Maynooth University

Third Year Sociology Special Topic Research Project

Remembrance, Violence and War: An Exploration into Public Attitudes Toward the Poppy in Contemporary Ireland

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Abstract

The poppy is primarily a symbol that is intimately bound with acts of war commemoration and remembrance. However, the poppy is also a flexible symbol in that it has the ability to adopt multiple symbolic values contrary to those of remembrance. Consequently, this research is an exploration into the attitudes and subjective responses that the Irish public possess regarding the symbolism of the poppy. The turbulent history between Ireland and Britain makes Ireland a unique arena in which to explore the symbolism that the poppy may encompass for general members of the Irish public. This research is based on qualitative data that was carried out in the Republic of Ireland in the form of seven in-depth interviews with members of the Irish public. It seeks to explore the complex feelings and ideas that individuals possess regarding the poppy and its symbolism in contemporary Irish society through the lenses of nationalism and the nature of war commemoration. It will note that the symbolism that the poppy contains is complex and oftentimes contradictory in nature. These contradictions may arise due to the conflicting ideas individuals possess regarding the nature of remembrance, how they view nationalism and national identity, the impact of contemporary British militarism and the history of violence that is shared with Britain.

Introduction

The poppy is a powerful symbol that encompasses a multitude of facets. It is considered by many to be a contentious symbol due to the multiple meanings that its symbolism evokes. Unlike stationary war memorials, the poppy is a unique symbol of war remembrance due to its size and possible mobility. Its meaning may be interpreted differently dependent on the context with, and where, it is worn. Iles notes that the poppy has come to encapsulate different symbolic meanings due to its "flexibility in lending itself to a conglomerate of ideas

and feelings" (2008:208). By wearing a poppy, an individual may align themselves with a potent political, cultural or religious stance. Similarly, the wearing of the poppy may simply be, for the wearer, a symbol of remembrance and respect for the war dead. This research is an exploration into the subjective responses that the poppy elicits in present day Irish society. Ireland provides a unique arena in which to undertake this research due to its historically turbulent past with Britain. Recent commemorative activity in Ireland marking the centenaries for both the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme in Ireland has also provided another lens in which to examine attitudes Irish people possess regarding its symbolism.

The interest in this research topic primarily stems from a personal interest in the involvement of the Irish volunteers in the First World War and how the Battle of the Somme, in particular, has been commemorated in the Republic of Ireland over the last one hundred years. Research regarding the commemoration of the First World War in Ireland has invariably led to examining the reception that Irish soldiers received in Ireland in the direct aftermath of the Easter Rising in 1916. The historical contrast between the commemoration of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme in Ireland has been stark due to the fact that both events took place within months of one another. The link between these two events has subsequently led to an interest in how the commemoration of the First World War in Ireland, or lack thereof, has predominantly been influenced by the construction of a nationalist narrative that has a direct correlation with the Easter Rising. In conjunction with this, numerous articles about the poppy started circulating through media outlets during "Remembrance Season" in the month of November. These articles dealt with a myriad of topics that ranged from the outrage that ensued when the actress Sienna Miller did not wear a poppy on a television

programme to an Irish owned pub in Britain that refused to serve any customers that were wearing the poppy. The level of response that the poppy produced, and its potency as a symbol of war remembrance, has led to an interest in how the poppy is perceived in present day Ireland.

The symbolism of the poppy has rarely been examined in detail within the context of Ireland. In its most basic incarnation, the poppy is primarily a symbol of remembrance that is utilised during the act of war commemoration. It has been suggested that war commemoration is an act that is intrinsically bound with the idea of the construction of a national identity (Ashplant, et al. 2000:8). Theorists have suggested that the construction of nationalism is based on "invented traditions" that are created by the state in order to create a sense of "continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm 1983:1), whilst alternative theories suggest that "nationalist movements" gain support because they draw on existing myths and symbols that stem from the subjectivity and memories of the citizens of a nation state (Day and Thompson 2004:10). The utilisation of symbols is therefore an important part of war commemoration and the formation of national identity. Scholarly work devoted to the poppy has oftentimes examined its symbolism within the context of contemporary British society. According to Iles, the poppy is both a "powerful" symbol of collective "remembrance of the war dead in Britain" and a potent symbol of British national identity (2008:201). It has also been noted that the poppy may symbolize a stringent form of militarism in contemporary British society (Basham 2016). Scholarly work that solely examines the role of the poppy within an Irish context has rarely been undertaken. Within the historical context of Ireland, scholars have briefly mentioned the utilization of the poppy as both a reconciliatory symbol in the act of commemoration by political bodies (Grayson 2010; Pennell 2014; Perry 2010) and as a

retaliatory symbol along ethnonational divisions (Andrews 2015; Beiner 2007). These approaches are mainly concerned with a historical and political analysis of the changing nature of commemorative activity in the Republic of Ireland.

It should also be noted that little to no qualitative research regarding the poppy and its symbolism has been undertaken in either Ireland or the British Isles. The poppy is mentioned or examined in scholarly articles related to Ireland that analyse its symbolism within a historical or political context. Subjective responses, in the form of qualitative data, will provide a new academic perspective on what the poppy symbolizes to general members of the Irish public. The unique cultural backgrounds that people possess provide an ideal backdrop to uncover diverse attitudes towards the concepts of national identity, British militarism, remembrance and violence. The poppy is a potent symbol whose facets may be used to uncover subjective responses related to these topics. It is my belief that this research will uniquely address and build on the theoretically established idea that war commemoration and national identity are inextricably linked. Gathering data that accurately encapsulates the thoughts and feelings of a cross-section of society provides a new perspective on what the poppy symbolizes in present day Irish society and will enrich current scholarly literature on the subject matter.

This thesis will first carry out a review on literature that pertains towards both theories of war commemoration and literature that references the symbolism of the poppy and its use as a commemorative symbol. Chapter 3 will then outline the methodological approach selected to carry out the research objectives. It will outline that the methodological approach undertaken is qualitative and carried out in the form of seven semi-structured, in-depth interviews with

general members of the Irish public. Respondents were selected based on whether they possessed strong opinions regarding the poppy as a symbol. This form of qualitative research provided the best method for gathering data based on the flexibility of the interview structure which allowed respondents to express complex answers to key questions that formed the basis of the research objectives. Research questions related to the symbolism of the poppy ranged from questions about remembrance and the First World War towards questions about British militarism and violence. The key findings of this research will be carried out and analysed in Chapter 4 of the thesis. It will note the importance of geographical location when analysing the poppy and will examine the changing nature of commemoration and the impact this has had on how the First World War has been commemorated. Militarism and violence will finally be examined as key symbolic features that the poppy possesses.

