) Regiment and returned safely. Since returning Charles has resumed his job in the linen mill but Hugh has become very involved in the Irish nationalist movement and has been on the run. In the early 1920s extreme sectarian violence in the city caused Ellen and her family to seek refuge in Dublin where they lived for months in a large town hall with about a hundred other families and limited facilities. They returned to Belfast after a year but found that their house had been ransacked and all their furniture destroyed or stolen. Boarders were reluctant to return to the house due to her son's involvement in the IRA and the frequent raids. An aging woman, she now depends on three of her children to support her.

8. John Biggar. 21 Ship Street, Belfast.

Born: 1883.

Occupation: Ship Plater.

Religion: Presbyterian.

Additional Information: John lives with his wife Sophia and their six children, his cousin Jane Flack and her two sons and his orphaned cousin Louise Hamilton in an old house on Ship Street (in the area now known as Sailortown - a traditionally mixed working-class area). In 1920 John is 37 and his eldest son, Stanley, has joined him in the shipyard. The years since the war until the early 1920s have been violent and tumultuous, and he fears for his family's safety. The house they live in is small and cramped, and John struggles to provide for his family. 1921 & 1922 many Catholics are forced from their jobs in the shipyards and from their homes, which means that the foreman has agreed to take on his other son, Clifford, providing the family with extra income. With the extra income the family can afford to send their two younger sons to secondary school which they complete and are employed as clerks. By the start of the 1930s the shipbuilding industry is on its knees, but John's younger sons support him and Sophia, and manage to get jobs for their older brothers working as delivery men for the companies that employ them. Their family lives safely and securely, and their children support John and Sophia as they grow older.

Appendix 9: Lesson Plans for Workshops (Pilot and Final Version)

Workshop Learning Plan September 2021

Section	Time	Aim	Activity
Intro	20	First survey & introduce selves & workshop aims	Survey, introductions
Theories	15	Basic intros to social identity & commemorative theory	
Historical Context	20	Establish common foundation for understanding of historical developments	Character timelines
BREAK	15		
Public History Case Study	35	Engage with chosen case study	Draft a blurb, engage with primary sources
Site Visit	20	Physically visit chosen case study	
Reflection	15	Reflect on differences/tensions	Final draft of a blurb for the monument
Interview	35	Host semi-structured interview	
Survey	5	Complete survey	
	180		

Table 2: The Lesson Plan for Pilot Workshops

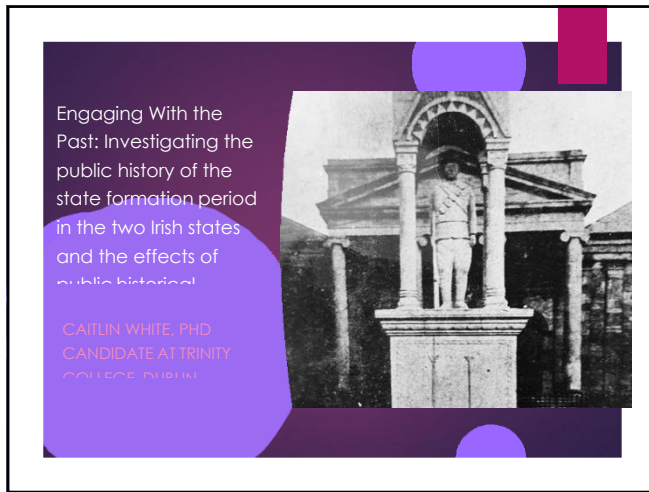
Workshop Learning Plan January 2022

Section	Time	Aim	Activity
Intro	20	First survey & introduce selves & workshop aims	Survey, introductions
Historical Context	20	Establish common foundation for understanding of historical developments	Character timelines
Theories	15	Basic intros to social identity & commemorative theory	
BREAK	15		
Public History Case Study	45	Engage with chosen case study	Group activity - engage with primary sources
Reflection	15	Reflect on differences/tensions	
Interview	35	Host semi-structured interview	
Survey	5	Complete survey	
	170		

