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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

History

Representations of Gender in the Irish Nationalist Daily Newspapers, c.1912-1923

by

Holly Dunbar

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

Gendered discourse and Irish nationalism during the revolutionary period evolved as part of the same historical dynamic. Press polemic about gender norms in revolutionary Ireland influenced Irish nationalism, just as Irish nationalism affected the ideals of masculinity and femininity disseminated by the nationalist daily newspapers. This thesis considers in particular the nationalist dailies with the highest circulation in Ireland, the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Irish Independent*. Gender ideals were central to debates in the nationalist dailies, from the militarism that engulfed Ireland between 1912 and 1923, to discussions about home life, families and welfare provision, but has not been sufficiently explored in previous scholarly work. Gendered press discussions are explored through four parts, 'Morality and Modernity', 'Marriage', 'Singleness' and 'Gendering Defiance'.

Gender in the Irish revolutionary period existed as an imagined construct, yet it had a real effect on press debates, individual lives and government policy. As gender was constructed the gendered narrative about men and women, their roles, and appropriate behaviour for each sex was not always consistent. There was a discursive tension between portrayals of women as powerful moral agents and women as weak, fragile or needing to be policed. Equally, men were described as protective, strong and soldierly, but this did not fit with the reality of many men's lives. Debates in the press drew attention to men who depended on state welfare or who lived outside the 'ideal' of marriage.

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1923**

Holly Teresa Dunbar

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Holly Teresa Dunbar declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Gender in the Irish Nationalist Press, c. 1912-1923

I confirm that:

This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

Parts of this work have been published as:

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Dunbar, Holly 'Women and Alcohol in Ireland During the First World War', *Women's History Review*, (Forthcoming: November 2016 – in final copy editing).

Signed:

Date:

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Dedication

In loving memory of Raymond Dunbar

List of Abbreviations

CWL	Catholic Women's League
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GPB	General Prison Board
INAAVDF	Irish National Aid Association & Volunteer Dependents' Fund
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
MU	Mothers' Union
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
SSFA	Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association
TAF	Total Abstinence Federation
TAS	Total Abstinence Society of the Sacred Heart
TUC	Trades Union Council
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
VDF	Volunteer Dependents' Fund
WNHA	Women's National Health Association

Introduction

When Mary Robinson was elected in 1990 as the first female president of Ireland, she said she had been voted for by ‘the women of Ireland, who instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system’.¹ Robinson mocked traditional beliefs that dictated women should remain in domestic spaces away from the public world of politics, while acknowledging that women had considerable power within and outside their homes. In 1912, a group of Irish suffragettes smashed some windows of the General Post Office in Dublin because they were outraged that women had not been included in plans to extend the franchise. Following this, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington published an essay in *The Irish Review* which claimed that there was seen to be an ‘element of unwomanly selfishness in the idea of women fighting for themselves’.² Skeffington’s statement acknowledged and problematized perceptions of women as passive and men as protectors who would act for them. Both Skeffington and Robinson refer to popular perceptions of gender roles and norms in Irish society, which warrant further historical contextualisation. This thesis traces ideals of womanliness and manliness in the revolutionary period (c. 1912-1923), a particularly important time in the development of modern Irish attitudes towards gender because formative debates about gender were not only facilitated by revolutionary events, but integral to how the revolutionary years unfurled.

The main sources used in this thesis are the nationalist dailies with the highest circulations in Ireland, the *Freeman’s Journal* and the *Irish Independent*. These newspapers have often been used as sources for writing about the revolutionary period,

¹ ‘From Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the Grave’, *RTE*, 6 Nov. 2015.

² Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, ‘The Women’s Movement: Ireland’, *The Irish Review*, 2 (1912), 225-227 (p. 226).

but their gendered discourse is less commonly discussed in studies of gender which tend to draw on more radical publications.³ This leaves unaddressed many themes relating to gender and the 'everyday' experiences of men and women living through the revolutionary period: cultural life and habits, marriage and singledom, and the relationships between gender and social policy, gender and activism, and gender and violence. While dissecting these themes questions about how class, age, religion and national identity affected people's experiences in the revolutionary period will also be considered. The nationalist daily newspapers had a middle-class Catholic readership and their discourse contained underlying assumptions about gender which were overwhelmingly articulated in a way that demonstrated the intersectionality of faith, class and politics in the press.⁴ A thematic structure has been chosen for this thesis so that certain topics can be discussed in their entirety throughout the period; this will help to draw out continuities or changes in gendered press polemic.

The nationalist daily newspapers dictated rigid ideals of masculinity and femininity, which suggested men should be strong, soldierly, disciplined and protective of women and the nation, while women should be pious, nurturing, attractive, and primarily fulfil the roles of wife and mother. While these ideals were common to broader gendered polemic in Britain and Ireland, they were articulated in a specifically Irish and nationalist manner

³ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996); Charles Townshend, *The Republic The Fight for Irish Independence* (London: Allen Lane, 2013); R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces* (London: Allen Lane, 2014); Matthew Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal in Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (Woodenbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006); James McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013); Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999); Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Karen Steele, *Women, press, and Politics During the Irish Revival*, (New York, Syracuse University Press, 2007); Louise Ryan, *Gender Identity and the Irish Press, 1922-1937*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

⁴ For more discussion of the theory behind intersectionality and gender see: Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics', *Women's Studies*, 13 (2006), 193-209.

because they were formed in revulsion at perceived English traits and in response to Ireland's history of British rule.⁵ In Ireland, gender norms were intrinsically political and had a direct effect on individual lives throughout the revolutionary period. Gender influenced the way society was structured and the policies pursued in Westminster and, in the later revolutionary years, the Irish Dáil. This introduction will locate this thesis in relation to the literature on gender, nationalism and the Irish revolutionary period, explaining its contribution to the field before discussing the sources and methodology used and giving an overview of the four parts that will follow.

Historiography

This thesis offers insight into key debates about women and femininity that took place during the revolutionary period, such as polemic that suggested women were inherently suited to marriage and motherhood. Ideals of marriage and procreation resulted in concerns, which were often voiced in the press, about single women, including widows and spinsters. Discussions of single women often focused on poor widows and led to debates in the press and parliament as to who should support vulnerable members of society and how this should be achieved. This thesis considers women who conformed to ideals of womanliness by marrying and birthing children, and women who transgressed them by remaining single or engaging in criminal activities such as excessive drinking or shebeen keeping (selling unlicensed liquor, usually from inside their homes). In many cases, women outside the ideal of femininity were not intending to make political or feminist statements, or challenge conservative perceptions of appropriate womanly

⁵ For more information about gender in the British press see: Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918- 1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, 'The Daily Mirror and the Creation of a Commercial Popular Language: A People's War, a People's Paper?' *Journalism Studies*, 10 (2009), 639-54.

behaviour; but this thesis contends that they did so through behaviour that conflicted with the rigid expectations placed on women by Irish Catholic nationalist culture. The way that these women posed an inadvertent challenge to the status quo is less obvious in the radical press, but is discernible in the nationalist daily newspapers and highlights their importance as a source for Irish gender history. While individual women and organisations are mentioned, this thesis is largely concerned with press representations of gender and does not intend to provide a comprehensive study of specific individuals or groups.

Writing a gendered history of the press during the revolutionary period is possible because women's historians have laid a solid foundation of academic work uncovering women's lives, agency and experiences in revolutionary Ireland. Diane Urquhart's study of women in Ulster has considered women's involvement in politics between 1890 and 1940, while Gillian McIntosh and Diane Urquhart's edited collection of essays on Irish women and war in the twentieth century has added to our understanding of Irish women's experiences in various conflicts.⁶ Social histories of women's lives in the period by Rosemary Cullen Owens and Catriona Clear have expanded knowledge of women from multiple social classes.⁷ Margaret Ward, Maria Luddy and Rosemary Cullen Owens have provided a rich analysis of the women's suffrage movement in Ireland, which was most active in the years just preceding the First World War.⁸ Senia Pașeta's work on Irish

⁶ Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004); Gillian McIntosh and Diane Urquhart, *Irish Women at War* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010).

⁷ Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970* (Dublin: Gill & Mcmillan, 2005); Catriona Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland 1850-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

⁸ Margaret Ward and Louise Ryan, *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldier, New Women and Wicked Hags* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004); Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times* (Michigan: Attic Press, 1982); Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995).

nationalist women has advanced studies of feminism in early-twentieth-century Ireland and demonstrates that women involved in the suffrage campaign were often familiar with and supportive of women working in other areas of political activism, such as nationalist organisations like Cumann na mBan.⁹ Pašeta's work on the Irish Women Patrol, a voluntary group of women formed during the First World War intent on involving women in the policing of women and the streets in Dublin and Belfast, has also shown that there was some 'sex solidarity' between the relatively wealthy women who patrolled and the working-class women they encountered in the two cities.¹⁰

Studies of Irish women and femininity have suggested that women's purity was particularly important in nationalist rhetoric. Jim MacPherson's work on nationalist women between 1890 and 1914 suggests that Ireland was often portrayed in nationalist discourse as female and individual women were frequently discussed as symbolic of the Irish nation, he also explores the participation of everyday women in nationalist culture through a case study of the United Irishwomen – a rural women's organisation that sought to improve women's homes and domestic skills.¹¹ Macpherson argues that there was an intersection between ideals of purity, rural living and Irish femininity.¹² Sikata Banerjee's comparative work on Ireland and India also stresses the connection between images of 'Mother Ireland' or 'Mother India' and nationalist women in both countries – emphasising perceptions of women as nurturing and the importance of women having children in order to be seen as womanly.¹³ Karen Steele has considered gender during the

⁹ Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Senia Pašeta, "Waging War on the Streets': The Irish Women Patrol, 1914-1922', *Irish Historical Studies*, 154 (2015), 250-271 (p. 268).

¹¹ Jim MacPherson, *Women and the Irish Nation: Gender, Culture and Irish Identity, 1890-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sikata Banerjee, *Muscular Nationalism: Gender, Violence, and Empire in India and Ireland, 1914-2004* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

Irish literary revival in the radical press.¹⁴ Louise Ryan's work on the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War considers representations of domesticity and femininity, as well as the behaviour of the Crown forces in Ireland.¹⁵ Ryan's analysis of gender and the nationalist press in the Irish Free State has expanded scholarship on gender, journalism and nationalist women exponentially through a consideration of key themes that were discussed in relation to Irish femininity: education, work, emigration and women's revolutionary involvement in the Irish Civil War.¹⁶ These valuable works of Irish history have tended to focus on extraordinary or radical women. This thesis will consider instead femininity in relation to everyday life and nationalist women by thinking about marriage, singleness and women's growing engagement in activities previously associated with male culture, like smoking cigarettes.

Irish nationalist masculinity will also be traced in the nationalist daily newspapers. Discussion of men in their everyday lives during the revolutionary period as fathers, husbands, bachelors and citizens has not been the focus of previous historical study, despite its prominence in the nationalist daily newspapers. This warrants further attention because perceptions of ideal masculinity influenced politics and government legislation. Studies of Irish men's contributions to the revolutionary period are more numerous than those of Irish women. Senia Pašeta's ground-breaking work on middle-class Catholics has explored the experiences of many men who believed that they would inherit control of a Home Rule Ireland, but whose hopes were dashed by the events of

¹⁴ Steele, *Women, press, and Politics During the Irish Revival*.

¹⁵ Louise Ryan, 'Furies' and 'Die-hards': Women and Irish Republicanism in the Early Twentieth Century', *Gender and History*, 11 (1999), 256-275; Louise Ryan, 'Drunken Tans': Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-21), *Feminist Review*, 66 (2000), 73-94.

¹⁶ Ryan, *Gender Identity and the Irish Press, 1922-1937*.

the revolution.¹⁷ Colin Reid has also addressed how these men adapted as Irish politics evolved during the revolutionary years through a biographical examination of Irish Parliamentary Party MP, Stephen Gwynn.¹⁸ James McConnel has added further insight into the Irish Parliamentary Party's workings, members and beliefs in this period.¹⁹ Joost Augusteijn suggests that through isolated group bonding experiences, such as being 'on the run', Irish men became emboldened to be violent.²⁰ Matthew Kelly has traced the 'fenian ideal' in Irish nationalism from the 1880s to the revolutionary period noting that integral to separatist cultural nationalism was a focus on the link between a set of manly ideals and understandings of manliness as the basis for citizenship.²¹ Integral to the performance of Irish nationalist masculinity was the firearm, which was both a tangible and symbolic feature of male nationalist culture.²²

Where Irish masculinity has been addressed more directly in Irish historiography it has largely been in relation to literature or sport. Joseph Valente's work on manliness and nationalism has focused on the literary works of writers like Lady Gregory, Patrick Pearse, John Synge and James Joyce.²³ Patrick McDevitt has looked at the ideals of manliness espoused by Irish sports teams, who were keen to demonstrate themselves to be physically fit and show their readiness for independence by conquering colonial stereotypes about weak or effeminate Irish men.²⁴ More everyday ideals of manliness

¹⁷ Senia Pašeta, *Before the Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Colin Reid, *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*.

²⁰ Joost Augusteijn, 'Accounting for the Emergence of Violent Activism among Irish Revolutionaries, 1916-1921', *Irish Historical Studies*, 35 (2007), 327-344.

²¹ Matthew Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal in Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (Woodenbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).

²² Ibid.

²³ Joseph Valente, *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

²⁴ Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

have received far less attention and this thesis offers reflections on masculinity associated with men in more routine activities, as well as those engaged in revolutionary events.

When discussing gender this work acknowledges the existence in the discourse of the nationalist dailies in early-twentieth century Ireland of a notion of separate spheres.

Amanda Vickery notes that 'separate spheres', 'public and private', and 'domesticity' were all used to describe women since the ancient world, but the specific application of this discourse to middle-class women is a more recent phenomenon.²⁵ Jurgen Habermas is often credited with having first used the concept to argue that from the eighteenth-century the domestic running of the home was overseen by women, and public participation in business, politics etc., was male-dominated.²⁶ In the 1970s and 1980s, American women's historians like Nancy Hewitt, Barbara Welter, Nancy Cott and Carol Smith-Rosenberg suggested that within the 'cult of domesticity' created by separate spheres women found 'gender-group solidarity' and began to express proto-feminist thinking.²⁷

However, there has been much criticism of separate spheres as a framework for historical analysis, because separate spheres were always 'an ideal' and did not necessarily reflect reality – men did partake in some household chores and women did undertake paid work outside of the home, as well as participate in political life, and exerted many of the skills associated with the 'public sphere' - financial astuteness, administrative and leadership skills - in running their homes.²⁸ A single definition of what the 'public' and 'private'

²⁵ Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383-414 (p.383).

²⁶ Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 310.

²⁷ Vickery, 'Golden Age', p. 385.

²⁸ Robert Shoemaker criticises the theory of separate spheres, arguing that there was too much movement of men and women between both spheres for it to be a workable theory. Nonetheless Shoemaker suggests

sphere actually consist of has been elusive.²⁹ Indeed, some suggest that ‘separate spheres’ could only be applied to the middle-classes, and others that even within the middle class few lived a life that reflected the separate sphere ideal.³⁰ Equally, to what extent the domestic sphere was a constraint on women and how far it provided a safe and potentially liberating space where women could exercise power and influence has been debated.³¹ When separate spheres are alluded to in this thesis it is to suggest a contemporary belief in rigid roles for men and women that were divided roughly along domestic/public lines, which was often referenced in the media and by politicians in debates about gender and women’s behaviour. This is not to suggest that it was representative of people’s everyday lives. Separate spheres ideology was used in the nationalist daily newspapers as a convenient stance from which to construct ideal Irish femininity and although it offered a constrictive outlook for women it was nonetheless fully embraced by some female commentators – notably, ‘Femina’, author of the *Freeman’s* woman’s section, ‘In Woman’s Sphere’.³² However, separate spheres ideologies were not the only view of gender relations visible in the nationalist dailies. Women like Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Elizabeth Bloxham mocked the notion of such a rigid division between the sexes and between different spaces which people could occupy.³³

that it did reflect how men and women’s roles were perceived and the ideals of male and female participation in national life.

Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*, pp. 305-308

²⁹ Vickery, ‘Golden Age’, p. 412.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 396-398

³¹ Ibid, p. 386.

³² In February 1922, Elizabeth Bloxham wrote a letter to the editor of the *Irish Independent* mocking traditional ideas that men and women had to conform to specific gendered roles and behaviours. She argued that ‘No girl need despair because she does not fit into the mathematical compartment formed by a man’s brain’.

‘Tastes of Men and Women’, *Irish Independent*, 21 Feb. 1922.

³³ There are several examples in the press of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington’s views on roles for women contravening traditional separate sphere ideologies. These include descriptions of her work for the Irish

Gender Theory

Gendered discourse was used in early twentieth-century Ireland to legitimate and motivate society along specific lines, whilst simultaneously delivering a diverse array of messages, articulated in a highly situational manner with specific and often transitory aims. However, while women were often critiqued openly in the press by both male and female commentators, discussion of masculinity was often more implicit. This thesis is influenced by R. W. Connell's seminal concept of 'hegemonic masculinity'.³⁴ Connell suggests multiple masculinities in a society, each vying for control. He also posits a 'hegemonic masculinity', which represents the ideal of manliness towards which most men aspire.³⁵ In Ireland the revolutionary period witnessed a substantial shift in nationalist men's approach to achieving Irish autonomy. The formation of the Irish Volunteers as a grass-roots military nationalist organisation in November 1913 represented a reclaiming of what was believed to be a previously existing and beneficial hegemonic martial masculinity within the organisation, which was associated with previous Irish rebellions in 1798, 1848 and 1867. An ideal of Irish men as soldiers contributed to polemic associating Irish men with discipline, soldiering, strength and cultural objects like the Irish language and hurley sticks, which became more in line with the ethos of Sinn Féin from 1917 and less aligned with the politics and beliefs of the Irish Parliamentary Party (henceforth IPP).

Women's Franchise League, views on women's roles in the nationalist movement, and in relation to the Irish Volunteers, as well as her calls for equal pay for men and women in the workplace.

'Dublin and District', *Irish Independent*, 26 Nov. 1913; 'The Cumann na mBan and the Suffragettes', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1914; 'Public Purse Philanthropy', *Irish Independent*, 7 Jun. 1920.

³⁴ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2 edn (California: University of California Press, 2005).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Connell argues that gender is 'multidimensional: embracing at the same time economic relations, power relations, affective relations and symbolic relations; and operating simultaneously at intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional and society-wide levels'.³⁶ The press is an ideal source to consider this because although the nationalist daily newspapers were predominantly written by male, middle-class, Catholic nationalists, there were a plethora of views within them visible in letters and advertisements. 'Deviant' forms of masculinity and femininity can also be gleaned from descriptions of men and women who stepped outside ideals of appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour. Equally, as would be expected, the nationalist dailies' political leanings evolved with Irish nationalism and can be seen becoming increasingly radical and supportive of different political groups, such as Sinn Féin, in the later revolutionary years.

Mimi Schippers has added to Connell's theory by suggesting a hierarchy of femininities too, with 'emphasized femininity' acting in support of hegemonic masculinity and the gender hierarchy while excluding 'pariah femininities' that are seen as outside the norm and potentially threatening to society.³⁷ Women outside the ideal of womanliness because they were unmarried, engaged in criminal activities, or behaved in ways associated with the 'New Woman' such as smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol, were particularly derided in the Irish nationalist dailies. Yet, despite the negative light editorials and journalists cast on these women, the fact that women nonetheless engaged in activities that contravened traditional perceptions of womanly behaviour posed a

³⁶ R. W Connell, 'Gender, health and theory: Conceptualizing the issue, in local and world perspective', *Social Science & Medicine*, 74 (2012), 1675-1683, (p. 1677).

³⁷ Mimi Schippers, 'Recovering the Feminine Other: masculinity, femininity, and gender hegemony', *Theory and Society*, 36 (2007), 85-102.

considerable challenge to Irish nationalism's conception of ideal femininity and the patriarchal structure of society in revolutionary Ireland.

Ideals of manliness and womanliness develop in tandem with one another and other factors, including class and economic status. Relational gender theory will be used in this thesis as an important framework to understand the hierarchies and power dynamics of the past. As Sonya O. Rose argues, gender history seeks to look at men and masculinity as well as women and femininity to dispel the myth that men are naturally masculine or that masculinity is unchanging, but also because 'masculinity and femininity exist in relation to one another'.³⁸ Throughout this thesis gender will often be discussed as performed through actions and behaviours. This is informed by Candace West, Don Zimmerman and Judith Butler's pioneering contributions to gender studies that suggest gender is performative, and that people are 'doing gender' by acting in ways that suggest they are masculine or feminine.³⁹ Performing nationalism was particularly visible in revolutionary Ireland at funerals for famous dead men and nationalist marches and displays of defiance, such as from 1916 Irish men refusing to give their names in English when stopped by police or the military.

The use of gender as a category for historical analysis has been well established. This thesis intends to build on prior work that has considered masculinity, such as John Tosh, Robert Nye, Martin Francis and Joan Tumblety's studies of masculinity in relation to

³⁸ Sonya O. Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Malden: Polity Press, 2010), p. 14.

³⁹ Candace West and Don Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender', *Gender & Society*, 1 (1989), 125-151; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1999).

empire, war and nationalism.⁴⁰ This will also be the case for femininity, which has received significant analysis in situations of war, conflict and intense nationalism, such as Nira Yuval-Davis seminal work on gender and the nation and Miranda Alison's work on women and political violence.⁴¹ This study will offer a gendered reading of the nationalist press during the Irish revolutionary period and address both masculinity and femininity.

Sources

This thesis mostly uses newspaper sources. A lot of material is drawn from the Irish nationalist dailies, the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Irish Independent*, which of the many newspapers publishing in early-twentieth-century Ireland had the highest circulations, despite regional competition in some areas. Although some local newspapers are included to further support discussion of regional alcohol-related crime, this study does not intend to make comparisons between local, regional and national newspapers, but instead to provide a comprehensive analysis of the nationalist dailies. Both the *Irish Independent* and *Freeman's Journal* catered to a predominantly nationalist readership and running throughout their polemic was the assumption that they were talking about Catholic ideals and ideology, which were applicable to and representative of the majority of people in Ireland.

⁴⁰ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (New York: Pearson Education, 2005); Robert Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), 417-438; Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth century British Masculinity', 45 (2002), 637-652; Joan Tumblety, *Remaking the Male Body: Masculinity and the Uses of Physical Culture in Interwar and Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴¹ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); Miranda Alison, *Women and Political Violence: Gendering Security* (London: Routledge, 2009).

The *Irish Independent* was launched on 2 January 1905 by William Martin Murphy 'as a mass-circulation commercial newspaper, politically unaffiliated though associated with middle-class conservatism'.⁴² Soon after beginning to print the *Independent's* circulation reached 30,000 and during the First World War had a circulation of 100,000.⁴³

Throughout the revolutionary period the *Independent* was sympathetic to commerce and trade, and especially condemnatory of the workers' strikes orchestrated by Jim Larkin and James Connolly in Dublin during 1913.⁴⁴ Disdain for the working class was often implicit in the newspapers from 1913 and F. M. Larkin suggests that the acrimony between Murphy and Connolly influenced editorials that Timothy Harrington, its editor, produced in April 1916 calling for Connolly's execution.⁴⁵ Padraig Yeates argues that the editorials were Murphy and Harrington's 'one great blunder' during their partnership working on the *Independent*.⁴⁶

Murphy had initially intended the newspapers to be non-partisan and hiring Harrington, who wrote for the newspaper throughout the revolutionary period, was supposed to aid this.⁴⁷ Harrington was one of many anti-Parnellite MPs who came to work for the *Independent* having held positions at newspapers that were amalgamated into it by Murphy in 1905.⁴⁸ Harrington's presence ensured that the *Independent* editorially

⁴² Patrick Maume, 'Parnellite politics and the origins of Irish Independent Newspapers' in *Irish Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien and Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 1-17 (p. 1).

⁴³ Frank Callanan, *Tim Healy* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 129.

⁴⁴ F. M. Larkin, 'No Longer a Political Side Show: T. R. Harrington and the 'new' *Irish Independent*, 1905-31' *Irish Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien and Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 27-37 (p. 35).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Padraig Yeates, 'The Life and Career of William Martin Murphy' in *Irish Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien and Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 14-25 (p. 24).

⁴⁷ Larkin, 'No Longer a Political Side Show', p. 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

showed some support for the Irish Parliamentary Party, but was critical of some of its policy, especially after discussions about partitioning Ireland arose, which the paper thoroughly opposed.⁴⁹

Murphy had significant links to the British Empire and therefore for much of the revolutionary period the *Independent* was not hostile to trade links with Britain; however, Aoife Uí Fhaoláin argues that this was balanced with another aspect of the newspaper's journalism, which promoted the Irish language and was unsupportive of foreign influence in Ireland.⁵⁰ The *Independent* shifted politically from 1916 to 'tacit support of Sinn Féin once it was clear that public opinion was moving in that direction'.⁵¹ Ian Kenneally argues that from 1917 the *Independent* was increasingly in agreement with Sinn Féin as both Harrington and Murphy deplored the idea of partitioning Ireland.⁵² The support for Sinn Féin persisted after 1919 despite Murphy's death and the paper passing to his son, William Lombard Murphy.⁵³ By 1920, the *Independent's* circulation was over 140,000, but had a strained relationship with both the Crown forces in Ireland and the IRA.⁵⁴ In December 1919, Harrington was threatened by the IRA.⁵⁵ Then, as the Irish War of Independence continued, Sir Neville Macready, General Commanding Officer of the

⁴⁹ Patrick Maume, 'The *Irish Independent* and Empire, 1891-1918' in *Irish Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien and Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 124-131 (p. 129).

⁵⁰ Aoife Uí Fhaoláin, 'Language Revival and Conflicting Identities in the *Irish Independent*', *Irish Studies Review*, 22 (2014), 63-79 (p. 66).

⁵¹ Felix M. Larkin, 'The Dog in the Night-Time: The *Freeman's Journal*, the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Empire, 1875-1919' in *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain, c. 1857-1921* ed. by Simon J. Potter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp.27-39 (p. 37); Patrick Maume, 'Parnellite politics and the origins of Irish Independent Newspapers', p. 129.

⁵² Ian Kenneally, 'Nationalist in the Broadest Sense: The *Irish Independent* and the Irish Revolution' in *Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien & Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp.40-58 (p. 42).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.45.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 43.

British Army in Ireland, accused both the *Independent* and *Freeman's* of promoting republican propaganda.⁵⁶ The *Independent* supported the 1921 truce that ended the Irish War of Independence, consistently remaining committed to non-violence and the desire for an independent Ireland.⁵⁷

The *Freeman's Journal* was more explicitly politically affiliated than the *Independent*, being the semi-official organ of the IPP.⁵⁸ The *Freeman's* published in Ireland between 1763 and 1924. From 1893, Thomas Sexton, an IPP MP became its business manager and editor, but Sexton failed to save the newspaper from floundering.⁵⁹ Sexton was a former IPP MP who battled for a long time to run the newspaper smoothly despite internal struggles in the IPP between Tim Healy and John Dillon, who both had held the greatest shares in the newspaper.⁶⁰ The paper struggled financially in the early-twentieth century partly due to dwindling circulation since the split in the IPP and because of the competition provided by the *Independent* from 1905, which was acute as the *Independent* cost half the price.⁶¹ In 1912, the IPP rescued the *Freeman's* from bankruptcy and ousted Sexton from its editorship, but it continued to fail to gain commercial stability, which was worsened by the destruction of its office in Dublin during the 1916 Rising.⁶²

In 1913, the *Freeman's* had a circulation of about 40,000, half that of the *Independent* in the same year.⁶³ After the IPP's humiliating electoral defeat in December 1918, the

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 51.

⁵⁸ Larkin, 'The Dog in the Night-Time', p. 113.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 116.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, p. 112.

⁶³ Ibid.

Freeman's was sold to Dublin Fitzgerald, a moderate nationalist and wine merchant who ran the newspaper with R. Hamilton Edwards, a London journalist who had previously worked with Lord Northcliffe before retiring to Ireland.⁶⁴ The newspaper supported moderate nationalism, Fitzgerald had been a loyal Home Ruler and the paper argued that Ireland should gain dominion status, which helps account for the further decline in its popularity in the increasingly radical atmosphere in Ireland post-1919.⁶⁵ Notwithstanding this, the British authorities in Ireland showed it little favour and it was suppressed for seven weeks between December 1919 and January 1920.⁶⁶ In December 1920 Fitzgerald, Hamilton and Patrick J. Hooper, the editor, were imprisoned in Mountjoy Gaol for writing about some violence perpetrated by Crown forces in Ireland.⁶⁷ In March 1922, the paper came under attack from the anti-treaty side of the IRA who, angered by the newspaper's support for the signing of a truce with Britain, smashed up its printing press.⁶⁸ Fitzgerald sold the paper in 1924 and it was absorbed into the *Independent*.⁶⁹

Both the *Independent* and *Freeman's* had women's sections that ran before the First World War, respectively 'In Woman's Realm' and 'The Irishwoman: Maid, Wife and Mother'.⁷⁰ These offer insights into the cares, concerns and ideals of nationalist women whose views were predominantly anti-suffrage. Neither of these sections has received

⁶⁴ F. M. Larkin, 'A great Daily Organ': *The Freeman's Journal, 1763-1924*, *History Ireland*, 3 (2006), available at: <http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/a-great-daily-organ-the-freemans-journal-1763-1924/> [Last accessed: 24/12/2015].

⁶⁵ F. M. Larkin, 'Martin Thomas Fitzgerald' (Dublin: Irish Dictionary of National Biography, 2004).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ F. M. Larkin, 'A Great Daily Organ'.

⁶⁸ F. M. Larkin, 'Martin Thomas Fitzgerald'.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ It was common for popular newspapers to include women's sections. This was true of Irish publications like *The Catholic Bulletin*, but also British newspapers.

Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015).

the same level of scholarly scrutiny as radical women's publications from the period.⁷¹ However, the women's sections of the nationalist dailies can provide context to more radical and feminist women's journalism as well as insight into more everyday discussions of Irish nationalist women. The women's sections of the nationalist dailies demonstrate that women in Ireland held considerable agency and expressed opinions on a range of issues without necessarily being radicals or revolutionaries. After the First World War, female journalists and commentators displayed more progressive thinking and questioned the 'double standard' in the way men and women's behaviours were judged, which this thesis discusses in relation to views on women smoking during the War of Independence.

Alongside the nationalist dailies material will be drawn from newspapers that represented other political and cultural groups. This will provide context to the nationalist dailies and unpick the discourse of revolutionaries that became more popular towards the end of the revolutionary period, when it was more represented in the nationalist dailies as well as radical nationalist publications. *Sinn Féin*, the newspaper of Arthur Griffith's separatist political party Sinn Féin, offers insight into radical nationalist beliefs. *Sinn Féin* began printing in 1909, but was suppressed under the Defence of the Realm Act in 1914. *The Irish Volunteer*, the newspaper of the Irish Volunteers, which printed briefly in the first year the organisation was established, is useful for considering the early workings of the group. *An tOglac* (The Irish Volunteer), the newspaper of the Irish Volunteers, will be used as an important source for radical nationalism after the First World War. From about

⁷¹ Karen Steele, 'Constance Markievicz Allegorical Garden: Femininity, militancy and the press, 1905-1915', *Women's Studies*, 29 (2000), 423-447; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*; Lisa Weihman, 'National Treasures and Nationalist Gardens: Unlocking the Archival Mysteries of *Bean na hÉireann*', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 27 (2008), 355-364.

1919, the Irish Volunteers became the Irish Republican Army and *An tOglac* their official publication.

Given that each newspaper represented multiple interests and expressed various views, their polemic can be considered as reflecting an array of ideologies within the contested field of nationalism. To trace the range of messages being disseminated by the press newspapers will be analysed in their entirety, from editorials to comments, adverts and layouts. As Adrian Bingham notes, newspapers are valuable sources for historians of gender because they are situated on the 'boundary of politics and popular culture', containing a mixture of high politics, housewifery and human interest stories.⁷² Newspapers will be carefully used, acknowledging how their perspective reflects their bias from political affiliations and commercial interests, as well as their readers' enjoyment of hyperbole and scandal. They will, however, also be treated as important sources of the revolutionary period because they were contributors to the gendered and political discourse of the time and had a broad reach. The press was a banal yet integral part of everyday life. Equally, the press demonstrates a re-articulation of the gender norms and roles discussed in the early 1910s by the early 1920s. Traditional expectations were still placed on men and women in the later revolutionary years, but there were more varied opinions and more progressive views are also visible in the newspapers after the First World War.

⁷² Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 7

This thesis is primarily concerned with the nationalist daily newspapers, but when the argument can be enhanced by a broader source base it also draws upon other primary source material. In discussions of 'deviant' femininity and women drinking during the First World War, data has been drawn from the *Criminal and Judicial Statistics for Ireland*, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police* and the *Irish Annual Reports of the General Prison Board*. These sources are useful for providing insight into the number of people involved in criminal activities, but are interpreted carefully because they represent only crime and actions known to the police.⁷³

Material from the Bureau of Military History witness statements is also incorporated when discussing the masculine ideals of the Irish Volunteer Force, adding personal reflections on accounts of Volunteers' smoking, or discussions of violence perpetrated against women by police, Volunteers and Crown forces in Ireland during the War of Independence. The statements are treated as individual interventions and memories, which were compiled many years after the events took place and could have been coloured by the intervening years, nostalgia, or compromised by witnesses misremembering some details from the past. When considering legislation in Ireland that affected the Volunteers, but also other themes from welfare provision to vulnerable women, particularly widows, debates in the House of Commons are also considered.

Chapter Outline

There are four parts to the thesis: 'Morality and Modernity', 'Marriage', 'Singleness' and 'Gendering Defiance: From the Irish Volunteers to the Civil War'. Part I of

⁷³ Brian Griffin, *Sources For the Study of Crime in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 62.

the thesis has two chapters. The first chapter considers gendered debates about alcohol in the nationalist press. Elizabeth Malcolm, Colm Kerrigan and Diarmaid Ferriter's work on temperance has shown that alcohol was recognised as a damaging social evil in Ireland when consumed by men or women, but alcoholism and its effects were more commonly associated with men, while women were considered to be the more temperate sex.⁷⁴ This thesis addresses a less commonly noted aspect of polemic about alcohol in Ireland, namely the effect of the First World War. The war altered the representation of Irish women and alcohol significantly, as a moral panic was voiced over women drinking and running shebeens (unlicensed venues where illicit liquor was sold, usually someone's home). The nationalist dailies castigated women for drinking because it conflicted with conservative beliefs about women being ideally suited to motherhood. The press was especially critical of drunken wives of soldiers because of fears that their inebriety might result in promiscuity, and of female shebeen keepers because they blurred the lines between domestic and public spaces, and challenged traditional norms of domesticity and femininity. This chapter also re-examines press debates about soldiers' dependents, who received separation allowances from the state, and suggests that this was not consistently or entirely negative. After the war the hysteria over women's drinking almost immediately subsided and traditional concerns about men and alcohol resurfaced. The Irish Volunteer Force took steps to foster temperance amongst its members arguing that this was linked to ideals of sobriety, reliability and soldiering.

⁷⁴ Elizabeth Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986); Colm Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement 1838-1848* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1992); Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in Twentieth-century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999).

As with alcohol, discussion of tobacco was often couched in gendered language and this will be the focus of the second chapter. Cigarettes, because of their long association with bourgeois men in the nineteenth century, were symbols of manliness. Tobacco companies purposefully connected smoking with strength, camaraderie and masculinity in advertising materials. Smoking was associated with manliness and male spaces, such as 'smokers' – music hall productions that only men attended and smoking was permitted. During the First World War, tobacco was promoted as offering comfort to troops and was thus even more closely bound to an ideal of military masculinity. However, as the political situation in Ireland altered and Irish men increasingly came into conflict with police and military personnel, representative of an authoritarian British state, they used cigarettes to perform acts of resistance such as smoking in court, or blowing smoke into the faces of the police or military.

The connection between smoking and manliness made women smoking controversial in Ireland. Disdain of female smokers was amplified by popular medical understandings that suggested women were physically and morally weaker than men and that the adverse effects of smoking would be worse for women. Penny Tinkler argues that women were conscious smoking had a visual impact.⁷⁵ This was certainly true after the First World War in Ireland when a lengthy debate over women smoking was printed first in the women's sections of the *Independent* and then continued in the newspaper's main comments section. When women smoked they contested the rigid norms of appropriate behaviour imposed on their sex and did so in a visible and public manner.

⁷⁵ Penny Tinkler, *Smoke Signals: Women, Smoking and Visual Culture* (New York: Berg, 2006), p. 2.

Part II of the thesis focuses on press debates about marriage through four chapters.

Marriage rates were low in revolutionary Ireland, but an ideal of marriage and procreation was nonetheless assumed to be the normal and natural state for men and women. The first chapter addresses perceptions of ideal marriage, which were heavily influenced by the intersection between Catholicism and Irish nationalism. The press dictated that ideal marriages required rigid roles for each spouse: men were to be the breadwinners and protectors of the family, while women were to maintain the home and nurture their husbands and children.

However, the press contained many references to marriages that had broken down, which are the focus of the second chapter. Domestic violence, separation and divorce were frequently commented upon in the press. These cases were sensationalised and suggested to be 'other' to ideal Catholic, nationalist marriage. Discussions of marital breakdown highlight the middle-class leaning of the nationalist press. Scandalous descriptions of divorce among the Anglo-Irish elites provided prized human interest stories, while lurid tales of potential spouses being seduced and abandoned were common and overwhelmingly featured the plight of jilted lower-class women.

The nationalist dailies condemned not only marital breakdown, but what it deemed to be inappropriately matched unions, such as mixed marriages between Catholics and other religious groups. Reports of these cases are analysed in the third chapter. The nationalist dailies stressed the damage and pain caused by marrying outside one's faith and the difficulties of raising children in a mixed marriage. Custody laws were weighted against women. Even after a woman's husband had died, she was legally required to bring their children up in the faith chosen by the child's father.

Changing patterns in courtship rituals and choice of marriage partners was also disapproved of by journalists. These new marriage customs nonetheless suggest that some younger people's approach to marriage was altering in the revolutionary period, which is addressed in the fourth chapter. Marriage was almost always described as transactional (two parties joining in a contract of marriage with understandings that they would each bring specific financial, emotional and physical contributions to the union), but after the First World War the expectations of each partner were shifting to include shared social interests and greater companionship.

Although marriage was the ideal for men and women, it was not the reality for many people during the Irish revolutionary period and Part III of this thesis considers the representation of single people, such as bachelors, spinsters and widows, who were the subject of much press discussion. How gender and welfare policy developed and influenced one another is discussed. Traditional gender norms and ideals had a significant effect on whether and how much aid vulnerable members of society received. The first chapter considers widows in relation to discussions about welfare for poor widows and single mothers. Whether aid should be provided to destitute widows by local philanthropy or the state was fiercely debated. This was further complicated in Ireland because understandings of what the state consisted of and where it was located evolved throughout the revolutionary period. The introduction of separation allowances to all soldiers' dependents in the First World War had an enormous effect on welfare provision in the United Kingdom and Ireland, making the state a key provider of aid to vulnerable women. Undoubtedly influenced by this to some extent, after the war both the Dáil and the British government provided vast sums of compensation money to women who lost their husbands in the Irish War of Independence and Irish Civil War. Significantly, there

was little reported about male widowers, perhaps because men were less easily constructed as victims and were expected to financially and emotionally care for themselves if their spouse died.

The second chapter considers spinsters and bachelors. Like widows, spinsters were often pitied by the nationalist press, which was especially concerned about a 'surplus' of single women after data from the 1911 census showing how many single women there were in Ireland was made popularly available. In contrast, bachelors were castigated for choosing to remain single and shirk the responsibilities and financial encumbrance of having a wife and children. This had a direct effect on state welfare policies; for example, unmarried labourers were denied or evicted from council cottages if they did not wed. In the First World War, bachelors were represented as the antithesis to 'heroic' men. The press was outraged that many husbands and fathers had enlisted and there were still bachelors who had not. Ideals of manliness dictated that men be husbands, fathers and soldiers, therefore bachelors were often portrayed as 'other' for being selfish, hedonistic and lacking a willingness to sacrifice themselves or their comforts. Notwithstanding the condemnation of single lifestyles, a more positive outlook on singleness was provided by advertisers who sought to capitalise and provide for a market of single consumers with goods and services that they would find convenient. Especially towards the end of the revolutionary period a more positive and progressive view of single life can be gleaned in the Irish nationalist dailies.

Part IV of the thesis genders the resistance against authority that became widespread in Ireland during the revolutionary period. Augusteijn's study of Ireland between 1916 and 1921 focuses on the revolutionaries (Irish Volunteers who later evolved into the Irish Republican Army), arguing that young men became radicalised through their participation

in Gaelic games and culture.⁷⁶ Augusteijn does not discuss the ideals of masculinity within the Volunteers, or the way that they were drawn to Gaelic culture because aspects of it, such as the Irish language and hurley sticks, became associated with a culture of Irish manly defiance. Several short chapters in this part of the thesis gender men's participation in revolutionary activities in Ireland.

The first chapter considers press discussion of the formation of the Irish Volunteer Force arguing that men in the Volunteers aspired to an ideal of martial masculinity that idolised guns, discipline, soldiering and brotherhood. Possessing guns was not just about displaying manliness in an overtly phallic way, but about a conception of civic liberty that included the rights of men to bear arms in self-defence. The Volunteer organisation exemplified the convergence of ideals of Irish manliness, citizenship and gun ownership. These ideals were evident across a spectrum of Irish nationalists and this is demonstrated by considering the way the *Irish Volunteer*, the *Independent* and *Freeman's* discussed rifles and masculinity. However, the fascination with weapons did not divorce the Volunteers from constitutional politics and the IPP. The second chapter considers the relationship between the IPP and the Volunteers, arguing that in its early formation the Volunteers combined multiple interests and balanced revolutionary and constitutional agendas.

In September 1914, a split in the Volunteers occurred after John Redmond pledged the organisation to support the British War effort in September 1914. Two branches of volunteers were created, the National Volunteers who were loyal to Redmond and the Irish Volunteer Force, who followed Eoin MacNeill and were under the influence of the

⁷⁶ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996).

Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secretive, radical nationalist organisation. After the Easter Rising in 1916, the Irish Volunteer Force regrouped and expanded. From 1917, acts of defiance by Irish Volunteers regularly involved refusing to give their names in English when asked to do so by authorities in Ireland, and the use of hurley sticks as symbols of a distinct Irish culture at nationalist events and as weapons of opportunity in affrays with police. The third and fourth chapters discuss the Irish Volunteers' use of hurley sticks and the Irish Language. The significance of these cultural objects to Irish masculinity has not been noted before; they bound a conception of Irish martial masculinity to Irish sports and culture, bringing an ideal of manliness in Ireland more in line with the ideals espoused by Sinn Féin and less in alignment with the IPP's emphasis on constitutionalism.

As conflict between Volunteers and police or Crown forces in Ireland increased during the War of Independence, the Volunteers sought to take over the justice system in Ireland by setting up Sinn Féin courts, which the fifth chapter explores. The nationalist dailies did not directly endorse this, but were sympathetic and admiring of Volunteers involved in distributing local justice, while deriding the ineptitude and failures of police and the military to address crime in Ireland or prevent the Volunteers from running their own courts. In press reports of Volunteers doling out justice, clear ideals of manliness are visible: discipline, intelligence and daring.

In the sixth chapter, Part IV of the thesis ends with a consideration of how ideals of masculinity that included discipline, brotherhood, sacrifice and soldiering were evident in press reports of men who died in the Civil War. There was a continuity in polemic about masculinity throughout the revolutionary period, but sacrifice was highlighted especially during the Civil War. The press was consistent in its condemnation of violence perpetrated by men on both sides of the conflict.

The four parts of this thesis discuss various questions about the way gendered discourse interacted with the social and political events of the revolutionary period: What were the ideals and norms of masculinity and femininity presented in the nationalist press during the Irish revolutionary period? And in what ways were they peculiarly Irish and nationalist? How did these ideals affect or influence the events of the time? And how did the Home Rule Crisis, the First World War, the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War alter or establish traditional gender hierarchies? To what extent did the gendered discourse of everyday life continue despite the revolution in Ireland? How did understandings of what represented the state in Ireland and its role in welfare provision develop in conjunction with understandings about gender? In answering these questions this thesis will offer an analysis of the gendered discourse of the Irish nationalist dailies during the revolutionary period and reflect on how this affected men and women's everyday lives.