It is important to note that the research conducted cannot be construed as being generalizable to the population of Ireland due to the small size of the sample selected. The scope of the research is relatively small due to the sample size selected and the research primarily being carried out within the confines of County Kildare in the Republic of Ireland. Whilst some participants are from other areas of the country, it should be noted that the narrow location of the research may have some bearing on the findings that were generated through the process. It should also be noted that this research does not include members of the public who may possess potentially ambivalent feelings towards the poppy, nor does it include participants who are not Irish by nationality. These two factors would have considerable influence on the nature of the research. The primary objective of the research is to uncover responses from individuals who have strong opinions on what the poppy symbolizes to them.

Literature Review

<u>Introduction</u>

This research is an examination of the attitudes and subjective responses that general members of the Irish public express towards the symbol of the poppy. This aim of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of literature pertaining towards the nature of commemoration in Ireland and the symbolism of the poppy. The review will provide a conceptual framework which examines key concepts in literature that pertain to war commemoration and the poppy in both present day Ireland and the United Kingdom. Each key concept within the review has been grounded within a theoretical framework that outlines key theories related to nationalism, war commemoration and symbolism. These concepts are further explored through literature that encompasses a sociological, political and historical approach to analysing the nature of commemoration in contemporary Ireland. The review will also examine literature that solely pertains to the symbolism of the poppy within the context of British society. This review will expose a clear gap within the field of commemoration in Ireland by revealing that little qualitative data exists within the literature that pertains to both the poppy and commemoration in contemporary Irish society.

<u>Invented Traditions: the Role of the State</u>

There has been extensive theoretical work that suggests that war commemoration is an act that is intrinsically bound with the idea of the construction of a national identity (Ashplant, et al. 2000:8). Highly influential theoretical perspectives on the processes of nationalism have attempted to pinpoint where this construction primarily stems from. One paradigm of thought

suggests that the past is consciously constructed by the elite in order to bind together populations and legitimize authority (Hobsbawm 1983:1; Ashplant, et al.2000:7; Smith 1993:11). Hobsbawm refers to this as "invented traditions" whereby traditions are 'invented' in order to appear timeless and to create a sense of a "continuity with the past" that occurs in the present in the form of ritualization and ceremonies (1983:1). This would suggest a political intent on the part of political bodies who utilize these traditions in order to maintain "social cohesion" (Ashplant,et al. 2000:7). Recent scholarly work has attempted to examine changes towards commemorating the First World War and attributes these changes to a concerted effort by political bodies in the both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom (Andrews 2015:104-105; Grayson 2010; Pennell 2014; Perry 2010).

Within the context of Ireland, studies have outlined the recent utilisation of commemorative activities of the First World War by the political elite as a reason for shifting attitudes towards Irish involvement in the First World War over the last two decades (Grayson 2010; Pennell 2014; Perry 2010). They examine the role of state-conducted ceremonies in the public sphere which attempted to change a broad cultural narrative that had previously excluded Republic involvement in commemorative activities pertaining to the First World War. These articles are predominantly concerned with the importance of the role of the state in constructing and revising Irish metanarratives that pertain to nationhood. There is an examination in the shift in Republican attitudes in Northern Ireland through a political lens that specifically relates to the memory of the First World War (Grayson 2010), whilst an analysis of the "revisionist controversy" of Irish historiography as it relates to the conflict in Northern Ireland briefly examines the role of the State in the Republic of Ireland in beginning to commemorate the First World War in 2006 (Perry 2010:345-346). Both studies maintain

that the emergence of commemorative activities pertaining to the First World War, after

decades of silence, were an attempt by both respective governments to reconcile differences

between Republican and Unionist groups in Ireland (Grayson 2010, Perry 2010). Qualitative

data is utilised in one study related to the shift in attitude amongst Republican groups in

Northern Ireland, however this data only provides a brief insight into the viewpoints of

members of the political elite (Grayson 2010:329-332,337). Studies have also attempted to

examine the absence of the First World War in previous metanarratives in Ireland (Grayson

2010, Pennell 2014). Pennell describes Irish involvement of the First World War as a

"forgotten history" and attributes this to an adoption of a hegemonic nationalist narrative

adopted by the Irish Free State which enshrined the Easter Rising and the War of

Independence into "official memory" and "marginalised" the First World War into

"unofficial memory" (2014:93).

These studies are useful for providing a historical and cultural framework that attempt to

outline why changes in processes of war commemoration in Ireland occurred over the last

two decades. However, it should be noted that there is very little insight into the role of the

public in changes in attitudes towards commemoration and how commemorative processes

are adopted by the general public in the form of empirical data. These works provide valuable

insight into the shifting nature of commemorative processes as utilised by the state as

"invented traditions" but do not shed any light on the subjective responses of ordinary

members of the public in present day Ireland.

Memory, Memorialization and Subjectivity

Another paradigm of thought suggests that an important aspect of war commemoration is the subjectivity of the citizens of a nation state who adopt commemorative processes through "personal memory" (Ashplant, et al. 2000:11). In this theoretical analysis of war commemoration, there is a utilisation of subjective memory that is used to craft "war memories" and commemorative events due to the fact that war is directly related to the identity of the nation and its "symbolic continuity" (Ashplant, et al. 2000:22). Anderson ascribes this to the "imagined" aspect of community whereby there are mental and emotional ties that bind citizens together within the finite boundaries of a nation state (Anderson 1991:49). This concept is inherently important in an analysis of war commemoration and overlaps with the concept of "invented traditions" whereby the state capitalises on the subjective responses of its citizens through ritualization and memorialisation. An analysis of the role of public memory in commemorative processes that relates to both the Easter Rising and the Somme outlines that commemorative events may "facilitate a public memory" where both elite and sub-elite forms of commemoration may intersect and create a "battleground" between "competing" forms of "group memories" (Beiner 2007:385). This analysis is primarily positioned within the academic field of memory studies and is useful in its use of Ireland and the commemoration of the First World War as an example of how and why different social groups adopt commemorative processes and exercise their subjectivity whilst doing so. However, this specific study is historically broad in that it gives an overview of memorialization in Ireland that spans a few hundred years. Whilst accounting for the subjectivity of different social groups in juxtaposition with each other and the state, it does not examine how individuals in social groups may possess memories and subjective responses that are not homogenous to the social environment that they inhabit.