Table 3: Lesson Plan for Final Workshops

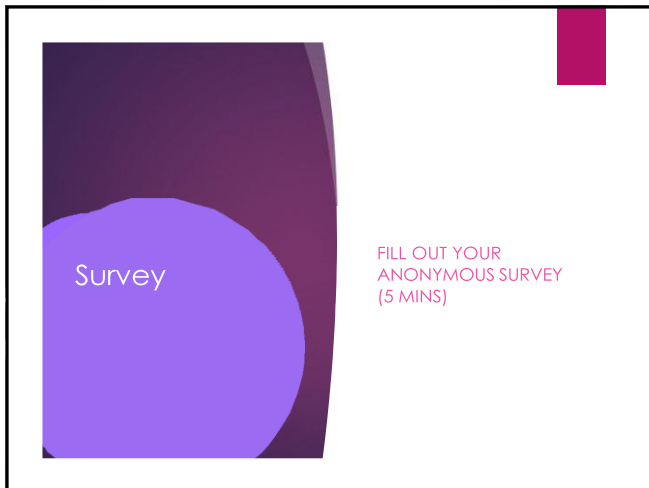
Appendix 10: PowerPoint Slides used in Workshops.

PowerPoints Used for Workshop with St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh



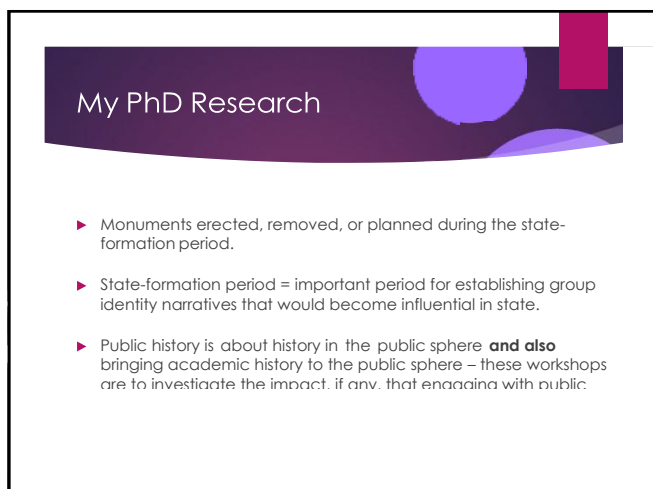
Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical.

CAILIN WHITE, PHD
CANDIDATE AT TRINITY
COLLEGE DUBLIN



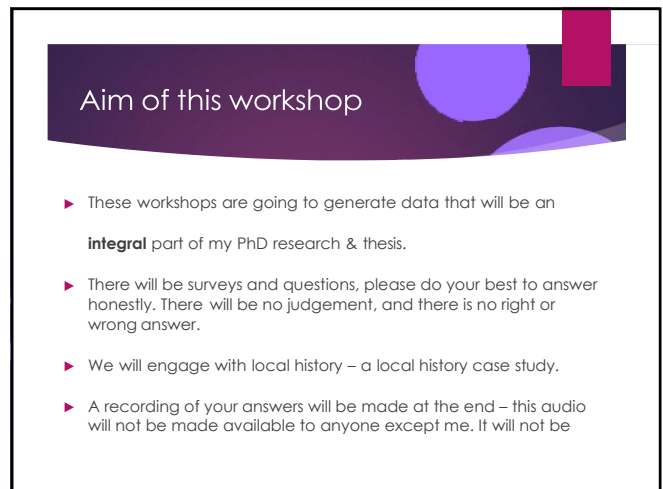
Survey

FILL OUT YOUR ANONYMOUS SURVEY (5 MINS)



My PhD Research

- ▶ Monuments erected, removed, or planned during the state-formation period.
- ▶ State-formation period = important period for establishing group identity narratives that would become influential in state.
- ▶ Public history is about history in the public sphere **and also** bringing academic history to the public sphere – these workshops are to investigate the impact, if any, that engaging with public:



Aim of this workshop

- ▶ These workshops are going to generate data that will be an **integral** part of my PhD research & thesis.
- ▶ There will be surveys and questions, please do your best to answer honestly. There will be no judgement, and there is no right or wrong answer.
- ▶ We will engage with local history – a local history case study.
- ▶ A recording of your answers will be made at the end – this audio will not be made available to anyone except me. It will not be



“Who controls the past
controls the future:
who controls the
present controls the past”

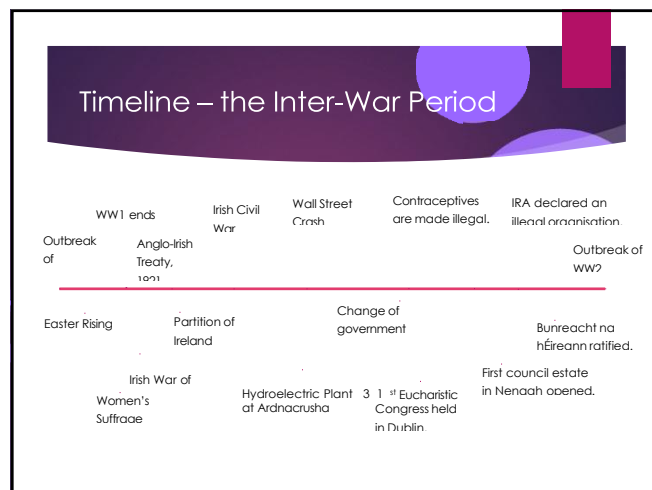


Important Information

- ▶ You have each been given an Information Leaflet, please read carefully and if there are any questions you can ask or, alternatively, contact me at a later date through Ms. Whelan.
- ▶ Your data will be anonymised and stored in a safe place, accessible only by me and to be used only for the purposes of my research.
- ▶ The end of this workshop will feature semi-structured interviews where I will ask you questions, as a group. These interviews will be recorded to allow me to analyse them at a later stage. Once the analysis and information has been written down and recorded, the sound recordings will be deleted.



Where do we encounter



Your Person From The Past

- ▶ Which event in this decade might have been the most impactful for your person?
- ▶ What age were they when different events were occurring?
- ▶ What event, if any, do you think might have been least

What Is Theory?

- ▶ A theory is a carefully thought-out explanation for observations of the natural world that has been constructed using scientific method.
- ▶ Theory provides us with a framework to apply to research through which we might better understand our world.
- ▶ Some theories that are mentioned in popular culture are evolutionary theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, or

Social Identity Theory

- ▶ The study of the relationship between *personal* and *social* identities.
- ▶ Studies have shown that people show biased preferences towards groups that they identify as belonging to.
- ▶ Group membership helps people to define who they are and determine how they relate to others.

Social Identity Theory



Commemoration Theory

- ▶ Commemoration = the past = history?
- ▶ Maurice Halbwachs believed that groups are at the core of remembering, that our ability to reconstruct these experiences depends on our present ability to view them from a standpoint of the groups to which they relate.
- ▶ Do we trust everything a stranger tells us?
- ▶ Commemoration can be misused – groups can manipulate the past to further their present agenda.

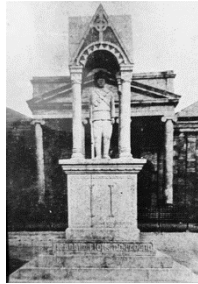
Agonistic Memory Theory

- ▶ Memory = shared?
- ▶ Describe your (individual) experience of a shared experience.
- ▶ Can we all agree on one experience as representative?
- ▶ What happens to our emotions & experience?

“Shared memory in a modern society travels from person to person through institutions such as archives, historiographic texts and mnemonic devices such as speeches by public representatives, monuments and the names of streets.”

*Mnemonic = a system designed to aid the memory.

North Tipperary Republican
Monument, 1931



Reading a source

- ▶ Who? – who is this source talking about? Are there people of interest being mentioned? Do names recur?
- ▶ What? – what can this source tell us about the monument? Look for some hidden meanings. What kind of source is it?
- ▶ When? – when was the source written?
- ▶ Where? – where is the information coming from?
- ▶ Why? – why was this source written? What purpose did it serve at its creation?