Morality and Modernity

1.1 Introduction

Men and women's behaviour was often commented upon in the Irish nationalist dailies. Women were judged against an ideal of Catholic, nationalist morality that positioned women as primarily wives and mothers. In contrast, men were expected to be the protectors of their families. This part of the thesis will consider gendered polemic about morality and modernity in relation to two controversial substances that were ubiquitous in press debates during the revolutionary period: alcohol and tobacco.

The focus will not be on the more feminist publications of the period, such as *Bean na hÉireann* or the *Irish Citizen*, which have been analysed by Louise Ryan, Karen Steele, Maria Luddy and Senia Pašeta.¹ Instead Irish women who challenged traditional norms, but were not necessarily feminist or revolutionary will be considered. Although the positions adopted in debates about morality and modernity tended to assume that women were mentally and physically weaker than men, by contesting traditional gender norms female commentators exercised significant intellectual and political agency. Equally, reports of 'deviant' women also challenged traditional thinking about women's capabilities and roles in society.

¹ Louise Ryan, *Irish Feminism and the Vote: An Anthology of the Irish Citizen Newspaper, 1912-1920* (Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1996); Karen Steele, *Women, Press and Politics During the Irish Revival* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Maria Luddy, *Prostitution in Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

1.2 Morality: Alcohol consumption during the Irish revolutionary period

1.2.1 Introduction

Alcohol had long been regarded as a problematic substance for both sexes in Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom.² During the nineteenth century, the Irish temperance movement developed in conjunction with a broader European movement that promoted sobriety, while increasingly becoming 'wedded to the wider cultural and spiritual ethos of Irish Catholicism'.³ In the 1830s, Father Mathew, a popular Cork friar, gained significant support for the Cork Total Abstinence Society.⁴ However, Father Mathew's movement crumbled due to lack of support from the Catholic Church and the nationalist political leader of the substantial Repeal movement at the time, Daniel O'Connell. By the end of the nineteenth century, various temperance activists looked towards the younger generation to bolster their ranks and young people's abstinence from drink was portrayed as 'an additional badge of patriotism'.⁵ Women were prominent in the Irish temperance movement throughout this period; Maria Luddy notes that affluent women regularly set up temperance societies and engaged in charitable work for 'fallen' women, which was often linked to drinking.⁶

² For more information about English women and alcohol during the war see: David Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Stella Moss, "'Wartime Hysterics?'" Alcohol, Women and the Politics of Wartime Social Purity in England', in *British Popular Culture and the First World War* ed. by Jessica Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

³ Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in Twentieth-century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999), p. 5.

⁴ Paul Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), p. 1. Also for more information about Father Mathew see Colm Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement 1838-1848* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1992).

⁵ Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes*, p. 28.

⁶ Maria Luddy *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 2.

Women were viewed as the 'naturally' temperate sex, so when they drank alcohol they were heavily condemned in a way that men were not. Equally, women's 'natural' temperance often resulted in appeals to them to join temperance movements and guide men towards temperate living. In the 1890s, Father James Cullen, a Jesuit priest from Dublin, founded a new temperance organisation, the Total Abstinence Society of the Sacred Heart (TAS). During the TAS's first year, Cullen only permitted four women to run it with him.⁷ In 1901, Cullen recalled that he had chosen women to be the first Pioneers, because they were 'by word and example the world's great social reformers'.⁸ Cullen believed that it was especially necessary for women to be involved in temperance because while they were 'the greatest sufferers in the wreckage caused by drink - they were but too often hidden, silent, uncomplaining victims of its cruelty and its savagery'.⁹ In combating drunkenness, Cullen placed female agency firmly within the domestic sphere of the home, where they could exert considerable influence over their husbands and children. In her discussion of Ulster Protestant temperance in the early twentieth century, Andrea Broznya suggests that women were seen as moral guides to men, capable of extreme compassion, innocence and purity, but equally burdened by a pervasive feminine weakness that often made them both victims of drunk men and the most villainous of drunkards themselves if they succumbed to liquor.¹⁰

Women were perceived to be worse drunks than men because of contemporary medical understandings of alcoholism. *The Family Doctor and People's Medical Advisor* ran thirty-

⁷ Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes*, p. 34.

⁸ Father Paul Cullen, *Foundation of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association (PTAA)* 18 Sept 1861-10Apr 1863, (University College Dublin Archives henceforth UCD, P145/1).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Andrea Broznya, "'The cursed cup has cast her down': Images of Women In Ulster Temperance Literature" in *Labour, Love and Prayer: Female Piety in Ulster Religious Literature, 1850-1914* ed. by Andrea Broznya (Ontario: McGill-Queens University, 1998), pp. 157-184 (p. 160).

four articles discussing alcohol between 1912 and 1918, seven of which were editorials.¹¹

There was a general consensus that consuming alcohol was bad for people, as 70.5% of articles on alcohol said it was physically damaging, 11% that it was beneficial and the rest made no mention of health. In October 1915, an editorial in the *Family Doctor* explained:

Inebriety from a fondness for alcohol for its own sake - vicious indulgence - is far less frequent in women than in men, and well indeed that it is so. Drunkenness is bad enough in a man, but in a woman it is even more pitiable, and, if it be possible more far-reaching and more dreadful in its results. With women it would, we think, be safe to say that the origin of the drink habit lies in perturbed physical conditions - in fact, that it is a disease, and not a mere moral obliquity, as many would have us believe. The consequences of alcoholism in women are not so quickly evident as in men.¹²

The difference in societal attitudes to men and women drinkers can be seen not only in the medical press, but in prison statistics from the early twentieth century. These can be found in the Annual Reports of the General Prison Board (GPB) and the annually-published *Judicial Statistics of Ireland*. While these sources can be helpful because they give a breakdown county-by-county of crime figures (including non-indictable offences such as drunkenness) they also need to be interpreted with care.¹³ At times crime statistics in Ireland were inflated because of periodic increases in police activity in response to revolutionary violence.¹⁴ Also, they only reflect crime that the police knew about, or, in the case of the GPB, the number of people convicted for crimes. In 1898, the Inebriates Act created a tri-tier system of punishment and rehabilitation for habitual drunkards. Conor Reidy describes the act as the 'most ambitious government intervention

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *The Family Doctor and People's Medical Advisor* (London, 1912-1918).

¹³ Brian Griffin, *Sources For the Study of Crime in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 62.

¹⁴ Ibid.

in the century long battle against alcoholism and its consequences'.¹⁵ The Inebriates Act allowed for the creation of a State Inebriate Reformatory in Ennis, Co. Clare for the worst and repeat offenders; these convicts were often working class and the nationalist dailies perceived them to be idle and lazy.¹⁶ While 126 men were sent to Ennis between 1900 and 1918, 204 of its inmates in this period were women.¹⁷ However, before 1915 more men were convicted of drunkenness, which suggests that women may have been more likely to receive specialist treatment for alcoholism. In 1914, 2,850 of the 7,937 prisoners incarcerated for drunkenness in Ireland were women.¹⁸

While men's committal for drunkenness in Ireland saw a sharp decline in the war period, the number of women imprisoned remained steady.¹⁹ It seems likely that the decline in men's drinking during this period was because many men were away fighting in the British Army. It is also possible that the authorities were less inclined to incarcerate men during the war, because they wanted more recruits for the British Army.

Number of People in Ireland Committed for Drunkenness 1913-1916			
Year	Men	Women	Total
1913	7,476	2,616	10,092
1914	5,087	2,850	7,937
1915	2,545	2,671	5,125
1916	1,323	2,488	3,811

¹⁵ Conor Reidy, *Criminal Irish Drunkards The Inebriate Reformatory System 1900-1920* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2014), p. 12.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 39.

¹⁷ Conor Reidy, 'Loose and immoral lives': Prostitution and the Female Criminal Inebriate in Ireland, 1900-1918' in *Sexual Politics in Modern Ireland* eds. Jennifer Redmond, Sonya Tiernan, Sarah McAvoy and Mary McAuliffe (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2015), pp.50-75 (p.56).

¹⁸ E. O'Farrell, *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1913* (London: HMSO, 1913) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1914* (London: HMSO, 1914) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1916* (London: HMSO, 1916).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Table I. Sources: E. O'Farrell (1913) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1913* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1914) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1914* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1915) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1915* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1916) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1916* (London: HMSO).



Figure I. Sources: E. O'Farrell (1913) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1913* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1914) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1914* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1915) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1915* (London: HMSO) and E. O'Farrell (1916) *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1916* (London: HMSO).

1.2.2 Growing Concerns over Alcohol Consumption

Women were expected to steer men away from vices such as drink; wives especially were supposed to guide their husbands towards sobriety. Traditional beliefs about gender and alcohol can be seen in an advertising campaign run by Edward J. Woods in 1912, which promoted a free treatment available to alcoholics.²⁰ Woods' company was based in London, reflecting to some extent the single economy in the UK at this time and the consequent overlap in advertising in Britain and Ireland. Men featured prominently in the

²⁰ 'Drunkards Can Be Secretly Saved', *Irish Independent*, 5 Mar. 1912.

campaign's pictures and case studies.²¹ In September 1912, Woods addressed 'Mothers, Wives, Sisters' and called upon them to save the men in their lives who had succumbed to alcoholism, promising a cure within just three days that could be administered 'with or without the drinker's knowledge'.²² Of the eight testimonials at the bottom of the advert describing individuals who were cured of alcoholism, only one described a female drinker and she had taken the remedy on her own volition. In contrast, the seven men who were allegedly cured had been given the remedy by somebody else and in six out of the seven examples this was the man's wife. Three of the wives in the testimonials had given their husbands the cure without their knowledge or consent, emphasising women's role as caregivers and primary medical providers within the home, but also suggesting that Woods believed he could further his commercial interests by suggesting male alcohol addiction was a significant problem for married couples and that it was wives who were expected to solve it.

²¹ 'Drink Habit', *Irish Independent*, 14 Sep. 1912.

²² 'Drunkards Can Be Secretly Saved', *Irish Independent*, 5 Mar. 1912.

Has Brought Joy & Contentment into Thousands of Homes.



I guarantee absolutely that any drinker will completely lose the craving for alcoholic drinks if he or she willingly takes my gentle, safe home treatment for only three days, or I refund the money. It is perfectly harmless, overcomes the craving, and wonderfully improves the health. By my "A" method you can treat yourself or any other person with the positive knowledge that success will follow, or money back. The craving the health improves every minute! An astonishing and lasting transformation! Also, I supply my "B" method, whereby the drunkard is saved without his knowledge safely and speedily. The person soon begins to detest the smell or taste of beer, spirits, or wine, despises the stuff, and nothing can induce him to drink it. Any wife, mother, or friend, can give these preparations secretly in coffee, tea, milk, whisky, beer or other drink or in food. They are tasteless and truly won-

derful in their action. My book "Confessions of an Alcoholic Slave" tells how I was a heavy drinker for many years and was marvellously cured; it explains how the same joy can come to every other drinker. I will send my book in plain wrapper, post paid, absolutely free. Write for it to-day.

WONDERFUL RECORD OF SUCCESS

From the hundreds of testimonial letters which I have on my files, I have taken these few at random. With every book I send a legion of testimonials from men and women who want others to know what my treatment has done for them. I give full addresses so that you can investigate.

Mrs. MORRIS, Wisbech, writes: "I gave your 'B' treatment faithfully in accordance with these directions, and it CAUSED MY HUSBAND TO GIVE UP BEER DRINKING. It is a long time since I gave the secret treatment, and he has tasted no intoxicants since then, and seems to have a distrust for them."

Mrs. DAVIES, Carnarvon, writes: "My husband said he would never give up the drink, but your treatment ACTED UPON HIM WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE, and caused him to dislike the taste or smell of anything intoxicating."

Mrs. NICHOLLS, Chichester, writes: "Your 'B' treatment has cured my husband of beer drinking. I used YOUR SECRET REMEDIES because he would never have taken the treatment willingly. He has been teetotal now for a long time, and OWNS HE IS BETTER WITHOUT THE DRINK."

Mrs. E. BATES, Liverpool, writes: "I cannot speak too highly of your 'A' treatment. It has QUITE CURED ME of any wish for alcoholic drink, and I certainly feel BETTER IN HEALTH."

My treatment is speedy, safe, convenient, and can be taken at home or while attending to business. I tell about the secret in my book, FREE to every person (or relative or friend) who takes alcohol in any form to excess. My remedy is for either steady or periodical drinkers. Think of it, a complete and lasting home cure, between Friday night and Monday night, or any other 72 hours. I also supply a reliable treatment which saves drinkers without their knowledge. It is the genuine secret method. I cannot say much in this advertisement; I want you to read my book—it will be a revelation to you. I will send you my book in plain wrapper, promptly, post paid. Correspondence strictly confidential. Write to-day! Address,

E. J. WOODS, 10, NORFOLK ST. (317 J), LONDON, W.C.

Mrs. RADFORD, Nottingham, writes: "I am pleased

Mrs. R. BLACK, Edinburgh, writes: "I am thankful to say that the SECRET TREATMENT has been a GREAT SUCCESS. He has no more craving for alcohol, and is quite content to take tea, ginger ale, or water."

Mr. J. MOORE, Dublin, writes: "I had been a heavy drinker FOR OVER 30 YEARS, and never thought to give it up; but I am GLAD THAT MY WIFE BOUGHT THE TREATMENT, and that the remedies caused me to lose all craving."

Mr. F. CLARK, Manchester, writes: "YOUR 3 DAYS' TREATMENT HAS CURED MY FRIEND. He was seemingly a hopeless drunkard, but he has NO CRAVING NOW, and says he NEVER FELT BETTER in all his life."

Mrs. NICHOLLS, Bristol, writes: "My husband had been DRINKING FOR YEARS, always at it. I gave him the remedies secretly, and in a short time he lost the craving. MY HOME IS HAPPY NOW."

FREE

Figure II: 'Drunkards Can Be Secretly Saved', *Irish Independent*, 5 Mar. 1912.

As women were regularly portrayed in adverts and press polemic as inspiring temperance, female drinkers were derided in the mainstream press for transgressing social norms. These women were especially vilified because they often came from the lower classes. In November 1912, a report on the speech of the Bishop of Galway drew

attention to numerous cases of drinking to excess, especially on Sundays.²³ The Bishop warned that this was most 'remarkable amongst a class of women than amongst any others'.²⁴ In July 1913, a gossip column in the *Irish Independent* jokingly remarked that in 'some places meat and drink has given way to meet and drink'.²⁵ Joseph O'Brien argues that in Dublin during this time claims of drunkenness were exaggerated by an elitist class looking down on the poorest in the city and that of all crimes drunkenness was the most scandalous, as it was often tied to poor living conditions, child neglect and sexual immorality.²⁶ The poorer inhabitants of Dublin were believed to be frequently drinking and also engaging in prostitution associated with their drinking.²⁷

In April 1913, the case of Bridget Prendergast referred again to the danger of neglectful mothers as a consequence of women drinking.²⁸ Bridget had been a prolific drinker and her husband had sent her for three years to the Inebriate Institution in Ennis, from which she had recently returned home; however, despite being able to mother for a short period of time she had returned to alcoholism and the judge deemed the only solution to return her to hospital in Ennis.²⁹ Beverly Smith's study of the Ennis Inebriate Institution suggests that the association between women kept there and child neglect was pervasive: 52.3% of the Inebriate Institution's female patients were held on charges of child neglect, compared to only 6.3% of male inmates.³⁰ Many of these women were in their thirties or

²³ 'A Growing Evil', *Irish Independent*, 4 Nov. 1912.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ 'Fact and Fancies', *Irish Independent*, 19 Jul. 1913.

²⁶ Joseph V. O'Brien, *"Dear Dirty Dublin" A City in Distress, 1899-1916* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 108.

²⁷ Maria Luddy notes that prostitutes were seen as both a physical problem and a moral infection at this time.

Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 38.

²⁸ 'A Hopeless Case', *Irish Independent*, 10 Apr. 1913.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Beverly Smith, 'Ireland's Ennis Inebriates' Reformatory: A 19th Century Example of Failed Institutional Reform', *Federal Probation*, 53 (1989), 53-64, (p. 60).

forties with family responsibilities and were often reported to the authorities by their husbands; it is possible, although unquantifiable, that the institution was used in some cases to control unruly spouses.³¹

Tom Inglis emphasises the role of public houses and alcohol in the formation of Irish nationalist, Catholic, male culture, claiming that pubs were 'traditionally male sanctuaries'.³² Inglis argues that towards the end of the nineteenth century, pubs were frequented by both single and married men because their homes that had been taken over by an alliance between women and the church due to the increasing adherence to separate sphere ideology.³³ This overstates the differentiation of public work and home life, but nonetheless illustrates the popular association between public houses and drinking culture as a homosocial space. Polemic suggesting that women belonged in the domestic realm ran throughout discussions of women and alcohol, but the public house was a highly contested arena and temperance activists had long been keen to limit its influence in Irish social life.

In the lead up to the First World War, press reports raised concerns that more women, of various social classes, were drinking. Concerns arose that the drinking had moved from public to private abodes and that in these unseen spaces women, implicitly including those of a more affluent and upper class, had become more comfortable consuming alcohol. In January 1914, Niall Cosgrave, secretary of the Wexford Temperance Council, warned that 'drinking amongst women, especially in their homes,' was becoming commonplace and that whilst public drinking had decreased, 'excessive drinking had been

³¹ Ibid.

³² Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987), p. 179.

³³ Ibid, p. 180.

transferred to the homes'.³⁴ The findings of the Wexford Temperance Council prompted an editorial in the *Irish Independent* which was anxious to condemn drinking in homes, especially by women. It predicted that there were 'many women who would not wish to be seen drinking in public houses, yet who, perhaps, would not scruple drinking to excess in their homes'.³⁵ The editorial emphasised the damage this did to Irish families, warning that this set 'a very bad example to their children, and is a matter which should be taken up by temperance advocates,' although it admitted it was far harder to challenge than public drinking.³⁶

Newspaper reports from the First World War reveal a moral panic about women and alcohol in private, unlicensed premises. Shebeens, private abodes (normally people's homes) opened up by unlicensed members of the public to sell liquor, were deplored for being the worst manifestation of Ireland's drink problem. Shebeens blurred the line between the domestic, family home and the public, 'masculine' drinking establishment. Debates about regulating drinking in Ireland, which will be discussed here with reference to the tensions between licensed and unlicensed liquor distribution, demonstrate women challenging societal gender norms by being involved in the illicit liquor trade.

Temperance activists in Ireland had been agitating for more than half a century to limit alcohol consumption by both sexes, but interfering in the trade was a highly political issue. It required politicians at Westminster to question the relationship that should exist between the drinks trade and the government. This was a delicate subject because the British Empire cherished free trade, but Britain had to regulate the drinks trade because it

³⁴ 'Drinking Amongst Women', *Irish Independent*, 2 Jan. 1914.

³⁵ 'Drunkenness in the Homes', *Irish Independent*, 3 Jan. 1914.

³⁶ James Nicholls, *Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 131.

was too dangerous, rich and extensive to be left unrestricted.³⁷ The Tories were disinclined to intrude upon the trade, fearing repercussions from affluent supporters who drew their profits from it, whereas the Liberals were more supportive of temperance; Irish nationalist MPs, who were politically tied to the Liberal Party over Home Rule, could not countenance licensing measures being applied to Ireland. Liberal and nationalist MPs sometimes found compromise through excluding Ireland from drink legislature.³⁸ The First World War, however, brought the drink question to the fore once again as worries abounded over soldiers and women, especially those who were unaccompanied since their husbands had enlisted, drinking to excess which it was believed could potentially lead to extramarital sex.

Regulating the Irish drinks trade was difficult because restrictions were unpopular with licensed traders. Tim Healy, in keeping with his support of the Irish liquor industry, as demonstrated by his displeasure with the 1909 budget that had raised taxes for distillers and his political affiliation to the O'Brienite All-For-Ireland-League, defended a general body of Dublin vintners against these restrictions on their trade at the Green Street Court House.³⁹ He forewarned that 'if licensed houses were closed shebeens would be resorted to by soldiers.'⁴⁰ The Recorder agreed to limit the opening times of pubs near army bases, but would not interfere with the rest of the city. Sir Mathew Nathan, the Undersecretary of Ireland, was disappointed that more restrictions were not imposed, as he felt that they would have prevented women from drinking in public houses.⁴¹ On 6 November 1914, Augustine Birrell, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, wrote to Nathan acknowledging his

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Elizabeth Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), p. 223.

³⁹ Frank Callanan, *T. M. Healy* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), p. 467.

⁴⁰ 'Dublin Vintners', *Irish Independent*, 4 Nov. 1914.

⁴¹ Augustine Birrell, Sir Mathew Nathan, 6 Nov. 1914 (Bodleian Library Archives Henceforth BLA MS 449).

concerns about Irish women drinking and offering him 'the freest of free hands in dealing with the women of Ireland'.⁴²

Temperance activists in Ireland saw the opportunity to gain advantage for their movement. On 20 April 1915, Sir William Fletcher Barrett, retired Professor of Physics at the Royal College of Science, Dublin (1873-1910), wrote a letter to the editor of the *Irish Independent* and the *Freeman's Journal* accompanied by a report of an investigation that he had arranged into the state of drinking in public houses in Dublin. In an editorial the *Irish Independent* warned that Barrett's report was 'very terrible, and would suggest a need for stricter supervision on the part of the police'.⁴³ Barrett argued that Ireland should be included in measures taken to restrict alcohol elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The *Freeman's Journal* published the report beneath his letter. It discussed in detail five public houses (labelled A-E) and the state of drinking within them. The report drew upon established fears of drunk women and the damaging consequences that they could reap on their families, describing that in front of public house C - 'five small children were crying outside in the cold, waiting for their mothers'.⁴⁴ Following this, two girls under fifteen years of age were thrown out of it 'helplessly drunk'.

Barrett's report also emphasised the danger of sexual promiscuity and immoral behaviour if women drank alcohol. The visitors to public house D initially found it 'full of girls and soldiers all more or less drunk and behaving disgracefully'.⁴⁵ On another visit, witnesses saw several soldiers and women exiting drunk. The report concluded that although some public houses in Dublin were well managed, many were not. It warned of frequent

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ 'Drunkenness in Dublin', *Irish Independent*, 20 Apr. 1915.

⁴⁴ 'Letter From Sir W. F. Barrett', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Apr. 1915.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

instances of tiny children waiting outside for their mothers, who were drinking inside. The report also described cases of expectant mothers drinking in public houses and of mothers who had left their babies outside with older siblings while they drank. The report called for greater enforcement against serving people who were already intoxicated and for more police to help efforts to combat drunkenness in Kingstown.⁴⁶ Kingstown was singled out because it was a port, which was frequented by more naval officers than usual during the war. The unspoken, yet omnipresent implications of this report and press polemic about women and alcohol, suggest that women, soldiers and drink resulted in immorality, often sexual in nature.⁴⁷ To the dismay of temperance activists, and despite the recommendations made in this report, restrictions on opening times for public houses were not enforced in Ireland at that time.

In April 1915, discussions were ongoing in Westminster over restricting opening hours for public houses and the sale of drink, as well as whether this would apply to Ireland. Lloyd George framed the debates in terms of a home front war against alcohol, claiming that: 'We are fighting Germany, Austria and Drink, and the greatest of these three deadly foes is Drink'.⁴⁸ Joseph O'Brien describes the people of Dublin rallying against this threat to alcohol production and sale in Ireland as a perceived economic attack on their nation.⁴⁹

Both the IPP and their nationalist opponents, such as the All-For-Ireland-League, battled in Westminster to stop drink restrictions being enforced in Ireland. The *Freeman's Journal* reprinted correspondence from the *Daily Telegraph's* parliamentary correspondent,

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Kate Adie in her study of women's contribution to the British home front during the First World War, remarks that a 'perceived problem involving troops and women is age-old, and for centuries garrison towns and naval ports had always been seen as dens of vice'. Kate Adie, *Fighting on the Home Front: The Legacy of Women in WWI* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2013), p. 7.

⁴⁸ 'Drink and the War', *Irish Independent*, 29 Mar. 1915.

⁴⁹ O'Brien, *Dear Dirty Dublin*, p. 251.

which explained the feeling that 'further restrictions are not at all needed in Ireland, and that their enforcement would seriously damage one of her most important industries'.⁵⁰ Vintners in Ireland naturally opposed limiting changes to licensing laws. H. McKenna, Chairman of the Management Board of the Belfast and Ulster Vintners' Association, declared that in Cork, where serving drink to soldiers in uniform was prohibited, there had been a consequent 'abnormal growth in shebeens'.⁵¹ An example of the danger of these establishments came a few days later when an inquest in Cork investigated the death of Private Philip O'Connor of the 3rd Leinster Regiment. The coroner heard that limiting serving times for soldiers had failed because shebeening had 'cropped up,' and soldiers were getting all the drink they wanted 'at private houses which they frequent[ed]'.⁵² The inquest found that it was in one such house that O'Connor had met his demise because of alcoholism.⁵³

It is hard to determine exactly how much shebeening took place in Ireland during the First World War. From *Judicial Statistics* it is possible to show how many prosecutions were carried out for unlicensed sales of liquor, but this cannot give a complete picture as many cases surely went undetected or were not brought to trial and unlicensed liquor sales could have included licensed traders who had failed to renew their pre-existing licenses. Indeed, prosecutions for selling unlicensed alcohol fell from 800 cases brought to trial in 1910, to 375 in 1915 and just 322 in 1916.⁵⁴ Unsurprisingly, densely populated cities such as Dublin and Belfast had more prosecutions for selling unlicensed alcohol than others and this continued to be the norm during the war. The Dublin Metropolitan Police District

⁵⁰ 'Ireland and the Drink Question', *Irish Independent*, 21 Apr. 1915.

⁵¹ 'Drink Reform', *Irish Independent*, 4 Apr. 1915.

⁵² 'Soldiers and Drink', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Apr. 1915.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1910* (London: HMSO, 1910).

had the most cases, comprising 82% of all unlicensed liquor prosecutions in 1915.⁵⁵ It is possible that more enthusiastic and evolved policing operated in Dublin. However, Belfast also added substantially to the overall figures, despite having only the Royal Irish Constabulary, which Mark Radford has examined evolving into a semi-military style force in attempts to deal with the demands of policing a city, but ultimately facing a crisis because of lack of governmental support.⁵⁶ Despite the RIC's struggles in Belfast, the city's high number of unlicensed liquor prosecutions suggests that there was a connection between population-dense, urban environments and unlicensed liquor sales.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ E. O'Farrell *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915).

⁵⁶ Mark Radford, *The Policing of Belfast 1870-1914* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

⁵⁷ E. O'Farrell *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1910* (London: HMSO, 1910) and E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915) and E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1920* (London: HMSO, 1920).

People Tried for Unlicensed Sale of Liquor by Province, 1910, 1915 and 1916

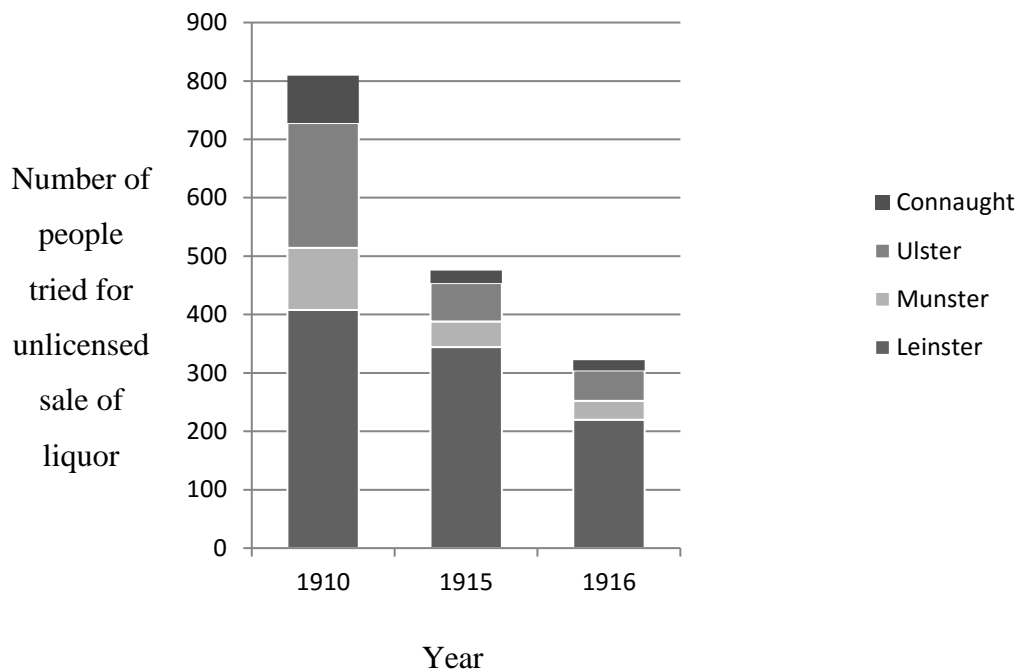


Figure III. Sources: E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1910* (London: HMSO, 1910) and E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915) and E. O'Farrell, *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1916* (London: HMSO, 1916).

While the *Judicial Statistics* do not provide a breakdown by gender of the various regions, the *Dublin Metropolitan Police Statistical Tables* do offer this for the Dublin Metropolitan Police District and these figures demonstrate that in this area women were far more likely to be charged with shebeening than men. Interestingly, while women were more likely to be shebeen keepers, men were more likely to be charged with drinking or being present in shebeens, suggesting perhaps that while women were more often illicit sellers of alcohol they were not necessarily partaking in the drink themselves.⁵⁸ Equally, the rise in

⁵⁸ J. Ross, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1910* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1910) and E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1915* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1915) and E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1916* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1916).

charges brought against women for illicit sale of drink during 1915 could have contributed to a moral panic about women and alcohol in the early years of the First World War.

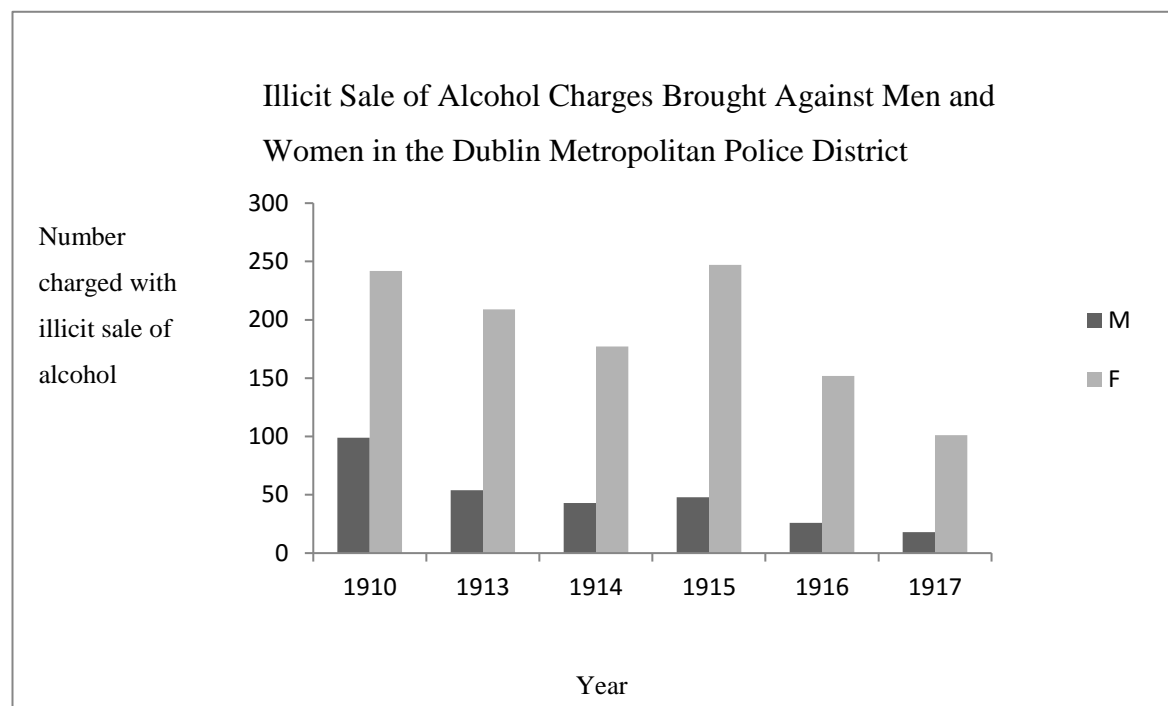


Figure IV. Sources: J. Ross, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1910* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1910) and E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1915* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1915) and E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1916* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1916).

Louise Ryan suggests that reports of women running shebeens after 1922 raises

'interesting questions about the boundaries between the public and private spheres'.⁵⁹

This was already a contested subject during the First World War, for example, in February 1915, the *Strabane Chronicle* reported on a case in Co. Tyrone in which Mary O'Kane had been fined £2 for shebeening.⁶⁰ When the police arrived to search O'Kane's home her mother, allegedly upset, had run towards a bedroom. Suspecting that she had ulterior

⁵⁹ Louise Ryan, *Gender, Identity and the Irish Press* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 181.

⁶⁰ 'Shebeeners Heavily Fined', *Strabane Chronicle*, 13 Feb. 1915.

motives, a policeman went ahead of her and found half a bottle of whiskey under her pillow which they confiscated. The *Strabane Chronicle* also described a police raid on Michael McDaid's home during which McDaid's wife had 'endeavoured to conceal in a shawl' a bottle of alcohol.⁶¹ In April 1915, the *Kildare Examiner* reported that Kate Canavan, who had been selling porter made up from 'scraps' of beer in unlabelled bottles, was fined £2 for shebeening and the charge was affirmed despite her appeal.⁶²

In some cases women received substantial fines for selling large quantities of illicit alcohol. The press emphasised that women's involvement was scandalous because shebeening brought criminality and alcohol into the home. In May 1915, Bridget Murtagh Legza was fined 10s at Ballinamuck Petty Sessions for having twenty-four gallons of porter in an upstairs bedroom.⁶³ The following month Norah Murray and her sister Agnes were prosecuted for illegally selling alcohol and fined 3s each.⁶⁴ In July 1915, Margaret Reilly was tried for shebeening at Arva Petty Sessions. Despite Reilly's explanation that she kept a little alcohol to treat customers in the shop attached to her living area, the chairman said that houses like hers, where alcohol was provided illegally and in a domestic space, were worse than 'all the public-houses in the district'.⁶⁵

According to the *Judicial Statistics*, Mayo had the largest number of unlicensed liquor prosecutions in Connaught and the press drew attention to shebeening cases in the area. In October 1915, the *Irish Independent* reported that of the three women arrested for shebeening in Ballina, Co. Mayo by Head Constable Dwyer, two were married.⁶⁶ The

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² 'Naas Petty Sessions', *Kildare Examiner*, 3 Apr. 1915.

⁶³ 'Ballinamuck Petty Sessions', *Longford Leader*, 15 May 1915.

⁶⁴ 'Castlebar Petty Sessions', *Connaught Telegraph*, 26 Jun. 1915.

⁶⁵ 'Arva Petty Sessions', *Longford Leader*, 25 Jul. 1915.

⁶⁶ 'Campaign Against Shebeening', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Oct. 1915.

report suggested that married women's misconduct was particularly reprehensible, perhaps because their husbands should have prevented them from engaging in criminal activity. The same month the *Connaught Telegraph* reported that the police were pleased with the presiding magistrates at Ballina Petty Sessions for the way they were dealing with the 'demonizing practice of shebeen-keeping'.⁶⁷ The County Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary in Mayo revealed that in the previous year, £400 in fines against shebeeners had been collected in that county alone.⁶⁸

Unlicensed liquor sales were highest in Dublin. In August 1915, a case of the illegal sale of alcohol in Dublin was given significant coverage by the *Irish Independent*. Mr. J. J. Corbett was fined at the Southern Police Court in Dublin for selling alcohol to a ten-year-old girl. The presiding judge commented that the way 'women are drinking in Dublin at present is a scandal. There is more drunkenness amongst women than amongst men'.⁶⁹ Despite the defendant in this case being a man and the girl being a juvenile, the judge chose to use the case to highlight female immorality and drunkenness suggesting that he viewed female drinking as an especially vile social problem, which needed to be brought to public attention.

1.2.3 Alcohol and Separation Women

While women shebeening were castigated in the wartime press, reports of female drunks suggested that they were disgraceful, especially when it was feared that they were soldiers' wives or dependents funding their inebriation through a separation allowance. Before the First World War the army had only paid money to military wives whose

⁶⁷ 'Police Activity', *Connaught Telegraph*, 23 Oct. 1915.

⁶⁸ 'Items of Interest', *Irish Independent*, 18 Dec. 1915.

⁶⁹ 'Women Drinkers', *Irish Independent*, 18 Aug. 1915.

husbands had been granted permission to marry because of excellent or long-term service.⁷⁰ However, on 4 August 1914 Britain and Ireland joined the First World War and six days later, Herbert Asquith announced that separation allowances would be paid to all women and dependents of army soldiers.⁷¹ Those benefiting from these allowances in the United Kingdom went from 1,100 to half a million in a few months and rose to a peak of 1.5 million.⁷² It is unclear exactly how many separation allowances were paid to Irish women who were 'wives and other female relatives and dependants of soldiers and sailors were away at, or killed in, the First World War'.⁷³

Press debates about separation women and alcohol took place in the context of a much broader panic about the morality of soldiers' wives and dependents. Separation allowances were first introduced on 10 August 1914, but the state did not have the infrastructure in place in Britain or Ireland to administer them and much of this work was done by charitable organisations that had already been working to support soldiers' wives, such as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association (SSFA).⁷⁴

Luddy notes that separation allowances were introduced at the same time that the war brought young women and girls to the attention of rescue workers and a widespread hysteria over the scale of prostitution in Ireland erupted, resulting in the formation of women's patrols to police working-class women on the streets from 1915.⁷⁵ The *Irish Citizen* was vocal on the issue of drunk, promiscuous women in receipt of separation

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Susan Pederson, 'Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain During the Great War', *The American Historical Review*, 95-4 (1990), 983-1006 (p. 989).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Luddy, *Prostitution in Irish Society*, p. 178.

⁷⁴ Pederson, *Gender, Welfare and Citizenship*, p. 992.

⁷⁵ Luddy, *Prostitution in Irish Society*, p. 39.

allowances, who were often prosecuted for prostitution.⁷⁶ However, Pašeta's work on the Irish Women Patrol demonstrates that during the First World War although some wanted 'to impose their own moral values on working-class women and even control their sexual behaviours' this was not common to all women involved in the patrols, nor did it 'define the ethos of the organisation'.⁷⁷

In April 1915, a report on a case of drunkenness from the Omagh Petty Sessions declared: 'Cases of the mis-spending by women on drink of war allowances made while their husbands are at, or preparing for, the front have already been reported from Kingstown and Carrick-on-Suir'.⁷⁸ The presiding judge, Captain Gosselin, remarked on a similar case in which 'the husband had been in hourly danger of losing his life for his country while his wife at home was drinking his very blood'.⁷⁹ It was then stated in evidence that 'since the war broke out certain lanes in Omagh had been "flowing with rum and whiskey" and that some of the inhabitants hoped the war would last a long time'.⁸⁰ There was no empathy shown towards women in the unenviable position of waiting for loved ones to return from war, but a very rigid understanding of the role of a wife left behind to continue in her domestic duties, which included exercising financial prudence and patience in waiting for her absent husband.

In October 1915, an editorial in the *Irish Independent* emphasised the need for women to be policed and reminded to fulfil their roles as wives irrespective of their husbands being absent:

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 173.

⁷⁷ Pašeta, 'Waging War on the Streets', p. 252.

⁷⁸ 'Women Drinkers and the War', *Irish Independent*, 28 Apr. 1915.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

While our soldiers are engaged fighting at the front, social reformers have to make a battle at home to prevent the wives of those men from criminally wasting the separation allowances in drink...We want more sobriety amongst all classes, but at the moment the evil is more rampant in the ranks of those in receipt of the separation allowances than in any other class.⁸¹

Concerns about women occupying public spaces and drinking were exacerbated when they were unaccompanied and perceived to be beyond the control of their husbands. Sir E. Fitzgerald, speaking in the Cork Police Court in November 1915, emphasised the new freedom that separation women had, declaring that 'since their husbands had gone to the front the women had all but gone beyond control'.⁸² He went on to assert that in 'the history of Cork he believed that never had more money been spent on drink'.⁸³ An anonymous 'Licensed Trader' wrote to the *Irish Independent* intimating that even publicans worried over the state of women drinking: 'Goodness knows the exhibition that soldiers' wives have made of themselves'.⁸⁴

Women drinking in public houses with soldiers was remarked upon not only in the press, but in the monthly regional reports of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The Cork report for April 1915 stressed that overall sobriety was increasing, but claimed that while there was little drunkenness among the soldiers there was 'too much among the women connected with them, especially those receiving separation allowance'.⁸⁵ Similarly, the report for April 1915 from Tyrone warned of a 'great increase of drinking amongst the women whose husbands are at the front' and who had more money because of the allowances.⁸⁶

⁸¹ 'Fight Against Drink', *Irish Independent*, 12 Oct. 1915.

⁸² 'Cork Women and Drink Evil', *Irish Independent*, 19 Nov. 1915.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ 'Drinking by Women', *Irish Independent*, 22 Nov. 1915.

⁸⁵ *Monthly Report of the Royal Irish Constabulary from Cork*, April 1915, p. 604. (National Archives, London [hereafter NAL], CO 904/96).

⁸⁶ *Monthly Report of the Royal Irish Constabulary from Tyrone*, April 1915, p. 794. (NAL, CO 904/96)

In October 1915, Cork magistrates held a special meeting and passed resolutions 'recommending that if women found drinking are soldiers' wives the licensed vintners in whose house they are being served be informed of the fact; that those traders be requested to discourage women remaining hours on their premises; and that military prohibition against the serving of soldiers be extended to the theatres and places of amusement'.⁸⁷ This resolution suggests that preventing women from drinking alcohol was also about reinforcing perceived gendered spaces and that respectable married women were associated with the domestic realm, rather than public spaces, such as theatres or public houses.

Luddy argues that separation women were 'an odious symbol of British rule in Ireland, and a symbol that overtook the prostitute in the public understanding of immorality', however, as will be discussed forthwith the image of the separation woman was not as consistently or entirely negative as this suggests, nor were they linked to prostitution to the extent that Luddy implies by including discussion of separation women in a book on prostitution.⁸⁸ Not everyone supported a negative view of separation women and there were political reasons to try to overturn the stereotype of the drunken soldier's wife. The IPP, believing Home Rule to be achievable if they showed support for Britain in the war, were avid recruiters from the offset, but felt hampered by seditious literature and an equally passionate anti-recruitment campaign that welcomed a lull in recruitment from the second half of 1915.⁸⁹ In an attempt to bolster enlistment figures, John Redmond wrote to all eligible men between the ages of nineteen and forty-one in October of 1915,

⁸⁷ 'Soldiers' Wives and Drink', *Irish Independent*, 26 Oct. 1915.

⁸⁸ Luddy, *Prostitution in Irish Society*, p. 178.

⁸⁹ Ben Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 21.

but this was badly timed as it coincided with conscription being introduced across Britain and only served to spread discontent and panic that the same would occur in Ireland.⁹⁰ There were numerous denunciations of reports of immoral soldiers' wives and military officers in the winter of 1915-1916. These also sought to overturn the ways that working-class women and alcohol were especially condemned. Some of these defences came from women. In response to 'Licensed Trader's' letter in the *Irish Independent* in November 1915, one such critic declared it to be 'self-denial to our poorer sisters' to suggest soldiers' wives were immoral for drinking in public houses, as rich women and those not in receipt of allowances were simply drinking at home behind closed doors.⁹¹ Mr. W. O'Reilly, president of the Cavan branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), and member Cecilia Power asserted that 'there was no foundation for the sweeping assertion that the soldiers' wives were squandering the separation allowances on drink'.⁹² O'Brien has gone as far as to suggest that during the First World War the *Freeman's Journal* had become so passionate an advocate of Britain in the war (so as to garner support for Home Rule in its aftermath) that it was in competition with the unionist *Irish Times* in vying for imperial favour by drumming up recruits.⁹³ The *Freeman's Journal* had an especial interest in debunking allegations against military wives. In January 1916, a quarter of a page in the *Freeman's Journal* was given up to an article refuting 'Slandorous Allegations' against soldiers' wives.⁹⁴

Debate over how malign and extensive women's drinking was split opinion within Bray Borough Council in February of 1916, when one member, Sir Albert Meldon, claimed that

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ 'Drinking by Women', *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1915.