Recent scholarly articles pertaining to the role of the poppy in commemorative processes challenge the notion that subaltern groups in society are able to compete with a hegemonic, state-sponsored narrative. These studies suggest that certain groups have historically felt marginalised, or left out, of dominant state-sponsored narratives in Britain (Andrews 2015:104-105; Basham 2016). A feminist geopolitical analysis of the role of the poppy in war commemoration suggests that subaltern memories of the Great War are effectively silenced within a narrative of commemoration that places emphasis a white, militarised form of masculinity (Basham 2016). Whilst a historical study of the poppy notes that the families of soldiers who were executed for reasons such as 'desertion' or 'cowardice' have achieved only partial success in incorporating their stories into a broader narrative of commemoration (Andrews 2015:112). Both studies are primarily concerned with this view of the poppy within a British political and cultural context that is vastly different to an alternative Irish context.

It is also worth noting the work that has been done on the idea of a locational form of memorialization in Northern Ireland (Graham, et al. 2007; Johnson 2003; McDowell 2007). In a seminal interdisciplinary study, Johnson examines the divergence of social memory and geographical memorial landscapes related to the First World War in Ireland (2003). She contrasts different examples of "spatializing memory" in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in order to "highlight the significance of geography" in the "construction of memory" as it relates to national identity (Johnson 2003:14). Studies have also examines the role of spatiality in commemoration in the context of Northern Ireland and suggest that the "territoriality" of a collective community is bound together with the notion of their respective "essentialist" identities (Graham,et al. 2007:478; McDowell 2007:726). These works are

invaluable in providing an insight into the unique nature of spatialized remembrance within the context of Ireland.

Symbolism and Identity

Building on theories of "invented traditions" and "collective memory", whereby an important aspect of war commemoration is the subjectivity of the citizens of a nation state who adopt commemorative processes through "personal memory", another paradigm of thought suggests that this process occurs due to how memory is constructed through "cultural practices of representation" (Ashplant, et al. 2000:11). In an analysis of the Durkeheimian theory of religious symbolism, Xie notes that Durkheim considered symbols as both "representing social reality" and a method of categorizing "cosmological reality in the mind" (2016:23). Symbols move beyond merely representing "collective sentiments" and start to "maintain and "revive them" (Xie 2016:24). There is a general consensus amongst key theorists of both nationalism and war commemoration which suggests that symbolism plays a significant role in the construction of a "nationalist consciousness" in nation building (Smith 1993:10) where "nationalist movements" gain support because they draw on existing cultural "myths", collective memories, and "symbols" (Day and Thompson 2004:10). In an analysis of war commemoration, Ashplant, et al. note that one paradigm of thought suggests that war commemoration and nationalism are intrinsically bound by a "symbolic repertoire" that is utilised by the state in order to bind "its citizens into a collective national identity" (2000:7). This suggests that the utilisation of symbols an important part in the formation of nationalism through war commemorative processes.

It is worth mentioning literature that outlines the importance of identity in an Irish context, particularly related to Northern Ireland. In a sociological text that provides a comprehensive overview of social and political identities in Northern Ireland, Coulter outlines the divisiveness of contemporary Northern Irish society, where "the definition of self" takes the form of ethnic identity (1999:15). Divergent identities create divisions along ethnic lines and can be based on religious identity or on a political stance in the form of nationalist sentiment (Coulter 1999:11,15,43). This work provides indispensable knowledge regarding the nature of identity in Northern Ireland which provides a context in which to examine the role of the poppy in contemporary Irish society. Studies related to war commemoration within Ireland have briefly mentioned the role of the poppy in reconciliatory acts of remembrance between ethnoreligious groups, in the form of Catholic and Protestant political bodies in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and its use in commemorative events on a more broadly national level, involving both British and Irish heads of state (Grayson 2010:331-332; Perry). In a historical study that charts the process of memorialization within Ireland there is a brief mention of the utilisation of the poppy as a retaliatory, as opposed to a reconciliatory, device by unionist groups against republican groups (Beiner 2007:387). Some research has also been done on the symbolism of the poppy within the context of recent Anglo-Irish politics which briefly examines its utilisation in discourses of national selfhood and its role in the political conflict between the Ulster Unionists and the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland (Andrews 2015; Iles 2008:208). Iles broadly gives a generalised statement stating that the wearing of the poppy "on both sides of the border" is seen as a political statement (2008:208). Whilst these studies mention the poppy, there is no in-depth analysis regarding its symbolism within an Irish context other than an acknowledgement of it being seen as a symbol of ethnonationalist identity within the context of the conflict between the two groups.

<u>The Poppy: Militarism, Violence and the Media</u>

Recent scholarly work about the poppy in contemporary British society has suggested that the British media plays a dominant role in shifting the symbolism of the poppy from one of remembrance to one that epitomises support for current British militarism through the act of collective remembrance (Andrews 2015:110-111; Basham 2016:888-889; Iles 2008:205,211-212). Andrews notes that the "mediatisation of remembrance" has produced a form of remembrance that is both "informal and "domestic" and inhabits "every corner of domestic life" which facilitates a naturalization and centralization of the role of the British armed forces in "everyday cultural life" (2015:107-108). These studies suggest that the Royal British Legion, through its annual Poppy Appeal, have capitalised on remembrance through the use of celebrities in their campaigns (Andrews 2015:110; Basham 2016:888; Iles 2008:206) and social media (Basham 2016:888) directed towards an "increasingly interested younger generation" (Iles 2008:206). Its continued success is attributed to a general public who are willing to engage with an "ideological pole", which is described as the "abstract moral values" that "guide and control members of society", that the poppy symbolizes (Iles 2008:208). Andrews briefly mentions that purchasing a poppy may simply signify support for contemporary British armed forces, whilst Basham attributes this engagement with a specific strategy that places emphasis on the stories of specific soldiers instead of civilian casualties in order to maintain support from a "community of feeling" that idolize the "heroism" of individual soldiers (2016:888,890). Basham ultimately construes this utilisation of the poppy to be one that disguises the "coercive nature" of the British military and a stringent form of masculinised militarism (2016:888). Iles is the only scholar that explicitly mentions violent aspects of the symbolism of the poppy by mentioning the role of the white poppy as a pacifist symbol to counteract the "bright red" colour of the traditional poppy that has connotations of "blood sacrifice" and "bloodletting" (2008:209-211). This violent symbolism is attributed to

the "shared memory" of the First World War by families and communities (Iles 2008:211). This "shared memory" is also utilised by the British Legion to maintain its "public profile" and support from the British public (Iles 2008:211).