Reflections

- ▶ Is there anything you recognise from your research on the primary sources?
- ▶ Has anything changed?
- ▶ Was there anything you encountered that differed from your expectations?
- ▶ How might your historical person have felt about this monument? What might it have meant to them, if anything?
- ▶ Would your historical person have engaged with this monument?

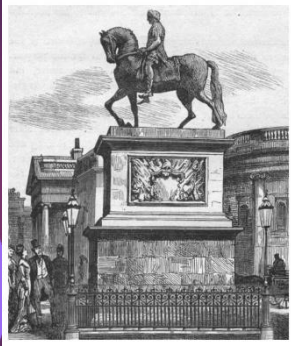
Survey

FILL OUT YOUR
ANONYMOUS SURVEY
(5 MINS)

PowerPoints used for workshop with St Patrick's Grammar School, Dublin

Engaging With the Past: Investigating the public history of the state formation period in the two Irish states and the effects of public historical

CAITLIN WHITE, PHD
CANDIDATE AT TRINITY
COLLEGE DUBLIN



Survey

FILL OUT YOUR
ANONYMOUS SURVEY
(5 MINS)

My PhD Research

- ▶ Monuments erected, removed, or planned during the state-formation period.
- ▶ State-formation period = important period for establishing group identity narratives that would become influential in state.
- ▶ Public history is about history in the public sphere **and also** bringing academic history to the public sphere – these workshops are to investigate the impact, if any, that engaging with public

Aim of this workshop

- ▶ These workshops are going to generate data that will be an **integral** part of my PhD research & thesis.
- ▶ There will be surveys and questions, please do your best to answer honestly. There will be no judgement, and there is no right or wrong answer.
- ▶ We will engage with local history – a local history case study.
- ▶ A recording of your answers will be made at the end – this audio will not be made available to anyone except me. It will not be

Important Information

- ▶ You have each been given an Information Leaflet, please read carefully and if there are any questions you can ask or, alternatively, contact me at a later date.
- ▶ Your data will be anonymised and stored in a safe place, accessible only by me and to be used only for the purposes of my research.
- ▶ The end of this workshop will feature semi-structured interviews where I will ask you questions, as a group. These interviews will be recorded to allow me to analyse them at a later stage. Once the analysis and information has been written down and recorded, the sound recordings will be deleted.

Where do we encounter

Timeline – the Inter-War Period



Your Person From The Past

- ▶ Which event in this decade might have been the most impactful for your person?
- ▶ What age were they when different events were occurring?
- ▶ What event, if any, do you think might have been least

What Is Theory?

- ▶ A theory is a carefully thought-out explanation for observations of the natural world that has been constructed using scientific method.
- ▶ Theory provides us with a framework to apply to research through which we might better understand our world.
- ▶ Some theories that are mentioned in popular culture are evolutionary theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, or

Social Identity Theory

- ▶ The study of the relationship between *personal* and *social* identities.
- ▶ Studies have shown that people show biased preferences towards groups that they identify as belonging to.
- ▶ Group membership helps people to define who they are and determine how they relate to others

Social Identity Theory



Commemoration Theory

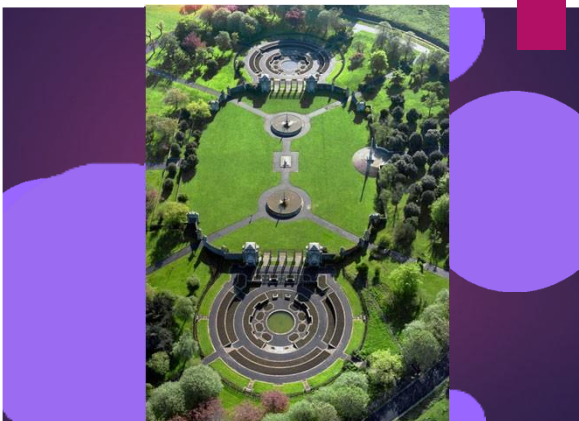
- ▶ Commemoration = the past = history?
- ▶ Maurice Halbwachs believed that groups are at the core of remembering, that our ability to reconstruct these experiences depends on our present ability to view them from a standpoint of the groups to which they relate.
- ▶ Do we trust everything a stranger tells us?
- ▶ Commemoration is a historical and social process