⁹² 'N.S.P.C.C Investigations', *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Dec. 1915.

⁹³ O'Brien, *Dear Dirty Dublin*, p. 255.

⁹⁴ 'Slandorous Allegations', *FJ*, 20 Jan. 1916.

the separation allowances had led to increased drunkenness amongst women.⁹⁵ In response, James Magee, JP and Chairman of Bray Urban Council, referred to Meldon's remarks as unfair and unnecessary before he had seen full statistics of female drunkenness in Bray, which in reality only amounted to an additional eight cases since the outbreak of war.⁹⁶ Meldon replied that any increase at all meant that intoxication amongst women receiving separation allowances should be halted and Magee agreed diplomatically that all drunkenness amongst women, whether it resulted in child neglect, disorderly conduct or simply a woman drinking alcohol in any measure, should be stopped.⁹⁷

In February 1917, an editorial in the *Irish Independent* reported on the Lord Mayor of Dublin's address to the annual meeting of the temperance movement. He claimed that the 'existing housing conditions of the poor might be largely attributed to the prevalence of intemperance and tuberculosis.'⁹⁸ He then expressed regret that whilst drinking amongst men had decreased, it had increased amongst women. However, the *Judicial Statistics* from the period do not show a significant increase in the number of women arrested for drunkenness, which suggests that it is possible the concerns about women's increased drinking may have been greater than the reality.⁹⁹

Notwithstanding the Lord Mayor's views, in May 1917 a report from the Central Control Board on liquor traffic confessed itself unable to ascertain whether more women were

⁹⁵ 'Soldiers' Wives and Drink', *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Feb. 1916.

⁹⁶ 'Soldiers' Wives and Drink', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Mar. 1916

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ 'Ireland and Temperance', *Irish Independent*, 26 Feb. 1917.

⁹⁹ The GPB figures do not support the suggestion that women's drunkenness had increased (Table I; Figure I): E. O'Farrell, *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1913* (London: HMSO, 1913) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1914* (London: HMSO, 1914) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1916* (London: HMSO, 1916).

drinking in public houses and found 'gradual alteration of public opinion with regard to greater freedom of manners and customs among women and the increased wage now being earned by women and girls.'¹⁰⁰ It went on to say that women being employed increasingly in the same industries as men had led to 'the gradual adoption by women of some habits and customs hitherto particular to men, and that the prevailing opinion among young people of both sexes no longer acts as a restraint, and does not condemn a young woman for having a glass of beer or stout in a public house with or without her men friends'; the Board believed that this trend would persist.¹⁰¹ This suggests that societal norms in Ireland were beginning to shift in a similar fashion to the way David Gutzke describes the war in Britain as being pivotal in altering the public perception of women drinking in public houses.¹⁰² Gutzke argues that single and married women of the middle and upper classes sought solace in the company of other women in public houses while their husbands were away during the war and demonstrated themselves to be both respectable and there to stay.¹⁰³ He describes pubs refurnishing and evolving to suit their new female clientele, who would drink in separate lounges (with female and male friends) where they were served at tables and could sometimes also buy food.¹⁰⁴ These areas were separate from other rooms that were less comfortable and where men could engage in perceived masculine activities like downing pints and spitting tobacco.¹⁰⁵

Despite the abundance of defamatory articles written about women and drink during the war, in the later war years when it appeared that women would gain the right to vote, the

¹⁰⁰ 'Women and Drink', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1917.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² David Gutzke, 'Gender, Class and Public Drinking During the First World War', *Social History*, 27-54 (1994). 367-391 (p. 374).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ David Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 4

temperance movement sought to venerate them as the answer to the drink problem in Ireland. In November 1917, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Laurence O'Neill, presided at the annual meeting of the TAS in the round room at Mansion House where Reverend James Cullen declared that their greatest success was amongst the rising generation of both sexes.¹⁰⁶ Stating that they had over two hundred centres in Ireland and 250,000 members, the majority of whom were women and girls, the TAS hoped that when women gained the franchise they would use their vote to wipe out drunkenness.¹⁰⁷ They looked forward to Ireland becoming 'emancipated from the present expenditure of millions on drink, and renewed with the vigour and strength of her youth, she would allow no nation to outpass her in the coming race of nations for virtue, peace, and prosperity'.¹⁰⁸ In December 1917, an editorial in the *Irish Independent* explained that despite beliefs in the first year of war that women drinking had increased, these were either unfounded or a great improvement had since occurred.¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁶ 'Drink Evil', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1917.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ 'Women and Drink', *Irish Independent*, 21 Dec. 1917.

Which is the Worse Evil?

What is there to choose between them?

War takes men from work.	Drink takes men from work.
War sends men to be murdered.	Drink sends men to do murder.
War takes labour to make the means of death.	Drink takes labour to make the cause of death.
War kills men by thousands.	Drink kills babies by thousands.
War ruins business.	Drink ruins business.
War makes widows and orphans.	Drink makes widows and orphans.
War makes cripples.	Drink makes madmen.
War destroys food.	Drink turns food into poison.
War never did anything but evil.	Drink never did anything but evil.
War destroys men's bodies.	Drink destroys men's and women's souls.

Kaiser Bill has abdicated. Kaiser Bung must abdicate too. Thousands of Irishmen have laid down their lives, more thousands are maimed and blinded, to put an end to War—for this is to be the last War. To what end, if the men who have saved us from slavery to the Kaiser are to be handed over to the worse slavery of drink?

Men and Women of Ireland ——— Demand an Armistice from Alcohol!

War is the enemy of man and the arch-enemy of women and children. Let every woman with a vote refuse support to every Candidate who will not work actively for prohibition in the next Parliament.

Women can win this War against Drink. There are enough Women with Votes to turn the scale. Women ———

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Figure V: 'Which is the Worst Evil?', *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1918.

In line with new press polemic that suggested women were becoming more temperate, the Ulster Temperance Council ran advertisements (many taking up entire newspaper columns) that appealed directly to women voters soon after the armistice.¹¹¹ These called on women to vote for temperance measures, claiming that women could 'win the war on drink'.¹¹² In the image on the advert, the figure of death standing behind an unsuspecting

¹¹⁰ 'Which is the Worst Evil?', *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1918.

¹¹¹ 'Ulster Temperance Council', *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1918.

¹¹² Ibid.

soldier as he reaches for his sword to face an advancing enemy, suggests that alcohol was an unexpected and insidious killer. The advert depicted alcohol as worse than war, because although war 'destroys men's bodies', drink 'destroys men's and women's souls'.¹¹³ This advert was designed to appeal to women, emphasising their duty as moral guides to men and their families.

1.2.4 Gender and Alcohol After the First World War

During the Irish War of Independence debates about alcohol in the nationalist dailies shifted to become more concerned with men's behaviour. The hysteria over women drinking seen in the press during the First World War was almost immediately extinguished in its aftermath. Polemic suggested that it was manly to be temperate and self-disciplined to refrain from alcohol and this was often discussed in relation to the Irish Volunteer Force. Both Republicans and the British military in Ireland sought to portray themselves as sober, chivalrous and disciplined, as opposed to their adversaries, who were described as drunk, violent and brutish towards women.¹¹⁴ Louise Ryan notes that reports of British soldiers humiliating or sexually assaulting women during the Irish War of Independence frequently involved alcohol.¹¹⁵ Ryan argues that men used women's bodies to exact revenge against men associated with them, who were harder to locate.¹¹⁶ This section argues that in descriptions of British military violence fuelled by alcohol blame was placed on men for lacking the discipline and self-control not to drink. Consequently, intemperance was seen to be emaculating not violence, which was portrayed as normal. At certain points intemperance was positioned as both a worse moral obliquity than

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Louise Ryan, 'Drunken Tans': Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921)', *Feminist Review*, 66 (2000), 73-94 (p. 74).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 80.

crimes committed while drunk and used as an excuse for murder, violence and intimidation. To further explore the gendered discourse around alcohol in the later revolutionary years an analysis will be offered of the nationalist dailies, the newspaper of the Irish Volunteers, *An tOglac*, and accounts taken from those who participated in the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War held by the Bureau of Military History.

In July 1918, the *Independent* gave considerable coverage to a case of manslaughter, in which Charles Quaid, a hotel proprietor, had beaten to death his manageress, Bridget Morris.¹¹⁷ This case provides an example of press polemic about alcohol moving away from castigating drunken women towards the end of the First World War and instead portraying them as the victims of drunk men. Quaid had been drunk when he killed Morris, and this was taken into account in his sentencing. A gossip column in the *Independent*, 'To-Day & Yesterday', sarcastically reported on a discussion between another man accused of beating a woman and the judge during the sentencing: 'The wife beater excused himself in court yesterday: "I regret I am a victim of the drink habit." "No." Said the magistrate. "It is your wife who is the victim of it."' ¹¹⁸ This suggested that alcohol removed men's control over their own actions, implying that male violence was natural and unavoidable if men were not fully in command of themselves because of being intoxicated.

Kevin O'Shiel, Judicial Commissioner for the Dáil's Land Courts, perpetuated the view that women were more temperate than men in his witness statement to the Bureau of Military History, suggesting that women associated with the Irish Volunteers seldom drank, except for a few who were 'cold-shouldered' by the other women and regarded as

¹¹⁷ 'Croom Manslaughter Charge', *Irish Independent*, 7 Jul. 1918.

¹¹⁸ 'To-Day & Yesterday', II, 7 Jul. 1918.

“fast”.¹¹⁹ However, O’Shiel described at other times ‘home-dances’ at which women might consume champagne.¹²⁰ The nationalist press suggested women were not drinking on a large scale in these years through a notable silence on the subject of women and alcohol, which was in stark contrast to its hyperbolic commentary during the First World War.

While the Irish Volunteers were not overly concerned with women drinking, the organisation held various beliefs about the harms and effects of alcohol on men. Some IRA men could countenance liquor being drunk, but many others presented drinking as emasculating, making men worse soldiers and sportsmen. For example, in late 1919 or early 1920, J. J. McConnell chose Paddy McCafferty to be the first captain of a new Irish Volunteer corps at Glennarriff, despite the reservations of Paddy McLogan that McCafferty ‘was fond of a drop’ and this would compromise him as a soldier; McConnell believed McCafferty was the best man for the job despite occasionally drinking.¹²¹ Patrick Hegarty, an IRA organiser in North Mayo & Sligo, took a similar stance to McLogan and advised the young men of Ireland to play sports and train hard to become good at them, but cautioned: ‘you will never become what you should if you train on alcohol’.¹²²

Drinking excessively was portrayed as unmanly because drunkenness was associated with the British troops in Ireland, who were often positioned as ‘other’ to the Irish Volunteers. Louise Ryan discusses several cases from women’s memoirs of the period in which soldiers, particularly Black and Tans, acted aggressively towards women when drunk.¹²³

The Bureau of Military History witness statements contain several references to the

¹¹⁹ (Bureau of Military History [henceforth BMH] WS. 1770).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ BMH, WS. 509.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ryan, ‘Drunken Tans’, p. 79.

military's violent and brutal behaviour when drunk. William J. Kelly, a member of the Dungannon Volunteers, described his part in raiding police barracks in retaliation after the death of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork in October 1920, which was in turn responded to by the military going 'out on the streets after being primed with liquor' and firing into people's homes.¹²⁴ Joseph Aherne, a member of the East Cork Volunteers, also remembered the British troops regularly being drunk and 'lax from a disciplinary point of view'.¹²⁵

The power alcohol was believed to exert over male behaviour resulted in concerns raised in the press that illicit liquor distilling and shebeening, so often highlighted in the press during the war, continued all over Ireland. Consistently the onus on fixing problems related to alcohol in Ireland was placed upon Dáil Éireann and the Irish Volunteer Force, indicating that it was popularly believed the answer to problems of Irish alcohol abuse lay within Ireland and away from Britain, which was often referenced as a cause and beneficiary of Irish alcohol consumption. In July 1920, the Catholic Total Abstinence Federation (TAF), comprised of many abstinence societies around Ireland including the Total Abstinence Society of the Sacred Heart (TAS) and supported by the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Archbishop of Cashel, Reverend Harty, forwarded resolutions to several county councils.¹²⁶ Despite the combined efforts of temperance societies in the TAF, the individual organisations were far from homogenous and had a range of aims and methods

¹²⁴ BMH, WS. 893.

¹²⁵ BMH, WS. 1367.

¹²⁶ The Catholic Total Abstinence Federation was founded in 1914 at a general congress meeting in Mansion House, in Dublin. The proceedings of the meeting were later published. There is also reference to the TAF in the archives of the Pioneers Total Abstinence Society held in the archives at University College Dublin. Peter Coffey, 'The People, the State, and the Drink Problem', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 6-23 (1917), 353-368; Catholic Total Abstinence Federation, *Catholic Total Abstinence Federation of Ireland, Founded 1914: First Ordinary General Congress, Mansion House, Dublin, 26th and 27th September, 1916* (Dublin: The Federation, 1916); (UCD, P145/52).

for reducing liquor consumption in Ireland.¹²⁷ The TAF made an 'appeal to all patriotic Irishmen to see that the paralysis of British rule in Ireland does not allow Ireland's worst domestic enemy, the liquor traffic, to tighten once more its stranglehold on the Irish people'.¹²⁸ They asked local councils to draw the matter to the attention of Dáil Éireann and recommended that the 100,000 members of the abstinence societies in Ireland use their influence on their fellow citizens to 'keep for their own and their country's well-being by becoming voluntary total abstainers the twenty million pounds they are now paying annually into the British Treasury in drink taxes'.¹²⁹ The following month a member organisation of the TAF, the Catholic Total Abstinence Society in Dublin, forwarded resolutions to the headquarters of the Irish Volunteer Force condemning drink traffic and congratulating them on the great work that the organisation was doing to stamp out illicit liquor distilling.¹³⁰

When the violence of the War of Independence paused after a truce was declared between Britain and Ireland in July 1921, temperance advocates sought to apply more pressure on the Irish government to address a perceived problem with alcohol. In September 1921, 'Sean', a correspondent in the *Irish Independent*, wrote of the great evils spread by 'the growth of shebeening and poteen-making, the granting of new licences, and the general laxity which prevails everywhere in the administration of the

¹²⁷ Dermot Fagan and Shane Butler suggest that even within some temperance organisations, like the TAS, during the twentieth-century there was a misalignment between the aims and motivations of their members and those on the running committees. Diarmaid Ferriter discusses the range of temperance organisations in early-twentieth-century Ireland, suggesting that they wished to protect the Irish from the physically and morally harmful effects of drink for religious, economic, and socialist reasons. Dermot Fagan and Shane Butler, 'What We Are About? An Organised Study of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association in Present-day Ireland', 18 (2011), 261-269.

Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (Dublin: Profile Books, 2004), p. 164-166.

¹²⁸ 'Donegal guardians and District Council', *Donegal News*, 24 Jul. 1920.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ 'The Drink Traffic', *Strabane Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1920.

licensing laws.¹³¹ Although 'Sean' accepted that 'the disturbed state of the country' may have explained the Dáil's attitude towards taking steps to limit alcohol traffic, he warned that establishing fresh sources of temptation for 'young men savours too much of Nero fiddling whilst Rome was burning'.¹³² He proposed that abstinence societies, socialist groups and the Dáil should work together to change Ireland's relationship with drink.

As the truce continued, fears arose over the behaviour of the semi-disbanded Volunteer Force. The *Freeman's* reported orders issued in *An t-Oglac*, the organ of the Volunteers. In November 1921, *An t-Oglac* warned that now the 'bracing tonic effects of the fight are absent; men who have been on active service are again leading civilian lives; they are subjected on all sides to influences and temptations which are detrimental to that high morale and discipline which our Army has reason to pride itself upon'.¹³³ It cautioned that peer pressure from friends might sway Volunteers to involve themselves in local disputes and that the methods of justice necessary in wartime were not justifiable in peace. The greatest danger, however, was drink, as a 'drunken Volunteer is a worthless Volunteer; he injures and degrades himself and he lowers the prestige of the Army in the eyes of the civilian population. A drunken Volunteer carrying arms is a public danger'.¹³⁴ Whilst they did not believe vice to be common amongst Volunteers, officers were reminded to keep an 'iron hand' over their men.¹³⁵ Joost Augusteijn, however, argues that: 'Drinking became a habit, and indeed a serious problem, for many active Volunteers'.¹³⁶ Alcohol

¹³¹ 'Evils of the Drink Traffic', *Irish Independent*, 27 Sep. 1921.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ 'Truce Conditions', *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Nov. 1921.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996), p. 142.

sometimes put Volunteers in precarious positions and contradicted the official stance on acceptable behaviour.¹³⁷

Charles Townshend draws attention to degrading morale amongst the Volunteers during the prolonged truce period, which they had expected to end swiftly.¹³⁸ This led in some cases to frustration and if fuelled by drink violent and unsanctioned action, such as the murder of a man, McGowan, which involved three Volunteers and prompted the Adjunct General to warn Michael Collins of drunkenness, 'blackguardism' and indiscipline in the organisation.¹³⁹ Dissatisfied Volunteers were further burdened by the removal of the public levies, which had likely been compulsory during the conflict and had financed Volunteer salaries; this provoked a crisis in the south.¹⁴⁰ This was particularly problematic as it undermined the idea and esteem of the Volunteers as Ireland's legitimate, national army. In January 1922, *An t-Oglac* warned the Volunteers to avoid political controversy, attempting to keep the peace while debates over whether or not to accept the Anglo-Irish treaty were splitting opinion in the Dáil.¹⁴¹ In April, it again emphasised the need for cooperation and urged Volunteers to remember the courage and support civilians had shown in sheltering them and assisting them.¹⁴²

1.2.5 Conclusion

Concerns about Irish people's consumption of alcohol were long-established by the revolutionary period. Perceptions of women and alcohol were formed against traditional understandings of women's roles as primarily wives and mothers. There was

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Charles Townshend, *The Republic The Fight for Irish Independence* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), p. 319.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 321.

¹⁴¹ 'Remain Steady', *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jan. 1921.

¹⁴² 'The I.R.A and the People', *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Apr. 1921.

an association in the Irish nationalist dailies between women as both moral compasses to their families, and as the worst of drunkards if they consumed alcohol.¹⁴³ Both views revolved around ideas of ideal femininity. Female drunkards were seen as unnatural, ill or criminal because this threatened their ability to perform their roles in the family, whereas women guiding men towards sobriety were natural because of understandings of women as nurturing and influencing their families.¹⁴⁴

Concerns over women drinking increased during the war, despite the GPB records indicating that there was not a substantial increase in the number of women arrested for drunkenness.¹⁴⁵ Women were viewed as vital to maintaining family life, therefore their presence in the home was important and activities perceived to be immoral that took them outside it were especially condemned. Drunk women were often described in press reports occupying spaces outside the family home, for example drinking in public houses.¹⁴⁶ Discussions of which spaces women could occupy reaffirmed conservative ideas of women belonging in the home and not in public. Shebeens were problematic as they were perceived to bring vice and intemperance into domestic spaces. The press

¹⁴³ Broznya discusses this in relation to Protestant women in early-twentieth-century Ireland: Broznya, "The cursed cup has cast her down", p.157. Reidy also refers to this in relation to the treatment of female inebriates by the state.

Reidy, 'Loose and Immoral Lives', p. 56.

¹⁴⁴ Reidy, 'Loose and Immoral Lives', p. 56.

¹⁴⁵ This is shown in the reports of the GPB: E. O'Farrell, *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1913* (London: HMSO, 1913) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1914* (London: HMSO, 1914) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915) and E. O'Farrell *Annual Report of the General Prison Board (Ireland), 1916* (London: HMSO, 1916).

¹⁴⁶ There are many examples of this in the Irish nationalist dailies, for example: 'Letter From Sir W. F. Barrett', *FJ*, 20 Apr. 1915; 'Women and Drink', *Irish Independent*, 11 May 1915; 'Total Abstinence', *Irish Independent*, 26 Feb. 1917; 'Women of the Present', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Nov. 1918; 'Dublin Tragedy', *Irish Independent*, 14 May 1919; 'The Drink Problem', *Irish Independent*, 8 Sep. 1919.

highlighted female involvement in shebeening and deplored women shebeen keepers for using the privacy of the family home to hide illicit activity.¹⁴⁷

A lot of the derogatory discussion of women drinkers in the nationalist press was directed from the middle-class viewpoint of its editors, correspondents and readership down the social scale towards women from lower social classes. While shebeening was overwhelmingly deplored, derogatory views of working-class women in receipt of separation allowances that were voiced in the nationalist dailies did not go unquestioned – notably in January 1920 a whole page discussion disputed the ‘slandorous allegations’ made against separation women.¹⁴⁸

After the First World War the debates about women and alcohol were almost immediately curtailed and traditional concerns about men and alcohol resurfaced, placing women once again in the roles of the more temperate sex and victims of drunk men. Descriptions of male aggression whilst intoxicated suggested that lacking the self-control to resist drinking was emasculating. Simultaneously, this indicated that aggression and violence were a natural part of masculinity and individual men’s behaviour. This meant that some press polemic about male violence was surprisingly permissive and if not uncritical, it was unsurprised by it.

¹⁴⁷ Press reports often emphasised that female shebeen keepers were using their homes for illicit activity, for example some reports discuss women hiding liquor in their bedrooms and other private parts of their homes: ‘Shebeeners Heavily Fined’, *Strabane Chronicle*, 13 Feb. 1915; ‘Naas Petty Sessions’, *Kildare Examiner*, 3 Apr. 1915; ‘Dublin and District’, *Irish Independent*, 24 Sep. 1919; ‘Menace of Drink Traffic’, *Irish Independent*, 16 Oct. 1923.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Slandorous Allegations’, *FJ*, 20 Jan. 1916.

1.3 Modernity: Tobacco Consumption during the Revolutionary Period

1.3.1 Introduction

The nationalist press frequently contained polemic during the revolutionary period about the use of tobacco, discussing the morality of consuming it, the effect smoking had on people and changes in the demography of who used tobacco products. Smoking was integral to male sociability in the nineteenth century and this continued into the twentieth century. Consequently, there was a backlash against women smoking, because they were perceived to be entering a cultural space that was male and unfeminine. A pervasive belief in feminine physical and mental weakness underpinned the discussion about women smoking. Women in the later revolutionary years also used cigarettes to demonstrate their growing liberty and challenge traditional social hierarchies. Women smoking in public had long been a taboo, so when women smoked openly it was perceived as deviant. This occurred in conjunction with cigarette companies becoming increasingly aware of an untapped female market for their products, which led to businesses seeking to adjust the perception of female smokers, and from the late 1920s the image of the sexy, glamorous female smoker was promoted.¹⁴⁹ Penny Tinkler argues that women in Britain 'were aware of the power of appearances to communicate and smoking was a highly visual practice.'¹⁵⁰

A close reading of the discussion surrounding tobacco consumption in the nationalist press exposes how political a form of recreation tobacco use was for both sexes. After 1916, cigarettes became tools of resistance used by Irish men to denote their disrespect

¹⁴⁹ Allan Brandt, 'Recruiting Women Smokers: The Engineering of Consent', *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association* 51 (1996), 63-66 (p. 63).

¹⁵⁰ Penny Tinkler, *Smoke Signals: Women, Smoking and Visual Culture* (New York: Berg, 2006), p. 2.

and rejection of British authority in Ireland. Numerous reports in the national press describe Irish men who had been arrested by the British during the War of Independence refusing to extinguish their cigarettes or beginning to smoke while being charged in court.

As with alcohol, tobacco and health was discussed in *The Family Doctor*. The adverse effects of smoking were deemed worse for women. As an article in *The Family Doctor* in February 1912, 'Keep the Cigarette Woman At Home', argued:

The cigarette smoking woman and the cocktail drinking woman are not decorative in any public place, nor are they in the least charming or "dashing" even in the eyes of their male companions[...]Cigarettes defile with brown stains fingers that ought to be pink like the rose leaf; they afflict their users with breath like that of a pipe-smoking longshoreman.[...]Incidentally they ruin the digestion, and their continued use results in blotchy complexions, dull yellowish eyes, and a prematurely haggard and drawn expression of face that ought to be fresh and beautiful for many years to come[...]Can you imagine a mother holding her baby to her breast with one arm and with her free hand carrying a cigarette to her lips?

Between 1912 and 1918, *The Family Doctor* printed thirty-five articles on tobacco consumption, twelve of which were editorials.¹⁵¹ There was a general consensus that consuming tobacco was bad for health. 68% of articles on tobacco claimed that it was hazardous, 23% suggested smoking had health benefits and the rest did not discuss its health implications.¹⁵²

1.3.2 Male Homosocial Culture and Tobacco

In early-twentieth-century Ireland women smoking in public was largely unheard of and social commentators afforded the woman smoker little attention. Matthew Hilton argues that the appeal of smoking for men had roots in the liberal ideology of the bourgeois gentlemen of the nineteenth century and because the product was only

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

available to the affluent it offered them the chance to demonstrate individuality through choosing special blends of tobacco and reading about their habit in the trade press.¹⁵³

Hilton suggests that the most significant date in the modern history of cigarette smoking was 1883, when the Bonsack machine was first used to manufacture cigarettes, driving down costs and increasing productivity.¹⁵⁴

Smoking concerts or 'smokers' - musical productions where smoking was permitted and only men attended – exemplified the cultural association between male cultural space and smoking. Smoking concerts were common in Ireland and were often frequented by male-dominated professional groups. Among those advertising smoking concerts in the *Freeman's* and *Independent* were the Irish Journalists' Orphans and Benevolent Fund, the Irish branch of the Railway Benevolent Institution, the Cycle and Motor Trades' Benevolent Fund, Dublin Railway Clerks and the Civil Service.¹⁵⁵ These events were often in aid of charities, but also offered opportunities for fraternal bonding and socialising, as evidenced by the ubiquity of 'smokers' hosted by men's clubs, such as the Catholic Commercial Club, the Christian Brothers' Past Pupils' Association and the Ancient Order of Hibernians.¹⁵⁶ In December 1911, the *Freeman's* reported the frivolity of the Civil Service smoker:

Anyone who might have turned into Wynn's Hotel Abbey Street, between 8 and 11 o' clock last Thursday night would be much surprised to learn that the hearty

¹⁵³ Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Association of Cranks', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Dec. 1911; 'Smoking Concert Rotunda Rink', *Irish Independent*, 28 April 1912; 'Irish Journalists', *Irish Independent*, 2 Feb. 1912; 'Cycle and Motor Trades Benevolent Fund', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Feb. 1912.

¹⁵⁶ 'Catholic Commercial Club', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 April 1911; 'The Christian Brothers' Past Pupils' Association', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Nov. 1911; 'A.O.H.', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Jan. 1914.

laughter and applause which even extended beyond the limits of the Hall, were associated with a gathering of 'cranks,' but nevertheless such was the case.¹⁵⁷

Although smoking was associated with men, reports in the nationalist dailies from America and the continent described women smoking. These reports stressed the novelty and irregularity of female smokers, as well as playing on conservative fears of foreigners and foreign habits. The *Independent's* New York correspondent reported that Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Westminster, had stated that women smoking in America was 'a matter which would adjust itself sooner or later, for a woman rarely smokes to excess, as her nerves are not so strong as those of the male sex.'¹⁵⁸ Carpenter also indicated the exoticism of female smokers by pointing out 'the prevalence of cigarette smoking among Oriental women', suggesting that this was 'obviously largely due to climatic conditions, and the habit... if indulged in moderately', had no serious ill-effects.¹⁵⁹ The *Freeman's* perpetuated this sense of the 'otherness' of female smoking through a report of a day in the life of 'My Lady Turk'.¹⁶⁰ This detailed a Turkish lady's daily routine, including a post-lunch retirement with other women to a room in her 'palatial home', where they would be found smoking and gossiping.¹⁶¹

Reports of female smokers continued to stress their foreignness and that smoking was incompatible with ideal femininity. In December 1913, the *Independent* reported on the foundation of the League of Politeness in New York, which proclaimed it equally bad manners for 'men to chew gum and distort their faces in the trains or tramcars as for a

¹⁵⁷ 'The Association of Cranks', *FJ*, 12 Dec. 1911.

¹⁵⁸ 'Smoking Amongst Women', *Irish Independent*, 31 Jan. 1913.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ 'My Lady Turk', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jan. 1913.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

lady to smoke cigarettes in public.¹⁶² In London, Lord Methuen, a veteran of the Egyptian and Boer Wars with an extensive and prestigious military career, condemned the rise of women smoking at a meeting of the Royal Army Temperance Association:

Some day there will be a crusade against smoking as there is now against drinking. It will not be made by the clergy, but by the doctor... A woman does not know where to stop. She has a craving for smoking. You will find many women smoking from morning to night, and doing as much harm to their nerves as many do by drinking. It is because one girl sees another smoke that she smokes - because she sees her mother smoking.¹⁶³

Lord Methuen's denunciation of women smokers exposed his belief that women were vulnerable, mentally and physically weaker than men, and both unable to control themselves and more prone to nervous disorders.

In Ireland women smoking was not described as commonplace in the press, however, and chivalry dictated that women should not have male smoking inflicted upon them. At the Wexford Petty Sessions in 1912, it was stressed that significant disturbance had been caused by smoking in non-smoking tramcars. Dublin and South Eastern Railway pressed charges against John M. Gee, a cattle dealer from Maudlinstown, Co. Wexford, who had committed the latter offence.¹⁶⁴ The railway confessed that 'a great many complaints from Waterford to Dublin have been made to the company in regard to the annoyance which has been received by the passengers, especially by ladies, through people smoking in non smoking compartments.'¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² 'League of Politeness', *Irish Independent*, 20 Dec. 1913.

¹⁶³ 'Smoking for Women', *Irish Independent*, 22 May 1913.

¹⁶⁴ 'Smoking in Railway Carriages', *Freeman's Journal*, 23 May 1912.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

By 1914, the problem had not entirely been resolved, as one male smoker - although claiming not to be a bothersome one - wrote a plea in the *Independent* that men should be more considerate when smoking on top of tramcars.¹⁶⁶ He deplored their rude behaviour, exclaiming:

The smoker as a rule, appears to be utterly oblivious of the fact that there is anyone else on the tram but himself, and I have often observed a lady's dress or hat receive a plentiful supply of ashes and sparks from the pipe or cigarette of the gentleman or gentlemen sitting immediately in front. In addition, the puffs of smoke in her face every minute or so cannot be otherwise than annoying.¹⁶⁷

The continued association of smoking and manliness facilitated male smoking taking on a new significance during the First World War. Rosemary Elliot has noted how pivotal the First World War was in establishing cigarettes as the most consumed tobacco product, in part because of the new ease of their manufacture, which resulted in them becoming 'a necessity for the troops which could be purchased back home, the cigarette became a symbol of patriotism and unity.'¹⁶⁸ Judy Vaknin also discusses the way that cigarettes were linked to support of the troops, describing how Imperial Tobacco donated a large quantity of their product to recruits in the First World War, which was endorsed by the government, who felt that smoking relieved stress and boredom at the front.¹⁶⁹ Ian Gately argues that cigarettes during the war 'provided the last example of civility before savagery', as was seen in the practice of offering men a final cigarette before execution to comfort both victim and executioner.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ 'Smoking on Top of Trams', *Irish Independent*, 30 June 1914.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Rosemary Elliot, 'Destructive but sweet': cigarette smoking among women 1890-1990', PhD Dissertation, Glasgow University, (2001), p. 25.

¹⁶⁹ Judy Vaknin, *Smoke Signals 100 Years of Tobacco Advertising* (Middlesex: Middlesex University Press, 2007), p. 21.

¹⁷⁰ Ian Gately, p. 233.

Cigarettes were also integral to wartime male sociability, as had been seen in the smoking concerts of the pre-war years. In wartime advertising smoking and masculinity became bound to brotherhood, enlistment and the armed forces. This was especially emphasised by the campaign run by Chairman Cigarettes (Figures VI, VII and VIII). In this the goblin, Private Chairman, joins recruits in carrying mess trays, physical training and passing the fitness test for military service. Smoking was associated with brotherhood and the communal experience of soldiers fighting together and sharing small comforts. Cigarette companies used their advertisements to encourage people to believe that cigarettes were supporting the troops, physically and emotionally.



Figure VI: 'Private Chairman' , *Irish Independent*, 17 Nov. 1916




"Private Chairman joins up"

No. 4. *Physical training.....through aches to fitness.* The Chairman goblin is privileged. He smokes on duty. The exquisites in the background, who would grace any ballet, have to wait for their cigarettes. But they know they are worth it. They are Chairman. None please more and very few as much. Sold by tobacconists and canteens everywhere

4^d. FOR 10.

R. J. LEA. LTD. MANCHESTER.



"Private Chairman joins up"

No. 1. *Fil for general service.* This cheerful Goblin is the symbol of Chairman Cigarettes which have long been accepted for general service by cigarette smokers at home and abroad. They pass any test that can be applied to a cigarette—quality, condition and flavour. They are really good. Sold everywhere by tobacconists at

4^d. FOR 10.

R. J. LEA. LTD. MANCHESTER.

Figure VII & VIII: 'Private Chairman', *Irish Independent*, 27 Oct. 1916 and 'Private Chairman', *Irish Independent*, 03 Nov. 1916.



10 FOR 4^d.

Pure, delicious, fragrant—once its qualities you test,
If your verdict is unbiased you'll pronounce it "Erin's best."
Where true worth caps glory's summit,
then no equal can we go,
For the famous "GOLDEN SPANGLED,"
Ireland's Leading Cigarette.

20 FOR 8^d.

GALLANER LTD.

Figure IX: 'Golden Spangled', *Irish Independent*, 3 Mar. 1917.

LAMBERT & BUTLER'S
WAVERLEY
 Straight Cut Virginia
CIGARETTES

Your friends judge you by the cigarettes you offer them. Give them Waverley Cigarettes to smoke and you cannot fail to be regarded as a man of discriminating taste.

10 FOR 4^d.
 20 FOR 8^d.

The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.

LAMBERT & BUTLER'S
WAVERLEY
 Straight Cut Virginia
CIGARETTES

A brand of cigarettes is far too intimate a thing to be lightly chosen. Try Waverley Cigarettes and you will find them equal to every occasion, responsive to every mood.

10 FOR 4½^d.
 20 FOR 9^d.

The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.

Figure X and XI: 'Waverly Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 2 Mar. 1917 and 'Waverly Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 29 Aug. 1917.

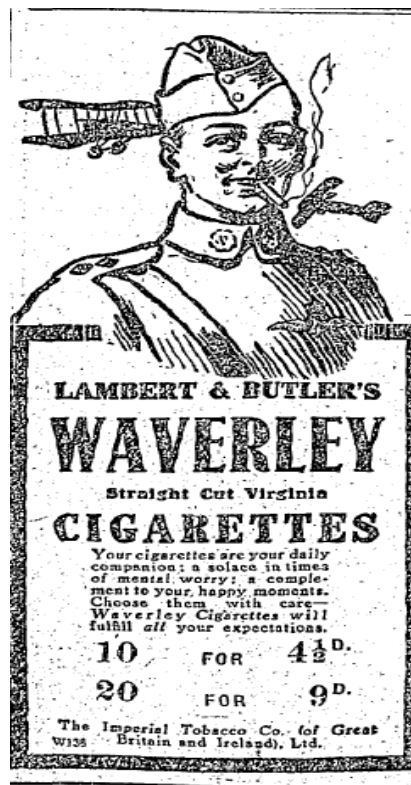


Figure XII & XIII: 'Waverly Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 17 Nov. 1916 and 'Waverly Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 18 Jul 1917.

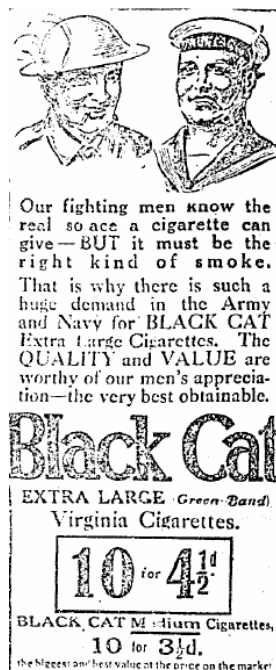


Figure XIV & XV: 'Mufti Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 16 Nov. 1916 and 'Black Cat Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 3 Nov. 1917.



Figure XVI: 'Carroll's Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 29 Jun. 1918

The communal experience of men enlisting was also emphasised in 'Golden Spangled' adverts, where the lighting of a cigarette connected two smiling men (Figure IX).¹⁷¹ It was common for soldiers to feature in cigarette adverts, in uniform, but with cigarettes instead of weapons, implying that as masculine symbols guns and cigarettes were interchangeable, both holding phallic and hypermasculine connotations. In the 'Waverly Cigarettes' adverts there were often cigarettes being smoked in the foreground and guns in the background, again linking the imagery of weapons and cigarettes (Figures XI and XII). 'Black Cat Cigarettes' and 'Mufti cigarettes' also strongly identified their brands with the camaraderie of soldiering, while 'Carroll's Cigarettes' emphasised the shared duty and mutual commitment men undertook by joining the forces, through their campaign 'The Pledge' (Figures XIII, XIV and XV).¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ 'Golden Spangled', *Irish Independent*, 3 Mar. 1917.

¹⁷² 'Carroll's Cigarettes', *Irish Independent*, 29 Jun. 1918.

It was not only advertisers and the British war effort that associated cigarettes with manliness and camaraderie. Nora Connolly recalled forming a tobacco squad with other members of Cumann na mBan to collect cigarettes for the Kimmage Irish Volunteer group in Dublin, which was largely comprised of Irishmen who had been forced to flee England and Scotland to avoid being conscripted into the British Army.¹⁷³ Although Connolly remembers gathering cigarettes for the men there is no mention in her account of female republicans smoking. Certainly some women did smoke - Seamas Kavanagh's witness statement includes a description of his being recruited into Fianna Éireann in 1909 by Countess Markievicz, who reached out to him while he was working in a drapers shop and was the first woman he had ever seen smoking – but it was not often mentioned that women associated with the Volunteers smoked.¹⁷⁴ Kevin O'Sheil remarked that smoking was 'fatal' to a woman's reputation, but admitted that there were nonetheless a few women 'who smoked openly and brazenly'.¹⁷⁵

While it was uncommon for contemporary press reports or personal recollections from this period to discuss women smoking, towards the end of the First World War, when the Defence of the Realm Act was used increasingly to impede young Irish men's social activities (such as drilling and gathering together in public) cigarettes became a symbol of manly resistance. This was especially the case during the tense lead up to the by-elections in 1917. In 1917, Irish Republican Army (IRA) prisoners incarcerated in Mountjoy produced a list of demands, including 'unrestricted smoking', which Austin Stack, secretary of Sinn Féin, wished to be published to encourage other prisoners to ask for like

¹⁷³ BMH, WS 286.

¹⁷⁴ BMH, WS 1053.

¹⁷⁵ BMH, WS 1770.

treatment in the future.¹⁷⁶ In May 1918, a report in the *Freeman's* about Stack's imprisonment in Mountjoy, described him to be in good spirits, 'enjoying a smoke and a read'.¹⁷⁷ In June 1918, two defendants in Ardare court on charges of illegal drilling in the lead up to the East Cavan by-election were 'smoking cigarettes' and 'had their hats forcibly removed by police'.¹⁷⁸ The following month seven men were arrested for unlawful assembly and appeared in court where police 'had to take off their caps and prevent them smoking their cigarettes'.¹⁷⁹ For these men smoking was integral to performing their manliness, a component of their nationalism.

Smoking was an established part of male culture in revolutionary Ireland, and IRA men could use the banality of a man buying or smoking cigarettes to conceal illicit activities. Perhaps the most famous republican involved in the tobacco trade was Tom Clarke, first signatory of the 1916 Proclamation, who had regularly entertained republicans at his tobacconist in Dublin.¹⁸⁰ Sean Moylan, member of the Irish Volunteers and later the Cork IV Battalion flying column, describes visiting a different tobacconist after the First World War on orders from his commanding officer to pick up cigarettes and finding inside the cigarette carton information about a woman who was cooking for the police and might be able to help find out intelligence for the IRA.¹⁸¹ Peter Cummins, member of the second battalion of the South Wexford

¹⁷⁶ BMH, WS 755 (ii).

¹⁷⁷ 'In a Cork Gaol', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 May 1918.

¹⁷⁸ 'Illegal Drilling Cases', *Irish Independent*, 12 Jun. 1918.

¹⁷⁹ 'The Unrest in the Country', *Irish Independent*, 10 Jul. 1918.

¹⁸⁰ There have been many biographies of Tom Clarke that discuss his tobacconist. It is also mentioned in witness statements in the Bureau of Military History and in his wife, Kathleen Clarke's biography, which was edited by their granddaughter, Helen Litton.

Michael T. Foy, *Tom Clarke: The True Leader of the Easter Rising 1916* (Stroud: The History Press, 2015); Helen Litton, *1916 Lives: Tom Clarke* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2014); Helen Litton ed. *Kathleen Clarke: Revolutionary Woman* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2008) and BMH, WS.

¹⁸¹ BMH, WS 838.

Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, recounts in his witness statement his role in a raid on Arthurstown Police barracks in 1920 when he was put on watch until the R.I.C left the barracks and then instructed to light a cigarette as signal to the rest of his battalion to commence their attack.¹⁸²

During the War of Independence cigarettes became controversial. Irish-Ireland ideology was widespread among the Volunteers and stressed the importance of supporting Irish industry and buying Irish goods. However, escalating violence often resulted in Catholic, nationalist casualties in the north of Ireland, particularly in Belfast, which prompted the IRA's Provisional Government to launch a boycott of products made in Belfast in January 1921.¹⁸³ The death rate in Belfast between 1920 and 1922 was the highest per capita of any area in Ireland.¹⁸⁴ Patrick Maguire, a member of the IRA Second Northern Division based in Dublin, conducted inspections of shops and pubs as part of his duties as a Volunteer to find out whether they were selling Belfast-made goods.¹⁸⁵ Where he found evidence that tobacco products had come from Belfast, he put the places and products on a 'Boycott Black List' that was published by the Provisional Government.¹⁸⁶ This meant that the cigarettes nationalists felt comfortable smoking became limited.

Buying Irish cigarettes was important to many nationalists, but smoking also offered a means of male bonding in homosocial environments, both when men were 'on the run' and when they were incarcerated. Sean Moylan recalled being imprisoned in Spike

¹⁸² BMH, WS 1470.

¹⁸³ Laffan, p. 231.

¹⁸⁴ Peter Hart, *The IRA and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 50.

¹⁸⁵ BMH, WS 0693.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Island prison, Co. Cork, where his cell mate offered him a 'pull' from a quarter inch cigarette impaled on a pin in the wall.¹⁸⁷ Moylan did not realise at the time what an act of friendship was being extended to him at the time because he was a non-smoker and had not appreciated the hardship inflicted by the ban on smoking or possession of tobacco enforced in the prison.¹⁸⁸ There are numerous accounts of men asking to borrow lighters from one another, smoking together and offering or asking other men for a cigarette in the Bureau of Military History witness statements. Cigarettes also served a comforting purpose. For example, Michael O'Donohue, a member of the Cork 1st Brigade describes smoking to 'steady my nerves' twice in his witness statement, suggesting that smoking was a form of relaxation and self-medication for men engaged in violent and dangerous exploits, especially for those addicted to nicotine.¹⁸⁹

Cigarettes continued to be used as a tool to defy British authority in Ireland throughout the troubles. Daniel McAleese recalls in his witness statement the destruction of the Custom House in Dublin in May 1921.¹⁹⁰ He had been working in the Custom House when the IRA raided it and left because the building was on fire. He was stopped by the Black and Tans close by and told to get down on the ground alongside another man, who took out a box of cigarettes and put one in his mouth. A Black and Tan ordered the man to extinguish his cigarette, but the man responded by blowing 'a whiff of smoke from his cigarette into the face of the Black and Tan', which McAleese believed was 'certainly

¹⁸⁷ BMH, WS 838.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ BMH, WS 1741.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

defiance'.¹⁹¹ Using cigarettes to defy British authorities made them cultural objects associated with masculinity and nationalist display.