Summary and Limitations

The intent of this literature review was to provide a conceptual framework on key concepts that arose out of literature pertaining to war commemoration in Ireland and the symbolism of the poppy. The commemoration of the First World War in Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon and the literature reviewed aimed to provide an overall conceptual framework regarding scholarship in this particular field. The nature of the studies provided encompass an interdisciplinary approach with a predominantly historical, political and sociological approach to analysing the role of war commemoration in Ireland. These studies were grounded within a larger, inter-linked theoretical framework related to the nature of war commemoration, nationalism and symbolism.

As has been noted, there is very little scholarly research on the symbolism of the poppy within contemporary Irish society. The poppy is briefly mentioned in studies pertaining to shifting attitudes amongst the political elite in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and its role within the conflict between unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland. This literature review also exposed a lack of qualitative research on the subjective responses that the poppy may elicit in contemporary society. Studies related solely to the poppy focused their analysis on providing a general cultural and historical framework of its symbolism (Andrews 2015; Iles 2008) or used a feminist analysis to analyse its role in current British

Militarism (Basham 2016). This literature provides an invaluable framework in which to fill a gap in academic knowledge regarding the symbolism of the poppy in contemporary Ireland.

Methodology

<u>Research Question and Objectives</u>

The poppy is a commemorative symbol that may possess several symbolic meanings to different people. This research set out to examine and explore the subjective responses that the poppy may elicit amongst general members of the public in present day Ireland. The intent of this research is to explore attitudes from members of the public that encompass different age ranges and hail from different parts of the country. The variety of generational attitudes crossed with viewpoints from different locales provided a wide array of opinions and reactions regarding the symbolism of the poppy. The primary research question is therefore: What attitudes do Irish people have towards the poppy, and what symbolic meanings do they assign to it? The research questions were set after a preliminary engagement with literature that pertained to the poppy as a commemorative symbol in Ireland. These questions aimed to explore how people felt about its symbolism and use as a commemorative symbol across a variety of different contexts, The questions that were set for each interview aimed to explore themes such as the poppy as a symbol for violence or militarism, its role as a symbol for war commemoration and whether respondents thought attitudes towards the poppy had changed in the last two decades. This research was exploratory by nature in that its primary objective was to explore an area that has not been sufficiently researched in detail before (Neuman 2003:29). Respondents were encouraged to

talk freely and explore their own responses to the primary questions set out during the research process.

Research Paradigm

This research used an interpretivist research paradigm. It was guided by a philosophy that suggests that social actors construct meaning through social interactions and a "cultural meaning system" with one another (Neuman 2003:77). It is therefore framed by the notion that social actors attach subjective meaning through meaningful interactions and that their reality is socially constructed through such meaning systems (Neuman 2003:77). An interpretivist approach suited the nature of the research objectives in that it is "sensitive to context" and is primarily concerned with the ways individuals interpret their social world. This research involved extracting themes and meaning encoded into the complex responses put forth by the respondents who were encouraged to be as detailed and provide as much complexity as possible during the interview process.

Research Methods

As this research was guided by an interpretivist philosophical viewpoint, qualitative methods were selected as the method for gathering data during the research process in that its primary objective is gaining an intimate understanding of complex, subjective viewpoints that respondents possessed regarding their social world. Interviews were the most suitable qualitative method selected for gathering data in that they provided an ideal environment for addressing an exploring the key questions that form the basis of the research. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, in-depth format which allowed for flexibility within

the interview process. Set questions were prepared for each interview but respondents were encouraged to talk freely and explore their own responses while the interview was being conducted. Questions were often improvised based on a response that a respondent had given in order to encourage them to elaborate on a point they had made. The set questions provided a prompt if a respondent had not covered a topic set out in the primary research objectives. However, it should be noted that these questions were set with the understanding that viewpoints towards the poppy may shift dependent on the context in which it is situated. Overall, this method proved to be the most suitable way to collect data that yielded complex and detailed responses from all the respondents.

Sampling Method

Participants were selected based on whether or not they had strong opinions about wearing a poppy and its symbolism in present day Ireland. The aim of the research was to provide a sample that included individuals that encompassed various age ranges and different locales within Ireland in order to provide as many differing viewpoints as possible. Purposive sampling was undertaken whereby participants were selected based on whether or not they possessed strong opinions on the poppy, either favourable or not (Neuman 2003:211). One difficulty encountered during the sampling process was seeking out general members of the public who had strong opinions on the subject matter in question. In order to overcome this, I utilised individuals from my own social network who acted as gatekeepers during the research process. A family member was instrumental in procuring a respondent for the interview process due to a mutual involvement in a war commemorative society based in South Kildare. The family member told the participant that I was conducting research into the symbolism of the poppy and gave them a mobile number in which to contact me. I spoke to

the participant over the phone and outlined the research in more detail. Consent was given during the call and an interview was subsequently arranged (SAI Ethical Guidelines:8). A further two respondents agreed to participate through an old work colleague who also acted as a gatekeeper (SAI Ethical Guidelines:8). I subsequently contacted these respondents through text messages which outlined the nature of the research and that it would involve being interviewed. Another respondent was procured through snowball sampling when a respondent contacted someone through their social network who also agreed to participate through text message after they had been given my contact details (Neuman 2003:211). The last three respondents were drawn from my own social network, both through a personal and professional environment, and were asked to participate due to the strong opinions they held regarding the poppy and its symbolism. The sampling process was also purposive in that it sought out respondents that included diverse ranges in age as well as encompassing both genders.