Agonistic Memory Theory

- ▶ Memory = shared?
- ▶ Describe your (individual) experience of a shared experience.
- ▶ Can we all agree on one experience as representative?
- ▶ What happens to our emotions & experience?

Monument Case Studies - Dublin

- ▶ National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge (1937)
- ▶ Statue of King William of Orange, College Green (1701)
- ▶ Statue of King George II, St Andrew's Church (1758)





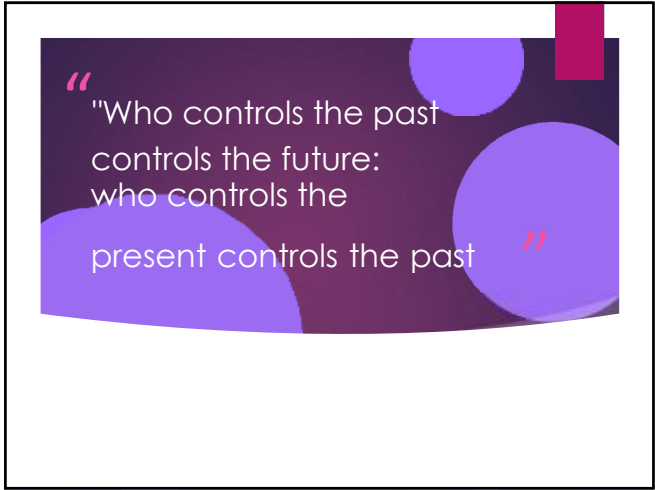


Reading a source

- ▶ Who? – who is this source talking about? Are there people of interest being mentioned? Do names recur?
- ▶ What? – what can this source tell us about the monument? Look for some hidden meanings. What kind of source is it?
- ▶ When? – when was the source written?
- ▶ Where? – where is the information coming from?
- ▶ Why? – why was this source written? What purpose did it serve at its creation?

Reflections

- ▶ Is there anything you recognise from your research on the primary sources?
- ▶ Has anything changed?
- ▶ Was there anything you encountered that differed from your expectations?
- ▶ How might your historical person have felt about this monument? What might it have meant to them, if anything?
- ▶ Would your historical person have engaged with this monument?



Appendix 11: Subsection guides for topics

In relation to the design of semi-structured interview for these works there were four topics identified. The topics to be addressed in each interview are as follows:

1. Attitudes towards public history.
2. Understandings of group identity expressions
3. Attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and critical thinking skills.
4. Attitudes towards history as an agent of reconciliation.

Each topic featured a subsection of questions from which two or more should be asked. The subsection extensions are as follows:

Attitudes towards public history

- Can you identify examples of public history in your own life?
- Can you discuss an example of public history being used in either a harmful or a beneficial way?
- How do you feel about public history and history in school? Are there differences/similarities?

Understandings of group identity expressions

- What is group identity? When can it be harmful or beneficial?
- What function do group identities play in society?
- Does a better understanding of group identity theory help you to understand the world around you?

Attitudes towards history as a promoter of empathy and critical thinking skills

- Are there any skills you feel you have improved after today's workshop?

- Do you think any differently about the ‘myths’ of history or the importance of independent research and source verification?
- Where in your own life might you use the skills, you have improved today?
- How do you feel towards the people of the past? Has your attitude towards them changed since participating in this workshop?

Attitudes towards history as a promoter of multiperspectivity

- Has anything today changed your perception/improved your understanding of the past? How?
- What is your opinion on history’s potential role in society?
- Having engaged in this programme, are you more or less likely to be open to listening to members of opposing groups, or does this remain unchanged?

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