1.3.3 'A smoking woman should be sent to a reformatory': Women and Smoking After the First World War

Nationalist women also used cigarette smoking to challenge the status quo. Louise Ryan suggests that during the War of Independence women transgressed traditional gender norms and roles, often by using their feminine appearances and clothes to engage in illicit activities such as gun smuggling and couriering messages.¹⁹² Ryan argues that their involvement was obscured by traditional female work in the home, and that during this time 'the boundaries of private home and political battlefield became blurred.'¹⁹³ Simultaneously, prominent and controversial polemic in the national press discussed a perceived increase in the number of Irish women smoking. This politicised smoking and meant that female smokers challenged traditional, patriarchal norms of feminine behaviour through their everyday activities, just as revolutionary women were doing by participating in the violent events of the revolutionary period.

The re-established woman's section in the *Irish Independent* became the locus of a debate about female smoking during 1919 and 1920, when several correspondents of both sexes voiced their opinions on women smoking. Tracing this correspondence uncovers fears that women who smoked became manly because smoking was associated with masculine behaviour. Stressing women's physical weakness meant that commentators often

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ryan, 'Furies and Die-hards' p. 263.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

discussed femininity as a collection of cultivated behavioural signifiers, which were normally fragments of a woman's body or of 'feminine' behaviour. For example, descriptions of women smoking often emphasised one or two of their features, such as their lips or skin colour

In January 1919, a correspondent, Cabhan, opened the debate on female smoking in the women's section of the *Irish Independent* by remarking upon a gathering he had recently attended at which fourteen to twenty women had been smoking 'in a most bare-faced fashion'.¹⁹⁴ Women smokers were portrayed as 'deviant' for stepping outside the traditional parameters of feminine behaviour. Cabhan concluded that 'their diminutive statures and pale faces testified to the terrible havoc which the nicotine poison was making' on their bodies.¹⁹⁵ This fragmented femininity was not just espoused by male correspondents. Gertrude Gaffney, writing for the *Independent* in 1920, remarked:

If one is in the company of a man smoker one is scarcely conscious that he is smoking: one's attention is never forcibly attracted to the lighting of numerous cigarettes. His smoking is so much a part of him... With the woman smoker it is different. Her movements, her whole attitude, attract attention.¹⁹⁶

Gaffney then described entering a room where a young girl was smoking; because her smoking attracted attention she remembered noticing all of the girl's imperfections, including her big arms and overly large ankles!¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ 'Letters in Brief', *Irish Independent*, 15 Jan. 1919.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ 'The Woman Smoker', *Irish Independent*, 16 Oct. 1920.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

Clare Herlihy, a regular contributor to several newspapers, including the *Independent* and the *Cork Free Press* (founded by her husband John Herlihy), added to the debate in the *Independent*:

What is it that attracts a man towards the opposite sex? It is the very fact of her being opposite to himself. It is the feminine in her that attracts him...who would be chivalrous to the short-haired, masculine, cigarette-smoking type of girl? She gives one the impression she is more than capable of taking care of herself. And as to making love to such a girl, the idea is ludicrous!¹⁹⁸

A growing concern over female smoking was that it entailed women engaging in a masculine activity that contradicted the fundamental distinction between male and female behaviours. This was largely because smoking became attached to the women's liberation movement of the 1920s, to the extent that cigarette smoking became 'a symbol of the young, liberated woman.'¹⁹⁹ This resulted in a backlash against female smokers. For example, another correspondent in the *Independent*, H.P., exclaimed:

Every man is an idealist and he has constantly mirrored before him his ideal woman, virtuous, loving and effeminate, gentle and mild, accomplished or gay, but always possessing the first three characteristics, and it is the last-mentioned of these that she loses when she becomes addicted to smoking.²⁰⁰

H.P.'s fear that through smoking a woman lost the effeminate quality of her sex indicated that he viewed the least attractive quality in a woman to be manliness. Women who displayed masculine qualities were often seen as outside gender, unnatural and H.P.'s described them as a 'hybrid' of male and female.²⁰¹ E.M.C, another correspondent, exclaimed that 'if women would only cease "trying to be men" we should have a happier

¹⁹⁸ 'A Woman's Greatest Charm', *Irish Independent*, 7 Apr. 1920.

¹⁹⁹ Elliot, p. 163.

²⁰⁰ 'May a Woman Smoke? Opinions of Our Readers', *Irish Independent*, 4 Feb. 1921.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

world.'²⁰² He went on to say that 'a smoking woman should be sent to a reformatory.'²⁰³ Inherent in this statement was the belief that smoking was a very conscious behaviour, which women were choosing to develop and that men felt the need to correct. The debate about female smoking in the *Independent* continued into October 1921, when Miss J. Toal's letter to the editor was printed, which suggested that 'modern Christian men have wisely withheld the tobacco weed from women because they know it debases them and detracts from their true womanly virtue and grace, which is the inherent right of every Christian woman'.²⁰⁴

Alongside the polemic suggesting women smoking was unnatural, was discussion of the potential health risks women exposed themselves to through smoking. H.P. despaired that smoking was 'injurious even to men' and therefore must be worse for women 'who naturally, are not as strong.'²⁰⁵ This stance was also taken by another correspondent, A Male, who wrote: 'I do not like to see a woman, delicate and fragile in comparison to man, the embodiment of grace and beauty, uniting in herself all these exterior and interior perfections which make us men glorify the opposite sex - I do not like to see her, I repeat, addicted to a habit that, we all know, ruins our health and damages our respiration.'²⁰⁶

The vitriol printed about women smokers in the nationalist press did not pass without protest. A defence of female smokers came from a supporter of the Irish-Ireland movement, Leix Woman, in October 1921. Central to Irish-Ireland ideology was a

²⁰² 'Opinions of Our Readers', *Irish Independent*, 15 Feb. 1921.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ 'A Woman's Protest', *Irish Independent*, 7 Oct. 1921.

²⁰⁵ 'May a Woman Smoke? Opinions of Our Readers', II, 4 Feb. 1921.

²⁰⁶ 'Opinions of Our Readers', *Irish Independent*, 8 Mar. 1921.

distinction between Irish and English. Leix Woman suggested that smoking was an imported English habit, but also defended Irish women who smoked arguing that:

The masculine sex should refrain from commenting on women smokers and women's fashions since the girl who ambitions becoming a social success finds it necessary to smoke, dress in hues rivalling the rainbow and adopt mannerisms and slang certainly not of her own Green Isle... If men are anxious to stop smoking amongst women let them cease patronising smoking girls, and that shoddy smartness which belongs to the West Briton.²⁰⁷

Leix Woman indicated that engaging in habits, which were both foreign and worse still English, was a betrayal of their national identity and perverted their natural 'Green' and implicitly Irish femininity.²⁰⁸ This is particularly implied by the term 'West Briton', which was commonly used to denote an Irish person who was too closely affiliated with Britain and British habits, and who favoured British rule in Ireland.²⁰⁹ Again, the weakness of individual women is stressed through their need to be protected by men. Equally, as they are being protected from English habits, this carries undertones of a post-colonial discourse centred on the distinction of Irishness and Englishness. Leix Woman highlighted the connection between her Irish-Ireland beliefs and her views on appropriate Irish female behaviour by finishing her letter with the words: 'I am a non-smoker and an Irish-Irelander.'²¹⁰

Leix woman was not the only woman to defend female smokers and the press did give space to dissenting female voices in the latter years of the revolution. Mrs. Connery, writing to the editor of the *Independent*, was so angered that the newspaper had allowed the derogatory discussion of female smoking to become so protracted, migrating as it did

²⁰⁷ 'Women and the Smoking Habit', *Irish Independent*, 14 Oct. 1921.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

from the woman's section to the main 'Comments' section of the newspaper, that she announced the end of her subscription publically:

As a protest against the vulgar and cowardly attack made on women as women... under the plausible pretext of criticising cigarette smoking, I am ceasing to buy and read your paper... Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, and any mudslinger who has a cheap jibe or sneer to hurl at women can always count on the hospitality of your paper.²¹¹

The *Independent* published her correspondence with a rather sarcastic title, 'Mrs Connery's Diatribe'.²¹²

Also evident in the discussion of female smoking was a broader debate about inequality between the sexes. This included use of the phrase 'the double standard' to denote gendered inequality and arguments putting forward the injustice of drawing distinctions along gendered lines. In a regular column in the *Independent*, 'Today & Yesterday', it was noted that many girls smoked. The columnist wrote:

The question involves the whole theory of "the double standard" for men and women. The weaker sex has definitely taken up this position: Smoking is a disgusting habit for anybody, but women have as much right to indulge in it as men.²¹³

T. G. Egan expressed their bemusement in October 1921 over the inequality with which men and women were judged:

It is not very logical to denounce in women a bad habit which is looked lightly upon in the case of men, though such is one of the conventionalities of civilisation. There is no logical reason why a man who is drunk almost every day in the year should be regarded as a lesser disgrace than his sister who only indulges occasionally; and there is no logical reason why a stain on the moral repute of a woman should be more gravely regarded than if a man had been guilty of the

²¹¹ 'Mrs. Connery's Diatribe', *Irish Independent*, 7 Oct. 1921.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ 'Today & Yesterday', *Irish Independent*, 16 Feb. 1921.

same offense a hundred times over. Yet such is the case, no matter how illogical.²¹⁴

The hypocrisy of denying women the option of smoking, set against the reality of young courting couples' behaviour, was also despaired at in the press. "The Walls of Limerick" wrote:

I object to men dictating what a girl should or should not do. If they themselves were anything like what they would have women believe them to be I would not object. Through the Press they cry down shame on short skirts, silk stockings, low-cut blouses, smoking, etc., and yet at dances in cities, towns and villages, aye, even in barn lofts in the country, you will find men pay all their attentions to the most modern girl.²¹⁵

This far more progressive thinking lamented that women engaging in a rather mundane, everyday activity had become a serious debate in the press. Women were being explicitly told how to behave by both male and female commentators. But as Bloxham suggested this was a rather intense reaction to women smoking and indicates how often traditional gender norms were contested in the nationalist press.

1.3.4 Conclusion

Smoking had long been associated with male culture and male spaces. Press polemic suggested that women smoking (particularly in public) were perceived to be problematic, because they were trespassing on male cultural habits. Equally, because women were believed to be physically weaker than men the ill-effects of smoking were

²¹⁴ 'The Smoking Habit in Women', *Irish Independent*, 18 Oct. 1921.

²¹⁵ 'Women and the Smoking Habit', *Irish Independent*, 24 Oct. 1921.

held to be worse for women. This was compounded by fears that women smoking would impact on their children and families, because women were primarily judged as wives and mothers. Therefore women smoking challenged traditional womanly behaviour. Although female behaviour was still policed in the later revolutionary period discussion of female behaviour was no longer as male-dominated as it had been and a broader range of opinions can be found within the press. The castigation of the female smoker in the nationalist press meant that women who smoked challenged traditional societal norms by engaging in an everyday activity, which received significant condemnation and discussion in the nationalist press and politicised the act of smoking. This meant that the female smoker was a challenge to Irish social norms of feminine behaviour, just as women engaged in more radical or revolutionary nationalism were when they transgressed conservative norms of feminine behaviour by couriering weapons, raising money for the Irish Volunteers or engaging in the violence of the revolutionary period.

Men also used smoking to challenge authority. After the war cigarettes became cultural objects associated with masculinity and performing nationalist displays of resistance. Men refusing to put out their cigarettes or attempting to smoke in court were examples of this. Cigarettes were also used to build fraternity and friendship between Volunteers, who shared cigarettes with friends even in prisons where tobacco was strictly regulated.

Marriage

2.1 Introduction

In early twentieth-century Ireland, the dominant ideology concerning marriage stressed the importance of the stem family to the wellbeing and morality of individuals and the state. David Fitzpatrick suggests that large-scale emigration from Ireland after the Famine ensured traditional family dynamics and ideologies surrounding home life were easily entrenched in Ireland, because it was easy for those who wanted to live differently to this to emigrate while those who remained relied heavily on close family networks.¹ Clair Wills argues that the traditional hetero-monogamous family dynamic emerged at the end of the nineteenth century when private domestic life became a component of the Catholic-nationalist ideal of the nation as a 'proper family'.² The Catholic Church leveraged popular understandings about marriage and the family to consolidate its power over domestic life and associated itself with the symbolism of the pure and pious Catholic mother.³ Tracing discussions of marriage in the nationalist press emphasises how strong the influence of Catholicism Irish beliefs about what constituted an ideal marriage. However, the ideals of what a marriage should be were not representative of reality for all Irish people. As Maria Luddy and Diarmaid Ferriter argue, the influence of the marriage ideal on government legislation and everyday life during the revolutionary period was substantial, but not everyone conformed to it.⁴

¹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Marriage in Post-Famine Ireland' in *Marriage in Ireland* ed. by Art Cosgrave (Dublin: College Press, 1985), pp. 116-31 (p. 116).

² Clair Wills, 'Women, Domesticity and the Family: Recent Feminist Work in Irish Cultural Studies', *Cultural Studies*, 15 (2009) 3-57 (p. 41).

³ Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly* (Dublin: University College Press, Dublin), p. 197.

For more information about Irish interest in Mariolatry see: Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, 'Thinking of her... as... Ireland': Yeats, Pearse and Heaney', *Textual Practice*, 4 (1990), 1-21.

⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Profile Books, 2009); Maria Luddy, *Matters of Deceit* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011).

Debates about marriage were often part of broader concerns about how the health of the people equated to the strength of the nation. However, Wills cautions against believing that 'Catholic-nationalism succeeded in holding back the modern tide of conjugal love and individualism in Ireland'.⁵ As will be shown, discussion in the nationalist press increasingly focused on the habits of the 'New Woman' and 'New Man', whose courtship rituals and marriages broke with tradition. Simultaneously, questions were raised about whether a married woman should work. These provide examples of women challenging overarching norms of femininity.

Press polemic about marriage, although it did not constitute a singular narrative, was couched consistently in gendered language, which sometimes supported and sometimes challenged the hegemonic ideal of Catholic, monogamous marriage, entered into primarily for procreation. Outside this ideal lay mixed marriages (between Catholics and other denominations of Christianity), marriages that had broken down, and what might be termed 'modern marriages' in which women were equal partners or sought to continue their careers after saying their vows. Considering marriage in the nationalist press uncovers that it was at once a domestic and private experience, and a public and national concern. Discussions in the House of Commons and House of Lords about whether divorce laws in England and Wales should be extended to Ireland, or what powers over marriage a Home Rule parliament would be allowed, emphasised that marriage was explicitly political. This part will address these themes through four chapters: 'Ideal Marriage', 'Unhappy Marriage', 'Mixed Marriage' and 'Marriage and Modernity'.

⁵ Wills, 'Women, Domesticity and the Family', p. 53.

2.2 Ideal Marriage

In December 1911, Mrs F. Jones wrote to the *Independent* warning that while it was 'customary when discussing woman's sphere to talk glibly of marriage' many did not realise that 'a true marriage is a vocation, not a profession, and that there are many good women and good men who for various reasons must journey to the end alone'.⁶ Jones went on to say that marriage was the 'ideal state' and that a good spouse was 'beyond all price'.⁷ Throughout the revolutionary period the press explicitly and implicitly presented marriage as the ideal state for Irish people. The press emphasised a version of ideal marriage comprising a passive, cheerful and submissive wife; ideal husbands, meanwhile, were portrayed as physically strong, and therefore able to protect their wives and homes. Although men were depicted as the protectors of their families, the responsibility for making and maintaining an ideal marriage was consistently placed on women. Catholicism had a significant influence on Irish marriage ideals, resulting in the veneration of large families and a revulsion against modernising forces that promoted gender equality within marriage or options for escaping unhappy marriage, like divorce or separation.

Marriage was often discussed in the women's sections of the nationalist dailies. From November 1912, the *Freeman's* ran a weekly section, 'The Irishwoman: Maid, Wife and Mother'.⁸ 'The Irishwoman' contained columns on fashion, such as 'Gowns and Gossip', and housekeeping, home medicine and child care, such as 'Mother's Notes'. It also dispensed social commentary, largely through a column entitled 'In Woman's Sphere'. The authors of all of these columns gave female aliases. When the *Irish Independent* was launched by William Martin Murphy in 1905, it also contained a woman's section, 'In

⁶ 'Real Arbitrators of Destiny', *Irish Independent*, 22 Dec. 1911.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 'The Irishwoman: Maid, Wife and Mother', *Freeman's Journal*, 1912- 1914.

Woman's Realm'.⁹ 'In Woman's Realm' provided less overt social commentary, although this can be gleaned beneath the veneer of fashion news, which dominated its content. After the outbreak of the First World War both 'In Woman's Realm' and 'The Irishwoman: Maid, Wife and Mother' were discontinued. Although women's sections in the *Irish Independent* resumed after the war, they were not regular or as substantial. However, marriage was discussed both within and outside the women's sections in the pre-war years and polemic about marriage was not curtailed by the First World War.

The women's sections of the *Independent* and *Freeman's* consistently venerated the status of wife and mother. In November 1913, Femina, writer of 'In Woman's Sphere', remarked that mothers who 'most constantly make slaves of themselves for their families are often those who are least appreciated and respected'.¹⁰ 'Mother's Notes' suggested that women needed to make time for their own recreation sometimes, because living indoors too long made a woman 'cross, nervous and irritable' to the extent that they could not get on with their housework and were left with a 'nagging and "worrying" disposition'.¹¹ This suggests that even nationalist women who were not overtly feminist in their outlook were aware of their agency within the home and the importance of what they contributed to their families. Despite Femina's rhetoric identifying a female domestic space and a male public world of work, in reality numerous women were agents of change both in their own homes and in the wider world.¹²

⁹ 'In Woman's Realm', *Irish Independent*, 1905-1914.

¹⁰ 'In Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1913.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), p 3.

While some women did engage in activity outside their homes, Rosemary Cullen Owens argues that women, once married, were seen as 'reproducers not producers' with domestic work their prescribed activity.¹³ The women's sections of the nationalist dailies suggested that women deserved respect because of their domestic labour, which was described as valued and respected work. This correlated to the growing trend for women to be educated for domestic work in Ireland.¹⁴ Since 1892, primary education had been free and compulsory for all children aged between six and fourteen and girls received similar schooling to their male counterparts, although from 1900 girls also had to study needlework, practical cookery and laundry.¹⁵ This was part of a broader movement towards domesticity in the United Kingdom; for example, Joanna Bourke describes housework becoming the ideal for working class women in England, alongside their more affluent contemporaries, because it was more appealing than alternative work in someone else's home and permitted limited freedoms and pride in their work.¹⁶

Jim Macpherson argues that in the pre-war period Irish women had been content to make their domestic contributions the basis for their participation in the life of the nation.¹⁷ Macpherson suggests that some Irish women through their focus on and participation in home maintenance 'created a 'banal' sense of Irish identity rooted in everyday life'.¹⁸ This emphasis on nurturing the home was very prominent in the nationalist dailies during the revolutionary period. The women's sections in the

¹³ Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland*, p. 165.

¹⁴ Joanna Bourke, *Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change and Housework in Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 1.

¹⁵ Susan Parkes, 'Education in Twentieth-Century Ireland', in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, Volume 5* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), pp. 667-669 (p. 667).

¹⁶ Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in working-class England 1860-1914', in *Women's Work The English Experience, 1650-1914* ed. by Pamela Sharpe (London: Arnold, 1998), pp. (p. 336).

¹⁷ Macpherson, *Women and the Irish Nation*, p. 52.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

nationalist dailies described how a housewife required keen intellect and dedication to their households. Prescriptions for how women should run their homes were written by and for middle-class women. Telling women how to keep house was a ubiquitous topic amongst moralists, philosophers, and middle-class female writers in Ireland.¹⁹ The women's sections adopted the trope that women who excelled at home management were not merely housekeepers, but home-keepers.²⁰ *Femina* warned that it was essential to make a husband feel comfortable in the home and not 'oppressed with the sense of too much tidiness or too obvious "housekeeping."' ²¹ 'Woman's Realm' described a home-keeper having 'kindness of heart, breadth of thought, a power of observation or else a wide experience'.²² 'Lady Molly', writer of 'Woman's Realm', warned that 'it is a science to be a good housekeeper, but it is a perfect art to be a good homekeeper.'²³

The house needed to be clean to be comfortable and orderly to be inviting, but it was essential for the woman who maintained it to be a good wife. 'Lady Molly' cautioned her readers not to 'belong to that army of women who can see no brightness in the sunshine, so long as there is a black spot on the kitchen stairs.'²⁴ The intersection between gender and Catholicism was evident in the women's sections of the nationalist dailies, which often reflected views seen in the archetypal periodical of Catholic nationalist families, *The Catholic Bulletin*. In March 1913, *The Catholic Bulletin* suggested that irrespective of 'how clever or how charming a woman may be, she cannot perfectly fulfil her destiny if, living

¹⁹ Luddy, *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918*, p. 3-4.

²⁰ 'In Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Apr. 1913.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² 'In Woman's Realm', *Irish Independent*, 28 Mar. 1912.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

in the world, she has not at least a good practical knowledge of the domestic arts', one of which was homemaking.²⁵

While performing their domestic roles women were expected to be intelligent and hardworking. Femina felt that finance was integral to managing each household's budget and deplored that 'in spite of all that girls are taught in school about domestic economy and the like, it would appear that what they learn is but skin deep'.²⁶ She wrote that a bride must 'have a working knowledge of house-craft and money matters'.²⁷ The home had to be run 'along business lines... carefully organised and everything methodically arranged'.²⁸ Femina recommended girls take a course in accountancy to prepare them for housewifery, but also so that they could be better wives to their husbands, as they would understand 'the enormous strain and fatigue of *real* work'.²⁹ In this instance 'real' work meant paid work. This suggested that within the ideal of domestic femininity women were expected to have significant skill and agency. It also implied that although women were capable of public, paid work, they were not obliged to do it because men shouldered the burden for them. 'Home Management', a column in the women's section of the *Freeman's*, warned that it was essential that a wife not 'make those mistakes in her home management, which if the husband made them in his business, would bring him to bankruptcy', indicating a belief that women's work was valuable to the family.³⁰

Housework was often strenuous and the women's sections in the nationalist dailies emphasised that women benefited from this kind of physical exertion. In March 1913, an

²⁵ 'For Mothers and Daughters', *The Catholic Bulletin*, Mar. 1913.

²⁶ 'In Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jan. 1914.

²⁷ 'The Seven Ages of Woman', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Apr. 1913.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid* (emphasis added).

³⁰ 'Home Management', *FJ*, 25 Apr. 1913.

article in the women's section of the *Freeman's Journal*, 'Woman at Home', suggested that with the exception of manual labourers modern men had no need to pity women for being physically weak, because 'the flabby city-dweller' required no more strength than a woman did to do her housework and the real test of strength was 'nerve-force' not 'brawn and sinew'.³¹ This statement suggests that there were fears of male physical degeneration because of increased urban living, which is discussed in Part IV of this thesis in relation to the formation of the Irish Volunteer Force. Women's physical health was a greater concern to the writers of the women's sections. *Femina* argued that 'games for women [were] a more crying need than votes'.³² 'Mother's Notes' suggested that 'housework, such as making beds, for instance, is said to be excellent health exercise for girls, calling into play, as it does, various muscles that are otherwise usually idle; and no nice or sensible girl who realises the "dignity of labour" will disdain to do that, or the sweeping and dusting of bed or reception rooms'.³³ Housework was suggested to be better than sport, which made girls lounge around the house afterwards and gave them a 'distaste for home-life', which would not help their own happiness, or that of their future family's.³⁴

Again this was reflected in *The Catholic Bulletin*, which in 1913 suggested that:

Irish mothers are oftentimes unwisely unselfish, and expend their own waning energies on keeping the domestic machinery in working order, while the daughters have unlimited leisure for outdoor sports and recreation of all kinds. Now nobody wishes to deprive the girls of the good time all young people should have in reason; but it is obvious that those fond and short-sighted mothers are simply putting "rods in pickle" of their daughters. Many modern girls who look forward to marrying and having homes of their own, have not the faintest knowledge of how such homes should be managed, nor do they possess the faintest rudiments of marketing and cooking.³⁵

³¹ 'In Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 28. Mar. 1913.

³² 'In Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Mar. 1914.

³³ 'Mother's Notes', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jan. 1913.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ 'For Mothers and Daughters', *The Catholic Bulletin*, March 1913.

The Catholic Bulletin made it clear that a woman's role was subordinate to her husband. It also suggested that a husband's duty was to vote in his families best interests claiming that wives had no need to choose separately from their families their political representation. In an editorial from March 1912, the Bishop of Clonferf was quoted saying:

A well-regulated family is a small state; the family is in fact the model of the State. It is the family, not the State, which is the unit of social life. In this little state the father is the head and ruler. To him the wife and children owe obedience and love. Though a wife may sometimes have more brains and gifts of administration than her husband, yet she must recognise his position as head of the family... Subordinate to her husband, the wife should reign as queen in her home. Though woman is, in a sense inferior to man, still her mission in life is not less noble than his... the sphere of woman is the home. Here she is mistress, teacher, and guardian angel.³⁶

Nationalism had a significant effect on discussions of feminism and female enfranchisement in Ireland. The Irish Parliamentary Party, the largest nationalist political party at the time, contained various views on women gaining the vote, but generally saw the issue as secondary to Ireland achieving independence in the form of Home Rule.³⁷ Feminists, like Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, whose beliefs were visible in the *Irish Citizen*, felt instead that there could be no free nation without women being enfranchised.³⁸ While Rosemary Cullen Owens and Cliona Murphy have suggested that nationalism split

³⁶ 'Editorial', *The Catholic Bulletin*, Mar. 1912.

³⁷ The Irish Parliamentary Party's electoral defeat in 1918 has been in part attributed to the party being punished by first-time female voters for their lack of support for women's suffrage. While James McConnell suggests that the party's leaders, John Redmond and John Dillon, did not actively oppose women's suffrage between 1917 and 1918, Senia Pašeta notes that most Irish Parliamentary Party MPs had solely conceived of franchise reform in terms of the extension of the male electorate. James McConnell, 'The Franchise Factor in the Defeat of the Irish Parliamentary Party 1885-1918', *Historical Journal*, 27- 2 (2004), 355-377; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*.

³⁸ For a more detailed discussion on *The Irish Citizen* see: Dana Hearne, 'The *Irish Citizen*, 1914-1916: Nationalism, Feminism and Militarism', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 18-1 (1992), 1-14; Louise Ryan, *Irish Feminism and the Vote: An Anthology of the Irish Citizen Newspaper, 1912-1920* (Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1996).

the suffrage movement in Ireland, Senia Pašeta argues that both feminism and nationalism were affected and that the women's movement at this time was not characterized by division, but instead a 'remarkable level of co-operation'.³⁹

Female enfranchisement was often discussed by anti-suffragists in relation to married women getting votes. The writers of the women's sections of the nationalist dailies opposed female enfranchisement not only because they supported the Catholic Church, but also the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). The IPP at this time were primarily concerned with achieving Irish Home Rule, which precluded supporting women's suffrage because it would have affronted their Liberal political allies in Westminster.⁴⁰ The nationalist dailies reflected the lack of support for female enfranchisement from many Irish people, as cultural norms in the early twentieth century dictated that Irish women should be focused on their families - a role influenced by the largely rural, conservative and Catholic composition of Irish society at the time.⁴¹

Eschewing support for suffrage was partly a reflection of the middle-class Catholic nationalist readership of the nationalist dailies. However, the authors of the women's sections of the nationalist dailies were more progressive than those of the *Catholic Bulletin*. In November 1913, Femina declared, 'I am not a suffragist, but nothing so nearly makes me one as when our mental, moral, and physical "inferiority" are being used by

³⁹ Cliona Murphy, 'A Problematic relationship: European Women & Nationalism 1870-1915' in *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain* ed. by Mariane G Valiulus and Mary O'Dowd, (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), pp. 144-158 (p. 148); Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970* (Dublin: Gill & Mcmillan, 2005), p. 108; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, p.2.

⁴⁰ Margaret Ward, 'Conflicting Interests: The British and Irish Suffrage Movements' *Feminist Review*, 50 (1995), 127-147 (p. 131).

⁴¹ Ibid.

some silly persons... as a valid argument against giving women the vote'.⁴² In March 1914, she rejected the idea that there were only two types of women, those who wanted women to be enfranchised and those who were 'soft, contented' and without any grievance.⁴³ Femina explained that she was in 'complete and ardent sympathy with the effort made by my sex to break away from the old chains of such barbaric custom and usage as make of her little better than a servant in the house of her master', but she did not believe that dragging women 'down to the sordid level of the hustings and the polling booth' would achieve this.⁴⁴ Instead, Femina felt that 'love and home' were 'woman's natural sphere' and women needed to be more respected for their domestic contributions. By 'love' Femina meant marriage to a man who would 'shelter her from the storms of life and the cruelties of change'.⁴⁵ This suggests that there was some middle ground between conservative Catholic views on women and feminists involved in the female suffrage campaign in revolutionary Ireland.

In the pre-war years, marriage was also discussed outside the women's sections of the nationalist dailies, where it was often portrayed as an important restraint on sexuality, especially for women. Press polemic suggested that a woman was responsible for creating an ideal marriage by channelling her sexual agency into the union, while viewing any lapse in fidelity on her husband's part far more leniently. For example, a review of 'Better not Enquire' at the Gaiety Theatre from February 1912 suggested that the moral of the play was that if her husband was unfaithful a woman should 'make no fuss, ask no questions, bear the constant insult with a shrug' because a marriage, even a bad one, was

⁴² 'Woman's Sphere', *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Nov. 1913.

⁴³ 'Woman's Sphere', *FJ*, 3 Sep. 1914.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

better than divorce.⁴⁶ Although this review was light-hearted, it is an example of the nationalist press being surprisingly permissive and indulgent towards male infidelity, despite its usually conservative and pious tone.

Male indiscretions were sometimes overlooked, but female sexuality was seen as far more problematic. Pat Thane argues that in England the 'conventional narrative about unmarried motherhood is that it was always shameful' and it is perhaps unsurprising that this narrative was also found in the Irish nationalist press.⁴⁷ In Ireland marriage was perceived to be the only acceptable location for female sexuality and sexual activity outside this was severely condemned. For example, in July 1912 a disgruntled Poor Law Guardian wrote to the editor of the *Independent* expressing his outrage at the 'awful insult of paying maternity benefit to unmarried mothers'.⁴⁸ 'P.L.G' argued that experience suggested impurity was 'hereditary' and had nothing to do with poverty or desperation: one 'impure' unmarried mother often gave birth to another unmarried mother.⁴⁹ 'P.L.G' had been horrified at the 'fatalism' with which a 'self-respecting poor worker would say of a fallen sister' that she had little other option as all her relatives had been the same way, but had come to realise that 'all such so-called "ignorant" sayings are founded on Nature's most deep-rooted facts'.⁵⁰

Purity was one of several attributes of an ideal Irish wife, many of which Nora Tynan O'Mahony, Katherine Tynan's sister, described in 'Irish Wives. Some Old-Time Tributes', a special article for the *Freeman's*.⁵¹ O'Mahony claimed that Irish wives had 'acquired a fair

⁴⁶ 'Don't', *Irish Independent*, 27 Feb. 1912.

⁴⁷ Pat Thane & Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 1.

⁴⁸ 'Another Champion', *Irish Independent*, 29 Jul. 1912.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ 'Irish Wives. Some Old-Time Tributes', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Mar. 1913.

fame not only for high ideals of modesty and virtue, but for a charm of manner and a warm kindliness' seldom equalled by women from other nations.⁵² It was not just Irishwoman's affability that made them ideal spouses, but their ability to be moral guides to their families. Tynan O'Mahony suggested that these longstanding ideals of Irish women could be found in literature, such as Canon Sheehan's novels which paid 'glowing tribute to the great qualities of heart and head of those grand, stern, but loving Irish mothers, whose power over their families, both husband and children, was such that all the demands of the modern suffragette campaign for women's rights seem pitifully poor and futile by comparison'.⁵³ Tynan O'Mahony discussed the 'creditable trait' of Catholic, nationalist Irishwomen who in 'loving content and cheerfulness' reared 'huge families of children, who in point of numbers alone would be considered an insufferable burthen by their sisters, say, of France, or America, or England'.⁵⁴ O'Mahony believed that it was the 'supreme contentment of Irish women with purely domestic life, and the loving rearing of their numerous offspring' that had 'rendered the Suffragette movement a failure' in Ireland.⁵⁵ Tynan O'Mahony exaggerates the insignificance of the suffrage movement in Ireland at this time, then at its peak, and instead reinforced traditional gender roles for women that venerated Catholicism and motherhood.⁵⁶

In March 1913, the *Freeman's* ran a special edition, 'The Seven Ages of Woman', which also considered women's traditional roles as wives and mothers. In a one off column for

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The Irish suffrage campaign in this period is discussed in by Margaret Ward and Senia Pašeta. Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* (London: Pluto Press, 1983); Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

the special edition, Christian Malvery⁵⁷ considered brides.⁵⁸ Malvery insisted that 'love' was integral to a happy marriage and came easily if two people married for 'the one reason that marriages should be made - because the man and woman love each other so dearly that to each life without the other would be empty and profitless'.⁵⁹ Like the various descriptions of an Irish wife Tynan O'Mahony had given, Malvery placed the responsibility for creating this loving, happy marriage on the wife.

While Malvery believed wives should know their husband's incomes and have an agreed amount set aside for the household expenses to prevent children suffering, the money had to be expertly managed by the wife because no man could be happy or 'make a good husband, unless he is well cared for at home'.⁶⁰ Equally, Malvery repeated the moral of 'Better Not Enquire', suggesting that 'in order to be happy a wife must never trespass on her husband's privacy', claiming that there 'ought to be mutual trust'.⁶¹

Malvery also considered husbands, suggesting that they had to be the family's public-facing front and defence, whilst being completely supported at home. Good husbands were 'brave and long enduring'; they had to hold their homes 'sacred' and be willing to 'die quietly without any fuss for the things that they love'.⁶² However, in the home husbands were almost 'child-like', wanting to be 'spoiled', 'considered first', loved lots and never 'questioned or teased'.⁶³ Malvery was rare in giving consideration to the ideals

⁵⁷ Olive Christian Malvery Mackirdy was an Indian-born English writer and journalist, for more information on her life see her ODNB entry.

Mark Pottle, 'Olive Christian Malvery', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁸ 'The Seven Ages of Woman', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar. 1913.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

needed in a husband, as a lot of the social commentary on marriage focused on the duties and qualities of an ideal bride. In June 1914, an article in the *Freeman's* by 'M.A.G.', titled 'Tea-Time Talk: the June Bride', suggested that 'there is no wedding without its bridegroom, but he, poor fellow, is a shy and overlooked individual by the side of the radiant and blushing bride'.⁶⁴ In fact, 'M.A.G' wondered whether anyone noticed the bridegroom at all or gave him 'more than a fleeting glance'.⁶⁵ However, just two months later the outbreak of the First World War put young men of marriageable age into the public eye as potential soldiers.

Recruitment literature from the First World War brought a serious tone to descriptions of the husbandly qualities Malvern had highlighted in a light-hearted manner. Robert Nye argues that historically societies have 'valued military masculinity and the personal characteristics of manliness that it comprises more highly than civic virtues and its masculinities'.⁶⁶ September 1914, P. O'Clery suggested in the *Independent* that Irish soldiers were 'promoting modern ideals of liberty and right', while in an editorial the *Independent* described Belgium as 'the champion of the small nations, whose resistance to invasion by a colossal Empire is one of the greatest things in human history'.⁶⁷ Belgium was used especially to unite Irish interests with those of Britain during the war: as late as May 1918, a letter from Lord Dunraven in the *Independent*, expressed his belief that each 'blow struck is for Ireland just as much as for France or Belgium'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ 'Tea-Time Talk: The June Bride', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Jun. 1914.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Robert Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace: An Essay Review', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), 417-438 (p. 418).

⁶⁷ 'German Militarism', *Irish Independent*, 19 Aug. 1914.

⁶⁸ 'Irish Discontent – Lord Dunraven's Letter', *Irish Independent*, 27 May 1918.

The influence of the war and recruitment campaign on press polemic about marriage was significant. Much of the jovial commentary on marriage vanished from the newspapers, to be replaced with a more sombre rhetoric. In January 1916, 'To-Day & Yesterday' suggested that after the war there would be a greater need for matrimonial agencies, because young men would not during the war have had the opportunity to meet potential spouses at receptions and balls.⁶⁹ However, the *Independent* reported that while marriages continued to take place, the War Savings Committee was pleased by 'quiet marriages' because 'descriptions of expensive gowns and lists of presents' created a 'very bad impression' during the war.⁷⁰

War weddings conveyed great respect to the military and valorised a martial standard of manliness, supporting the depiction of husbands as protectors of their families. For example, in November 1916, Patrick MacGrill of the London Irish Rifles married Margaret Gibbons in St Mary's Catholic Church, Hampstead.⁷¹ The report portrayed MacGrill as a heroic soldier and sensationalised the story by suggesting that up until 'the eleventh hour it was doubtful whether the bridegroom, who has been wounded in the hand and forearm and was in hospital in France, would be allowed' leave for the wedding.⁷²

Another military wedding that received considerable coverage in the Irish press was that of Lieutenant John Vincent Holland of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Queenstown Cathedral, Co. Cork.⁷³ The *Freeman's* reported that 'the 3rd Leinsters (the bridegroom's regiment)

⁶⁹ 'To-Day & Yesterday', *Irish Independent*, 18 Jan. 1916.

⁷⁰ 'Items of Interest', *Irish Independent*, 19 Dec. 1916.

⁷¹ 'London Correspondence', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Nov. 1916.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ 'Irish V.C. Married', *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Jan. 1917.

were present at the ceremony and formed an arch with crossed swords as the happy pair left the Cathedral'.⁷⁴

Press polemic during the war increasingly upheld the importance of marriage and the stem family to the creation of a strong, healthy nation. In May 1917, Dr. F. Coey Bigger, the Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board, published *The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust Report on the Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children Vol. VI. - Ireland*.⁷⁵ The *Freeman's* emphasised the report's findings on the benefits seen in Irish living conditions because of the cottages built and the '50,000 families' housed thanks to the provision of the Labourers' Act, 1883.⁷⁶ Bigger argued that the 'change in the way these houses are kept is most gratifying, the good woman of the house finds that she now has a home which can be kept clean' and all 'her inherent domestic pride is aroused, and she makes up her mind that her house will be clean, and it is clean'.⁷⁷ This suggests that Bigger thought it was women's responsibility as wives to maintain their homes. However, Bigger also raised concerns that in the West of Ireland many women emigrated to American cities for around twenty years in order to work and earn the money for a dowry that they needed to marry.⁷⁸ He disliked this practice as it led to late marriages, which in combination with the unhealthy lifestyle in cities led to frequent trouble in childbirth. The *Freeman's* was keen to stress this emphasis on unhealthy city dwelling.⁷⁹

Lindsey Earner-Byrne argues that Bigger's report was influential because it linked the health and living conditions of the mother to infant mortality, which was to become an

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ 'Late Marriages', *Freeman's Journal*, 23 May 1917.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

integral aspect of maternity debates in the Free State.⁸⁰ Bigger's report is also a significant source for considering Irish femininity because it said a lot about the role of married Irish women in the family, as well as their health. He placed the responsibility for children's health on Irish mothers, even while accepting that they were often too malnourished and overworked to be able to mother effectively.⁸¹ He portrayed Irish mothers as 'celebrated throughout the world' for being affectionate, but warned that love was not enough and that women needed to be taught mother-craft, crucially the importance of breastfeeding a young baby and weaning before the child became too old and needed additional nutrients.⁸² Much of what Bigger suggested should be done to improve infant mortality rates in Ireland called for the state to exercise more control over Irishwomen's bodies. He proposed more inspections of pregnant women and that they be trained to mother in a way dictated (with the advice of medical professionals) by the state.⁸³

Earner-Byrne argues that the implementation of new maternity care was complicated by political divisions in Ireland that became more marked during the First World War.⁸⁴ The Women's National Health Association (WNHA), founded in 1907 by Lady Aberdeen, the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was an organisation that worked tirelessly to encourage authorities to provide better maternity care to women. In 1916, the WNHA convinced the Dublin Corporation to fund the establishment of Baby Clubs.⁸⁵ Women's health advocates in republican organisations, like Cumann na mBan, tended to be more concerned with the spread of venereal disease, bad hygiene and low levels of sanitation.

⁸⁰ Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-1960* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 14.

⁸¹ Francis Bigger, *Carnegie United Kingdom Report on the Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children, Vol. 4, Ireland* available at: <https://archive.org/details/reportonphysical03carn> [Last accessed: 10/08/2016].

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Earner-Byrne, p. 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

However, Kathleen Lynn and Madeleine French-Mullen set up St. Ultan's, a children's hospital in Dublin, to deal with the appalling conditions of poverty and welfare in Dublin. St. Ultan's co-operated with the WNHA in training health visitors and teaching mothercraft.⁸⁶

After the First World War more light-hearted discussions of marriage resumed in the press. In December 1920, E. Laurence Luke wrote that because of 'freer mingling of the classes with the masses' unequal marriages were becoming more common and these 'invariably' involved a woman marrying up the social scale.⁸⁷ Luke argued that women were better able to marry into a higher class because they instinctively sought a mate they could 'look up to - both for strength and intellect - for mental and physical protection'.⁸⁸ He also believed women to be more able to adapt to new circumstances and friendship groups, and more willing than men to cast off their previous friends.

Luke may have believed women inclined towards disloyalty to their friends, but in February 1921, Ruth Roberts, writing in the *Independent*, suggested that they should be exceptionally faithful to their husbands, re-articulating traditional thinking about the need for wives to be permissive when discussing whether wives should not inquire into their husbands' possible transgressions.⁸⁹ Roberts argued that a more interesting question than whether wives should wonder about male infidelity was whether wives were ever unaware of it, implying that sometimes women accepted 'a lie for the sake of peace', and that this was only problematic if women ignored their 'husbands' lies out of sheer indifference'.⁹⁰ He claimed that a 'certain amount of harmless deception is, no doubt

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 16.

⁸⁷ 'Women and Unequal Marriages', *Irish Independent*, 22 Dec. 1920.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ 'Are Wives Really Deceived?' *Irish Independent*, 21 Feb. 1921.

necessary in married life' but that it should not be so much so as to 'foster suspicion, which in turn breeds distrust and hate'.⁹¹ This suggested that the power dynamics within Irish marriages was shifting slightly during the revolutionary period and that there was less acceptance of male infidelity as something wives had to put up with.

In a column for the *Independent* in March 1921, 'L.A.M', also demonstrated a new perspective on the conservative opinion that women should be always cheerful and were responsible for creating happy homes.⁹² Instead of being pleasant and supportive of a husband, 'L.A.M' suggested that women used their 'weak and feminine' tears, 'appealing' smiles and 'dainty' clothes to render a man 'helpless' and get their own way.⁹³ 'L.A.M' argued that because husbands were 'naturally' protective towards women they would be so horrified by seeing them cry that they would bend to their will.⁹⁴ She suggested that the 'argumentative, nagging or masculine type of woman has not half the chance of the feminine type of getting her own way with the stronger sex' and that if only 'women had rightly used their weapons, many households might still be intact which were broken up because wives either did not take the trouble to look well, nagged when tears would have been more effective, or frowned when a smile would have worked wonders'.⁹⁵

By contrast, Bernard Railton, writing in the *Independent* in May 1921, argued that helplessness in marriage could become a 'great source of annoyance' and kill affection.⁹⁶ Railton claimed that while 'pretty faces will always attract men', attraction was not the same thing as love and that to create a loving and companionate marriage women

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² 'Women's Unfailing Weapons', *Irish Independent*, 11 Mar. 1921.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ 'Personality Not Beauty', *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1921.

needed 'personality and brains'.⁹⁷ He suggested that pretty girls, as well as plain ones, cultivate their minds. This indicates that Railton viewed a good marriage as requiring interaction, agreement and understanding between two intelligent partners and, while he placed the responsibility for cultivating this on women, this was a more progressive stance than had been seen in similar jocular press discussions of a successful marriage before the war. In January 1922, Tom Brack, writing in the *Independent*, also suggested the need for spouses to be able to discuss and agree on ideas. Brack argued that 'the most pitiable, as well as the most justifiable cynic is the man who has drawn a dud in the marriage lottery'.⁹⁸ Brack despaired at the plight of a man who had married a woman believing that she understood and agreed with his idealism, but then found that she had only ever intended to marry him to 'teach him some sense'.⁹⁹ It is possible that this could have reflected the broader lack of political cohesion in Irish nationalist politics at this time, as the broad consensus over Home Rule had given way to uncertainty and some families becoming divided between supporting either the irregulars or Free State forces in the Irish Civil War.