The youngest respondents were twenty nine at the time the interviews were conducted whilst the oldest respondent was seventy nine. Other respondents were aged thrity five, forty, forty eight and forty nine. The sample also included five men and two women. The interviews were conducted in pubs, coffee shops, the house of one of the respondents, and the office of one of the respondents. The interviews ranged in time with the shortest being twenty minutes whilst the longest interview was an hour long. All the interviews were recorded using a mobile phone and were subsequently uploaded to an encrypted file on a laptop. Once this was done, the interviews were deleted from the mobile device. All of the recorded interviews were transcribed in their entirety. The raw data was first analysed using an inductive approach. This involved reading through the interview transcripts to draw out themes that

were common across several of the interviews (O'Leary 2014:305). The process also involved uncovering data deductively, as the research process involved asking questions that had been pre-determined by engaging with literature prior to the interview stage. As each interview progressed it became clear that some themes were emerging from the data across all the respondents interviewed. However, an inductive approach was still used throughout as themes that had not been considered through the literature or the interview process itself began to emerge.

Ethics

Guided by the SAI Ethical Guidelines, my role as a researcher is to protect the well-being of any participants involved during the research process (1). Informed consent was willingly given by all participants before the research process took place and after the research objectives and process were explicitly stated (SAI Ethical Guidelines:8). All of the respondents were assured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be protected at all stages of the research project (SAI Ethical Guidelines:8). Following the SAI Ethical Guidelines, it was clearly stated that their name would not be used in the transcript of the interview or in the finished thesis in order to protect their anonymity (6). For this reason, pseudonyms have been used throughout this work. Permission was also granted by all the respondents to record the interview on a mobile phone and respondents were advised that the audio recording of the interview would be stored securely in order to protect their confidentiality. It was outlined that they had the right to request a copy of the recorded interview, a copy of the thesis, and that they were free to withdraw their participation from the research process at any stage before the thesis was completed. Respondents were also advised that the recorded interviews would be stored in a secure location for five years before

being destroyed. All findings are reported accurately in order to uphold my integrity as a researcher and to safeguard the information given by the respondents during the research process (SAI Ethical Guidelines:6)

Limitations

It is important to note that the research conducted cannot be construed as being generalizable to the population of Ireland due to the small size of the sample selected. It should also be noted that this research does not include members of the public who may possess potentially ambivalent feeling towards the poppy. All the participants interviewed solely identify as Irish by nationality, with one respondent holding dual citizenship from both Ireland and the United Kingdom. For this reason, it should be stated that the sample selected is not indicative of the general population of Ireland as a whole. Eight participants had initially been lined up to be interviewed, but an additional respondent declined to participate after short notice. At that stage, it was deemed too late to replace the respondent as it would involve seeking out a participant who met the criteria needed to carry out the research.

Findings and Analysis

Introduction

These findings outline the specific themes that emerged through the interview process regarding the symbolism of the poppy. Respondents shared personal responses and opinions regarding its symbolism that was oftentimes complex and somewhat contradictory. These

contradictions arose due to the powerful and complex nature of the poppy itself. As the findings will note, the symbolism of the poppy is liable to shift the perceptions of the responses of respondents based on the context in which it is situated. These findings will examine how geographical context undoubtedly shifts the symbolism of the poppy for some of the respondents. It will analyse how the wearing of the poppy is confined to a commemorative environment in a local context and how its symbolism shifts to encompass a political stance within a national context. It will then explore the ways in which symbolism may shift depending on historical context. It will finally explore the militaristic and violent symbolic attributes it possesses for some respondents and how this may have an effect on whether the poppy is worn as a commemorative device.

A Mobile Symbol: Geographical Context

The poppy is a mobile symbol whereby the connotations that it possesses are entirely dependent on its geographical location. According to participants, the symbolism of the poppy is liable to shift depending on the geographical location in which it is worn. Out of the seven respondents interviewed, three stated that the wearing of the poppy, for them, is subject to the locational context in which it is worn.

(i)The Local Context of the Poppy

Two respondents stated unequivocally that they would wear a poppy as a commemorative symbol but would hesitate in wearing it in other locations in their locality. Ciaran (35) is from South Kildare and has family members who have served in the military. When asked about

whether he considered the wearing of the poppy to be a reactionary symbol in the Republic of Ireland, Ciaran stated:

> Yeah, I wouldn't be doing it that way intentionally but I could see why it would happen but… no, it wouldn't be designed to get a reaction, but it'd depend on the occasion. Like, I wouldn't walk into the pub when it's time to wear the poppy.

For Ciaran, the wearing of the poppy is subject to its geographical location. He identified the pub as being a local location where the wearing of symbols may provoke a reaction outside of a commemorative environment. Despite pride in a familial involvement in the military, there is a fear of provoking a reaction and stigmatisation from his local community. He also mentions that "occasion" plays an important role in determining when the poppy is worn.

David (48) is a native of Belfast in Northern Ireland and wears the poppy every year on Remembrance Sunday in his local parish in Dublin. For him, the wearing of the poppy is entirely restricted to its geographical location within the church during Remembrance service. Whilst David wears the poppy every year on Remembrance Sunday he noted that the wearing of it is very much due to the rituals of the church he attends. He mentioned that he would feel conspicuous if he did not wear one and also notes that he would "not wear one to work for example" (David). Ashplant,et al. have noted that commemorative processes take place through the use of memory in "cultural practices of representation" (2000:11). These representations may take the form of symbols that reflect "collective sentiments" and begin to "maintain and revive them" as time goes on (Xie 2016:24). These findings would suggest that the wearing of the poppy in this instance is bound to the collective sentiments of the congregation. For David, this mode of collective commemoration is confined to the geographical boundaries of a church during a ritual of remembrance.

(ii)The Etnonationalist Context of the Poppy

The symbolism of the poppy tends to shift from one of commemoration to a symbol that evokes an ethno-nationalist form of identity depending on whether it is situated in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland. Respondents who grew up in Northern Ireland, or near its borders, identified a nationalist or ethno-nationalist symbolism within this context. It should also be noted that participants from the Republic did not mention any nationalist connotations when asked about its symbolism. The identity of the wearer therefore determines what symbolism the poppy encompasses. Eimear (29) comes from a Catholic nationalist family from a border area. When asked if she would wear a poppy, Eimear states that she would, but only in South Kildare, where she is now living, and not near her home near the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. When asked why she would not wear one she stated that:

> I suppose it's just a different perception of what the poppy means down
> here I think it kind of relates to, more to, World War I and Irish men that
> died. Whereas, at home, it's more linked to British soldiers who died during
> the Troubles which… probably more chance of offending someone at
> home.