In 1921, more progressive attitudes towards marriage, which suggested that no individual could live up to the ideal version of wife or husband, became more common in the press. In February 1922, Elizabeth Bloxham, suffragette and prominent member of Cumann na mBan, wrote in the *Independent* that an 'observant person cannot forbear chuckling over some of the solemn statements that are made as to the type of girl to whom men give their approval as suitable wives, and equally as to the man regarded by girls as a model

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ 'The Popular Cult of Cynicism', *Irish Independent*, 20 Jan. 1922.

prospective match'.¹⁰⁰ She argued that time 'upsets all the pretty little rules and regulations which the man and maiden make before they enter into the thralldom of the great attraction' and that no girl should 'despair because she does not fit into the mathematical compartment formed by a man's brain'.¹⁰¹ Three months later another article in the *Independent* questioned the validity of suggesting that there were marriage ideals for men and women suggesting that in patriotic movements where 'actual fighting men' were lionised, it was a good thing 'for peaceably inclined individuals' that 'women do not always marry their ideals'.¹⁰² This might have reassured Irishmen who felt under-valued in the context of the revolution, when the manliness of men 'on the run' was often celebrated.

2.3 Unhappy Marriage

In March 1915, the Monthly Report for the Royal Irish Constabulary from Co. Cavan highlighted a murder case in which William Gough, a farmer from Killyfern, had 'cut his wife's throat with a razor as she lay in bed, almost severing the head from the body'.¹⁰³ No motive could be found for Gough's actions and the police report suggested that he was probably insane.¹⁰⁴ Gough's case was particularly gruesome, but it was not uncommon for husbands to be violent towards their wives. Royal Irish Constabulary figures show that between 1838 and 1892 a hundred men were found guilty of spousal murder.¹⁰⁵ If murder was not resorted to there were limited options for Irish people to

¹⁰⁰ 'Tastes of Men and Women', *Irish Independent*, 21 Feb. 1922.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² 'To Be Falstaff or Hamlet?' *Irish Independent*, 8 May 1922.

¹⁰³ *Royal Irish Constabulary Inspector General's Monthly Report from Cavan*, March 1915, (National Archives, CO 904/96).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Diane Urquhart, 'Irish Divorce and Domestic Violence, 1857-1922', *Women's History Review*, 38 (2013), 820-837 (p. 825).

escape from an unhappy marriage. This section will consider what happened when marriages were unhappy in revolutionary Ireland. It will trace the gendered debates and discussions that laid the foundation of marriage and divorce legislation in the Irish Free State and the newly established parliament in Northern Ireland. First the history of divorce and separation will be considered to show how traditional gender norms were already entrenched in law long before the revolutionary period and then a detailed examination of the national press between 1912 and 1923 will demonstrate how unhappy marriage was portrayed as both deeply personal, while simultaneously being a publicly discussed, political problem in Irish society.

When marriages broke down in Ireland people had few options. While some couples voluntarily lived apart, obtaining a legal separation was expensive (costing about £100 in 1910) and divorce even more so (over £500 in 1910 if the petition was defended).¹⁰⁶ This was not the case in England and Wales, where the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act (1857) had made it possible to petition for divorce in newly established divorce courts.¹⁰⁷ Diane Urquhart notes, however, that a double standard for men and women remained despite this new legislation and while women's adultery was grounds for a man to obtain a divorce, a woman had to prove adultery with desertion for a period of at least two years.¹⁰⁸ Unfaithful wives were problematic because their infidelity might result in children of unknown descent and raise questions over a child's rightful inheritance, whereas male adultery was merely a moral failing.¹⁰⁹ Urquhart notes that the most

¹⁰⁶ David Fitzpatrick, 'Divorce and Separation in Modern Irish History', *Past and Present*, 114 (1987), 172-196 (p. 174).

¹⁰⁷ Diane Urquhart, 'Ireland and the Divorce and Matrimonial Cases Act of 1857', *Journal of Family History*, 38 (2013), 301-320 (p. 303).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

common grounds for divorce in the late nineteenth-century in cases brought by women were cruelty and desertion.¹¹⁰ Cruelty was hard to define and the meaning evolved over the course of the nineteenth century to include threats of violence and verbal abuse, which coincided with popular attitudes increasingly associating male domestic violence with 'unmanly' behaviour.¹¹¹ Despite these changes, divorce proceedings were costly and there were only thirty-nine Irish divorce cases between 1857 and 1910, all of which were between Protestants.¹¹² Divorce was not a common escape from an unhappy marriage and remained an option only for the wealthy elite, who could still suffer from the social stigma attached to being a divorcee.¹¹³

Legal separations were a slightly less expensive option than divorce for Irish people in unhappy marriages, but they too were far from cheap. David Fitzpatrick argues that separations were mainly used by the better off.¹¹⁴ There were only about two hundred separation cases brought between 1901 and 1909.¹¹⁵ A separation decree did not permit the right to remarry, but in some cases could provide maintenance for women if they were deemed 'innocent wives'.¹¹⁶ Before the First World War, the Dublin Metropolitan Police published figures of maintenance applications and outcomes, which suggest that women who petitioned for maintenance from their husbands in Dublin were successful less than 40% of the time (Table I).¹¹⁷ Custody of children in separation cases almost

¹¹⁰ Diane Urquhart, 'Irish Divorce and Domestic Violence, 1857-1922', p. 825.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 827.

¹¹² David Fitzpatrick, 'Divorce and Separation in Modern Irish History', p. 179.

¹¹³ Diane Urquhart, 'Ireland and the Divorce and Matrimonial Cases Act of 1857', p. 302.

¹¹⁴ Fitzpatrick, p. 175.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 173.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 176.

¹¹⁷ E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1910*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1911); E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1912*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1913); E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1913*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1914); E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1915*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1915).

always went to the father, although legislation in 1873 and 1886 heightened the position of child welfare in custody decisions and made women more likely to be able gain guardianship of their children.¹¹⁸ Grounds for separations included adultery, unnatural practices and some forms of cruelty.

Maintenance Orders from Married Women in Dublin Metropolitan Police District 1910-1914			
Year	Number of Applications	Numbers of Orders Made	Percentage Granted
1910	159	95	37.40%
1912	158	94	37.30%
1913	234	121	36.12%
1914	199	104	34.32%

Table I: E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1910*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1911), E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1912*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1913), E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1913*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1914) and E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police For the Year 1915*, (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co, 1915)

The prominence of extreme cruelty in cases of marriage breakdown reported in the national press emphasised the vulnerability of women in unhappy marriages. Press descriptions of extensive abuse in separation cases contributed to women being represented as weak and passive, as opposed to their husband's manly strength and aggression. However, it also sensationalised marital breakdown, which was partly intended by the press to interest readers, and partly an unintentional reinforcement of

¹¹⁸ Diane Urquhart, 'Irish Divorce and Domestic Violence, 1857-1922', p. 829.

traditional ideas that suggested marital breakdown was extreme, unusual and to be avoided. It is impossible to demonstrate conclusively the extent of domestic violence in Ireland during this period, although the violence in these reports suggests that domestic abuse was far from irregular. This chapter will provide several examples of unhappy marriages and use these case studies from the nationalist dailies to comment upon how they contributed to a gendered discourse about marital breakdown in revolutionary Ireland.

Carolyn Conley's study of homicide in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales during the late nineteenth century indicates that it was less common for Irishman than Englishmen to kill their wives – a fact of which the Irish were proud and often used metaphorically to suggest England had acted as an abusive partner towards Ireland since the Act of Union.¹¹⁹ However, trials in which men had murdered their wives increased by 30% in Ireland in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁰ Conley also argues that in Ireland the community was more likely than in England to intervene and halt domestic violence, but Irish people nonetheless found it difficult to know when to become involved.¹²¹ This was further complicated by Irish defence attorneys regularly arguing that chastising a wife had nothing to do with criminal homicide, which was reflected by the fact that 65% of men who beat their wives to death in late-nineteenth-century Ireland received sentences of less than two years.¹²² Irishwomen in the nineteenth century were far less likely to kill their spouses than Irishmen: only fourteen women were tried for this offence and they

¹¹⁹ Carolyn Conley, *Certain Other Countries* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007), p. 125.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

received particularly harsh sentences suggesting that it was viewed as an unusual and particularly abhorrent crime.¹²³

The violence described in the press was often sensationalised, implying that an unhappy marriage was an extreme situation and potentially indicating that without the brutal acts reported in the press spouses should be in no doubt that their marriage was 'happy' - or at least without grounds to be dissolved. For example, in May 1912, the *Freeman's* described Kate Fallon's marital breakdown, which involved her husband hitting her and cutting her eye.¹²⁴ Kate's husband claimed that she had deserved the abuse because she had been 'drinking with three men in the garden', which Kate denied. The judge, Mr. Byrne, said that it was an 'unfortunate case' and that they would leave them living together for three months, but keep an eye on them, because 'when people get married they must support their families and make the best of it'.¹²⁵ In the same month, Mary McNicholas from Kilbride, Co. Wicklow, was granted five shillings per week of maintenance from her husband, Michael McNicholas, who had thrown water over her while she was asleep, threatened to choke her, and kicked her until she fainted, as well as on one occasion putting her in hospital for three weeks.¹²⁶ When Mary left Michael, he wrote her a long letter begging her to return home and suggesting that if 'instead of proving wrong things' about him, she had 'said something to smooth them over' then their quarrels would have been avoided.¹²⁷ Michael's belief that his wife was his property was evident, as he said he would do anything possible, but could not give money to his

¹²³ Ibid, p. 159.

¹²⁴ 'Husband and Wife', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 May 1912.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ 'An Unhappy Marriage', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 May 1912.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

wife when she was not in his house where he could have the 'pleasure of seeing her or knowing where she' was.¹²⁸

While many women received considerable support from the court if their husbands were violent towards them, magistrates were not always sympathetic to women petitioning for maintenance. In July 1913, the *Freeman's* reported on a case at Williamstown Petty Sessions, in which Ellen Corr had brought charges of abuse against her husband Thomas for preventing her from eating breakfast and chasing her out of the house with a knife.¹²⁹ The magistrate said Ellen had a 'terrible tongue' and felt that her court case had no merit.¹³⁰ As well as dismissing the charges the judge warned Ellen that if she brought any more charges against her husband he would send her to jail for 'a long period'.¹³¹

In 1912, the Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes investigated whether there was a need to alter the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 in England. The Commission suggested extending the grounds for divorce.¹³² Urquhart suggests that Ireland had not been included in divorce legislation in 1857 because the government feared exacerbating an already politically unstable situation in post-Famine Ireland.¹³³ In 1857, it was feared that the measure would also highlight the large number of mostly Catholic Irish nationalists, who opposed British rule in Ireland. The Catholic Church encouraged Irish aversion to divorce legislation, thereby inflating the 'sense of Irish popular resistance to divorce reform'.¹³⁴ In 1913, Ireland's original exclusion from the 1857 act was used to continue arguing for Ireland's exemption from divorce laws applied

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ 'Husband and Wife', *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jul. 1913.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Diane Urquhart, 'Ireland and the Divorce and Matrimonial Cases Act of 1857', p. 315.

¹³³ Diane Urquhart, 'Irish Divorce and Domestic Violence, 1857-1922', p. 823.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

to England and Wales.¹³⁵ Consequently, the act was not extended to Ireland and divorce in Ireland continued to require an act of parliament.

The Royal Commission produced a majority and a minority report, which was common practice when a chairman of a reporting commission needed to allow some members to attach additional dissents or reservations at the end of the main document.¹³⁶ The Majority Report argued that grounds for divorce should be extended to include various grievances, such as insanity of more than five years, cruelty and male adultery.¹³⁷ The Commissioners argued that it was not because of ecclesiastical law, but societal attitudes about gender that male adultery had not been made legal grounds for divorce when female adultery had been. The report suggested that making divorce more accessible to poorer people would not increase immorality, but would reduce it, because in many cases unhappy marriages resulted in both parties living sinfully with other people outside their marriage.¹³⁸ However, the Commissioners claimed that in Ireland 'where the majority of the population are Roman Catholics', the 'conditions of life differ[ed] materially' to England.¹³⁹ The Commissioners noted that the biggest opposition to reforms came from the Anglican women's organisation, the Mothers' Union (MU), and the Protestant and Catholic clergy.¹⁴⁰ This was made clear in the Minority Report, by the Lord Archbishop of York, Sir William Anson, M.P, and Sir Lew T. Dibdin, D.C.L, who argued that grounds for divorce should not be extended.¹⁴¹ In 1913, a Matrimonial Causes Bill that recommended

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ P. Ford and G. Ford, *A Guide to Parliamentary Papers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 37.

¹³⁷ *Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes* (1912-13) [Cd. 6478], p. 29

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 38-40

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.171.

extending the grounds for divorce in line with the recommendations of the Majority Report was debated twice in the House of Lords in 1913, but failed to pass.¹⁴²

This legislation would not have been applied in Ireland, but both the nationalist press and the Catholic Church took the opportunity offered by the discussions of the report to proselytise about the ill-effects of divorce. The *Independent* indicated its lack of support for relaxing divorce laws by reporting on Cardinal Farrelly's response to the Majority Report, which he had given as an address to the American public, arguing that:

Not by telling a sick man how sick and weak he was would they hasten his return to health, but by assuring him that if he tried and endured he may get well. So also with the human race. Put up before it many ideals: honour of plighted vow, the dignity of womanhood and the worth of manhood; the duty of childbearing and child training; the holy stability of the family - teach the race what it can do and it will achieve ... Marriage ... is the beginning and the foundation of the family; and upon the stability of the family rests the welfare of the State. Weaken or destroy marriage and you would begin at once the destruction of society, with all the virtues and all the blessings that civilised society gives. Divorce spells the ruin of family and of nation - marriage the upbuilding of both.¹⁴³

Significant societal opposition to divorce meant that it could only be obtained in the most serious cases. In Ireland, divorce cases were only brought by wealthy Protestants, but the nationalist press nonetheless gave them extensive and sensationalist coverage, positioning abusive husbands as the villains in scandalous tales of marital breakdown that was portrayed as 'other' to ideal, indissoluble Catholic matrimony. For example, in December 1913, Justice Maddon granted a divorce to Mary Boland, from Tankerstown, Co. Tipperary whose husband had beaten her, torn out her hair and dragged her along the ground.¹⁴⁴ Maddon ruled that her husband must pay thirty shillings per week to Mary

¹⁴² *Matrimonial Causes, A Bill to amend the law relating to matrimonial causes in England and Wales* (1913) [Cd. 6478].

¹⁴³ 'Cardinal and Divorce', *Irish Independent*, 3 Jan. 1913.

¹⁴⁴ 'Tipperary Divorce Case', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Dec. 1913.

in maintenance.¹⁴⁵ In May 1914, Justice Maddon granted another divorce to Phyllis Denny. Phyllis's husband, Gerald Henry Maynard Denny, was an alcoholic and had frequently been violent towards her when he was drunk, once threatening her with a revolver.¹⁴⁶ On a separate occasion, Gerald had dragged Phyllis across a room and injured her to the extent that she had been receiving medical treatment since.¹⁴⁷ Phyllis's lawyers claimed that because of her husband her health was 'undermined and endangered'.¹⁴⁸

In the First World War cases of unhappy marriage remained common in the press and cases stressed that these involved soldiers, which suggests the added strain war was putting on personal relationships was also affecting men's mental health. In January 1917, Robert Story, who was serving in the Royal Irish Rifles killed himself and his wife with a razor blade in the parlour of a friend's house where the couple were staying.¹⁴⁹ The murder and suicide were unexplained as Robert had spent the afternoon happily with his wife and they had eaten an evening meal with their friends. After the meal, the couple had gone into the parlour. Their friends had heard screams, which caused them to go into the parlour too and find the couple dead.¹⁵⁰ Another case involving a soldier occurred in July 1918. Annie Kelly petitioned for divorce from Patrick Kelly, who had been a Sergeant in the army when they married. Patrick had twice attempted to kill Annie with a 'naked razor'.¹⁵¹ Justice Moore, the presiding judge, granted the divorce, but called it a very sad case because the husband was clearly in love with his wife and mad with jealousy.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ 'Wife's Allegations', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 May 1914.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ 'Dublin Double Tragedy', *Irish Independent*, 1 Jan. 1917.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Despite vivid and violent descriptions of unhappy marriages there was a prominent campaign to prevent divorce being made easily accessible in the later years of the war. This was a subject upon which Protestant and Catholic clerics and organisations agreed. The MU was prominent in anti-divorce agitation and worked alongside a Catholic women's organisation in Ireland, the Catholic Women's League (CWL). The Catholic Women's League in Britain had been founded in 1906.¹⁵³ Eileen Reilly describes the growth of lay Catholic women's social work in Ireland during the war, suggesting that in previous years these women had been notably less involved than Protestant women in charitable activity because they were suspicious that it masked Protestant proselytism.¹⁵⁴ Reilly notes that to combat this several articles were published in *The Irish Monthly* calling for Catholic women's involvement more broadly in Irish philanthropy.¹⁵⁵ One such article by Reverend Lambert McKenna, a Jesuit priest from Clontarf, Co. Dublin, was published in *The Irish Monthly* in 1917 and called upon Catholic women to create a Catholic Women's League.¹⁵⁶ McKenna noted that since the 1850s Catholic women had agitated for the 'removal of the legal disabilities of women' and had made an organised effort to alleviate poverty.¹⁵⁷ He suggested that 'Feminism' in the early twentieth century had roots in the 'Christian conception of women's spiritual and moral equality with men', but equally important was the need for Catholic women to be more involved in public life and welfare.¹⁵⁸ Therefore McKenna urged for the foundation of a new Catholic Women's League that would recruit Catholic social workers, co-ordinate Catholic endeavour and

¹⁵³ For more information on the Catholic Women's League in Britain see: Catriona Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights: the attitude of the Mothers' Union and Catholic Women's League to divorce, birth control and abortion in England, 1928–1939', *Women's History Review*, 16 (2007), 463–485.

¹⁵⁴ Eileen Reilly, 'Women and Voluntary War Work' in ed. by Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta, *Ireland and the Great War: A War to Unite Us All?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 49–72 (p. 67).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁵⁶ Lambert McKenna, 'An Irish Catholic Women's League', *The Irish Monthly*, 45 (1917), 353–368.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

bring Catholic women's influence to bear on legislative and administrative authorities.¹⁵⁹

The article laid out in detail plans for a central governing body and the financing of the league through subscriptions.¹⁶⁰

Both the MU and CWL rejected discussions of a bill to include new grounds for divorce in 1917, which was again based on the recommendations of the Majority Report of 1913. Divorce was being discussed at this time because the number of people petitioning for divorce in England had increased, from an annual average of 701 in 1910 to 846 by 1917.¹⁶¹ By 1918, there were 1,407 cases of divorce and this nearly doubled the following year.¹⁶² Roderick Phillips argues that the enforced separation of spouses caused by war and adultery in these years contributed to the rise in divorce suits.¹⁶³

The *Freeman's* reported that a largely attended protest meeting against the Matrimonial Causes Bill occurred in January 1918 in Molesworth Hill, Dublin.¹⁶⁴ The protest had been organised by the Irish branch of the MU. Cordelia Moyse suggests that the war was a formative period for the MU and that the organisation's 'identity as the great anti-divorce society was built on two mutually supporting pillars: the first was the exclusion of divorced women from membership; and the second was public opposition to any extension of divorce facilities.'¹⁶⁵ The Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes had provided the MU with their first opportunity to try and influence public policy.¹⁶⁶ In 1917 and 1918, the MU continued this pattern by protesting against the new

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 362.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 516.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 526.

¹⁶⁴ 'Making Divorce Easy', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Jan. 1918.

¹⁶⁵ Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), p. 117.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 121.

bill that would allow for divorce after three years of separation.¹⁶⁷ Lady Talbot de Malahide, president of both the Dublin Mothers' Union and the Dublin Branch of the British Red Cross Society, described the proposed bill as an 'amazing scheme' that was the result of 'the unrest intensified by the war and the upheaval of all previous social restraint, hasty and improvident marriages and the influence of pernicious literature and the example of German social conditions'.¹⁶⁸ Talbot de Malahide argued that although the 'old moral and social code was a strict one' it was the opinion of the Mothers' Union that 'any relaxation of that code would in the future lead to most disastrous results in their homes and among their own children'.¹⁶⁹

After Talbot de Malahide had spoken, Reverend Barnard, an Anglican clergyman, said that they did not dispute putting rich and poor on the same footing for divorce, but rejected any change that would lead to a greater number of divorces.¹⁷⁰ He argued that marriage was a fundamental building block of the 'state' and that it was 'on family life in the last resort' that the state depended.¹⁷¹ He feared that the new legislation would make home life unstable, which was also suggested by Reverend Crozier, who believed the new bill would 'weaken the life-long bond of marriage and endanger the happiness of home life'.¹⁷² Implicit in this rhetoric is an understanding that men and women had rigid roles to fulfil in life, chiefly marriage and procreation, which was a service owed to society and the nation.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ 'Making Divorce Easy', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Jan. 1918.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Although the MU had begun their crusade against divorce with a distinctly Anglican character, they soon formed an ecumenical council and the Catholic clergy could be just as prominent in condemning legislation that would facilitate divorce.¹⁷³ Some Catholic clerics in Ireland held particularly strong views on the illegitimacy of divorce and what constituted a 'valid' marriage. In May 1919, Reverend Peter Finlay lectured on Catholic theology at University College Dublin arguing that 'there might be temporary separation for certain sufficient reasons, such as cruelty or ill treatment, but that did not release either husband or wife from the marriage bond, or enable them to contract valid marriage with others'.¹⁷⁴ Finlay believed that a 'valid marriage' could only be one that was performed by a Catholic ceremony and observed Catholic sacraments.¹⁷⁵ Finlay made it clear that a marriage did not depend on the 'will of either man or woman' and was therefore an unbreakable bond, because there was no 'power in the church or on earth which could annul a valid marriage'.¹⁷⁶ In July 1919, James Keene, the Bishop of Meath spoke out against the threat of divorce courts operating in Ireland.¹⁷⁷ He blamed women for petitioning for divorce, saying that every Catholic knew the marriage bond was unbreakable 'but woman, she says, can break it'.¹⁷⁸

Between 1921 and 1922 constitutional changes transferred Westminster's jurisdiction over divorce and separation to the parliament in Northern Ireland and the Irish Free

¹⁷³ Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union*, p. 117.

¹⁷⁴ 'Marriage and Divorce', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1919.

Reverend Peter Finlay also published a book on this subject outlining the history of the Catholic Church's opinions of what constituted a valid marriage in Ireland and outlining his view that the only form of valid marriage was one that observed the Catholic requirements and was a sacrament in the eyes of the Catholic Church.

Peter Finlay, *The Church and Her Marriage Laws*, 4th edn (Dublin: 1930).

¹⁷⁵ Finally, *The Church and her Marriage Laws*.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ 'Catholics and Sanctity of Marriage Bond', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jul. 1919.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

State.¹⁷⁹ At the same time two private members' bills were read in the House of Lords advocating making desertion grounds for divorce. Conservative Catholic and Protestant opinion remained aligned and both the MU and CWL deplored the bills. The nationalist press was also disgusted by attempts to make divorce more readily available in England and Wales and demonstrated this in December 1922, by providing ample coverage of the Catholic Bishop of Southwark's pastoral letter which explained that 'we cannot remain indifferent while attacks are made on the sanctity of marriage'.¹⁸⁰ The Bishop described divorce as an 'accursed thing' and said that 'no Catholic worthy of the name can look with sympathy at the present movement based on false sentiment which aims at further spreading the poison'.¹⁸¹ He warned that although civil law could make divorce legal, it would never be able to supersede the Divine Law. Despite these protests the result was the 1923 Matrimonial Causes Act, which applied only to England and Wales and extended the grounds for divorce to male adultery, cruelty, desertion and prolonged insanity.¹⁸²

The situation in Ireland was very different. The Northern Irish parliament continued a system whereby divorce could be granted by an act of parliament. No divorces were granted in the Irish Free State and in 1937 its constitution outlawed not only divorce, but future laws that would permit divorce.¹⁸³ Catriona Beaumont describes the 1937 Constitution as the unification of Church and State in Ireland, which declared that 'home-work' for women was part of 'the natural order', an ideal to be attained by the majority of women'.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Fitzpatrick, 'Divorce and Separation in Modern Irish History', p. 174.

¹⁸⁰ 'Catholics and Divorce', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Dec. 1922.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union*, p. 117.

¹⁸³ Fitzpatrick, 'Divorce and Separation in Modern Irish History', p. 172.

¹⁸⁴ Catriona Beaumont, 'Women, citizenship and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922-1948', *Women's History Review*, 563-585 (p. 578).

As complicated as the breakdown of marriage was in Ireland, throughout the revolutionary period there were also accounts of marriages that ended before they began, when one party withdrew from an engagement. In some cases this resulted in the withdrawing person, almost always the man, being sued for breach of promise, because pledging to marry was a 'legally binding contract' in common law. Maria Luddy argues that women brought these cases if they felt that their 'reputation had suffered' and that this might impair 'her ability to find a suitable husband', condemning her to spinsterhood.¹⁸⁵ While Catriona Clear has argued that in the early twentieth century some women chose to embrace singleness, the prevalence of breach of promise cases in the nationalist press emphasise that damaging a woman's reputation or marriages chances was still perceived to be scandalous.¹⁸⁶ The number of breach of promise cases was increasing at the turn of the twentieth century, there had been 62 breach cases were tried in the 1890s and 87 between 1900 and 1909.¹⁸⁷

In the majority of breach of promise cases women were portrayed as financial victims (as they had often incurred costs preparing for a wedding), and also sometimes claimed that their reputations had been damaged by the aborted affairs. In January 1912, Anne Alice Hunt was awarded £300 from Patrick Holmes for breach of promise, both resided in Roscommon. Holmes had arranged to marry Hunt in front of numerous witnesses and then failed to turn up on the wedding day.¹⁸⁸ Mr. Powell, when prosecuting the case, claimed that Holmes owed Hunt damages not only to pay towards the wedding that had

¹⁸⁵ Luddy, *Matters of Deceit*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁶ Catriona Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland 1850-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 76.

¹⁸⁷ Luddy, *Matters of Deceit*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁸ 'Roscommon Breach of Promise Case', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jan. 1912.

been organised, but also because Hunt was a nice, respectable, well-educated girl and Holmes' actions had made her 'the talk of the district'.¹⁸⁹

Breach cases often involved issues of gender and class – affluent men were often reported abandoning lower-class women after initiating sexual relations with them on the pretext of marriage. For example, in September 1912 Catherine Cook sued John Gibney for breach of promise before the King's Bench. Cook claimed that while she had been working as a servant for Gibney he had promised to marry her and then seduced her, but later refused to marry her because he feared his family would disinherit him.¹⁹⁰ Although Cook's case was dismissed because the court felt she should make her case at a County Tribunal, her allegations were not disbelieved.¹⁹¹ In January 1917, the *Independent* reported another breach case in which Robert Coltrim, a farmer from Country Derry, had seduced his maid, Ellen Mooney, from Co. Meath.¹⁹² Mooney was awarded £150 compensation from Coltrim, who had promised to marry her and had a child with her, but then refused to be wedded.¹⁹³ In July 1917, similar circumstances saw Alice Smith, from Wexford, awarded £250 of damages from Nicholas Cullen, a wealthy farmer who had employed Smith as his servant. In December 1917, James Bellew, a licensed vintner from Dunleer, Co. Louth, was found guilty of breaching his promise to marry Mary Flanagan.¹⁹⁴ Tim Healy, AFIL MP for North-East Cork, represented Flanagan and argued that Bellew's behaviour had been particularly unacceptable because Mary was a 'humble' young

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ 'Servant's Action', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Sep. 1912.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² 'Low and Contemptible', *Irish Independent*, 25 Jan. 1917.

¹⁹³ 'Wexford Girl Awarded £250 Damages', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Jul. 1917.

¹⁹⁴ 'Breach of Promise Case', *Irish Independent*, 20 Dec. 1917.

woman, whom Bellew had impregnated and not only refused to marry, but further insulted by questioning the paternity of her child.¹⁹⁵

While breach suits persisted, emphasising issues of class and gender well into the period of the Irish Free State, attitudes towards these cases were shifting. In 1921 Grace Bibby wrote in the *Independent* that breach cases perpetuated a double standard that was unfavourable to men, because women were able to change their minds whereas men could not.¹⁹⁶ She deplored stories of men marrying their betrothed while in love with another woman as a matter of honour, suggesting that it produced unhappy marriages. Bibby argued that marriage was more important than engagement.¹⁹⁷ Breach cases highlighted the transactional nature of marriage, but Bibby's suggestion that marriage itself required certain commitments from each spouse indicated that even progressive attitudes voiced in the press presented marriage as a contractual undertaking. By voicing her opinions on breach cases, Bibby also challenged traditional assumptions and discussions of women as weak and needing protection.

Reports of unhappy marriages and breach of promise cases highlight the intersection in the national dailies of polemic about faith, gender and class. Reports often emphasised women's vulnerability, suggesting women were physically weak in reports of domestic violence and that women's reputations were fragile when describing breach of promise cases, although more progressive views did become apparent in the later revolutionary years. Class ran throughout these reports. The national dailies stressed that divorce was an immoral and scandalous action practiced only by the Anglo-Irish elites or detailed

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ 'A Plea for Greater Freedom in Engagements', *Irish Independent*, 1 Apr. 1921.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

lower-class women being jilted by more affluent lovers. Throughout the discussions of unhappy marriages and breach of promise gendered debates were relational and not only commented on femininity but also masculinity, as the press frequently suggested behaviour that was abusive, irresponsible or disloyal as emasculating. Equally, some correspondents challenged the need to protect women from broken engagements, suggesting that women were strong and capable enough to look after themselves when it came to their marriage prospects.

2.4 Mixed Marriage

Mixed marriage, between Catholics and other Christian denominations, amounted to about one per cent (3,834 out of 472,475) of all co-resident married couples who returned the 1911 census report.¹⁹⁸ Despite not being a widespread practice mixed marriage was a fiercely contested subject in early-twentieth-century Ireland.¹⁹⁹ This was partly because mixed marriages led to concerns over what religion children should be raised in, but also because of differences between what was deemed to be a valid marriage ceremony by the Catholic Church and the common law in Ireland. This was further complicated because the common law in Ireland was dictated by Britain and therefore despite being a majority Catholic nation, Ireland's marriage laws were decided by a Protestant polity. There has been much discussion of how the Catholic Church's attempts to define valid marriage and the consequent protests from Protestants affected debates about Home Rule in pre-war Ireland. Much research has considered key legal

¹⁹⁸ Alan Fernihough, Cormac Ó Grada, Brendan Walsh, 'Mixed Marriages in Ireland a Century Ago' *Social Science Research Network*, (2014), 1-46 (p. 5).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

cases, such as *McCann v. McCann* or *Ussher v. Ussher*, but there has been no analysis of how gender influenced these proceedings. Equally, little attention has been given to the more general polemic about mixed marriage, coming from laity as well as clerics, which was prominent in the press throughout the revolutionary period. This section will provide an overview of the history and discussion of mixed marriage in early-twentieth-century Ireland, before tracing the gendered debates about mixed marriage in the press.

The Catholic Church had long been interested in ending mixed marriage. In the medieval period, the Canons of Laodicea and Chalcedon had forbidden marriage with heretics unless there was the promise or hope of the non-Catholic converting.²⁰⁰ In 1563, the Council of Trent decided that it was necessary for two witnesses and a parish priest to be present at a marriage ceremony to validate it. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most Catholic countries incorporated this into their legal systems through Trident Laws, which were used to persecute Protestants by suggesting their marriages to be invalid.²⁰¹ In Ireland the situation was different because Ireland was ruled by British law, which made it a capital offence for a cleric to perform a mixed marriage ceremony until 1871.²⁰² After Catholic emancipation in 1829, the Council of Trent's laws were applied to the whole country by the Pope, but excluded marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics. By the early twentieth century, the Vatican were keen to impose one law regulating marriage for Catholics around the world because multiple laws had arisen over the preceding centuries and variation had been permitted in different countries. In April 1908, the Pope issued the *Ne Temere* decree, which bound all mixed marriages in the

²⁰⁰ Eoin de Bhaldrathe, 'Mixed Marriages and Irish Politics: The Effect of *Ne Temere*' *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 77 (1988), 284-299 (p. 285).

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

eyes of the Catholic Church to the Tridentine laws and therefore entailed that whenever a Catholic married outside their faith the marriage was invalid unless witnessed by a Catholic priest.²⁰³ Eoin de Bhaldrat suggests that initially it had been intended by the Catholic Church that Ireland would be excluded from this, but that Pope Pius X purposefully included Ireland as part of a broader move towards rigid papal laws under his rule.²⁰⁴

Jesse Buck suggests that when *Ne Temere* was introduced in 1908 it garnered little attention, but in 1910 and 1911 it caused huge public debate when Agnes McCann brought a case against her husband Alexander McCann, demanding that he let her know the whereabouts of their children.²⁰⁵ Agnes, a Protestant, and Alexander, a Catholic, had married before *Ne Temere* had been enforced. Agnes alleged that in 1910 a priest had visited her husband and informed him that because of *Ne Temere* their marriage was invalid because they had been married in an Anglican ceremony and the only way to rectify this was for them to remarry in the Catholic Church. Agnes refused to do this and Alexander left her taking their children.²⁰⁶

Protestant outcry deploring the way Agnes had been treated was vast: the Belfast Presbytery formed a committee in support of her and the case was raised in the House of Commons by J. H. Campbell, Unionist MP for Dublin University, and in the Lords by Lord Donoughmore.²⁰⁷ Fears were voiced that *Ne Temere* was an attempt by Rome to

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 290.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Jesse Buck, 'The Role of *Ne Temere* in the Decline of a Custom in Ireland For the Religious Affiliation of Children in Mixed Marriages', *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, 11 (2011), 28-43 (p. 6).

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Raymond Lee, 'Intermarriage, Conflict and Social Control in Ireland: The Decree "*ne temere*"', *The Economic and Social Review*, 17 (1985), 11-27 (p.17).

undermine British law.²⁰⁸ Notwithstanding the significant controversy of the case, the British government did not intervene on Agnes's behalf; Augustine Birrell, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, argued that it should have been raised in the Court of Chancery and not with him and at Westminster, where the case was used by Unionists to whip up discontent over the Home Rule Bill rather than to demonstrate concern over Agnes's plight.²⁰⁹

Raymond Lee argues that the *Ne Temere* decree caused a moral panic in Ireland that distinguished the Catholic Church from other churches in the way it treated people and convinced many Protestants that *Ne Temere* and its discrimination against non-Catholics was a taste of the 'Rome Rule' that would come if the Home Rule Act were passed.²¹⁰ *Ne Temere* put some people in a vulnerable position because it appeared to offer the potential to gain an annulment to spouses in mixed marriages that were unhappy. This could be especially difficult for women who might be left destitute, disgraced and without their children, partly because women's honour was perceived to be more fragile than men's and partly because of what Owen Dudley Edwards termed the 'hypergamy' of mixed marriages (the trend for women to marry up the social scale rather than down).²¹¹

David Jameson describes the next high profile mixed marriage case in Ireland, *Ussher v. Ussher*, as an example of how *Ne Temere* caused problems for people in mixed marriages in Ireland and demonstrated that there was no question 'civil law did indeed supersede canon law'.²¹² In December 1911, William Ussher of Eastwell in Loughrea, brought a case for the annulment of his marriage to Mary Caulfield before Justice Kenny in *Nisi Prius*

²⁰⁸ de bhaldrathe, 'Mixed Marriages and Irish Politics: The Effect of *Ne Temere*', p. 292.

²⁰⁹ Lee, 'Intermarriage, Conflict and Social Control in Ireland: The Decree "ne temere"', p. 16.

²¹⁰ Ibid, p. 24.

²¹¹ Buck, 'The Role of *Ne Temere* in the Decline of a Custom in Ireland For the Religious Affiliation of Children in Mixed Marriages', p. 2.

²¹² David Jameson, 'The Religious Upbringing of Children in "Mixed Marriages": The Evolution of Irish Law', *New Hibernia Review*, 18 (2014), 65-83 (p. 72).

Court 2.²¹³ William Ussher's counsel argued that he had gone through 'what purported to be a ceremony of marriage' with Mary in April 1910, but that only a housemaid, Agnes Kavanagh, had witnessed the marriage and therefore it was invalid because the Council of Trent required two witnesses as well as the priest officiating the ceremony. Mary explained that she had believed the marriage was valid because *Ne Temere* had replaced the decree of the Council of Trent. If the marriage was annulled Mary would be disgraced and her daughter, Kathleen, born in January 1911, would become illegitimate.

There were some unusual features to the Ussher case. Jameson briefly mentions that there was some question as to whether or not William Ussher was a Catholic, but suggests that this was not especially important because *Ne Temere* would have applied whether it was a Catholic marriage or a mixed marriage.²¹⁴ However, the fact that William Ussher was a wealthy, Protestant man (as well as having property in Loughrea he had a residence in Castleknock, Co. Dublin), who had converted to Catholicism under unusual circumstances and in great haste before marrying his Catholic servant, is very significant.²¹⁵ This suggests that confusion over ecclesiastical laws, and how they applied in Ireland, could be used by the wealthy to rid themselves of marriages they regretted, placing lower-class spouses, who were most often women, in vulnerable positions.

As well as being her employer, William Ussher was also ten years senior to Mary, a point which Justice Kenny drew attention to when expressing his regret that William refused to appear in court in person.²¹⁶ Kenny suggested it was impossible to know what William felt he had been entering into without him saying for himself, but also wanted to stress that if

²¹³ 'A Western Marriage', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Dec. 1911.

²¹⁴ Jameson, 'The Religious Upbringing of Children in "Mixed Marriages": The Evolution of Irish Law', p. 72.

²¹⁵ 'A Western Marriage', *FJ*, 19 Dec. 1911.

²¹⁶ 'Ussher Matrimonial Case', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan 1912.

the petition were granted it would have serious effects: Kate's child would become illegitimate, which was stigmatised.²¹⁷ He ruled that he could find no provision or regulation either in the Common Law or the Canon Law for nullifying a marriage of Catholics by a Catholic priest on account of the non presence of a witness at its celebration and he was 'therefore satisfied that by the common law of England, which was also the common law of Ireland, the presence of a witness at a marriage antecedent to the Reformation, was not necessary to give it validity.'²¹⁸

While Justice Kenny highlighted Mary Ussher and her child's plight when he delivered his ruling, it is interesting to note that representing William Ussher was J. H. Campbell, the MP for Dublin University, who had raised the McCann case in the House of Commons. In the Ussher case, Campbell's concerns for women who were adversely affected by Catholic Church laws seem to have been suspended, suggesting he was more concerned when Protestant than Catholic women found themselves in a predicament because of *Ne Temere*. This suggests that Birrell was correct in thinking that Agnes McCann's case had been raised in parliament rather than Chancery Court for political reasons and not out of genuine concern for her wellbeing.

Similar to the McCann case, the Ussher case was raised in parliament and was timed at a moment of political significance. In February 1912, William Ussher appealed against the verdict that his marriage was valid in response to Mary bringing an application against him in Probate Court asking for alimony.²¹⁹ William Ussher's appeal was denied and the nationalist press, particularly the *Freeman's Journal*, celebrated this as a success for

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ 'Ussher Marriage Case', *FJ*, 22 Feb. 1912.

Catholic Ireland. Mary Ussher and her family received considerable attention and were lauded as an example of an ideal Irish Catholic family. The *Freeman's* observed that the result of the Ussher case, 'occasioned great rejoicing in the district of Tubberclair Athlone, where Mrs Ussher spent her early years.'²²⁰ Mary Ussher's family were described as being 'of the respectable farming class' and her mother, Mrs. Caulfield, as 'a woman of very high intelligence and deep piety - a typical Irishwoman of her class'.²²¹ The descriptions of Mary and her mother suggest a clear association between ideal Irish nationalist femininity and Catholicism. It also indicates how on both the Catholic and Protestant, nationalist and unionist, sides of debates over the Home Rule Bill women and representations of femininity as fragile, virtuous and pious, were being used to score political points.

In July 1912, the *Independent* reported they were 'reliably informed' that Mary and William Ussher were 'casting their lot' together again and moving to England.²²² The rather unfortunate reality for Mary Ussher was that having won her legal case, she may not have been disgraced and Kathleen was not deemed illegitimate, but she had to remain married to a man who had twice taken her to court seeking an annulment that would have had devastating consequences for her.

It is unclear how much ordinary people engaged with debates in parliament about the minutiae of the Home Rule Bill.²²³ However, with regards to the power a Home Rule Irish parliament would have over marriage laws there appears to have been significant interest from both nationalists and unionists. Although the Ussher case may have been settled early in 1912, it had attracted press attention, which in turn spotlighted debates about

²²⁰ 'The Ussher Case', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Apr. 1912.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² 'The Ussher Case', *Irish Independent*, 15 Jul. 1912.

²²³ James McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), p. 243.

marriage and the Third Home Rule Bill. In February 1912, Sir Henry King, MP for Hull Central, asked in the House of Commons whether the 'object of ultimately arriving at uniform marriage laws for the whole British Empire, the Prime Minister would expressly exclude from the powers of the Irish Parliament under the Home Rule Bill any right to pass legislation affecting marriage'.²²⁴ Reginald McKenna, British Home Secretary, responded that he did not know and they would have to wait for the Home Rule Bill.²²⁵ This was part of a broader public interest in the history of marriage law in Ireland. In May 1912, the *Freeman's* published the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record's* consideration of 'Two Famous Marriage Cases' and remarked that in view of the 'recent Ussher case, and other marriage questions, the present series of papers by the Most Rev Dr Walsh will be followed with the keenest interest'.²²⁶ In his papers Walsh outlined the case of *Mills v Graham* and *Beamish v Beamish*, explaining the differences between what constituted a valid marriage in canon and common law.²²⁷

While Reverend Walsh discussed legal cases regarding marriage in Ireland in the *Ecclesiastical Record*, debates about marriage and Home Rule Ireland were ongoing in Westminster. Sectarian polemic from unionists (who were predominantly Protestant) and nationalists (who were often Catholic) can be seen in debates about Home Rule. Patrick Maume suggests that the Irish Parliamentary Party were willing to offer safeguards to unionists not believing that they posed any significant threat to the passing of Home Rule.²²⁸ However, he argues that Sinn Féin in Ireland and the O'Brienite MPs in Westminster were angered by unionist rhetoric that drew upon similar polemic to

²²⁴ 'Marriage Law and Home Rule', *Irish Independent*, 28 Feb. 1912.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ 'The Irish Ecclesiastical Record', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1912.

²²⁷ William Walsh, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1912).

²²⁸ Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999), p. 120.

arguments made against Catholic Emancipation in the 1830s.²²⁹ Maume suggests that the nationwide 'Literature Crusade' against immoral, English texts provoked these debates, but if the newspaper coverage is anything to go by discussions of marriage legislation in Home Rule Ireland also popularised debate about Home Rule.²³⁰ Questions were raised in the press and in parliament as to whether clause three of the Home Rule Bill, which had prevented making 'any religious belief or religious ceremony a condition of the validity of any marriage', would remain.²³¹ In April 1912, Herbert Asquith explained in the House of Commons that this clause would not be included in the Home Rule Bill that year because he believed it to be 'absolutely unnecessary'.²³² He also pointed out that any attempt to make *Ne Temere* part of Irish law could be stopped by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who would have the power to veto legislation from the Irish houses of parliament. In October 1912, the legislative powers that would be granted over marriage in the Home Rule Bill were debated in parliament again. Edward Carson asked whether marriage law was going to be devolved to an Irish parliament. Birrell said that it was not and that the government did not suggest it should be.²³³

In response to these debates a letter from a parish priest was printed in the *Freeman's* suggesting that all of the safeguards called for in relation to the Home Rule Bill by the 'intolerable minority' of unionists meant that the 'majority in Ireland have been totally overlooked'.²³⁴ Below the letter, the editor added an amendment to the priest's argument, suggesting instead that 'the subject of marriage should be entirely withheld

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ 'A "Safeguard" of the Home Rule Bill', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Sep. 1912.

²³² HC Deb 11 April 1912 vol 36 cc1410-2.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ A "Safeguard" of the Home Rule Bill', *FJ*, 25 Sep. 1912.

from the Irish parliament or the above restriction should apply only to marriages known as mixed'.²³⁵ Four days later, another letter from the priest was printed, disputing the editor's response to his original letter and adding that barring an Irish parliament from legislating about marriage would mean that while 'a bare majority could enact a law about divorce or polygamy' not even 'the entire Irish parliament and people' could about marriage.²³⁶ The priest felt that the clause 'shuts the door against religious education, but leaves it open to godless and secular education galore.'²³⁷

Changes to Catholic legal laws regarding marriage affected mixed marriages in Ireland, but also the children born from them. Jesse Buck argues that it was customary in Ireland for the female children of mixed marriages to be raised in their mother's religion and the male ones in their father's.²³⁸ Buck notes that this was not widespread in reality, but was part of 'popular consciousness'.²³⁹ Fernihough, Ó Gráda and Walsh have used the 1911 census to demonstrate that 70% of children born from mixed marriages were raised Catholic.²⁴⁰ While they suggest the custom of raising male and female children respectively in their father's or mother's religion may have alleviated some religious tensions, they found little evidence for this and instead that it was commonplace to raise all children in the same faith.²⁴¹

Choosing a religion for children of mixed marriages in Ireland was further complicated because the law stated that the father had the right to decide his children's religion. Even

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Buck, 'The Role of Ne Temere in the Decline of a Custom in Ireland For the Religious Affiliation of Children in Mixed Marriages', p. 2.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Fernihough, Ó Grada and Walsh, 'Mixed Marriages in Ireland A Century Ago', p. 9.

²⁴¹ Ibid, p. 11.

after the father's death it was necessary for the mother to raise her children in the religion of her husband's choosing. This left widows of mixed marriages in a precarious position should they wish to change their child's religion, because petitions could be brought against them to appoint a co-guardian of the children or to have the children removed from their care entirely. For example, in August 1912, a petition was brought before the Master of the Rolls by Bridget O'Keefe from Wexford, to grant her joint guardianship of Alice Hendrick's five children because O'Keefe was the children's older half-sister and wanted to raise the children in their father's Catholic faith.²⁴² O'Keefe's counsel, Serjeant Moriaty, argued that Patrick had been a 'most devout Catholic' and that his girls had attended a convent school and the boys the Christian Brothers Catholic school.²⁴³ Despite Alice Hendrick's claim that she had always been Protestant and that her husband had told her she could raise her children in any religion she wanted to atone for the poverty he had brought upon the family, the judge appointed O'Keefe joint guardian over the Hendrick children and ordered that the two boys be raised Catholic, but made no ruling on the religion of the girls, who were older, explaining that he felt more harm than good might come from making them reconvert.²⁴⁴

A similar case in January 1913 was brought by Mr. Leech against Kate Webster, his daughter-in-law, who was not raising her children in the Protestant faith of their dead father, Alexander Webster.²⁴⁵ All of Kate's children were less than nine years of age, which made it easy for Leech's counsel to argue that for Kate Webster this was a 'breach

²⁴² 'Children's Religion', *Irish Independent*, 3 Aug. 1912.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ 'Mixed Marriage', *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Jan. 1913.

of her duty to her husband, and in breach of the law'.²⁴⁶ Justice Barton, despite saying that in the 'ideal home the children ought to grow up in their mother's religion', ruled in the Webster case that Kate's children must be raised Protestant because legally a mother was obliged to raise her children in their father's religion.²⁴⁷

Despite the political uncertainty in Ireland following the First World War, both the press and the Catholic Church continued to stress the perils of mixed marriages and resultant problems for children born into them. In July 1918, churches in Cork read out a pastoral letter from Reverend Cohalan reminding parishioners that it was a grave sin to 'contract marriage with a Protestant and get married in a Protestant church'.²⁴⁸ In August 1919, Mary O'Toole from Dublin was appointed co-guardian of her eight-year-old niece Anastasia with the child's mother, Eva Mary O'Toole.²⁴⁹ Eva Mary O'Toole had been married to Mary O'Toole's brother, who was a Catholic and during their marriage had followed the Catholic faith, but after his death she had reverted to the Protestant faith she had been born into.²⁵⁰ In January 1920, the *McKenna v McKenna* case emphasised the difficulties inherent to deciding the religion of children born into mixed marriages.

Bernard McKenna brought a case to Chancery Court to remove his grandchildren from Martha McKenna, his widowed daughter-in-law, and placed with a Catholic woman.

Bernard McKenna's son had always been a Catholic, but Martha McKenna had converted to Catholicism before their marriage and then converted back to Protestantism after his death.²⁵¹ Justice Powell appointed a joint guardian for Martha's children, but did not

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ 'Mixed Marriage', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Feb. 1913.

²⁴⁸ 'Dr Cohalan and Mixed Marriage', *Irish Independent*, 22 Jul. 1918.

²⁴⁹ 'Mother's Obligation', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Aug. 1918.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ 'Children's Religion', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jan. 1920.

remove them from her.²⁵² These cases of mixed marriage were reported in the nationalist press in a cautionary tone that suggested ideal marriage was contracted between people of the same religion, which would serve as a foundation for a strong marriage and agreement over childrearing. It also highlights the intersection of Catholicism and nationalism in the nationalist dailies, which directed their polemic about nationalist social life.

2.5 Modern Marriage

Although the nationalist dailies printed a lot of prescriptions about what constituted ideal marriage, this stance was contested from within the newspapers as well. While there were traditional discussions of marriage as a sacred duty, emphasising the religious and particularly Catholic aspects to marriage and married life and polemic also suggested that ideal marriages rested upon women being adaptable, submissive and passive. Irishwomen were portrayed as ideal spouses alongside these conservative images of marriage, however, were debates about the 'New Woman' and women's rights, before and after marriage, regarding employment and personal freedom. In the later revolutionary years, the supposed perils of women's growing liberation were increasingly discussed, albeit often in humorous or half-serious ways.

While Irish attitudes to marriage before the First World War remained largely conservative, attempts by high profile, elite British and American suffragettes to change the wording of the marriage ceremony and promote a more progressive ideal of the marriage union were reported in short gossip columns by the nationalist press, which

²⁵² Ibid.

suggested the marriages were rare, unusual and bordering on scandalous. In January 1912, Una Dugdale, niece of Viscount Peel, married Mr. Victor, Secretary of the Men's Political Union for Woman Suffrage, in Chapel Royal in London.²⁵³ Una wanted the words of the marriage service altered so that she would not have to promise to 'obey' her husband because she was a suffragist, but the priest conducting the service refused to allow it. This was also the case for Elizabeth Laurelt, a known advocate of women's emancipation, who at her wedding in New York suddenly interrupted the clergyman and requested he not ask her to obey her husband. Her wish was refused and she abandoned her nuptials.²⁵⁴ In November 1913, Jessie Wilson, daughter of Woodrow Wilson, the American President, successfully married her husband in America with the command to obey taken out of the service.²⁵⁵ The *Independent's* report on Wilson's wedding emphasised the bringing together of old and new customs by describing both the altered marriage ceremony and the bride dressed in 'shimmering white satin, trimmed with rare old lace which has been in the possession of Mrs. Wilson's family for over a century'.²⁵⁶

Despite the sensationalised reporting of stories of suffragettes' weddings, Ireland also experienced change in perceptions of women's roles in the early-twentieth-century and the First World War was a catalyst in this. Deborah Thom argues that despite the greater need for women workers in Britain during the war, they were viewed as 'potential or actual mothers' and were judged primarily as women, not employees.²⁵⁷ While the war did see a change in the numbers and areas in which women were employed, this was not

²⁵³ 'Bride had to Promise to Obey', *Irish Independent*, 15 Jan. 1912.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War One* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), p. 2.

immediately felt during the first months of the war when rather than replacing male employees many extra female workers were taken on in positions considered suitable to their biological potential.²⁵⁸ As demand increased, however, the need for female workers facilitated the emergence of a new female type, the woman war worker. Gail Braybon suggests that a large number of British women war workers were married.²⁵⁹ In Ireland, women's wages were not so inflated by the war, but Irish women's involvement in trade unionism did increase, aided by their new work (although not on such a large scale as in Britain) in munitions, and the extra work created in the clothing and linen industries.²⁶⁰

During the First World War in Ireland, there were particular duties expected of Irish, some press discussion of Irish women mirrored that of their British counterparts, although elements of it also contained distinctly Irish views on femininity. Irish women's domestic roles continued to be viewed as important and even if they worked outside the home they were expected to be home-keepers, which entailed housework and domestic economy. Making clothes, for example, was a priority in the early wartime. On 17 August 1914, the *Independent* ran the final instalment of 'Woman's Realm' in which Lady Molly advised women to 'get as much of your sewing done as you can conveniently manage at present, so as to be ready with your "work parties" when garments for the soldiers are being asked for'.²⁶¹

In September 1915 an editorial in the *Independent* on 'Irish Problems' argued local government should keep pace with private enterprise by recognising the value of women

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 49.

²⁶⁰ Theresa Moriarty, 'Industrial Controls and Irish Trade Unionism' in *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'* eds. Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 73-93 (pp. 86-87).

²⁶¹ Ibid.

workers.²⁶² The editorial suggested that, 'the more general employment of women which was now taking place, as a result of the war, in business concerns might be advantageously followed in municipal institutions.'²⁶³ Not all of these women would have been married, but the influx of more female workers to the job market could have paved the way for married women to take up work. Examples of women assisting the war effort were common to both the *Freeman's* and the *Independent*, as can be seen in this picture of women on horseback in Reading, printed in the *Independent* in December 1915 (below).²⁶⁴ It indicates that women were entirely replacing men in some jobs, freeing them to enlist. Despite this being an example of women in Reading, it highlights the willingness of the press to promote a more united front both in terms of supporting Britain in the war and women's work.



Figure 1: 'Hunting Women Help the Army', *Irish Independent*, 6 Dec. 1915.

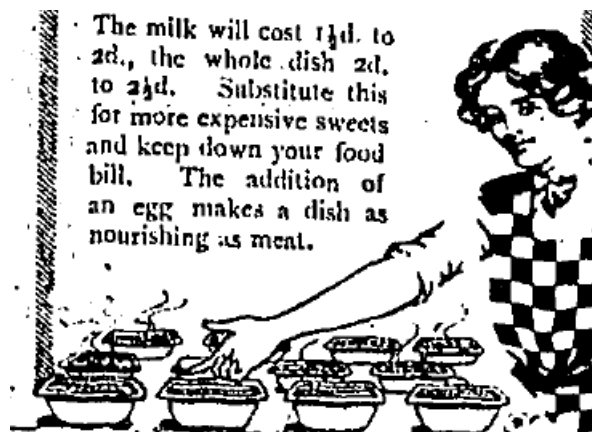
²⁶² 'Irish Problems', *Irish Independent*, 22 Sep. 1915.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ 'Hunting Women Help the Army', *Irish Independent*, 6 Dec. 1915.

As the war continued the need for women to take on paid work increased and the nationalist press explained this necessity, if not welcoming the phenomenon.²⁶⁵ An editorial in the *Independent* from January 1916 noted that 'the outstanding feature of the labour market during the year, 1915, was the shortage of workers... to a certain extent, met in some trades by employees working overtime.'²⁶⁶ It then quoted the 'Board of Trade Union Gazette' expressing the opinion that 'the growing shortage of male labour can only be met by a very much larger influx of women into industry than has yet taken place.'²⁶⁷ Keith Jeffery suggests how lucrative women's war work could be, citing Florence Ross who worked for the Dublin Dockyard Company and was able to earn 50 shillings a week.²⁶⁸

Wartime advertising demanded women be both workers and beautiful, feminine individuals. For example, Polson Flour ran a series of adverts picturing pretty young wives turning a small, cost-effective amount of flour into several loaves.²⁶⁹



²⁶⁵ Moriarty discusses the new need for women workers in munition factories in Ireland during the First World War.

Moriarty, 'Industrial Action', p. 86.

²⁶⁶ 'Wages and Prices', *Irish Independent*, 18 Jan. 1916.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ 'Polson flour', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Feb. 1915.

Figure II: 'Polson', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Feb. 1915.




Figure III: 'Polson flour', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Feb. 1915.

Wartime advertisers encouraged women to worry about their looks so that they could be beautiful and inspiring for men, who would then want to become soldiers. Pomoroy Skin Food promoted their skincare products in the press throughout the war period, picturing attractive women with perfect complexions and bright smiles. Lucy Adlington describes how Pomoroy Skin Food in Britain sought to target munitions workers wishing to remove dust from their pores at night, alongside many products that were 'adept at linking their brand names with the concept of aiding women's war work.'²⁷⁰ These same adverts were often used in Ireland.

²⁷⁰ Lucy Adlington, *Great War Fashion: Tales From the History Wardrobe* (London: The History Press, 2013), p. 57.

Icilma, another face cream seller, reminded women: 'just because you are a busy war worker, just because *he* is fighting, or training, or working, the daily use of a really good toilet cream is of the utmost importance if you are to keep your youthful looks.'²⁷¹ The italicisation of '*he*' indicates that these efforts were for a man. Despite the strain of war, advertisers continued to try and further their commercial interests by encouraging women's concerns about losing their looks and emphasised the need for women to keep up appearances, both in terms of physical attractiveness and to mask the pain and suffering of the war. Rigid norms of femininity were maintained during the war and the importance of motherhood was particularly stressed. Images of ideal motherhood were ubiquitous in adverts that promoted child health products, especially those selling cure-alls or preventative treatments. Virol, a health supplement pill, made a point of showing adverts of babies that were the picture of health and happiness.²⁷²



Keep Your Youthful Looks!

Just because you are a busy war worker—just because *he* is fighting or training or working, the daily use of a really good toilet cream is of the utmost importance if you are to keep your youthful looks.

But, now particularly, you must be quite sure to get the economical all-British Toilet Cream—**ICILMA CREAM.**

Icilma Cream is actually the only Toilet Cream in the world containing the refreshing Icilma Natural Water. That this natural water *really stimulates* and refreshes the skin and complexion no matter how sensitive it may be, has been proved time after time.

Besides, it is so very economical that a 1/- pot will last several weeks. Daintily fragrant and non-greasy. Get a pot to-day. *Use it daily and look your best!*

Icilma Cream
(Guaranteed not to grow Hair).

Price 1/- everywhere. *Icilma is pronounced Eye-Silma.*

FREE Send postcard to-day for FREE copy of new 64. book containing 250 Toilet Hints and Beauty Treatments. Deals with everything you need to know about the toilet. Shows what to use—what to avoid—how to save money. Address Icilma Co., Ltd. (Depo 1800-37, 39, 41, King's Road, St. Pancras, N.W.). Irish Wholesale Depots: 27, Waring St., Belfast; 28, Great Ship St., Dublin.

²⁷¹ 'Icilma', *Irish Independent*, 17 May 1917.

²⁷² 'Virol', *FJ*, 2 Jun. 1914.

Figure IV: 'Icilma', *Irish Independent*, 17 May 1917.



Figure V: 'Virol', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jun, 1914.

An advertising campaign for Veda, a nutritionally-enriched bread, ran during 1918 in the *Independent*, described the 'body-building' and 'health-giving powers' of its product, which the mother pictured understood and appreciated, demonstrating the control she could exercise over the health of her children.²⁷³ It also indicates the experience and expertise that a mother had in health care stating that 'Mother knows that "Veda" is good for sonny.'²⁷⁴ Advertisers exploited women's concerns about being good mothers by linking the use of their products to women fulfilling their natural roles and deploying agency and skill when doing so. Advertisements often appealed to a mother's medical knowledge. 'California Syrup of Figs', a laxative for children exclaimed 'MOTHER! GIVE CROSS, SICK CHILD "CALIFORNIA SYRUP of FIGS."'²⁷⁵ Allenburys' Foods also appealed to a mother's love and concern for her child, when advertising baby food.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ 'Veda', *Irish Independent*, 16 Jul. 1918.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ 'California Syrup of Figs', *Irish Independent*, 10 Nov. 1917.

²⁷⁶ 'Allenburys' Foods, *Irish Independent*, 16 Mar. 1916.



Figure VI: 'Veda', *Irish Independent*, 16 Jul. 1918.

MOTHER! GIVE CROSS, SICK CHILD 'CALIFORNIA SYRUP OF FIGS.'

If fretful, feverish, constipated, bilious or tongue coated, give this delicious "fruit laxative" at once.

A laxative to-day saves a bilious child to-morrow. Children simply will not take the time from play to empty their bowels, which becomes clogged up with waste; then the liver grows sluggish, and the stomach is disordered.

Look at the tongue, mother! If coated, or your child is listless, cross, feverish, with tainted breath, restless, doesn't eat heartily, or has a cold, sore throat, or any other children's ailment, give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," then don't worry, because it is a perfectly harmless dose, and in a few hours all this constipation, poison, sour bile and fermenting waste matter will gently move out of the bowels, and you will have a healthy, playful child again. A thorough "inside cleansing" is oftentimes all that is necessary.

It should be the first treatment given in any sickness. Ask your chemist for a bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has full directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups plainly printed on the bottle. Look carefully and see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company."

Refuse substitutes. "California Syrup of Figs" is sold by all leading chemists, 1/12 and 1/9.

Figure VII: 'California Syrup of Figs', *Irish Independent*, 10 Nov. 1917.



Figure VIII: 'Allenburys' Foods, *Irish Independent*, 16 Mar. 1916.

Advertisers played on the anxiety of women waiting at home for a son or husband at war, suggesting what they should send them in care packages. This was apparent in a campaign by OXO, with the slogan 'keep on sending them OXO', which ran throughout the war from 1915 and regularly featured on the front page of the *Independent*. They used quotes from senior officers, soldiers and letters from the front. In March 1916, the commander of H.M.S Viking was quoted saying that OXO was brilliant to both 'promote fitness, or to recuperate after fatigue.'²⁷⁷ They also described the comfort of receiving OXO, particularly in the colder, winter months.²⁷⁸ OXO was a British-based company and the adverts had been designed with a British, rather than Irish, audience in mind. Nonetheless, as 74,293 new recruits enlisted in Ireland within the first fourteen months of

²⁷⁷ 'Oxo', *Freeman's Journal*, 09 Mar. 1915.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

the war there were clearly numerous Irish wives, mothers and sisters to whom these advertisements might appeal.²⁷⁹

Keep on
sending them
OXO

From a Rifleman at the Front.

"No praise is too high for the OXO which we receive from our friends and relatives. We have been in and out of the trenches for some months now, and have realised the value of a cup of OXO during these cold and wet nights."

OXO Ltd., Thames House, London, E.C.

Figure IX: 'Oxo', *Irish Independent*, 15 Feb. 1915.

Keep on
sending them
OXO

From a Lance Corporal at the Front.

"Our parcels from home are never complete unless our good folk put OXO in. We just boil the water in our mess-tins by hook or crook, and put in the OXO, and then feel much better, especially these cold winter nights."

Figure X: 'OXO', *Irish Independent*, 6 Mar. 1916.

²⁷⁹ 'On Recruitment in Ireland', 14 January 1916, Available at: University of Southampton Digital Library, [Last Accessed: 09 Aug. 2012].



Figure XI: 'Oxo', *Irish Independent*, 11 Jul. 1917.

While men joined the British Army, Irish women were expected to remain at home.²⁸⁰

Advertisers sought to make money from women who wanted to show support for men who had enlisted. For example, Erasmic Soap, which ran during the middle years of the war in the *Independent*, pictured well-dressed women, smiling despite the sadness of the war and preparing care packages for their loved ones.

²⁸⁰ See discussion of recruitment statistics in Chapter two of David Fitzpatrick, 'The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914-1918', *The Historical Journal*, 48 (1995), 1017-1030 (p. 1018); Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 193.



Figures XII & XIII: 'Erasmic', *Irish Independent*, 04 Apr. 1916; 'Erasmic', *Irish Independent*, 28 Feb. 1917.

After the First World War, there was a lot of discussion about whether or not women, particularly married women, should be in the workplace. An editorial in the *Independent* in May 1919 explained that because all 'the myriad phases of modern life have been profoundly affected by the war' several 'old and conservative traditions have been discarded'.²⁸¹ This had led to many occupations, once seen as 'the prerogative of men', being opened up to women.²⁸² The editorial suggested that the pressing question resulting from this change was whether women would be permitted to remain in these jobs.

²⁸¹ 'Women in Industry', *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1919.

²⁸² Ibid.

The Irish press reported on the backlash in Britain against women in jobs perceived to belong to men. For example, in September 1919, the *Independent* reported that returning soldiers had rioted in London over lack of employment and taken their frustrations out on working women, particularly female bus conductors.²⁸³ Harold Spender, the British liberal politician, author and journalist, wrote to the editor of the *Independent* explaining that although some women were 'going quickly back to their homes', largely because they were compelled to do so, others were looking for new work and did not want to return to traditional feminine duties in the home.²⁸⁴ He believed that men and women 'worked in different spheres, even in the same industry', but that the excess male mortality caused by the war had changed the context, meaning a 'million more women must work, because, there are no men to look after them'.²⁸⁵ Despite this necessity, Spender still viewed the 'nursing of babies' as the job women did best and claimed that given the choice most women preferred to be married and not employed outside the home.²⁸⁶ Women working therefore would be short-lived, Spender argued, once time had readjusted the demographics altered by the war women would not need to work and would not choose to do so.

Theresa Moriarty argues that after the war Irish women's trade unions disintegrated and women were expelled from the workforce at a faster rate and with less training opportunities than women in England.²⁸⁷ Press polemic was not consistent on the issue of women's work, however, and progressive views were becoming more common. In May 1919, a letter in the *Independent* entitled 'Advance Ladies' warned that the twentieth

²⁸³ 'Work and the Woman', *Irish Independent*, 20 Sep. 1919.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Moriarty, 'Industrial Action', p. 88.

century would be most notable for the emancipation of women, because women had in art, athletics and the professions established a foothold, from which it would be difficult for them to be 'dislodged'.²⁸⁸

However, as the political situation in Ireland deteriorated and the War of Independence intensified, increased unrest heightened concerns over women and social boundaries.

'H.H' wrote regretfully to the *Independent* in March 1920 that people had become 'accustomed to the great invasion' of women from the home into the workplace that was the 'sacred domain and scheduled reservations of man'.²⁸⁹ He complained that it had 'made business romantic and deprived it of the suggestion of eternal work'.²⁹⁰ The suggestion that women's work was never equal to men's also came from 'J. A. McD', who wrote to the *Independent* in June 1920, that 'the payment of female employees on a lower scale than men has never been regarded as unjust, even by those most immediately concerned... masculine efficiency is only obtainable from men'.²⁹¹ 'J. A. McD' argued that calls for equal pay for women asked people to accept a 'solemn affirmation of a sexual absurdity'.²⁹²

Insecurities about women entering the preserve of male journalists were printed in the press, as the columns naturally reflected the issues faced by their authors. In the *Independent*, 'A Literary Gent' wrote to complain about praise being given to the increasing number of letters written to the press by women and the praise publicly given to them by the editor, because the ladies had 'a knack for choosing interesting subjects,

²⁸⁸ 'Advance Ladies', *Irish Independent*, 28 May 1919.

²⁸⁹ 'The Advent of the Woman Juror', *Irish Independent*, 23 Mar. 1920.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

and dealing with them, in a lighter vein.²⁹³ He quoted his Uncle Toby and agreed with his assertion that 'if anything more than vanity prompts the ladies to appear in print it is not apparent in their literary efforts.'²⁹⁴ This mockingly dismissive treatment of what women wrote implied half-seriously that women were both incapable and uninterested in writing anything of value. Polemical interventions against women's changing roles in Irish society reflected broader material experiences, for example, Laura Kelly's study of Irish women in medicine highlights that despite the perception that women found it easier to gain work within the medical profession because of the changes during the war, it was very difficult to gain employment for women who graduated after 1918.²⁹⁵ Deborah Thom also emphasises that in Britain while women had shown they could work during the war, they had not shown that they had a right to do so.²⁹⁶

Notwithstanding the views of some commentators, more progressive views on married women's rights were increasingly voiced in the press. In March 1921, the *Freeman's* described a talk from Dr. Mellroy on women and work in which he argued that increasingly women had to work out of necessity. Mellroy argued that 'married women more and more' had to work and that it was 'not fair to thrust them out of work without clear proof that their work is injurious to the next generation'.²⁹⁷ Mellroy cautioned against putting women off having children for fear of losing employment. He believed that already women found marriage problematic because it forced them to rely on a limited wage 'earned by one worn and harassed man', while women were able and willing

²⁹³ 'What Women Chiefly Write About', *Irish Independent*, 22 Feb. 1921.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Laura Kelly, *Irish women in Medicine, c. 1880s-1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 149.

²⁹⁶ Thom, p. 8.

²⁹⁷ 'Women and Women's Work', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Mar. 1921.

to assist their husbands in earning money. Mellroy pointed out the practical failings of the marriage ideal in which a woman was solely supported by her husband by suggesting that although this might work when they were just a married couple it could result in 'hopeless poverty when there are children'.²⁹⁸ Olivia Strachey exclaimed in a letter to the editor of the *Independent* in September 1921 that 'we are just women, no longer a dream, a joke, or a problem, just an ordinary part of the human race, fitting in naturally as citizens, workers, and companions into a world which includes us.'²⁹⁹

Between the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in July 1921 and the Constitution of the Irish Free State in December 1922 what rights, if any, would be provided for married women in the new Irish state were hotly contested. In October 1922, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington demanded to know what rights would be provided for women by the Irish constitution. She deplored that women were not regarded as guardians of their children and that inheritance rights remained restricted, stating that in 'marriage law husband and wife are to continue to be regarded as one and the husband is that one'.³⁰⁰ Maryann Valiulis argues that many Irish women who had played key roles in bringing about Irish independence had expected more than the domestic roles they were assigned in the Irish Free State. Valiulis suggests that the paradox of the 1922 Constitution was that it gave women over the age of twenty-one the vote, yet the state was desperate to restrain women's access to public life; in the 1920s this resulted in a backlash against women's participation in the civil service or serving on juries.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ 'How We Have Progressed', *Irish Independent*, 23 Sep. 1921.

³⁰⁰ 'Dail and Women's Rights', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1922.

³⁰¹ Maryan Valiulis, 'Power, Gender and Identity in the Irish Free State', *Journal of Women's History*, 7 (1995) 117-136 (p. 120).

2.6 Conclusion

Representations of marriage in the nationalist press emphasise the intersection between Catholic ideals and everyday life in Ireland. A prominent ideology in the nationalist dailies linked indissoluble marriage and the stem family to the moral and physical strength of the Irish nation. Often a discourse that suggested marriage and procreation were fundamental to the 'state' was voiced in Ireland, however, implicit in this rhetoric was that the 'state' referred to the Irish nation and not the state as represented in Westminster. This discourse also upheld an ideal of pure, Irish Catholic wives and suggested that Protestant women in countries like England or America, where divorce laws were more relaxed, were 'other'.

Marriage in early-twentieth-century Ireland was as political a subject as the more revolutionary events of the period. Concerns over the power a Home Rule Ireland would have to legislate about marriage laws meant that there was widespread engagement and discussion in the press about women's rights to access divorce, the status of mixed marriage couples and custody of children. After the war, the press increasingly described and discussed married women engaging in public life. However, counterrevolutionary action by politicians during the period of the Irish Free State stifled and covered up not only female participation in Ireland's armed struggles for independence, but questions that had been raised about women's rights during the revolutionary period.³⁰²

Although the press discussed marriages that were imperfect, these were usually portrayed as 'other' to the ideal. Mixed marriages were deplored for the perils associated

³⁰² Ryan describes how women's participation in the revolutionary events of the period were hidden by the proceeding regime Valiulis discusses how women's rights were curtailed during the Free State Period. Ryan, "Furies and Die-Hards", p. 256.
Valiulis, 'Power, Gender and Identity in the Irish Free State', p. 120.

with deciding the religion of children. Reports of marital breakdown often depicted a rich and wayward Protestant, Anglo-Irish class in sensationalised tales of divorce, which were almost always violent. Class and religion ran through press polemic about marriage, the Catholic middle-class slant of the *Independent* and *Freeman's* was evident in the lurid reports of upper-class Protestant divorce cases and heart-wrenching descriptions of usually Catholic women being abandoned by affluent, often Protestant spouses or potential spouses.

Singleness

3.1 Introduction

Press polemic about single people during the revolutionary period portrayed singleness in a variety of ways dependent on a person's social class, gender and age, but certain themes ran throughout these discussions. The most controversial topic was how much provision should be made to support vulnerable or impoverished single people. Press debates suggested that widows and their children were a particular concern for charities and governments. However, single men were less easily constructed as deserving of support, which will be discussed in relation to the allocation of labourers' cottages. While spinsters were less derided than bachelors, they were nonetheless the focus of a certain amount of pitying and derogatory press commentary.

Debates about welfare raised issues that were increasingly being voiced in early-twentieth-century Britain and Ireland as to what was an appropriate level of state intervention in people's lives. José Harris describes the ideological development that occurred in the United Kingdom as people began to conceive of 'society' for the first time and to view it as an organic being, which had symptoms of decay or debilitation that should be treated for the benefit of the whole.¹ However, in Ireland this was complicated by evolving conceptions of what constituted the state, from visions of a Home Rule parliament in the pre-war years to a lack of clear definition of the Irish state after the 1916 Rising when Sinn Féin was growing increasingly popular, but Ireland was technically still represented at Westminster by the Irish Parliamentary Party. Further confusion over

¹ José Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 232.

where authority lay in Ireland followed during the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. This chapter outlines and critiques issues of welfare, taxation and singleness, considering first widows and then bachelors and spinsters.

3.2 Widowhood

3.2.1 Working-Class Widows

Franz Lehar's *The Merry Widow* was performed between 1912 and 1923 at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin, with a break between 1917 and 1921. The operetta contained many of the themes which ran throughout the discussion of widows in the Irish nationalist dailies: love, intimacy, loss, financial concerns, worrisome female sexuality, the weakness and vulnerability of women and the importance to the nation of women as mothers. Before the First World War it was assumed that the general public and philanthropic organisations would care for widows and children. Much rhetoric suggested the 'heroic' masculinity displayed by working-class men who died at work warranted community respect and support for their widows. This equally emphasised the rigid roles prescribed for husbands, who were expected to act as protectors and providers for their families. However, with the introduction of separation allowances during the war it became more common for editors and commentators in the press to suggest that the state should pay to support widows and their children.

Widows' children, who were often praised for being the future of the Irish nation, were also commonly discussed in the nationalist dailies. Child welfare was a growing area of concern during the revolutionary period, which witnessed much agitation for provisions to be made for widows and their children. This resulted in welfare legislation in the Free

State that had its roots in the revolutionary period, yet evolving attitudes to welfare before 1922 have received less historical attention than in the later period. First some context to press polemic about widows will be given by considering the development of state welfare available to them and then how press discussions of widowhood formed specific ideals of Irish femininity during the revolutionary period will be considered, as well as how this related to Irish masculinity.

In the early twentieth century, poor relief was administered by regional Poor Law Guardians under the 1838 Poor Law (Ireland) Act, which was modelled on the 1834 Poor Law Act in Britain. The intention of the Act was to deter people from taking relief. To this end, workhouses were established where people could get food and shelter in return for labour, but these provided a low quality of life and separated families.² Relief was provided outside the workhouse to those the state deemed truly deserving, which included widows in the first six months after their husband's death.³ The stigma attached to poor relief and its meagre offerings meant that many widows avoided taking relief and suffered crippling poverty instead.⁴ Middle-class philanthropists disapproved of workhouse provision for widows, viewing it as contrary to family life, and partly because of this during the Famine it became permissible for widows to receive outdoor relief if they had two or more children.⁵

Welfare provided to widows and their children evolved in the context of a broader development of two political entities in Ireland and Britain, respectively the Irish Home Rule movement and the British Liberal/Labour collaboration. The Liberal Party and the

² Ibid, p. 16.

³ Ibid, p. 208.

⁴ Lindsey Earner-Byrne, "Parading Their Poverty", p. 33.

⁵ Ibid, p. 32.

Labour Party worked in conjunction when both were tied to the Liberal Party, which became associated with labour in the 1860s after the selection of some Lib-Lab MPs, and Home Rule in the 1880s after the union between Parnell and Gladstone.⁶ In the 1906 general election, both the Irish nationalists and the labour-leaning Liberal candidates did well. In 1908, Herbert Asquith became Prime Minister and Lloyd George was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lloyd George was a central figure in the promotion of 'New Liberal' policies which focused on improving society by battling the causes of poverty. New liberalism justified interventions on behalf of poorer members of society in order to ensure that they had the freedom (unrestrained by poverty) to participate fully in a capitalist society. New liberals spurred to action by reports of poor people's appalling living conditions by investigators like Hobhouse and Rowntree.⁷

The rise of organised labour and demands for workers' rights were the backdrop not only to high political developments concerning welfare, but also press polemic surrounding the treatment of the widows and orphans of working-class men in Ireland. Working-class men regularly risked their lives working in unsafe environments to support their families. Concerns about widows, especially widows with children, were prominent in the nationalist dailies before the First World War and often voiced by charitable organisations. In September 1912, the *Independent* reprinted an interview from the *Daily News*, in which General Bramwell Booth, Chief of Staff for the Salvation Army, deplored 'not only the waste of child life, but the waste of child chance'.⁸ The Salvation Army had been founded in Britain in the 1860s by Catherine and William Booth as a response to the

⁶ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory Britain 1900-1990* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1996), p. 28.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 54.

⁸ 'City Extra', *Irish Independent*, 2 Sep. 1912.

appalling poverty they witnessed in London.⁹ The organisation targeted women in particular, aiming to assist working-class women to live moral lifestyles and raise Christian children. In 1880, the organisation had begun working in Ireland, first establishing itself in Belfast and then setting up a Dublin corps in 1888. William Booth's son, Bramwell, took over command of the Salvation Army in 1912.¹⁰ Bramwell Booth saw it necessary to care for fatherless children and widows, claiming that:

Thousands of women with children are widowed every year, to whom the workhouse is as great a horror as it would be to your widow or mine. I hope to do something for these widows, and as for their children, I think the nation has a very grave responsibility.¹¹

Bramwell Booth placed the responsibility for these widows and orphans on the shoulders of the community, suggesting that the failure of the traditional familial structure and resultant poverty was a problem for society as a whole.

It was not just philanthropic bodies that were concerned about the plight of widows and their children, calls were made in the press for the state to take a more active role in supporting them. In October 1912, the *Freeman's* printed a special article on 'Pensions for Widows' written by Nora Tynan O'Mahony, sister of Katherine Tynan who had contributed to 'The Seven Ages of Woman'.¹² She described the benefits of a pension for widows, beginning by praising the Old Age Pensions Act of 1911, which had seen the state accept a new degree of financial responsibility for its most vulnerable citizens as 'one of

⁹ Gráinne. M. Blair, 'Equal Sinners': Irish Women Utilising the Salvation Army Rescue Network for Britain and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century' in *The Irish Women's History Reader* ed. by Alan Hayes and Diane Urquhart, (London: Routledge, 2011), pp.139-144 (p.144).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 'City Extra', *Irish Independent*, 2 Sep. 1912.

¹² 'Pensions for Widows', *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Oct. 1912.

the best measures of reform ever given to us by the English Government'.¹³ However, as the status of widows and their children had been less clear in this legislation. O'Mahony explained that:

My sympathies have never been with the suffragettes; yet one wonders a little if some such benevolent measure might not ere this have been enacted if women had a share in the making of the laws of their country[...]The lot of the poor widow left practically penniless on the death of her husband and bread-winner, often with six or eight children to provide for, is surely a most pitiable and heartrending one. A mother's hands are full enough, goodness knows, with the constant care of her children and house and to be the bread-winner also involves a terrible strain, under which sooner or later she is likely to breakdown. Therefore she is faced with the problem of either parting in her hour of greatest loneliness and desolation with her little ones - and no one but a mother can guess what that means - of giving them up in some institution or under the care of some more well-to-do relative, away from the tender, watchful care of her loving, aching mother's heart; or else of keeping them to starve with herself at home.¹⁴

Widowed mothers were an issue that women felt comfortable speaking about publically. Tynan O'Mahony positioned their plight as only fully comprehensible to other mothers, suggesting they were particularly capable of empathy and compassion, which reinforced notions of women as the 'naturally' caring sex. Far from ignoring women's voices on the matter, the *Freeman's* proudly published Tynan O'Mahony's views as a special piece. The *Freeman's* affiliation to the IPP suggested the Party had some sympathy for the plight of widows and their children.

The following month the *Freeman's* also reported on a court case dealing with similar themes. Ellen Mary Hancock, a widow from Bristol, was charged with stealing from drapers and grocers shops.¹⁵ In court, she claimed that she had been driven to steal by the Insurance Act, which had resulted in several women, including her, being laid off from

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 'Driven to Steal', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Nov. 1912.

the sack factory where they had worked. Hancock, 'having a good character, was bound over to be of good behaviour'.¹⁶ Although Hancock challenged the charges made against her, which did not fit with traditional views of women as passive and submissive, the court did not punish her with the severity that other 'deviant' women (such as those who drank excessively) were treated, implying considerable sympathy with her position.

As seen in Hancock's case, discussion of widows highlighted the plight of the working classes in Ireland. Men were often expected to work in unsafe environments, therefore reports of deadly accidents at work were common in the nationalist press and these often included commentary on the suffering of working-class widows. On 6 January 1913, the *Freeman's* lead editorial covered one such tragedy that had occurred at Pigeon House sewage works in Dublin when Christopher Leonard, a worker for the sewage works was overcome by sulphurous gas and rendered unconscious in a culvert. The editorial in the *Freeman's* described the bravery displayed by men trying to help, as men 'after man faced death in the hope of saving the life of the workman'; it claimed that the 'battlefield has never seen a finer display of self-sacrifice than that given by John Tallant, who although he had seen the other rescuers stricken, descended without hesitation into the stifling culvert'.¹⁷ The heroic masculine ideals attached to men by the press emphasise the expectations of resilience and physical strength placed upon working-class men who undertook dangerous and potentially fatal work to provide for their families – which was typical in many working-class employments.

The *Independent* reported that the first man to go into the culvert after Leonard was his colleague, Bartle O'Connor, who also fell unconscious. Then three more workers, Pat

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 'Main Editorial', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Jan. 1913.

Saunders, Michael Roche and Sam Beamish made 'brave but ineffectual' efforts to rescue the two men, before John Tallant and Henry O'Brien, two sailors from a sludge steamer moored close by, came to assist.¹⁸ O'Brien went down attached to a rope but passed out and was pulled back up. Finally, Tallant descended and was able to pull all of the men up; all six were taken to hospital, but Leonard was dead on arrival. A few days later, the *Independent* reported the 'death of a hero', as Bartle O'Connor had also perished.¹⁹



Figure I: 'Tragedy and Heroism', *Irish Independent*, 6 Jan. 1913.

The heroism and manliness of the men involved was also stressed in later coverage of the incident. George G. Mooney, the Parish Priest at St. Joseph's church in Ringsend where the workers had worshipped, described his great admiration for the 'pluck and courage of the heroes - such they really are - who, heedless of death, fearlessly risked their lives to rescue and save those who, overcome by the sewer-gas, lay powerless, and as if they

¹⁸ 'Tragedy and Heroism', *Irish Independent*, 6 Jan. 1913.

¹⁹ 'Death of a Hero', *Irish Independent*, 11 Jan. 1913.

were lifeless'.²⁰ He enclosed £2 with his letter to the editor of the *Freeman's*, to begin a fund for the widows and children of Leonard and O'Connor.²¹

At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation, Lorcan Sherlock,²² the Lord Mayor of Dublin, also praised O'Connor's 'heroic conduct' and claimed that no:

greater love could a man show for another than by his readiness to risk his life for him, and in this case a life was readily given to save that of a comrade and fellow-worker. O'Connor was a man of the humblest type, drawn from the common people, to whose ranks he (the Lord Mayor) was himself pleased to belong.²³

At the Corporation meeting a public fund was opened, 'to receive subscriptions to go towards the succour of the widows and orphans of the two men who had died doing their duty at the Pigeon House'.²⁴ The *Independent* discussed the fund in an editorial, calling it a 'deserving fund' and publicising that one man had left a widow and four children, the other a widow and five children.²⁵ The use of public funds suggested that it was acceptable some responsibility for supporting these men's families fall on the kindness of the Irish public, and not entirely on the state or their employers.

Men were under considerable pressures as the breadwinner of the family, expected to fulfil brave, soldierly ideal of manliness, as the press had highlighted in reports of Bartle O'Connor's death. But this was not always possible and mental health issues could be particularly painful and damaging to families. Suicide was illegal in Ireland and carried a social stigma because it was condemned by the Catholic Church, but this did not prevent

²⁰ 'Letters to the Editor', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jan. 1913.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Sherlock was a progressive mayor, with links to the United Irish League and the Irish Parliamentary Party, who would go on to attempt to diffuse growing tensions between trade unions and workers, and the Dublin Corporation in the summer of 1913.

Padraig Yeates, *Lockout Dublin 1913* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2001), p. Xivv.

²³ 'Dublin Heroes', *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Jan. 1913.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ 'A Deserving Appeal', *Irish Independent*, 28 Jan. 1913.

men and women trying and succeeding at taking their own lives. The *Criminal and Judicial Statistics For Ireland 1912* show that in 1912 twenty people were tried for attempting suicide in Ireland, seventeen of whom were men.²⁶ Trials for attempted suicide increased four-fold in the first two years of the war, perhaps because of the added mental stress it caused.²⁷ In the Dublin Metropolitan Police District between 1912 and 1914 the police were aware of sixty-four attempted suicides by men and forty-eight by women.²⁸ These figures are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of suicide in Ireland, because they only offer insight into suicide attempts that failed and were known to the authorities in the Dublin area, but they do suggest that self-harm was a recognised social problem.

Reports in the nationalist press indicate that male suicide was not infrequent in pre-war Ireland, emphasizing the emotionally and financially fraught position. In February 1913, a labourer from Inch, Co. Donegal, was found hanging from a tree in his brother's garden; in a note he left his wife he wrote 'give my love to all the children. I can't help this as my head is so bad.'²⁹ His widow 'tearfully informed the jury that her husband seemed quite rational the previous day, but was depressed latterly' and they returned a verdict of 'suicide while temporarily insane'.³⁰ The following month, Sergeant Mannix, a Royal Irish Constabulary Officer in charge of the police station in Ballyvary, Co. Mayo, shot himself dead leaving a wife and three children.³¹ There was no financial reason for his suicide. The

²⁶ E. O'Farrell, *Criminal and Judicial Statistics Ireland 1912* (London: HMSO, 1912).

²⁷ E. O'Farrell, *Criminal and Judicial Statistics Ireland 1915* (London: HMSO, 1915); E. O'Farrell, *Criminal and Judicial Statistics Ireland 1916* (London: HMSO, 1916).

²⁸ E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1912* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1912); E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1913* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1913); E. O'Farrell, *Statistical Tables of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 1914* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Com, 1914).

²⁹ 'Donegal Labourer's Suicide', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Feb. 1913.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ 'Blew His Brains Out', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Mar. 1913.

widow said that she had 'noticed recently that her husband was depressed' and 'spoke very seldom'.³² In August 1913, the *Independent* described 'a widow's strange request' at the inquest of Thomas Hannon, who had strangled himself with a silk handkerchief while in 'unsound mind'; she asked for the handkerchief, but the Coroner refused her stating that these items were sometimes used by the widow to kill herself in the same way as the dead person.³³ Widows were created and made vulnerable not only by the tragic deaths of their husbands at their own hands, but as a result of losing their husbands in the deteriorating political situation in Ireland due not only to the spread of nationalist and unionist militarism, but also disputes over labour questions about squalid, overcrowded housing, which particularly centred on Dublin.³⁴ Disputes between trade unionists and the Dublin Corporation resulted in workers strikes and in response a lockout from employers between January and August 1913, which was spearheaded by William Martin Murphy, owner of the *Irish Independent*, and consequently violence was common on the streets. In September 1913, one such clash between police and workmen proved fatal. After a day of riots that began in Ringsend, the working-class district that had been the location of the Pigeon House disaster eight months previously, a crowd gathered around Liberty Hall in the centre of Dublin in the evening. During the attempt by police to disperse a crowd from Eden Quay a labourer, James Nolan, was fatally wounded and a police baton charge resulted in an additional two hundred people being hospitalised.³⁵ At the inquest into Nolan's death, Christina Nolan, his widow reportedly wept piteously. Many reports described Mrs. Nolan's distress and the 'allegations of brutality against the police'.³⁶

³² Ibid.