For Eimear, the poppy is primarily a symbol of remembrance that is very much linked to the First World War. However, Eimear acknowledges that the wearing of the poppy in South Kildare bears a very different context to the wearing of it back in her hometown. She also acknowledges that, for her family and community, the wearing of the poppy is closely linked to the memory of the British military in the historical context of the Troubles. In her case, there is also a fear of stigmatisation from her predominantly Catholic nationalist community:

> I wouldn't even have been anywhere, unless it was Dublin or Belfast, where
>
> you could buy a poppy. There's no way you could have even thought about
>
> wearing one. And now I still would not wear one at home. I really
>
> wouldn't.

This fear of stigmatisation is primarily linked to the Nationalist sentiment of her community. The poppy as a symbol demonstrates how the utilisation of symbolism in war commemoration can inextricably be linked to national identity. Although David wears a poppy in the Republic of Ireland during Remembrance Sunday, the wearing of the poppy in Northern Ireland takes on another context:

> I guess there's also a certain kind of perverse side to it. When I lived in
>
> Northern Ireland I could refuse to wear one. I wouldn't wear one. No way
>
> would I wear one. Because it aligns you with a particular kind of political,
>
> Unionist stance which I spent my whole life in the North trying to escape.

David also stated that wearing the poppy in the Republic of Ireland is a "liberating experience" due to the fact that, in doing so, he is not "exercising his national identity". In this instance, not wearing a poppy in Northern Ireland is a conscious decision to exercise subjectivity and control over his identity. This also implies that the poppy possesses powerful cultural signifiers that are liable to shift depending on its geographical location and the cultural identity of the wearer. It has been noted that groups within societies "insert symbols which resonate with their sense of identity" within a territorial boundary that serve to "incite remembering" (McDowell 2007:726). Graham and Whelan note that commemoration is "deeply implicated" with ethnonationalist and sectarian constructs of the past" within the context of Northern Ireland (2007:478). Both Eimear and David are acutely aware of what the poppy symbolizes to their respective communities in both Northern Ireland and in the

Republic and acknowledge the political dimension that the poppy inhabits in the North due its historical association with the Troubles. They also both stated that, for them, wearing it in the Republic is an act of commemoration. Within the context of Northern Ireland, the poppy therefore incorporates a political ethno-nationalist symbolism that is demarcated by a physical territorial boundary.

"The Silent Factor": Changes in Commemoration

Two respondents stated that they had noticed a change in how the First World War has been commemorated in Ireland over the last twenty years and that this has affected their view on the poppy. Tommy and Ciaran are both from South Kildare. When asked if he had noticed any changes in commemoration, Ciaran stated that he there had been very little information about the war until around ten years ago and that he would not have worn a poppy for that reason. Tommy (79) had a family member who served in the First World War and is actively involved in commemorative groups and events in South Kildare. He stated that he would wear a poppy but is unsure if he would have worn one in the past:

> I'd wear one now. But, if you asked me would I wear one thirty years ago?
> I couldn't answer that. Because you'd be isolated, you see. Only people that
> had… there were only thirty people in the whole town would have
> represented in the Great War. Maybe more in other towns. But I'd be one in
> thirty people. But the general public they weren't involved one way or the
> other. You know what I mean? When television and mobiles came in… the
> computers were a great thing to find out the actual happenings. But before
> that no one knew nothing about it.

Tommy mentioned a lack of knowledge of the Irish involvement in the First World War as taught through state-sponsored schooling and suggested that this had been over-shadowed by the events of the Easter Rising and the War of Independence. He noted that he only knew about the Irish involvement in the Great War because of his grandfather. He also stated that technology has made it easier for people to find out about their family history. When asked why he was unsure about whether or not he would have worn a poppy, Tommy mentioned that not many people in his village had family members in the First World War and also stated that there might have been ignorance as to what a poppy was in his rural community

> Now suppose if I was forty and put a poppy on and walked up the town,
> they wouldn't know what it was anyway. That's the truth. They'd think it
> was just another… that I was after pulling a flower and putting in my
> jacket. They hadn't a clue.

This would suggest that the poppy was not conceived as either a symbol of remembrance or one associated with the British military in Northern Ireland in his community. When asked if he would wear a poppy now he stated he would and that he never had to think about wearing one or not:

> Yeah. I'd wear one now alright. We never got the opportunity to wear one.
> I never had to refuse anyone. It wasn't part of our culture. And there was
> no anti-anything. No one ever took the initiative to produce a thousand
> poppies and distribute them to the areas. Nobody ever took the initiative.

When asked to elaborate, he stated that "anti-anything" meant "anti-British". He also mentioned that the question of whether or not to wear a poppy arose due to the "silent factor" regarding the war and that there was now a sense of "pride" in having a family member who fought in the First World War due to recent commemorative activity. It has already been

noted that there was a lack of information regarding Irish involvement in the First World for around eighty years. Iles refers to this period in time as an "official amnesia" in the Republic of Ireland regarding Catholic soldiers who fought in the First World War (2008:209).

These findings would suggest that individuals who had family members who served in the war tended to keep this information to themselves. It would suggest that this was less to do with fear of retribution and had more to do with the very small numbers in a rural community that were involved in the war itself. In this instance, the absence of both an "invented tradition" through the state and a collective memory through the community forced individuals to keep their familial involvement in the First World War to themselves (Hobsbawm 1983:1). Despite the historical context of the Troubles, Tommy was unsure as to whether the poppy would have incited any reaction if he had worn one forty years ago which would suggest that nationalist sentiment might not necessarily have been a deciding factor regarding war commemorative activity in every community in Ireland during this period.

A History of Violence: the Troubles

Six out of seven respondents identified the poppy as being symbolic of violence. Two of the respondents stated that they would never wear a poppy for this reason, whilst the rest expressed ambivalence about wearing the poppy when asked if they thought it symbolised violence. The question of violence during the interview process ultimately shifted the symbolism of the poppy, for some respondents, from a symbol of remembrance to a symbol that has a violent history within the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Aidan (29) is from North Kildare and adamantly stated that his refusal to wear a poppy is due to the violent history of the British presence in Ireland during the Troubles. When asked why he would not wear a poppy he referenced historical incidences where violence was enacted by the British

military against members of the Irish public. Aidan is from North Kildare and has never been to Northern Ireland. Despite this, he was able to express anger at incidences of violence during the Troubles that happened before he was born:

> Ten people died in Ballymurphy and twelve people died in Bloody Sunday and the same regiment, the Parachute Regiment. And basically 'til this day, no one has been held accountable for it. The military police investigated themselves for what they did, and any reports were just hidden. It's just fucking crazy, you know? That's why I'd be anti-poppy. Some of the biggest atrocities by the British Army have happened in this land. And I don't see why I should, or even be shamed into, buying a poppy to pay off these veterans for committing these crimes.

Tony (40) is from a Catholic community and grew up in Derry during the Troubles. When asked about his views on the poppy, Tony cites similar reasons to Aidan by referencing Bloody Sunday:

> I would not wear a poppy. The poppy to me symbolises the support of all British Forces and their fallen dead, including the British Parachute regiment who killed fourteen innocent young men and boys on Bloody Sunday. None of those soldiers who murdered their victims will ever see a day behind bars or will ever face justice.

Both respondents raised the idea of accountability by stating that, in their view, the British military have never been held accountable for violent acts that were committed in Ireland against Irish civilians. However, Tony also mentioned the loss of a family member during the violence of Bloody Sunday in 1972:

> Whenever I see or read about the publicity that is attached to the poppy and the vilification of those who do not wear a poppy, all I can think of is my mother pregnant on her fourth child having to break the news to her three young sons that their uncle, [name redacted], at twenty one years of age was dead, shot dead, and they would never see him again.

Tony went on to discuss the lasting impact that this had on his family in the years after the incident. The poppy, in this instance, is not merely an abstract symbol of violence due to direct, familial involvement in the Troubles. It should be stated that very little has been written about the poppy or commemoration within the context of violence between the British military and nationalists in Northern Ireland. Much of the literature refers to the ethnonationalist conflict and the utilisation of the poppy within this context (Andrews 2015; Beiner 2007:387).

Ciaran stated that he would wear a poppy for reasons of remembrance, but later on in the interview mentioned that he would do so only if it was white. For him, the white poppy is a symbol of remembrance that promotes pacifism whilst the red poppy promotes violence that he also associates with the Troubles:

> Well yeah, if I had my choice I wouldn't wear a red poppy, I'd wear a white poppy. I'd wear the pacifist poppy. But yeah, there is that certain element to it and the symbolism there. And it's red, vivid red, you know what I mean? It looks like blood-red, it looks like it's symbolising, for me… anyway, you look at it and it's symbolising the spilling of blood. It doesn't matter where that blood was coming from; it could be innocent civilians, and maybe that's why there are people in Northern Ireland who are sympathetic to the Republican side: there's guys who shot innocent civilians up there.

Ciaran stated that the poppy has an association with violence and suggests that this symbolism is exacerbated by the red colour of the symbol itself which has connotations with the colour of blood. Iles states that this violent symbolism may account for a "shared memory" of the First World War by families and communities within the context of Britain (Iles 2008:211). However, the violence that Ciaran identifies is not associated with the First World War and instead stems from an awareness of the history of the Troubles. Ciaran does not identify as a nationalist, whilst Aidan mentioned that he would consider himself a nationalist but abhors the use of violence for political gain.

One respondent cited the memory of violence enacted against British soldiers as a reason for buying a poppy. When asked about why she decided to buy a poppy, Eimear described driving home to work every weekend and driving past a monument covered in poppies. When she researched what the monument was for she found out that it was a memorial for British soldiers who were killed in the Ballygawley bus bombing in 1988. She described what happened after she researched it:

> When I googled it all the pictures of the guys who were killed came up.
> And they were really, really young, I think the oldest was 20 most of them
> were 18. And I just felt really, really sad about it. So, eventually I saw a
> poppy; I saw a seller in Dublin and bought a poppy and stopped one night
> and put it on the monument.

Eimear stated that she "felt a sense of shame" about the bombing and this was the primary reason for purchasing a poppy. However she also stated that she would also have reservations about wearing a poppy because it "glorifies violence". The use of the poppy as a reconciliatory symbol between political parties has been noted by scholars who have described its adoption and use in war commemorative events in Ireland over the last two

decades (Grayson 2010; Perry 2010). It has also been suggested that the poppy is often not worn in Ireland as a "political statement" due to its association with "British rule and the Orange movement in Ulster" (Iles 2008:208). These findings suggest that the symbolism of the poppy is deeply connected with the history of the Troubles for some members of Irish society. However, this violent symbolism is also deeply complex in that it is intertwined with contrasting, subjective responses based on familial involvement in the Troubles, nationalist sentiment, aversion to violence, and complex feelings of shame about the historical past along nationalist lines.

War and Militarism

The poppy is primarily a symbol of war commemoration and this aspect of its symbolism was acknowledged by all the respondents interviewed. However, respondents stated both positive and negative reactions to this strand of symbolism. For respondents who would wear the poppy, the act of wearing it is oftentimes due to a familial background in the military. Other respondents would not wear the poppy precisely due to this association with the First World War and its role in current military conflicts. Both Tony and Aidan would not wear a poppy and cite the association with conflict as a reason for doing so. Aidan associates the poppy with Irish involvement in the First World War:

> To me the poppy, for World War I, is a symbol of the lies that all those sad
> young lads were told. That's fifty thousand casualties, like, you're not
> talking about people being maimed, you know? That would be the big thing
> for me, you know? When someone mentions the First World War to me, or
> the poppy, that's a big symbol for me, you know… like, those poor young
> lads were told a vicious lie for political gain.

In this instance, Aidan is exercising a subjective opinion about Irish involvement in the First World War that challenges the state-sponsored rhetoric of remembrance and reconciliation (Grayson 2010:331-332; Perry 2010). It should also be noted that Aidan was not aware of any personal, familial involvement in the First World War. By contrast, Eimear and Ciaran both come from families with a history in the military. Eimear stated that, for her the poppy is merely a symbol of remembrance "for soldiers in uniform that fought or died in World War I". For Ciaran, the wearing of the poppy is also a form of remembrance:

> I suppose it's a matter of respect, I've had members of the family have served in the British forces, members of the family have served in the Irish army, so yeah I would wear it. Because I've family members. But it's not just that. It's just a sign of respect for the dead really.

Whilst Aidan feels that the poppy is a "symbol of lies" that were told to young Irish soldiers who were enticed to fight for Home Rule, Ciaran feels that wearing one is a 'respectful' act. Basham notes that the wearing of the poppy is to openly "belong in some way to a community that respects the fallen" (889-890). It could therefore tentatively be suggested that associating the poppy with war can evoke either a positive or negative response depending on whether or not an individual has historical or current ties to the military through their family or community.