³³ 'A Widow's Strange Request', *Irish Independent*, 19 Aug. 1913.

³⁴ Yeates, p. Xx.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ '20,000 Workers Affected', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Sep. 1913.

Nolan had a vast public funeral, attended by between 10,000 and 12,000 mourners, which became less of a funeral and more, as the *Freeman's* described it, 'an extraordinary demonstration' with trade unionists carrying placards.³⁷ Although Nolan's death was used to further the socialist cause it was the image of his widow at the funeral that drew much press attention. The *Freeman's* detailed the 'pathetic sight' of the coach carrying the widow and her 'five children - one of them a fat little baby... It was all deep sorrow, mourning for the poor fellow who had been taken away, and commiseration for the bereaved young widow and her little orphans'.³⁸

As had been the case with the widows of the Pigeon House accident, Nolan's widow and children were supported by people who wanted to show support for the bravery of the dead husband. A fund was opened for his widow and orphans at the Amalgamated Slaters and Tilers Dublin branch.³⁹ It was intended to 'enable the widow and children to get along in the battle of life under some fair conditions'.⁴⁰ That Nolan's children were called 'orphans' despite having lost only their father infantilised his widow by denying her full adulthood or parenthood. The North Dublin Guardians passed a resolution of sympathy with Nolan's widow and said it trusted that the public would continue giving to the relief fund.⁴¹

While the state did not provide assistance as a matter of policy to widows, in some cases the law courts were willing to intervene against employers on their behalf. In October 1913, Catherine Bolton, a widow with four children, claimed that her husband had died of Bright's disease, caused by lead poisoning he had endured while working as a painter for

³⁷ 'Public Funeral', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Sep. 1913.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ 'The Baton Charges', *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Sep. 1913.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ 'North Dublin Guardians', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Sep. 1913.

Great Southern and Western Railway.⁴² The Recorder decided the railway company had to pay compensation and awarded her £229, of which £80 would be put in trust for the children.⁴³

Alongside or instead of relief from the state widows often relied upon public charity and the press was active in advocating and facilitating this. For example, in February 1914, the *Mexico* sank off the Irish coast, near to the village of Fethard, South Wexford. Three Irishmen lost their lives trying to save the boat and its crew. The *Freeman's* described the mourners walking 'in mute sorrow, unless when, at frequent intervals, one heard a heartfelt prayer for the repose of the souls of the deceased, or an exclamation which testified to the admiration of that valour which has added an imperishable record to the annals of Irish and Wexford heroism.'⁴⁴ The *Freeman's* opened a fund for the widows and children of the heroic dead men, expressing their confident hope that 'our readers will now do the duty that falls upon them'.⁴⁵ In the following months, Carrick-on-Suir Urban Council and Cashel Urban Council held public meetings to raise funds for the families of the lifeboat men.⁴⁶ Two boys from Longford raised 23 shillings on their own accord to donate to the cause, which was sent with a letter to the editor of the *Freeman's* from one of the boys' fathers.⁴⁷ This touched upon a broader rhetoric in the press that suggested there was a general lack of welfare provided for the poorest in Irish society at this time. The plight of women particularly, who could not support themselves as easily as men due to lower wages or needing to support children was significant. However, as will be

⁴² 'Lead Poisoning', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Oct. 1913.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ 'A Line of Coffins', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Feb. 1914.

⁴⁵ 'A Ready Response', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Feb. 1914.

⁴⁶ 'Fethard Lifeboat Tragedy', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Mar. 1914.

⁴⁷ 'Two Boys and the Fethard Fund', *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Mar. 1914.

discussed in the next section, while politicians, the press and the general public may have been sympathetic towards widows and their children before the First World War, the war was to change the state's relationship with welfare significantly.

3.2.2 Separation Allowances and Mothers' Pensions

On 4 August 1914 Britain and Ireland joined the First World War and discussions of widows and welfare provision were significantly altered by policies aimed at supporting war widows and soldiers' dependents. Debates about separation allowances in the nationalist dailies show how Irish ideals of femininity and masculinity influenced the development of state policy, even as the notion of what represented the 'state' in Ireland evolved. During the First World War, children were no longer viewed as mere dependents, but future soldiers. Women were not just wives and mothers, but soldiers' wives and the mothers of current or future recruits. This raised the status of both mothers and their offspring.

Lindsey Earner-Byrne describes the work of the Irish Mothers' Pension Society, particularly its honourable secretary John Patrick Dunne, in campaigning for mothers' (often specifically widows) welfare during the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁸ The Irish Mothers' Pension Society was a non-governmental organisation set up to advocate for reform to the welfare provided to widows, particularly widowed mothers, who avoided relief under the system set up by the Irish Poor Law because of the social stigma associated with receiving support in this way.⁴⁹ Earner-Byrne argues that this was influential in bringing about the *Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane*

⁴⁸ Lindsey Earner-Byrne, "Parading Their Poverty", p. 34.

⁴⁹ Ibid p. 33.

Poor in 1928.⁵⁰ This chapter will consider the press coverage of Dunne and the Mothers' Pension Society during the revolutionary period, demonstrating that the organisation had been vocal in the Irish press long before the 1920s and that it began calling for the introduction of some form of mothers' welfare in the more sympathetic atmosphere created by the introduction of separation allowances in the First World War.

Separation allowances were introduced in August 1914 and intended to support the dependents of soldiers fighting in the army.⁵¹ Those benefiting from these allowances in the United Kingdom went from eleven hundred to half a million in a few months and rose to a peak of 1.5 million.⁵² Joseph O'Brien describes the allowances as a valuable recruitment tool in Ireland.⁵³ The state did not want the responsibility or financial burden of the allowances, but reluctantly accepted that they were necessary in order to feed the British war machine.⁵⁴

Consequently, multiple conversations about separation women took place in the press during the first years of war and this chapter considers how widows figured in this polemic. In November 1914, the scale of separation allowances was increased so that a widow of the lowest grade with four children, whose husband was in the army or navy, would receive a minimum of £1 per week and upon remarriage widows would be entitled to £39 instead of £13 per annum.⁵⁵ This increase, however, was still thought insufficient by the *Freeman's*.⁵⁶ It was pointed out that the 'treatment of the childless widow of a

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 34

⁵² Susan Pederson, 'Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain During the Great War', *The American Historical Review*, 95 (1990), 983-106 (p. 985).

⁵³ Joseph V. O'Brien, *"Dear Dirty Dublin" A City in Distress, 1899-1916* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 254.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 990.

⁵⁵ 'Soldiers & Sailors', *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Nov. 1914.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

soldier, for instance, remains a hardship'.⁵⁷ The *Freeman's*, keen to support the Irish Parliamentary Party's recruitment campaign, editorialised that the 'new scale of allowances and pensions in respect of seamen, marines, and soldiers, and their wives, widows and dependents, will dispose of one obstacle' to enlistment.⁵⁸

The Irish press closely followed debates about pensions in Westminster, suggesting that they were of great significance in Ireland. Asquith appointed six MPs to a Select Committee to report on military pensions.⁵⁹ The findings of the Select Committee were discussed in the House of Commons and George Nicholl Barnes, MP for Glasgow Blackfriars and Hutchesontown and member of the Select Committee, complained that:

the stoppages from the married men's pay were causing much dissatisfaction. A widow who was made a widow by the war should receive such a pension as would keep her out of the labour market altogether, and the children should be regarded and treated as wards of the State.⁶⁰

In February 1915, the Select Committee prepared a report that as the *Freeman's* correctly predicted increased the value of pensions given to soldiers' wives and widows; this change came into effect in March 1915.⁶¹ The *Independent* described the changes as being 'in the nature of a revolution'.⁶²

In July 1915, a new Naval and Military Pensions Bill was read in the House of Commons bringing the treatment of widows and their children into a public forum again. Gerald Hohler, Conservative MP for Chatham, called it a 'sham' and a 'farce' because so little was offered to dependents, but Thomas MacNamara, Liberal MP for Camberwell North,

⁵⁷ 'Our London Letter', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Nov. 1914.

⁵⁸ 'The Conscription Scare', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Nov. 1914.

⁵⁹ 'The Pensions Scheme', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Nov. 1914.

⁶⁰ 'Pension Scheme', *Irish Independent*, 19 Nov. 1914.

⁶¹ 'London Correspondence', *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Feb. 1915.

⁶² 'Navy Separation Money', *Irish Independent*, 17 Feb. 1915.

responded that far from being 'niggardly' it offered more than ever before and more than any other European country had ever proposed to give.⁶³ Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, echoed MacNamara and claimed that Britain had done more than any other country for soldiers and sailors.⁶⁴ At the same time it was decided that the Select Committee should be able to make grants in special cases to enable widows and dependents of deceased officers and men to obtain training and employment'.⁶⁵ This suggests that rather than shoulder the financial burden of supporting widows, the state preferred to promote lower class women working to support themselves. Financial necessity pushed the state away from enforcing traditional ideas about women not belonging in the paid workforce, despite it still being prominent in the rhetoric of some MPs, such as George Nicholl Barnes.

Despite the formation of the Select Committee and attempts to reform army pensions, the Irish press reported that in Ireland separation allowances were especially delayed and lacking, exacerbating an issue of unsupported widows and their dependents. The main editorial in the *Freeman's* on 14 March 1916 expressed support for a letter they published from The O'Connor Don, home rule MP for North Kildare, who the newspaper described as 'a friend of the Irish soldier and a worker in the recruiting campaign in Ireland'.⁶⁶ In his letter, The O'Connor Don claimed it was 'rightly felt that the provision for the dependents was absolutely necessary to ensure good recruiting' and instead of making good on this there were months of delay before money reached dependents and claims were cumbersome, while the procedure for submitting them was unclear. He understood that

⁶³ 'The New Government Provision', *Irish Independent*, 1 Jul. 1915.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ 'The War Pensions Bill', *Irish Independent*, 15 Jul. 1915.

⁶⁶ 'Obstacles to Recruiting', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar. 1916.

there was a Statutory Committee in London to hear cases, but he did not believe it had heard a single Irish case.⁶⁷ The editorial described the letter as calling for reform and in doing so being a:

protest against a system which everybody hoped would have been reformed out of existence long ago. One would have said that, while the call for recruits and more recruits was being made, care would be taken that neither the men who were broken in the fight nor the dependents of those who went down for ever would have cause to say that in the hour of their misfortune they were left without assistance.⁶⁸

The following month, the *Freeman's* continued to deplore the folly of having a committee in London dealing with Irish pension claims.⁶⁹ Their derision of governing Irish interests abroad supported their claims for Irish Home Rule and the transfer of power over Irish affairs to an autonomous Irish government.

By 1916, the costs of supporting dependents had soared and it was stated on behalf of the treasury that a £6,000,000 grant for widows and dependents would be strengthened if necessary.⁷⁰ This exemplified the British government's new attitude towards caring for widows and dependents. An editorial in the *Independent* in August 1916 was adamant that the state should take responsibility for providing this sort of welfare, but also questioned what that meant for Ireland in the future. The *Independent* declared that:

Mr. Asquith said the other day when speaking of the army that the men who had shown such splendid examples of patriotic self-sacrifice should be assured, as far as it was possible to assure them, against any want or suffering from unemployment after the war. This sounds very well, but soldiers will have some doubts as to the value of the Prime Minister's assurance when they realise how

⁶⁷ 'Letter from the O'Connor Don', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar. 1916.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ 'War Pensions in Ireland', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Apr. 1916.

⁷⁰ 'Items of War', *Irish Independent*, 4 Aug. 1916.

the Government proposes to treat disabled soldiers and the widows and dependents of soldiers who have fallen on the battlefield⁷¹

The *Independent* demanded that the state do its job and care for soldiers' dependents, but implicitly also cautioned that Britain would have a financial responsibility towards Irish soldiers whether Ireland was granted some form of self-governance after the war or not.⁷² At this point it was unclear whether the *Independent* was envisioning the welfare strategy of a Home Rule Ireland or a fully autonomous Irish government.

In the House of Commons the issue of Irish women's separation allowances were raised by Alfred Byrne, Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Dublin Harbour, who asked whether any increase would be made to separation allowances in Ireland as the costs of living had increased by 60% since they had last been fixed.⁷³ Henry Forster, the Financial Secretary for War, responded that a Select Committee would be reassembled to assess the situation.

Concern over the welfare of soldiers' wives was not just seen in parliamentary debates, but also popular literature. Appropriate behaviour and the emotional demands upon a soldier's wife were stressed in the *Freeman's* book review of *Letters From a Grass Widow*, by Mary Hardy.⁷⁴ The book contained a series of letters from a young wife to her husband at the front. The review suggested that as 'the poignant anxieties aroused by the war manifest themselves the trend of the letters is on the deepest of human feelings, finely expressed, with a sustaining note of well-centred, properly directed belief in religion. It is a book which should find ready acceptance in Ireland'.⁷⁵ The protagonist in the novel,

⁷¹ 'Scale of War Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 5 Aug. 1916.

⁷² 'Soldiers' Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 9 Aug. 1916.

⁷³ HC Deb 21 November 1916 vol 87 cc1199-200.

⁷⁴ 'Literature', *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sep. 1916.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Betty, was a practising Catholic, who understood that 'much has been given me; of me much will be required' and faithfully sought to support her husband by sending care packages and letters.⁷⁶ For a brief period Betty's husband went missing and in her desperation she turned to her religion, writing in her diary: 'I thank God I hold Catholic doctrine about my dead, that my church does not regard them with patronizing pity as "past praying for." The incredible desolation of this belief!'⁷⁷ Hardy's novel was welcomed in the nationalist dailies in Ireland because it associated ideal female behaviour with being maternal and pious.

It was not just in popular literature that separation women and soldiers' widows were treated favourably. In January 1917, the *Freeman's* welcomed an increase in separation allowances for lower ranking naval officers.⁷⁸ Also in this year, the Ministry of Pensions assumed control of administering the allowances from charities like the SSFA, which had previously been doing so.⁷⁹ The SSFA had been inspecting separation women and their homes to ensure 'sobriety and good conduct', as well as ensuring children were adequately cared for. The Ministry of Pensions were only concerned to halt behaviour that would constitute legal grounds for divorce, such as infidelity.⁸⁰

Dead soldiers' wives were not the only dependents discussed in the nationalist press. The widows of those involved in the Easter Rising of 1916 and the dependents of the men interned by the British government in its aftermath also garnered considerable press attention. In 1917, the Volunteers Dependents' Fund (VDF) was launched by Kathleen Clarke with the intention to provide for 'the Families and Dependents of the Men who

⁷⁶ Mary Hardy, *Letters From a Grass Widow* (London: Heath Cranton, 1916), p. 74.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ 'Separation Allowances', *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Jan. 1917.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*, p.111.

were Executed, of those who fell in action, of those sentenced to penal servitude in connection with the Insurrection of Easter, 1916, and, in addition, to provide for the necessities of others who suffered by reason of participation, or suspicion of participation in the Insurrection.⁸¹ In doing so, it positioned the widows of the Easter Rising and internment as akin to the widows of the First World War, thereby elevating their husbands to the status of soldiers in Ireland's national army. It also increased the status of widows of dead republicans.

Founded around the same time as the VDF, the Irish National Aid Association (INAA) had grown out of the Mayor's Fund, set up in Dublin to help repair the city following the devastation of the Easter Rising. The VDF and INAA eventually merged to become the Irish National Aid and Volunteers Dependents' Fund (INAAVDF).⁸² The organisation paid for republican funerals, notably Thomas Ashe's in 1917, as well as supporting widows or wives of internees and their children. The INAAVDF operated 'Lady visitors' and predicated welfare on the needs and quality, morally and physically, of each household.⁸³ This was similar to the SSFA and other contemporary philanthropic organisations, demonstrating the pervasive tendency to equate a woman's deservingness of public assistance to her husband and her fulfilment of wifely and motherly duties. The INAAVDF was a recruitment tool for Sinn Féin and has been recognised as a bridge between revolt and revolution by Caoimhe Ni Dháibhéid, who describes the organisation as an effective instance of political welfarism in twentieth-century Ireland, despite its adherence to class

⁸¹ 'Volunteers' Dependents Fund', *Irish Independent*, 13 Jan. 1917.

⁸² Caoimhe Ni Dháibhéid, 'The Irish National Aid Association and the Radicalization of Public Opinion in Ireland, 1916-1918', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 705-729 (p. 706).

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 719.

boundaries as shown by the allocation of more generous amounts to the dependents of upper-class men.⁸⁴

Notwithstanding the substantial changes to where and how much aid was being offered to widows during the war, some working-class widows still struggled to maintain themselves and the dangers faced by working-class men were exacerbated by wartime circumstances creating the potential for many more widows. In June 1917, a letter from Thomas Heany, a parish priest in Spiddal, Co. Galway was printed in both the *Independent* and *Freeman's*.⁸⁵ It divulged the tragic tale of nine men who had been 'blown to atoms' by a mine they had found off the coast and tried to pull ashore to be disarmed. Heany appealed for funds to support their widows and children:

One of the victims leaves a widow and 7 children, who are now absolutely destitute; another a widow (married only 5 years) and 3 young children; a third a widow (married about 4 years) and 2 children; 4 of the other victims were orphans for years and helped very materially to provide for their mother, brothers, and sisters[...]Life is a struggle for existence in the best of times for the majority of the people of this barren district, endeavouring to subsist on small patches of wretched soil, living their own lives in peace and poverty, content and satisfied with the bare necessities of life. Need I say, then, what the outlook is for the poor widows and orphans of this terrible disaster?⁸⁶

Heany called upon 'the benevolent and charitable public' to act on behalf of the widows and their children, feeling it to be his 'sacred duty' to spur the community to support them.⁸⁷ Five days later the *Independent* printed Heany's heartfelt gratitude at the many donations received.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 707.

⁸⁵ 'Spiddal Disaster', *Irish Independent*, 21 Jun. 1917.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ 'Spiddal Mine Disaster', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jun. 1917.

The plight of poor widowed mothers was particularly emphasised in the press during the later war years. Mary Quaid, a Poor Law Guardian, wrote an anguished letter to the *Independent* describing the treatment of a dying woman.⁸⁹ She claimed little surprise that 'a matter concerning the administration of the Poor Law, and the rights of mothers, was not reported in your issues of last week' as it had not reflected credit on the Guardians.⁹⁰ The mother's dying wish had been that her five girls were not separated and instead sent to the Cabra Auxiliary School, but the Guardians made arrangements to board out the younger ones and send the older girls to industrial schools ignoring 'a solemn and binding request' that would have been respected by 'any Catholic with the instincts of humanity'.⁹¹ Quaid hoped for some maternal solidarity and wished that 'at the next election ladies who have votes, will express in a practical manner, their disapproval of such action on the party of men elected to look after the interests of the poor'.⁹² Quaid, like O'Mahony in the pre-war years, suggested that women would be 'naturally' empathetic and compassionate towards widows.

In July 1917, 'Baby Week' was celebrated and the issues affecting widowed mothers were again brought to public attention by press reports on a conference held at the Mansion House, in Dublin, attended by representatives of Infant Aid Societies, Baby Clubs and Women's National Health Associations.⁹³ Dr. Win Maguire, Medical Commissioner of National Health Insurance, gave a paper arguing that the National Insurance (Health) Acts had helped the public realise the importance of maintaining the nation's health. The act had helped many women by allowing them time away from work before, during and after

⁸⁹ 'Guardians and Children', *Irish Independent*, 2 Jul. 1917.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ 'Baby Lives', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Jul. 1917.

confinement.⁹⁴ Patricia Cunningham talked about the difficulty of the working classes not being paid enough to 'feed and clothe their children properly'.⁹⁵

In response to the "Baby Week" conference, John Patrick Dunne wrote a letter to the editor of the *Independent* suggesting that the Irish public should hear about the work of Judge Neil, an American activist for Mothers' Pensions, who had secured mothers allowances in many of the American states.⁹⁶ Dunne, who went on to become secretary of the Mothers' Pensions Society, was a particularly keen advocate of mothers' welfare. Dunne believed that widows, 'by virtue of their motherhood, marital status and poverty' deserved support from the state and that the state should fulfil this role for society.⁹⁷ Dunne felt that not enough was being done for widows and their children.

Dunne proposed that similar measures to those used in America should be included in the National Insurance Act, because he had seen hundreds of cases where 'poverty and want of care of children has been due to the early decease of the bread-winner, and the widowed mother being in consequence compelled to absent herself from home and its duties in order to win a pittance for herself and her orphans'.⁹⁸ Dunne suggested getting Judge Neil, who was at the time in London, to visit Ireland for such would be a huge help to Irish children.⁹⁹ Interestingly, this suggests that despite the political turn in Ireland towards support for Sinn Féin and a disregard for the power of Westminster, Dunne clearly did not feel that the country was at such a stage of revolution that Westminster was incapable of affecting Irish legislation.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ 'Pensions for Widows', *Irish Independent*, 10 Jul. 1917.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Dunne got his wish and in October 1917, Judge Neil came to Ireland to explain his Mothers' Pensions scheme.¹⁰⁰ The movement for mothers' pensions sought to capitalise on the need for manpower caused by the war and Judge Neil's arrival in Ireland. The *Independent* remarked that the 'preservation of child life and rearing of healthy children were never more necessary than now, when the war wastage of life is so appalling'.¹⁰¹ Judge Neil's visit gained considerable attention and support in the press and from some MPs. Stephen Gwynn, MP for Galway Borough, wrote in the *Freeman's* that Judge Neil's suggestion that the fact in France, Great Britain and the United States nowhere 'neglects the children of the very poor as the capital of Ireland[...]should spur all decent men and women into action, for very shame's sake'.¹⁰² Gwynn argued that the kind of mothers' pension introduced in the United States allowed for women with 'no bread-winner nor means to support them' to care for her children and 'maintain a proper home'.¹⁰³ He argued that this form of welfare 'utilises the community as a force of nature - for the maternal instinct is nothing less - which under other arrangements has been sterilised, run to waste, or, as often happens with disregarded forces, perverted into an agency of sheer destruction'.¹⁰⁴ Gwynn claimed:

If you give a mother a fixed sum a week to keep her children, both the community and the children will get far more value for the money than if you paid it to another woman or a charitable institution for the same purpose. If you take away her children from a destitute mother who is capable of caring for them provided she has the means, you lessen her value as a citizen and you probably lower her quality as a human being[...]Of course, there is need of inspection and supervision, and cases occur when a mother is not the best person to care for her children. Judge Neil's testimony is that such cases are the very rare exception, and in them the pension can be withheld. That is a disgrace to the mother. To receive the pension is no disgrace for mother or for children. It is on the same footing as old age pensions[...]Fit provision

¹⁰⁰ 'Mothers' Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 31 Oct. 1917.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² 'Children's Pensions', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Nov. 1917.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

for all children is not only a war necessity; it is the greatest of war necessities, and the cheapest and wisest way of making it has been proved to be that of paying a pension for the destitute child to the child's own mother.¹⁰⁵

This implied that especially during wartime, male children were crucial as potential soldiers and replacement citizens for soldiers lost in the fighting. Equally, Gwynn in this statement was arguing explicitly for the state to take responsibility for the welfare of widows and children.¹⁰⁶

In the wake of the debates about Mothers' Pensions and Judge Neil's visit to Ireland, the Irish Mothers' Pensions Society was founded. Dunne was appointed its Hon Secretary and went on to work with the organisation long after the establishment of the Free State.¹⁰⁷ It held its inaugural meeting at the Trades Hall in Dublin. This was addressed by Reverend Denham Osborne, who argued that there were many children of unspoilt character being raised in institutions even though their 'mothers were alive and qualified and willing to care for and rear them'.¹⁰⁸ While he believed these institutions to be 'excellent, clean, and managed with skill and devotion', they were still institutions, and not homes'.¹⁰⁹ Denham argued that

no amount of institutional efficiency could make up to the children for the deprivation of the home's sanctities and the mother's love[...]Homes, though possessing but few of the special equipments and comforts of the institutions, were nevertheless, if decently furnished, and kept clean, tidy and adequately

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Gwynn had been influenced by his time at Oxford, when he realised that money had a huge affect on the experience people gained there and that many his fellow learners at Brasenose lived apart from the rest of the student body. It was also at this time that he saw first-hand the effects of poverty on Ireland, because of his friendship with Kate O'Brien, the daughter of famous nationalist William Smith O'Brien. O'Brien ran a refuge that helped Irish people emigrate for a better life. In 1913, Gwynn was the only Irish Parliamentary Party to condone the workers' strikes that led to the Dublin Lockout. In 1917, Gwynn returned from fighting in the First World War and advocated support for women and children. After losing his Irish Parliamentary Party seat in the December 1918 election, Gwynn continued to advocate for poverty-stricken people, particularly supporting the cause of demobilised Irish soldiers, who were particularly badly off. Colin Reid, *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) p. 23, p. 117, p. 173.

¹⁰⁷ Earner-Byrne, "Parading their Poverty", p. 33-34.

¹⁰⁸ 'Mothers' Rights', *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Dec. 1917.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

supplied with food, clothing, and education in charge of the mother, the places intended of God for the children's upbringing, and were far superior to any institution[...]In the two Dublin Union districts there were 600 widows, with 2,000 children dependent upon them. The scale upon which this class of people was helped by the Poor Law was inadequate - even cruel, in its inadequacy.¹¹⁰

Later in the Mothers' Pension Society's founding meeting, Alfred Dickie, K.C., proposed that the Irish administration be called upon to provide state pensions for mothers and dependent children, free from all stigma of pauperism; the motion was seconded by Miss Malone and adopted.¹¹¹ The Mothers' Pension Society's aims represent a significant progression in thought, from a society that had been deeply suspicious of the state and its involvement in individual lives, to a state that had a responsibility to intervene in them, irrespective of the potential loss of individual freedom that had been a cornerstone of liberal ideology. However, Lynsey Earner-Bryne argues that this type of intervention was justified by the Mothers' Pension Society, because a widow's family home was seen as already broken.¹¹²

The concern in the nationalist dailies for widowed mothers with children continued to be prominent during the last year of the war and another significant shift is discernible in ideas about how to address these issues. At a meeting of the Mothers' Pensions Society in Father Matthew Hall, Dublin, Reverend Lambert McKenna (who had also encouraged the founding of the Catholic Women's League) summarised the aim of the movement: to get state assistance provided to widows.¹¹³ He argued that this money had to come from the state to stop a heavier burden being placed on the ratepayers.¹¹⁴ McKenna deplored that money from 'the Poor Law, as it existed in Ireland, pauperised its recipients and made

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Earner-Bryne, "Parading their Poverty", p. 35.

¹¹³ 'Mothers' Pensions', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Mar. 1917.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

them ashamed. That was the spirit in which it was established from the beginning, the spirit of its rules and regulations, though he could not say it was the spirit of its officials'.¹¹⁵ He argued that 'money should be given to the widows because they deserve it, so that the mother need not have to undertake any work incompatible with her duty to her own household'.¹¹⁶ This suggested rather radically that women's natural work was motherhood and that it should be paid the same as other employment.

Dunne wrote regularly to the press promoting the cause of the society. In April 1918, he argued that of all the poor in Dublin none had suffered as much as widows, orphans and other dependents, because the money given to them had never been 'adequate to sustain life'.¹¹⁷ In July 1918, Dunne wrote excited by an opportunity to change the way widows were treated, which had arisen because the North Dublin workhouse was being closed. The Local Government Board in Dublin planned to transfer all the occupants to the South Dublin workhouse which would fully fill it and he urged them instead to save expenses by 'dealing with the mothers with dependent children in a separate category. Adequate allowances in all such cases would enable them to provide for their personal and children's needs outside the institution'.¹¹⁸ Dunne suggested that it was preferable to have widows and children in as traditional a family home as possible, rather than in communes of women and children. Dunne wanted to see widows and children integrated into families, rather than large-scale homes, preferring the idea of boarding out both mother and child to a family that could care for them to housing them with one another.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ 'Relief for Widows and Orphans', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Apr. 1918.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

As well as Dunne's open letter to the Local Government Board, a deputation from the Mothers' Pensions Society met with the North Dublin Guardians and discussed boarding out widows and children.¹¹⁹ Miss Malone, a member of the Central Committee for the Employment of Women, asked the Board to take a step towards reform in widows' pensions 'by revising the scale of outdoor relief of widows and children in a generous spirit, so that the mothers would be given sufficient to enable them to keep their homes together and care for the children'.¹²⁰ Walter Nugent, Irish Parliamentary Party MP for South Westmeath and member of the Board, dismissed this, saying that they had done what they could to assist widows and children. Alderman Keogh, J.P, added that the society should help them provide better care for widows and children by helping to find women work outside the workhouse and beyond Poor Law assistance. The Board agreed to do what they could, but cautioned the society that 'if they had not gone the whole length of the scheme of the society they had gone as far as the Poor Law allowed them'.¹²¹ The activities of the Mothers' Pensions Society were hampered by the conflict in Ireland as the revolutionary period progressed. However, in the calmer time of the Irish Free State, Dunne went on to campaign for mothers' pensions and particularly pensions for widowed mothers. Dunne suggested a report be compiled on the subject, which he achieved in 1927 when the Free State appointed the *Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane and Poor*.¹²² The commission found that widows were treated very badly. In 1935 Dunne was pleased to see legislation brought in that entitled poor, widowed mothers to state support.¹²³

¹¹⁹ 'Dublin Workhouses', *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jul. 1918.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Earner-Byrne, "Parading their Poverty", p. 35.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Around the time of the armistice, there were frequent calls for increasing the amount spent on supporting the families of the soldiers who had fought and the widows and children in society who were struggling to maintain themselves. Sinn Féin was less concerned by the issue, because they felt that all welfare complaints in Ireland were likely to be solved by an independent Irish parliament. However, the issue of soldiers' and sailors' wives was raised in the House of Commons and the Irish Parliamentary MPs were particularly vocal. Matthew Keating, MP for South Kilkenny, claimed that 'there were instances of men in his own constituency who had responded to the call, and sacrificed their personal interests, and who, on returning after doing their duty, were the victims of government neglect'.¹²⁴ Keating felt allowances provided to widows and children were inadequate and that it was necessary for soldiers' to see that their dependents 'were not in a worse position than the men and dependents in the Allied armies'.¹²⁵ John Boland, MP for South Kerry, claimed the larger scale of unemployment in Ireland heightened the need for adequate pensions and trusted the government to make the increase that was needed.¹²⁶

By this time, it was clear that some women would have the parliamentary vote in the 1918 General Election and the Mothers' Pension Society urged women to vote for changes to the treatment of widows and children. The Central Branch of the Mothers' Pension Society met at Mansion House and passed the following resolution: 'that we appeal to the woman voters of Ireland to only vote for those candidates for Parliamentary representation of Irish constituencies who are prepared to pledge their active support to the establishment of State Pensions for all necessitous widows and orphans in Ireland,

¹²⁴ 'More Money Wanted', *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Nov. 1918.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

and to remove all such from the purview of Poor Law administration'.¹²⁷ They called on all women's organisations to interview parliamentary candidates and inquire about their exact views on Mothers' Pensions. Their intention was clearly to show the political influence of first-time women voters and women's potential to affect legislation regarding women's welfare. In the lead-up to the vote, the organisation produced election adverts reinforcing the urgency of the issue and placing it firmly as an issue that would be of especial interest to women. One of these adverts urged women to check whether their chosen candidate was in the list of those who had pledged to support pensions' for necessitous widows and orphans and printed the names of the parliamentary candidates who had given their support.¹²⁸

On 21 January 1919, an independent Irish Dáil had been established in Dublin, which produced four constitutional documents, including a Democratic Programme that contained its 'social values and ideals'.¹²⁹ This programme was based on recommendations from the Irish Labour Party, which had been too weak to contest the election, and Emmet O'Connor argues that the programme was a bundle of social reforms that were neither supported by a mandate from the Irish electorate or ever intended to be implemented; O'Connor suggests instead that the programme was aimed at gaining support for Ireland's autonomy from the British Labour Party and at the International Socialist Conference at Berne in February 1919.¹³⁰

The lack of an implementable social policy in Ireland meant that it was more complicated to assign responsibility for addressing welfare for widows and their children in Ireland

¹²⁷ 'The Widows and Orphans', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1918.

¹²⁸ 'Women Electors', *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Dec. 1918.

¹²⁹ Emmet O'Connor, 'Neither Democratic Nor A Programme: The Democratic Programme of 1919', *Irish Historical Studies*, 40 (2016), 92-109 (p. 92).

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 93 and p. 109.

after the war. Frank Fahy, Sinn Féin MP for South Galway, wrote an open letter to the Loughrea Board of Guardians acknowledging receipt of a letter, originally from the Dublin Citizens' Association, but explaining that pensions for widows and orphans could not ease local taxation.¹³¹ Fahy assured them that the Irish Republican Party would solve the economic problem, but 'there were many other matters of importance - but the big and most pressing question was to get rid of the foreigners and then they could easily and speedily solve the smaller difficulties'.¹³²

Sinn Féin's complicated stance on welfare at this time meant that discussions of mothers' pensions largely took place in Westminster and involved Irish MPs from other political parties. Nonetheless the nationalist dailies reported extensively on debates about mothers' pensions that commenced in the House of Commons in April 1919. Tyson Wilson, a Labour MP for West Houghton, moved that pensions adequate to support widows with children, or mothers whose breadwinner had become incapacitated, should be provided by the state not in connection with the Poor Law.¹³³ Major O'Neill, unionist MP for Mid Antrim, remarked that the legislation was sure to come now that women had the vote. Edward Shortt, the Home Secretary, responded that it was impossible for the government to pledge the exact terms of the motion and it was talked out.¹³⁴

The First World War had altered the Irish nationalist dailies' perspective on providing care to widows; the newspapers were far more sympathetic to the view that caring for these women was the state's responsibility, as demonstrated by their coverage of Mothers' Pensions. A combination of New Liberal ideology, wartime necessity and traditional

¹³¹ 'Not a Solution', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jul. 1919.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ 'Pensions for Mothers?' *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Apr. 1919.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

beliefs about women as weak and needing support had resulted in far more money being spent on widows by the end of the First World War. However, the focus of polemic about widowhood shifted during the War of Independence and Civil War. As will be discussed in the following section, discussions of vulnerable widows began to revolve around widows' rights to compensation for the losses they suffered and the need to provide for them and their children.

3.2.3 The Troubles and Widowhood: Pensions and Compensation

From 1919, guerrilla warfare between the Irish Republican Army and the British Crown Forces in Ireland intensified. As during the First World War, the troubles affected the way widows were represented in the nationalist press. In this period, discussions about widows were often related to compensation claims being brought to local Petty Sessions by women after the death of their husbands or damage to their property. This section focuses on the press representations of widows, but first offers an overview of what was being done for them materially. In 1919 and 1920, Criminal Injuries Acts were passed in Westminster, which forced reluctant ratepayers in Ireland to cover the costs of compensation from local taxation, following the loss of a husband through violence or destruction of property.¹³⁵ Many claims were made by widows for compensation during the revolutionary period. After the Civil War, the Free State and the British government were both made liable for damage and injury.¹³⁶ In November 1922, the Free State resolved to proceed with compensation legislation in due course, but allowed claims to be made in the interim.¹³⁷ In 1926, the Shaw Commission was established and this dealt

¹³⁵ Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p. 20.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*.

with claims from the War of Independence. The British and Irish governments divided compensation costs so that they each compensated their own 'supporters' and split the cost of neutral injuries.¹³⁸ The British also paid compensation towards some victims of Irish violence during the Civil War, often topping up payments made by the Free State when people felt they had not been treated generously enough.¹³⁹

Women seeking compensation were often the widows of policemen, but there were also widows who had lost their husbands in reprisals or conflicts between British forces and republicans. In June 1919, an editorial in the *Independent* commented on how unpleasant it was that almost daily money was being awarded for malicious injuries in Ireland and that in some of these cases the men had been police 'murdered while in the discharge of their duty'.¹⁴⁰ These claims resulted in mounting costs that would become a 'blister' to the ratepayers in some counties.¹⁴¹ The editorial regretted that it was 'not so long ago since Ireland was the most peaceful country in the world' and blamed Carsonism, the British Government and the atrocities sanctioned by them for destroying the peace.¹⁴² The editorial expressed agreement with Cardinal Logue's feelings on the matter and urged 'patience and restraint'.¹⁴³ The nationalist dailies consistently condemned the violence and humanitarian cost of conflict in Ireland. The financial cost was also a burden on Irish taxpayers as the money awarded to the claimants in compensation cases came from ratepayers in the first instance, and later more money was provided by the British government.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 24.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ 'Compensation Claims', *Irish Independent*, 23 Jun. 1919.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p. 24.

In January 1920, the case of Mary Finnegan, widow of an RIC constable shot in Thurles, attracted significant attention in the press.¹⁴⁵ The *Freeman's* reported that a resolution condemning the policeman's murder and expressing sympathy for his widow and family had been passed at Thurles Petty Sessions.¹⁴⁶ The *Independent* provided further detail of Finnegan's death, describing the 'pathetic story of the dying man's anxiety for his wife and children' told by the widow herself.¹⁴⁷ Mary Finnegan had drawn the blind of her house and seen her husband on the ground dying, men wearing fawn coats were fleeing the scene, a neighbour assisted her in aiding her husband whose last thoughts had been concern for his widow and babies.¹⁴⁸ James Leahy, IRA commandant of the 2nd Tipperary Brigade, recounts in his witness statement shooting Mary's husband because he had been informed that Constable Finnegan had compiled a list of men involved in recent raid on RIC barracks. However, Leahy's statement also suggests killing Finnegan was an intentional provocation that did indeed result in the RIC and military firing in the streets and into people's homes the day before the Labour Party's "'Fact Finding Mission'" arrived to investigate allegations of brutality against civilians perpetrated by the authorities in Ireland.¹⁴⁹ Louise Ryan notes that the Labour Party's report emphasised the

¹⁴⁵ 'Tributes to Dead Constable', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jan. 1920.

¹⁴⁶ Constable Luke Finnegan had been in charge of distributing the sugar ration in Thurles during the war, he was familiar with the area and was a key witness against some IRA men who had been involved in rescuing some of their comrades from Knocklong. On 18 January 1920 the Thurles RIC barracks were attacked by the IRA and the IRA received information that Finnegan was compiling a list of IRA men involved, so decided he had to be killed. In response to Finnegan's murder the police carried out heavy reprisals, known as the 'sacking of Thurles'.

John Reynolds, *Divided Loyalties: The Royal Irish Constabulary in County Tipperary* (PhD thesis: University of Limerick, 2013), p. 75; John Reynolds, *46 Dead Men: The Royal Irish Constabulary in County Tipperary 1919-22* (Dublin: The Collins Press, 2016).

¹⁴⁷ 'Constable Finnegan's Widow's Sorrowful Story', *Irish Independent*, 26 Jan. 1920.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ BMH, WS. 1454.

invasion of the domestic realm by Crown Forces and the extensive financial, emotional and physical damage this did to women.¹⁵⁰

The vulnerability of widows in the Irish War of Independence was emphasised in the press, as they had no male protectors and often had children to care for as well as themselves. In April 1920, the *Independent* described Mrs. Horan, a widow whose husband had been killed by Crown forces. Following her husband's death, Horan suffered 'destructive raids' by police, including one incident on 11 March 1920 when twelve armed policemen entered her home, 'terrorised her children smashed everything about the place, and even pulled down the gas pipes causing the gas to escape'.¹⁵¹ The *Freeman's* also reported that as the raiders were leaving the widow called them cowards and two ran back with rifles to tell her that if she did not return inside they would 'blow her brains out'.¹⁵²

A satirical piece in the *Freeman's* suggested that some of the widows of the Irish War of Independence had been tricked and cheated by the British: having lost their husbands in the First World War, they found not even their homes were safe from the oppressive and violent intrusion of the Crown Forces.¹⁵³ The article, 'It's A Puzzle to Molly', was written in the style of a short story. It told the tale of Molly and her man Jimmy, who had been 'a fine hearty lad and proud as a king of her and her two little boys'.¹⁵⁴ But at the outbreak of the First World War, Jimmy had gone to a recruitment meeting and heard:

stories of the awful things the big bullies of Germans were doing on the people in Belgium. 'Twould make a man's blood rise to hear all that was going on. And there was only one way to stop it, and that was for him and the likes of him to put on

¹⁵⁰ Louise Ryan, 'Drunken Tans': Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921), *Feminist Review*, No. 66 (Autumn 2000), p. 78.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² 'Raid After Murder Described', *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Apr. 1920.

¹⁵³ 'It's a Puzzle to Molly', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Oct. 1920.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

the uniform and go and fight side by side with the men trying to crush those brutes.¹⁵⁵

Molly had been distraught, but 'twas his duty to go' and she had to 'think what the women and children were suffering over there', and Jimmy told her that 'England was fighting for right'. Molly did not complain, but 'grew thinner and thinner, the worry' eating away at her. When Jimmy went to the front, Molly prayed for strength 'to bear the burthen, to forget the ache and the loneliness, and try to have hope'. She explained to her children that it was for Ireland and Ireland's freedom that their father was fighting, despite the uniform he wore being English and the flag the Union Jack. Jimmy died at Loos and Molly received a letter from the English King on fancy paper, which was full of sympathy for her and pride for her husband. When the war was over, 'England had tricked them again' and Molly at the end of the story was left confused, 'lying in a field, her little boys at her side'. Her house had been burned down by men acting in the name of the King who had written to say how proud he was of her husband.¹⁵⁶

Republican widows' houses were burned down by Crown forces to intimidate them and the men associated with them, as well as being an efficient method for doling out retribution if they were suspected of aiding republican men. It could also serve as a warning to the republican forces that deliberately targeted reprisals would be the consequence of their involvement in the conflict. Louise Ryan suggests that the intrusion into women's houses by the British army contributed to 'the intensely political work' going on within them.¹⁵⁷ She describes the home as a 'locus of resistance', where Irish

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Louise Ryan, "'Furies" and "diehards": women and Irish Republicanism in the early twentieth century', *Gender and History*, 11 (1999), 256-275 (p. 263).

women were actively resisting British occupation by sheltering soldiers 'on the run', cooking for them and hiding weapons.¹⁵⁸ Entering family homes was also an exercise in performing and displaying dominance, because the Crown forces made women and children witness their actions as a demonstration of power.

It is hard to ascertain from the press reports whether women involved were republican or not, but the fictional story of Molly was similar to the pathetic reality of many other widows living in Ireland in 1920. In October 1920, Mrs. Egan from Athenry had three policemen come to her house in search of her husband Thomas.¹⁵⁹ As the police attempted to shoot Thomas, his wife shielded him with her body but they shot around her and pulled her out of their way.¹⁶⁰ As the men were leaving she called out to her children to get help as their father had been shot and the men callously mimicked her calls; it took Thomas twenty minutes to die, all the while unable to speak, while surrounded by his family. Beside the story of Thomas Egan, the *Independent* described the death of John Sherlock, a volunteer from Skerries, Co. Dublin.¹⁶¹ Sherlock had been pulled from his bed at 2:30am and left dead in a field, in a pool of his own blood.¹⁶² The report included 'the anguish' of his mother who had been promised by the raiders when they tore her son away from her that he would only be asked questions.¹⁶³ Once they had left the house she and her daughter heard five shots and she found that her son had been killed.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ According to Geraldine Dillon, Joseph Plunkett's sister, Thomas Egan's house had been used as a meeting place for the Carramore and Athenry Volunteers. Dillon suggests that Egan's death was an example of the Crown Forces killing off an individual in the middle of a general reprisal. BMH WS: 0424.