Three respondents also expressed a negative reaction towards the poppy due to its association with war and militarism. This association is not specific to the Irish involvement in the First World War and is entirely referential towards a current form of British militarism. When asked about if he thought the poppy symbolised militarism, Tony stated that he believed that the British media play an instrumental part in "attracting young vulnerable men and women to take up the cause for 'freedom'".

Pauline (49) was the only respondent interviewed who was unsure about whether she would wear a poppy or not. When initially asked whether she would wear one she stated that she would not have done so in the past but had recently learned that a distant family member had served in the First World War and, for this reason, she would be "more open" to the idea of wearing a poppy. However, when asked what her initial reactions towards the poppy would be, she stated:

> War. War, power. I suppose that's just what I think of. And I suppose in Ireland you're just removed from war. Or I am anyway, I've never had anybody really involved in a war. I'm not from an army family. I really don't entertain it. I just that it causes too much sorrow. Maybe I wouldn't wear one because I just don't support war. Not from a political background, more from a… I just don't support war.

For Pauline, the poppy primarily symbolised war and militarism. She also stated that she feels that the notion of war is abhorrent to people currently living in Ireland due to its turbulent history. When David was asked about whether or not it symbolised militarism he conceded that it did, but that he sees it primarily as a symbol of remembrance due to the context of it being worn in a church on Remembrance Sunday. The context of the poppy is an important factor in determining its symbolism. It could be suggested that the symbolic context of the poppy is not always necessarily locational but may also ideological. Basham has noted that the Poppy Appeal campaign in Britain effectively glorifies militarism by shifting focus away from civilian casualties and remembrance by placing focus on the "heroism" of soldiers currently serving in the armed forces (2016:888,890). Iles has noted that the poppy is a "flexible" symbol in that it has the ability to lend itself to a "conglomerate of ideas and feeling" (Iles 2008:205-206). The views of some of some of the respondents shifted

dramatically when asked about its role in current militarism. Views were also dependent on whether or not there was a familial association with the military. Those who possessed strong opinions regarding its militaristic symbolism could not regard it as a symbol of remembrance. Conversely, respondents who viewed it symbolism as being primarily due to remembrance were able to acknowledge the militaristic aspects of its symbolism without changing their primary views.

Summary of Findings

These findings suggest that the symbolism of the poppy is still liable to evoke a strong response amongst individuals in Irish society. Respondents shared that the felt that the wearing of the poppy as a commemorative symbol is indefinitely confined to the context of events pertaining to remembrance and commemoration. The question of violence and militarism embedded within the symbolism is also able to shift its symbolism from one of remembrance to one that connotes the historical presence of the British military in Ireland and contemporary British militarism. Interestingly, some respondents specifically associated this violent symbolism with the history of the Troubles and cited incidences between the British military and Irish civilians as a reason for not wearing one. No respondent mentioned an ethnonationalist dimension unless they were asked if they would wear a poppy in, or near, Northern Ireland. It would perhaps suggest that the ethnonationalist symbolism that the poppy encompasses, whereby it is a marker of a political stance, may be confined to the geographical area of Northern Ireland. Similarly, these findings also suggest that the wearing of the poppy in Northern Ireland may not be seen as a symbol for remembering Irish soldiers who fought in the First World War. Even if an individual would like to wear one for those reasons, it would still be seen as a conscious political stance. For one respondent, there was a

level of ambivalence about whether the poppy would have been worn forty years ago. He could not state if the Troubles had any bearing on this and suggested that this could partly be due to the scarcity of commemorative activity through both the State and his local community in Ireland during this period. It would suggest that the poppy gains its symbolic potency through commemorative activity enacted by both the state and communities.

Conclusion

This thesis examined the nature of commemoration and identity through the symbolic power of the poppy. It has already been noted that the poppy has the capacity to transform its symbolic register based on the context in which it is worn and its ability to absorb the ideological and political impulses of a respective community or nation. This thesis offered a new examination of its symbolism whereby its representation may change due to the emotional and personal opinions and feelings of members of the general public. It could therefore be stated that the complex symbolic register of the poppy is mirrored by a similar emotional register elicited by an individual. Situating this research in Ireland provided a unique environment in which to carry out this research due to the complex, and often turbulent history, that Ireland shares with Britain.

Within an Irish context, the poppy is a complex symbol whose signifiers may be determined by both the identity of the wearer and where it is worn. It has already been noted that the wearing of the poppy in Northern Ireland is construed as signifying a conscious political stance. The wearing of the poppy, and its symbolism, adopts a more nuanced stance within

the context of the Republic of Ireland. This, of course, can be attributed to the differences between societies in Northern Ireland, where divisions based on ethnoreligious divides are readily more apparent, in comparison to the Republic. Despite this, the poppy is still able to evoke the memory of the Troubles for individual members of society in the Republic. The poppy is not a symbol of allegiance to any political party in this instance. Rather, it is symbolic of the historic incidences of violence enacted by the British military against Irish civilians. It could therefore be suggested that the poppy is therefore associated with a domineering and devastating form of colonial rule. It would also perhaps suggest that the ethnonationalist symbolism that the poppy encompasses, whereby it is a marker of a political stance, may be confined to the geographical area of Northern Ireland.

Decades of state-sanctioned silence regarding the involvement of Catholic Irish soldiers in the First World War, in an environment that placed value on the heroic nationalist narratives of Irish history, confined the memories of those killed to the privacy of the family home. This environment created a vacuum in which the symbolic potency of the poppy was effectively stifled. The poppy gains its symbolic currency due to concerted commemorative efforts enacted by either a community or state. In the absence of this, the poppy ceases to be a symbol and merely reverts back to the abstract form a flower.

Further Research

It should be noted that data collected during this research yielded the potential for further study in different areas. This research was carried out during a period of sustained commemorative activity in the Republic of Ireland regarding the centenary of the Easter

Rising. Due to this, many of the respondents interviewed put forth opinions about the nature of commemoration and nationalism that could not be used in this thesis. Areas such as Irish nationalist symbolism, and opinions about the nature of remembrance about the First World War, are findings that were yielded from this study that may provide a starting point for further qualitative research about the nature of nationalism and commemoration in contemporary Irish society.

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