'Story of Athenry Tragedy', *Irish Independent*, 28 Oct. 1920.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ 'Scenes of Horror, Terror and Death', *Irish Independent*, 28 Oct. 1920.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

Censorship of the press made it difficult for journalists to overtly criticise the British in editorials and articles. To manoeuvre around the censor the newspapers sometimes reprinted commentary on the troubles that had been printed in the English press. Maurice Walsh suggests that many British journalists, particularly those working for the *Daily News*, *Manchester Guardian* and the *Guardian*, openly criticised British military actions in Ireland making reprisals a 'major political issue in Britain' and simultaneously demonstrating that control over press coverage in Ireland was out of the hands of the British government.¹⁶⁴ The *Independent* showed disgust for the way the police and Crown Forces had made Irishwomen victims in the conflict by reprinting an article in the *Manchester Guardian*; this argued that if County Councils in Ireland were being made to pay for the burning of police barracks, or for the widows and orphans of murdered policemen, it was 'simple justice that the Government should bear the cost of damage inflicted by its servants in wantonly burning down shops, houses, creameries, and stacks of hay and corn, or in the murder of innocent non-combatants'.¹⁶⁵ It is possible that being held accountable to British public opinion influenced the British government's decision to share the costs of compensation incurred during the Anglo-Irish war.

In November 1920, the *Freeman's* deplored that several widows' homes had been raided.¹⁶⁶ In the same month the *Independent* reproduced the editorial from the *Cork Examiner*, 'Thou Shalt Not Kill', which stated that the 'fact that stands out painfully in the orgie of blood that has cast gloom over Cork and its citizens, is that lives have been taken, widows and orphans have been suddenly brought into existence in homes where joy and

¹⁶⁴ Maurice Walsh, *The News From Ireland* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2008), p. 75.

¹⁶⁵ 'Why The Government Should Pay', *Irish Independent*, 6 Nov. 1920.

¹⁶⁶ 'A Tale of Terror', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Nov. 1920.

contentment formerly reigned, sorrow and mourning have superseded the amenities of ordinary life, and the spectre of death still stalks abroad'.¹⁶⁷

Running throughout reports of atrocities in Ireland was an emphasis on how these events invaded the domestic realm, placing women (often widows) and children at the centre of the conflict. For example, on Christmas night 1920 two more civilians were murdered by Crown forces, Maurice Reidy, 25, and John Leen, 24.¹⁶⁸ Reidy and Leen were both members of the Ballymacelligot Volunteers.¹⁶⁹ They had been in the house of Mrs. Byrne, whose husband was already in hiding and who urged them to leave for fear that danger might be imminent. Before they could heed this advice, armed assailants arrived and shot Leen, instantly killing him. Mrs. Byrne pleaded with the attackers to spare Reidy's life, her sister even imploring them to shoot her instead. According to the *Freeman's* report, the raiders would not spare Reidy and told him to prepare for death; after 15 minutes he said he was ready and they shot him through the head, before burning down Mrs. Byrne's home.¹⁷⁰

The experiences of vulnerable widows appeared in other material too. For example, in December 1920, the Labour Party published the findings of the Labour Commission to Ireland. This was an investigation into violence in Ireland, appointed by the Parliamentary Labour Party and included the Labour Party's Scottish chairman, Alexander Gordon Cameron and vice-chairman, Fred Jowett.¹⁷¹ The commission toured Ireland, investigating allegations of terrorism, arson, destruction of property, looting, cruelty and shooting. In the report of the commission, a raid on a widow's home was described in which a dozen

¹⁶⁷ 'The Terror in Cork City', *Irish Independent*, 20 Nov. 1920.

¹⁶⁸ 'Ireland's Toll of Sorrow', *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Dec. 1920.

¹⁶⁹ BMH WS: 882.

¹⁷⁰ 'Ireland's Toll of Sorrow', *FJ*, 28 Dec. 1920.

¹⁷¹ *Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland 1921*, The National Archives, BL/104/4/2.

Auxiliaries had rushed into the house demanding to speak with her sons.¹⁷² They had 'terrified a delicate daughter whom they covered with revolvers'.¹⁷³ Having left disappointed on that occasion, the Auxiliaries returned another night when the daughter was ill in bed and one of the soldiers had sat on her bed demanding to know her brothers' whereabouts. The men had 'roughly handled the old widow' and threatened to burn the house down.¹⁷⁴ The *Freeman's* publicised the British Labour Party's indictment of the way the British forces had behaved in a manner 'terrifying to women'.¹⁷⁵ The Commission argued that there were horrible incidents of soldiers raiding houses late at night and in one case cutting off a woman's nightdress; the *Freeman's* hoped that these were isolated incidents, but reported that the Labour Commission found that the 'women of Ireland are reticent on such subjects'.¹⁷⁶

In the Labour Commission's report there were numerous allegations of army, police and auxiliary violence. In one example, a man was awoken in the night by Crown forces and questioned with the barrel of a gun against his chest for thirty-five minutes.¹⁷⁷

Significantly, the *Freeman's* chose to detail the cases of brutality against women, emphasising their particular vulnerability and also suggesting that the reporters and editors believed descriptions of female victims would arouse most sympathy from people reading the newspaper.

As the conflict advanced, widows continued to be described as victims of nationalist violence. For example, in 1921, many widows of policemen were awarded considerable

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ 'British Labour's Indictment', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Dec. 1920.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ *Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland 1921*, TNA, BL/104/4/2.

financial damages for the loss of their husbands and property. In January, Margaret Horan, widow of RIC constable Timothy Horan was granted £1000 at Loughrea quarter Sessions and £600 was put in trust for each of his children.¹⁷⁸ Later that month, Agnes Roche was awarded £5,500 for the death of her husband, a Sergeant in the RIC. Kate MacClean, whose husband, an RIC Lieutenant, had also been killed in conflict with the IRA, was allocated £400 and her son £3,500.¹⁷⁹

It was not just widows of policemen who were granted compensation. In April 1921, Peter Mackin, a male civilian who had been shot twice by Crown Forces but survived, was granted compensation.¹⁸⁰ To add to the case he made against the Crown Forces, he described that his widowed mother had attempted to hold onto him as he was dragged away and that 'one policeman kicked her in the side and she fainted when she heard the shots'.¹⁸¹

Widows suffered considerable financial difficulties because of the conflict in Ireland, but as an increasing number of men were interned in British prisons their wives also experienced some hardship. The INAAVDF strove to support these women, but nevertheless the *Freeman's* told the harrowing tale of Mrs. Brennan, a widow whose family had been interned; she was left in the unenviable position of continuing her stationary business in Tralee devoid of any help.¹⁸² A Mrs. Johnson was also left to run a business unaided.¹⁸³ The *Freeman's* described the case a correspondent had sent to them

¹⁷⁸ 'Award to a Widow', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Jan. 1921.

¹⁷⁹ 'Shot in Dublin', *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Jan. 1921.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ John Grant, Captain of the Mullaghbawn company of Volunteers in County Armagh, describes Peter Mackin's injuries in his witness and claims that he was a civilian, suggesting that Mackin had no IRA involvement.

BMH, WS: 0658.

¹⁸² 'Deprived of Male Help', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jun. 1921.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

of Mrs. Fehan, with two out of three of her sons interned, who consequently found her 'poultry and egg business is at a standstill'.¹⁸⁴ The report claimed that there were more examples of 'families having been deprived of all male help'.¹⁸⁵

The plight of women in Ireland was especially condemned by the press when they were widows of ex-serviceman, because their husbands had given their lives serving in the British Army only to have their families terrorised by fellow soldiers. In the House of Commons, Commander Kenworthy, the Liberal MP for Rotherham, demanded to know whether express orders had been issued that widows and homes of ex-servicemen should not be the targets of reprisals.¹⁸⁶ Denis Henry, the unionist MP for Londonderry South, admitted that no specific orders had been given, claiming there was no need for them.¹⁸⁷

From July 1921, when the truce had been agreed between the Irish Republican Army and the Crown Forces in Ireland, widows were able to make more compensation claims for having lost their husbands over the previous year. The *Independent* reported that in 26 counties £9,911,616 had been awarded in the previous year and eight months for injuries to persons or property.¹⁸⁸ The majority of this money had been granted in Cork and Dublin, where the fighting of the War of Independence had been particularly intense. The press was full of examples of women claiming compensation. Mrs O'Connor sought £10,000 for the murder of her husband, a retired Major, who had been forced out of his house in July and shot. Mabel Watts, a widow from Waterfall, claimed £15,000 for her husband's death in November.¹⁸⁹ Mrs Ryan claimed £2,000 for malicious injury that had

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ 'Military Grounds for Reprisals', *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Jun. 1921.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ 'More Awards in Kerry and Cork', *Irish Independent*, 3 Nov. 1921.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

occurred in Dublin.¹⁹⁰ The press was deeply sympathetic to all widows, their editorial line was consistently condemnatory of violence and the loss of life fighting often resulted in.

Throughout the revolutionary period widows were pitied by the nationalist dailies, which regularly drew attention to their emotional and financial distress. Discussion of widows in the press highlight tensions over who was seen to be responsible for alleviating widows' hardship and an evolution in thought is discernable, catalysed by the First World War's changes in welfare provision to soldiers' dependents, which saw the state taking a larger role in caring for vulnerable citizens. After the First World War compensation legislation for widows positioned the state as an additional source of support for widows and children, emphasising their feminine weakness and need of financial protection. During the War of Independence the evolved popular and government opinion that widows required financial support from the state meant that women who lost their husbands or property during the conflict were able to gain compensation. The nationalist dailies were consistently condemnatory of the financial and emotional loss suffered by these women and sympathetic to the difficult situations in which they found themselves.

3.3 Bachelors and Spinsters

3.3.1 Introduction

Population decline, rapidly accelerated by the loss of life and emigration caused by the Great Famine, was one of the most significant trends in nineteenth-century Ireland.¹⁹¹ It had manifest effects. With less competition people began to enjoy and desire a better standard of living, which put 'an end to subdivision of farms'.¹⁹² Marriage habits also

¹⁹⁰ 'Widow of Thomas Ryan', *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Oct. 1921.

¹⁹¹ Cormac Ó Grada, *Ireland A New Economic History 1780-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 213.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p. 215.

changed after the Famine; the mean age of marriage rose and the number of marriages decreased.¹⁹³ Kenneth Connell suggests that late marriage occurred because people were unable to marry until they were economically ready to leave the family home.¹⁹⁴

Guinnane argues instead that affluence and singleness often correlated so poorer, smaller farmers and labourers were more inclined to wed than their richer counterparts, who could hire in help in later life rather than relying on children.¹⁹⁵ Catriona Clear adds to this that between 1850 and 1922 the most common demographic to marry late or never were middle-class, wealthy women in almost all counties of Leinster and Ulster.¹⁹⁶

Demographic trends created a perception of unmarried men and women as a social problem. This chapter will trace these concerns in the nationalist press during the revolutionary period.

Between 1850 and 1922, those most likely to marry were those hit hardest by the famine - the labouring classes in the rural west - however, they came to mirror the marriage patterns of the upper classes by the end of the period.¹⁹⁷ Clear offers a number of reasons for this. First, she claims that the lifestyles of labouring class women and men, who frequently moved into work as domestic servants and farm hands respectively, precluded them meeting regularly and forming the strong attachments that commonly led to marriage.¹⁹⁸ Second, she argues that farmers' daughters and young women of the provincial, mercantile middle class were the first to benefit from educational opportunities in the 1880s and therefore prone to postpone marriage in favour of work,

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 216.

¹⁹⁴ Kenneth H. Connell, *Irish Peasant Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 116.

¹⁹⁵ Timothy Guinnane, 'Age at Leaving Home in Rural Ireland, 1901-1911', *Journal of Economic History*, 53 (1992), 651-674 (p. 669).

¹⁹⁶ Catriona Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland 1850-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 76.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

religious life, philanthropy and private income, or simply single life at home.¹⁹⁹ This was further supported by the fact that should people remain single they would have a large support network of family and friends preventing loneliness.²⁰⁰

In the 1880s, rare and late marriage had become a cause for concern when the census from 1851 was made popularly available. From the 1890s spinsters were at risk of being condemned for lesbianism, because lesbians and spinsters were associated by contemporary sexologists with the New Woman and her habits: smoking, playing sports, brusque speech and living alone.²⁰¹ In the Irish press, the primacy of marriage and motherhood in women's lives was unquestioned, resulting in spinsters and widows being pitied or derided.

Despite negative polemic about spinsters, discussion of the New Woman and her lifestyle was increasingly seen in the nationalist press towards the end of the revolutionary period, particularly in advertising materials. This rearticulated the more traditional narrative of 'old maids' and 'spinsters'. Consequently, in the Irish press there was a tension between conservative ideologies and a fascination with the New Woman.

The bachelor as an aberrant figure, against the ideal of the responsible married men, has received less historical attention than spinsters. John Gilbert McCurdy argues that debates about bachelorhood in America proliferated at the turn of the twentieth century and bachelors were seen as either effeminate or 'disorderly'.²⁰² This was also true in Ireland, but whereas the spinster was often depicted as a sad and lonely victim unable to

¹⁹⁹ Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life*, p. 79.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 86.

²⁰¹ Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press Pty Ltd, 1997), p. 106.

²⁰² John G. McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 3.

support herself, the bachelor was portrayed as having chosen the affluence and enjoyment of singledom - shirking the responsibility and financial burden of marriage and children.

Class was a pervasive component of this polemic and often it was the middle classes who placed expectations and demands on working-class people to marry. Reverend Dalton, for instance, founded a 'School of Matrimony' in February 1912, because he felt any bachelor of 24 with £15 per month and any girl over 18 'ought to marry, and he intended they should'.²⁰³ Unmarried bachelors were held to be selfish and a drain on society. Marriage was used to show good character, therefore in some cases bachelors were scorned as unsuitable employees and tenants. The only exception to condemnations of single men was in relation to men seeking a monastic life or entry to the army or police force, which preferred unmarried, childless men.²⁰⁴ This chapter will discuss issues relating to bachelors and spinsters through a consideration of press reports about the allocation of labourers' cottages in the pre-war years and the representations of bachelors and spinsters in the newspapers at this time. It will then consider suggestions, reported in the press, that single people should pay more tax and that bachelors should enlist before and instead of married men during the First World War. Finally, the slightly more progressive views, particularly disseminated by advertisers, about single people that are visible in the press in the later revolutionary years will be explored.

²⁰³ 'School of Matrimony', *Irish Independent*, 2 Feb. 1912.

²⁰⁴ Brian Griffin, 'The Irish Police: Love, Sex and Marriage in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *Gender Perspectives in 19th Century Ireland Public and Private Spheres* ed. by Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1997).

3.3.2 Bachelor Tenants and Rural District Councils

Gendered debates about single people in the press often arose out of material, everyday concerns and traditional beliefs about single men and women informed government decisions on a broad spectrum of welfare issues. Legislation intended to provide adequate housing for farm labourers in Ireland is not only an example of the British state's first major intervention in housing, but also how gendered state welfare implementation was from its inception. First some background will be given to this innovation in housing policy and then press discussion of the allocation of labourers' cottages will be traced.

Trade unions and activists who wanted to see changes in land ownership had worked to improve the conditions of tenant and small farmers in nineteenth-century Ireland. The Land Acts of 1881, 1891 and 1903 had vastly improved many lives, especially the 1903 Wyndham Act, which allowed for large-scale land purchase by tenants. This gave Catholic farmers their own holdings and, as property-holders, access to elective positions on Local Government Boards.²⁰⁵ Farm labourers, however, found it more difficult to improve their living conditions and increasingly their fight was with small, Catholic nationalist farmers and not large Protestant landlords. While there were some Irish labour associations, they were eventually barred from the Trades Union Council (TUC) and the improvement of labourers' living conditions took a long time to be achieved.²⁰⁶

The labourers' housing problems were widely known in Ireland and as early as 1836 the Irish Poor Law Commissioners had recommended housing legislation and allotments of

²⁰⁵ Frank H. A. Aalen, 'The rehousing of rural labourers in Ireland under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883-1919', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 12 (1986), 287-306 (p. 291).

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

land be brought in for labourers by the Board of Improvement.²⁰⁷ However, while there were fewer labourers after the famine there was little change to their living conditions because there was less demand for labouring work as farming began to concentrate on pasture instead of tillage.²⁰⁸ Legislation for labourers was often passed close to land legislation, therefore in 1883 and 1885 the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts were introduced, which empowered the Local Government Boards to build houses for labourers with half an acre of land attached. However, this was slow to change things and there were accusations of farmers serving on Local Government Boards allocating cottages unfairly to labourers that they favoured.²⁰⁹ Consequently, the overall construction of cottages in the 1880s was low.²¹⁰

In 1906 a new Labourers' Act increased the speed of cottage building.²¹¹ In 1911, a further £1,000,000 was assigned to build 12,000 labourers' cottages by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Augustine Birrell. By 1921, 54,000 cottages had been authorized and 48,000 built.²¹² Frank Aalen estimates that given the average family size of a labourer being five, new cottages must have accommodated about a quarter of a million people.²¹³

Interestingly, Aalen's assumption, like that of the rural district councils, was that accommodation would be provided to families and not single men. However, analysis of the nationalist press indicates that bachelor applicants and occupiers of these cottages were more common than previously believed, and traditional beliefs about gender influenced the allocation of the cottages.

²⁰⁷ Enda McKay, 'The Housing of the Rural Labourer, 1883-1916', *Saothar*, 17 (1992), 27-39 (p. 27).

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid, p. 28.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 33.

²¹² Aalen, 'The rehousing of rural labourers in Ireland, p. 287.

²¹³ Ibid.

From 1911 there was a lively discussion of labourers' cottages in the nationalist press. These reports largely came from three rural counties in Leinster: Meath, Westmeath and Athlone. In these counties the councils were unwilling to provide homes to bachelors, believing that they were unable to keep them in an adequate condition without a woman to maintain the house. The debates about bachelor tenants were often light-hearted although council attitudes betrayed traditional views on marriage as the ideal state for men and women. In March 1912, the *Freeman's* reported that Kells Rural District Council, Co. Meath, tackled the 'much debated question of permitting unmarried labourers to become or continue as tenants of Union labourers' cottages'.²¹⁴ The report described several tenant applications being considered, during which Mr. Monaghan vouched for one applicant, promising the labourer would marry if he got a cottage. The council chairman joked that 'he must have bought the engagement ring', because there were many young men who said they were getting married, took plots and then gained 'a crop or two out of them' before giving them up.²¹⁵ The council then heard the application of Mr. Mechan, a forty-year-old labourer living in a congested house with his father, two brothers and two sisters. His parish priest, Father Clavin, had written in support of him, assuring the council Mechan would marry if he had a home and that he was 'sober, quiet, and a first-class specimen of an agricultural labourer'.²¹⁶

In April 1912, the Board of Guardians in Mountmellick, Co. Athlone, received an amusing application for a wife from a labourer called John O'Neil:

Mr. Chairman - I beg to apply to you for your aid in choosing me a wife as I hear 'yous' have many fine, strapping young girls and middle aged women in your institution who, I am told, would be only too glad to get a chance to change their names, and you

²¹⁴ 'The Bachelor Labourer', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Mar. 1912.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

would therefore be helping my tastes in a wife by relieving the poor red hats, who are always and forever grumbling about the way they are taxed. I am not hard to please, and only for the satisfaction of my mother, who wants to see me settled down, I would probably go to the grave a bachelor. But wouldn't it be a pity to let the fine old name of O'Neil die out? I am thinking to apply for a cottage under the new scheme, but I hear bachelor applicants have a poor chance. I would like a fine, loose, healthy woman, sound in wind and limb, as the vet says. She need not be handsome, but homely and hard working, as beauty is only skin-deep, and anyone so gifted - especially one of the female class - spends the devil's length of time at the looking glass during the day, and neglects her household duties. She must be a good plain cook, as I need not tell you that with a Mountmellick labourer's wages it is very little one will have to do in the pastry line, or such "codology," which has those tight laced, hobble skirted ladies of the present day suffering so much from indigestion and corns. She must be of good temper, comforting and consoling, and when I am downhearted I would like her to be a good singer or able to play some musical instrument - a mouth organ or a melodeon, and when the Lord blesses us with a family to bring them up in a law-abiding and God-fearing manner. With a wife possessing these qualities a man would spend very little time or money in the pub. Gentleman, is there anyone more despised on earth than a bachelor? No - barring old maids, who are the devils altogether. I hope you will do your best to suit my wants.²¹⁷

O'Neil was satirising the Board of Guardians' intrusion into men's lives, by forcing men to marry for a home. Equally, he was suggesting that a bachelor lifestyle was more appealing than a married one, but marriage was about passing on a name or dutiful procreation, therefore his conception of an ideal wife was purely functional, like buying livestock: he was not interested in her looks only her financial prudence, cookery skills and ability to rear pious children. O'Neil's remarks suggest a transactional marriage, which – and here his irony seems particularly marked - if conducted properly would result in no man visiting a pub or gambling. O'Neil's view was that while men held the agency in choosing a wife, women were solely responsible for maintaining a marriage.

In case he had not convinced the council of his literary talent, O'Neil added a satirical poem at the end of his letter:

If in need of a wife,

²¹⁷ 'In Search of a Wife', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Apr. 1912.

To comfort your life,
To the Mountmellick Guardians apply
They will do their best
To grant your request,
And a fine strapping woman supply.²¹⁸

The laconic response of the Mountmellick Council chairman was that he did not imagine O'Neill would require much assistance finding a wife.

Dunshaughlin Rural District Council, Co. Meath, also had a bachelor problem. In April 1912, the *Independent* reported that the council had received letters from residents demanding that the bachelors 'get married or "get out"'.²¹⁹ It humorously described the response from English girls who had heard of the plight of Irish single labourers and were 'philanthropically eager to save the bachelor tenants from eviction'.²²⁰ More amusing still were letters to the council from Englishmen who had misunderstood the situation and thought that there was a 'superfluity of eligible damsels in the district'.²²¹ While the response to the situation was largely comical, the letters included some qualities the women desired in a potential partner. For example, one woman said she did not want a gambler, but a 'man able to wash and cook for himself [was] not to be scoffed at'.²²²

Despite the convivial correspondence, perceptions of how men were raised could have a significant material effect on people's lives. The following week, Dunshaughlin Rural District Council decided to allow a labourer tenancy in one of their cottages who was getting married the following Sunday, as the chairman was 'satisfied this wouldn't swell

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ 'Meath Matrimonial Market', *Irish Independent*, 11 Apr. 1912.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

the ranks of bachelors'.²²³ The same meeting of the council also discussed the considerable volume of correspondence they were still receiving about bachelor tenants from all over the United Kingdom. A woman from Sligo tailored her letter in response to John O'Neil, describing herself as 'inclined to be stout, but not exceeding 12 stone' and good-looking, her only issue being that she had little musical talent bar a mouth organ and would like a man who was an early riser so he could bring her tea in the morning.²²⁴ Another woman, who was a 'practical housekeeper' from Navan, admitted that she was 'plain-looking' but promised to recommend the prospects for single women searching for husbands in County Meath if she was successful in finding a husband.²²⁵

In May 1912, the *Independent* explained that Dunshaughlin Rural District Council was embarrassed by the letters it was receiving from people anxious to find a marriage partner.²²⁶ Mrs. Kelly described it as 'silly nonsense', and despaired that the letters were being published in both the Irish and English press. The *Independent* was nonetheless still enjoying the story and added that 'Brown Eyes' from Howth Road in Dublin sought a bachelor; she described herself as brunette, 6ft with £500 per year and did not care the age of the bachelor so long as he did not receive a pension.²²⁷ Another woman, from Haddington Road in Dublin, claimed to have a wealth of black hair, grey eyes and 'a fine Roman nose'; she boasted satirically that she could both cook and play the mouth organ.²²⁸

²²³ 'Dunshaughlin Bachelors', *Irish Independent*, 18 Apr. 1912.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ 'Meath Matrimonial Market', *Irish Independent*, 1 May 1912.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

The issue of bachelors receiving council housing continued to be discussed in a jocular tone. In September 1912, Ardee Rural District Council, Co. Meath, heard an application from Thomas Meade for a labourer's cottage in Davidstown. Mr. Callan, a member of the council who had been agitating for some time for the council to be more careful in whom they chose for their cottages, wanted Meade to sign an agreement to marry within six months.²²⁹ Callan said that such promises were futile and now that labourers had houses there was 'no excuse for not having wives, and it was not fair the way the houses were kept'.²³⁰ He added that it was 'scandalous that some of them were not occupied at all'.²³¹ This was because many labourers worked away from their cottages all day and they were empty for significant periods. Mr. Connell seconded Callan's proposition that Meade sign an agreement to marry, stating that the young men seemed to 'have some disinclination to marry', which caused laughter. The chairman made a passing allusion to British control in Ireland by suggesting this was coercion and the council laughed some more. Callan was outraged and declared that something had to be done, because it had been six months since some labourers had agreed to either marry or take their mother or sister in to keep the cottages, but no improvements had been made.²³² The chairman agreed that it was nonsensical to be building cottages while some stood empty and Connell ended the discussion by suggesting that the men 'seem to have a hatred of the fair sex'.²³³ Implicit in this statement was the suggestion that some of these men may not have wanted to be forced into a heterosexual partnership and it seems reasonable to assume that some of

²²⁹ 'Bachelor Tenants in Meath', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Sep. 1912.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

these men may have chosen bachelorhood as preferable to an unwanted sexual relationship with a woman.

In October 1912, Dunshaughlin Rural District Council again addressed the issues of their bachelor tenants. Alfred Delaney, a Government Board Inspector, gave evidence that many of the applicants were bachelors, profuse in promises to marry 'provided they were given houses to take their prospective brides to'.²³⁴ Patrick Fox, a potential tenant, claimed to have all the arrangements made to marry, except 'a house to bring his "Missus" to'.²³⁵ Delaney informed Fox that he would not be allowed to remain in a house 'if the joybells are not ringing', which Fox, 'amidst laughter', assured him was the case.²³⁶ Charles Dunne, another applicant, was told by Delaney, 'you have sworn that you will get married and you must do it'.²³⁷ T. Early, solicitor to the District Council, jokingly referred to Dunne's promise as a 'solemn covenant', making light of the tense political climate mounting in Ireland following the signing of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant by several thousand unionists the previous month.²³⁸ Patrick Dowd, another applicant, was told that the council had 'nothing against him only that he was unmarried, and he replied that he would not be long so'.²³⁹ Another hopeful labourer, Robert Elliot 'admitted the soft impeachment that he was unmarried', to which the Inspector replied dryly that it seemed 'to be a common complaint'.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ 'Must Get Married', *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Oct. 1912.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Bachelor tenants were also a problem for Trim Rural District Council, when in April 1913 rent collectors informed the council of 'a large number of cases of the cottages held as tenants by bachelors' and four cases of the bachelors refusing to give up their possession.²⁴¹ Mr. Fox, a local JP, spoke for one tenant, who had promised the council he would marry imminently, but most of the tenancies were terminated. The chairman explained that they had to 'get rid of some of the bachelors and get some men with families into the houses', because it was 'very hard to see a poor man with a wife and family occupying a wretched house, whilst bachelors have cottages closed all day'.²⁴² The council decided to get a list of all the tenants and assess 'those who are badly in need of houses', so that they could 'get shut of the bachelors'.²⁴³ Within a month the decision to evict bachelors had caused controversy and many cases were taken up at the Summerhill Petty Sessions. Some bachelors had 'given up possession without a struggle' as they preferred it to the 'alternative of matrimony'.²⁴⁴

However, not everyone felt that the state should have so much control over men's personal lives. The *Independent* detailed the case of Mr. Trimble, a labourer in Mullingar, who had been awarded a cottage by Mullingar Rural Council and been told he had three months to marry.²⁴⁵ When the case was discussed by the council, Mr. Lennon moved that the marriage compulsion be removed arguing that no man should be forced to marry because they had 'a perfect right to live in single bliss'.²⁴⁶ At Summerhill Petty Sessions, during a case against Jason Murrery, an unmarried labourer tenant of Trim Rural District

²⁴¹ 'All Ireland', *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1913.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ 'All Ireland', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 May 1913.

²⁴⁵ 'Marriage Not Compulsory', *Irish Independent*, 3 May 1913.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

Council, it was read in court that 'at the inquiry all the bachelors promised to get married, and very few of them had done so'.²⁴⁷ Logistically or emotionally, the demands on these men to wed were found untenable.

While debates about single men and women continued in the press, the issue of labourers' cottages was ongoing within certain District Councils. In December 1913, Dunshaughlin Rural District Council was determined to enforce their edict that all bachelor tenants 'get married or get out' and began the eviction process.²⁴⁸ The situation was tense and James Kelly, a labourer being removed from his cottage, burst into the council meeting brandishing a marriage certificate. Despite his married status, the council ruled that he had caused too much trouble already and would be evicted anyway, to which Kelly responded he would only be taken from the cottage in his coffin!²⁴⁹

The First World War interrupted much commentary on single people and simultaneously construction of labourers' cottages in Ireland stalled because materials and labour became scarce. While there was less discussion of labourers' cottages throughout the war, the cottages that were assigned in these years were also intended to be for married men. In January 1915, Ardee Rural District Council, Co. Meath, heard from five applicants for cottages. At the meeting it was stated that 'they had a resolution on the books that no houses be given unless to married men'.²⁵⁰ This meant that a labourer, Mr. Dunbar, had his application denied as he had 'tried to get married, but didn't succeed', which caused

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ 'All Ireland', *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Dec. 1913.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ 'Provincial News', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Jan. 1915.

laughter at the meeting and it was decided that the cottage in question would go to a married man, Mr. Carolan.²⁵¹

In 1919, another act was passed to facilitate building homes for labourers, but the political uncertainty in Ireland and increased building costs meant that there was no return to pre-war levels of construction.²⁵² Nonetheless, the Labourers' Acts in the early-twentieth century had removed many slum dwellings in rural Ireland. The nationalist press is an important source for tracing how the allocation of these cottages demonstrates the centrality of the ideal of marriage and family life in a country with some of the lowest marriage rates in Europe, and the everyday influence of gender on individuals' lives and the formation of state welfare policy in Britain and Ireland.

3.3.3 The Image of the Selfish Bachelor and the Sorrowful Spinster

The nationalist dailies contained a plethora of views on single men and women. This section will trace commentary on single people in the Irish national dailies before The First World War, which often portrayed bachelors in a humorous way as selfish, irresponsible and fun-loving. In contrast, spinsters were less often mocked and more often pitied or portrayed as concerning because while all single people were outside the ideal of marriage that was applied to men and women, 'deviant' forms of femininity were held to be more troubling. However, the portrayal of singleness in the press was not entirely negative. Advertisers for products aimed at single people sought to overturn negative stereotypes and portray single living as comfortable and alluring.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Aalen, 'The rehousing of rural labourers in Ireland', p. 297.

Belief that marriage was preferable to singleness was not unique to Ireland and the press frequently reported the attitudes of other countries to bachelors and spinsters. In May 1912, the *Independent* noted that the National Congress of American Mothers in Chicago had resolved that 'bachelors are mostly selfish men who remain single to escape the financial burdens of matrimony, and it was urged by several speakers that all bachelors earning over £4 a week be taxed for the maintenance of one child'.²⁵³ Dr. Ernest Coulter, who had worked for the Child's Court in New York, expressed the view that any man 'who earns a little more than it takes to give him food, shelter, and clothing has no right to live a perfectly selfish life' and such men would be 'happier', 'saner' and 'a more useful citizen' if they realised this.²⁵⁴ In June 1912, Adolphe Messimy, the French ex-Minister of War, proposed to make state grants to mothers with more than four children and pay for them by taxing bachelors.²⁵⁵ This was in order to counter fears that had arisen in France because the birth rates were lower than the death rates.²⁵⁶

In Ireland, bachelors were also perceived to be a social problem, not just as discussed in rural districts where labourers' cottages were being allocated, but around the country. Giving evidence before the Departmental Committee on the Agricultural Credit System in Strabane, J. McGinley from Ramelton, Co. Donegal, argued that while many rural parts were improving Ramelton was regressing.²⁵⁷ He firmly believed this was because 'of the

²⁵³ 'Taxing the Bachelors', *Irish Independent*, 15 May 1912.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ 'Bonuses for Mothers', *Irish Independent*, 1 Jun. 1912.

²⁵⁶ Kristen Stromberg Childers argues that there was a concern over the falling birth rate in France at this time, coupled with polemic that promoted an association between fatherhood and citizenship, which portrayed fathers as saviours of the French nation. Joan Tumblety notes that the popular assumption in post-war France was that men were 'citizen-soldiers'.

Kirsten Stromberg Childers, *Fathers, Families and the State in France* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003); Joan Tumblety, *Remaking the Male Body: Masculinity and the Uses of Physical Culture in Interwar and Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 15.

²⁵⁷ 'Bachelors Blamed', *Irish Independent*, 4 Oct. 1912.

old bachelors' there who had 'most of the money' but did not know what to do with it.²⁵⁸

This caused laughter. Dr. Thompson, from Omagh, suggested the labourers were saving money in order to move up the social scale and become farmers; he urged for the establishment of agricultural banks throughout the country to provide proper, safe places for the labourers to keep their money.²⁵⁹

Bachelors were commented upon in the press not only in rural Ireland, but in urban areas too. In November 1912, the *Independent's* column 'Facts and Fancies' remarked on the proliferation of bachelors, particularly in cities.²⁶⁰ It concluded that during '1912 the tendency to postpone matrimony has been marked' and revealed that 'the bachelor or spinster past fifty is inclined to choose a partner under twenty-five'.²⁶¹ This trend of late marriage may have been partially explained by a humorous definition of 'bachelor' in 'Facts and Fancies': a 'man who is getting grey, bold, and forty, with a wife and a family to support - not his own, but his father's'.²⁶² This referred to a trend of late marriage in Ireland, which had resulted in marriage commonly being between an older man and a younger woman.²⁶³ This in turn resulted in young widows, who Clear suggests were not always keen to cede control to a younger daughter-in-law and therefore encouraged their sons to remain single.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ 'Facts and Fancies', *Irish Independent*, 21 Nov. 1912.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² 'Facts and Fancies', *Irish Independent*, 14 Dec. 1912.

²⁶³ Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970* (Dublin: Gill & Mcmillan, 2005), p. 169.

²⁶⁴ Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland*, p. 78.

Spinsters as well as bachelors occasioned derision in the Irish nationalist press. In July 1912, a report beside the woman's section of the *Independent* described the view of Reverend Elmer Huffner, from Grand Junction in Colorado, who advocated the exile of all old maids to a barren island.²⁶⁵ However, the spinsters were aptly defended by correspondents who argued that old maids did a lot of good service and charity work. Miss. Gould wrote that despite many 'man-haters in the world' most old maids did not choose to be alone, but had been 'unable to find a suitable mate'.²⁶⁶ The defence of spinsters and the less light-hearted manner in which they were discussed could have been because women outside the ideal state of marriage were less amusing than single men or that women were perceived to be weaker, less able to endure mocking.

In 1913, reports on the 1911 census were published, suggesting that there were most spinsters, aged 20 and above, in Co. Dublin, Leinster (51.5% of the females over 20) and proportionately fewest in Co. Mayo, Connacht (32.6% of women).²⁶⁷ These figures are in keeping with social studies of Ireland that suggest people in Leinster and Ulster married later than people in Connacht and Munster and that wealthy women in the Dublin area were most likely to remain spinsters.²⁶⁸ These statistics were given in both the *Freeman's* and *Independent*, but the percentage of bachelors was only given for Co. Dublin, where 45% of the men over 20 were bachelors. It was also found that in ten counties in Leinster, four in Munster, five in Ulster and one in Connaught, bachelors comprised half the male population over the age of 20.²⁶⁹ These figures were all cherry-picked by the papers from

²⁶⁵ 'The Bachelor Girl', *Irish Independent*, 29 Jul. 1912.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ 'A Census Report', *Irish Independent*, 13 Mar. 1913.

²⁶⁸ Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland*, p. 76.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

vast amounts of data in the census, perhaps intentionally seeking controversy by trying to generate public concern over the proportions of single people in the population.

Discussion of changing demographics prompted social commentary on single men and women. 'Facts and Fancies' argued that:

"An old bachelor" is an epithet which may not convey commendation, but it does imply reproach. The case is otherwise with "an old maid." And a clergyman of note has been protesting vigorously against this lack of logic. He says with truth that 'some of the most charming women come under the heading of 'maiden ladies.' Enlarging his text he adds that they are "the victims of a fate which they have not merited." The assertion is not in agreement with what one habitually hears from the single lady of mature years. She as a rule explains that if she hasn't got married it is her own fault, that in her teens she had more chances than other girls, that she had her choice of twenty but that she preferred her freedom - and so on indefinitely. Whatever the cause of her solitariness it would be absurd to suggest that she had not the physical grace to attract - that theory holds good only in comic papers. Statistics gathered recently by three independent inquirers show that in the marriage market the gifts of Nature rank much lower in the scale of worth than the accidents of Fortune. Elderliness and ugliness are unspeakably beautified by a little money. The metal imparts a personal magnetism heaps more compelling than a pretty face and figure.²⁷⁰

Spinsters were pitied for not finding a partner, but also for having a more forlorn existence as a single woman than a single man endured.

However, condemnation of singleness was not the only view seen in the press, despite the panic over single people that had been seen after the press's sensationalised reports of the census report. In a one-off column in the *Independent*, Eileen Desmond questioned whether home life was decaying and being buried 'beneath the debris' along with 'the ideal wife, the dutiful daughter, and all domestic virtues'? She did not believe this to be

²⁷⁰ 'Facts and Fancies', *Irish Independent*, 7 Aug. 1913.

the case and instead suggested, 'human nature remains what it ever was: young men and maidens fall in love still, in spite of the mighty dollar; they marry, children are born, and the same amount of happiness or the reverse is meted out as was the case at the beginning of the world.'²⁷¹ Desmond continued to say that 'the fact that marriage cannot be the outlook for women owing to their greatly superior numbers, are factors largely responsible for the apparent change which has come over the home life of the great middle class' and that 'narrow, old-fashioned' ideas of family life were fading and providing young women with more freedom and work opportunities.²⁷² Desmond suggested this was positive change, especially for mothers, who instead of being 'surrounded by a constellation of soured old maids' could look forward to 'visits from bright and charming [single] women'.²⁷³ She deplored that so much was heard of the 'selfish bachelor' and 'pleasure-loving woman' who existed 'largely though not entirely in the lurid imaginations of the persons who write letters to the papers'.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ 'Home Life', *Irish Independent*, 27 Oct. 1913.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.



Figure II: 'Irel Coffee', *Irish Independent*, 29 Nov. 1913.

Advertisers keen to market their products to single people also portrayed bachelors as less aberrant figures. On the front page of the *Independent* in June 1913 an advert for gas power in homes declared, even 'a Man can cook by gas' and suggested the possibilities of making porridge or bacon with 'little trouble even to a novice'.²⁷⁵ The gas company assumed that men would not only have not been expected to cook, as this was an implicitly feminine skill, but would no experience preparing food. Irel coffee also promoted a new style of bachelor masculinity, which gave men the option of single living, but required them to sustain themselves. Irel argued the bachelor was 'not a bad fellow' alone in his lodgings, but needed 'the solace of a good cup of coffee'.²⁷⁶ The bachelor pictured looked incredibly comfortable, with his feet up and beaming.

²⁷⁵ 'Even a Man Can Cook by Gas', *Irish Independent*, 19 Jun. 1913.

²⁷⁶ 'Irel Coffee', *Irish Independent*, 29 Nov. 1913.

3.3.4 'Bachelor Tax' and Recruiting Bachelors

Notwithstanding products facilitating a bachelor lifestyle, the press was generally condemnatory of single living. This section will consider first issues of taxation relating to single people in the Irish nationalist press and debates held in the House of Commons. Then it will focus on the arguments made for bachelors to enlist or be conscripted before married men, which suggested that the sacrifice of a single man was less heroic or worthy than that of a married man.

The idea of government introducing policies that discouraged bachelorhood were discussed in the revolutionary period. In June 1912, the Extension of the Franchise and Registration Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by J. A. Pearse, President of the Board of Education. In response, Colonel Yate, Conservative MP for Melton, argued that as well as extending the franchise electoral reform gave an opportunity to address the questions about the 'decreasing birthrate' by 'giving the man who brings up a family some encouragement in the shape of an extra vote'.²⁷⁷ In May 1913, Leo Money, Liberal MP for Northamptonshire East, went further than Yate, suggesting that 'in view of the needs of the national exchequer' it was time to 'penalise the bachelor' and this deserved 'very serious consideration' because of the 'fall in the marriage-rate and the birth-rate'.²⁷⁸

The Irish national dailies were also interested in taxing bachelors. In July 1913, an editorial in the *Independent* announced that the French Parliamentary Budget Committee had decided to impose a surtax of 20% on bachelors over 30 in order to increase the

²⁷⁷ HC Deb 17 June 1912 vol 39 cc 1325-435.

²⁷⁸ HC Deb 07 May 1913 vol 52 cc2107-46.

population and marriage rate.²⁷⁹ The editorial remarked that it was not inconceivable something similar would happen in the United Kingdom, although the population was not declining as it was in France, because the birth rate was being held up by the very wealthy and the poor - the problem being the middle class, who were not reproducing at a comparable rate and would suffer worst from the imposition of such a tax.²⁸⁰ The *Independent* championed its middle-class readership and suggested that they struggled to afford marriage because of high levels of taxation. The *Freeman's* commented that English interest had been awakened by the French tax bill and that it was noted marriage age had increased because of material prosperity, amusements, sports and ease of travel; consequently, the proportion of bachelors between 25 and 35 had risen between 1881 and 1911.²⁸¹

Then in December 1913 taxing bachelors was discussed by the Mountmellick Poor Law Board. In the board meeting, James Patrick Dunne, a women's rights activist who would go on to play a critical role in the Mothers' Pensions Society, proposed that labourers with more than three children and only 12s per week should have a supplement of 1s per week from the treasury.²⁸² Mr. Bailey moved that 'bachelors be made to pay for the support of large families of labourers' and the motion passed unanimously.²⁸³ The *Freeman's* reported favourably on the initiative.

²⁷⁹ 'The Tax on Bachelors', *Irish Independent*, 21 Jul. 1913.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ 'By the Way', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Aug. 1913.

²⁸² 'All Ireland', *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Dec. 1913.

²⁸³ Ibid.

The *Independent* reported on further discussions of bachelors being taxed in the House of Commons, claiming that Asquith had recently implied he had plans to widen the basis of income tax and suggested that this had been timed to coincide with the Austrian 'Bachelor Tax' Bill passing a second reading in the Austrian Second Chamber and appearing set to become law.²⁸⁴ The Bill would see all bachelors, spinsters, widows and widowers with an income over £192 per year being taxed a further 10%.²⁸⁵ Elsewhere in the *Independent*, 'Some Odds and Ends' mocked the discussion of taxing single people and suggested that desperate for revenue, new tax suggestions included 'a tax on bald heads, on whiskers, on pedestrians, on bachelors, on bananas, on spring sonneteers, and on pianos (next door)!'²⁸⁶

In November 1914, the new war budget was discussed in the *Independent*, which suggested that as well as being hard on Irish traders, the budget was a 'very direct hit at bachelorhood' as reduced taxes for married men with large families was a way of indirectly taxing single men.²⁸⁷ The *Independent* demonstrated its support for taxing bachelors, by publishing a letter from 'A Bachelor Willing to Pay', who claimed that the heavy taxes levied by Lloyd George should have 'put a tax on bachelors instead of on the tea'.²⁸⁸ He claimed to be a bachelor with 'a good income, which is the case with a good many bachelors', and he believed that it was only fair bachelors paid more than men with large families.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ 'Items of Interest', *Irish Independent*, 3 Jan. 1914.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ 'Some Odds and Ends', *Irish Independent*, 5 Feb. 1914.

²⁸⁷ 'The Income Tax', *Irish Independent*, 19 Nov. 1914.

²⁸⁸ 'Letters to the Editor', *Irish Independent*, 3 Dec. 1914.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Suggestions that deficits in the national budget might be made up by a tax aimed at bachelors continued after the First World War. In March 1919, the *Independent* reported that France was planning to tax bachelors and men exempt from military services.²⁹⁰ The same month in the House of Commons, Commander Bellairs, asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain, whether he was aware of a new Italian Finance Bill that included a bachelor tax and whether he intended to adopt similar measures in the United Kingdom? Chamberlain replied that he had seen the press reports stating that he was looking at the Italian finance bill, but did not clarify whether he was intending to act similarly.²⁹¹

Despite the uncertain political atmosphere in Ireland, the press was still following discussions of tax in Westminster. In April, the *Freeman's* suggested Chamberlain had indicated that taxing bachelors was in his mind.²⁹² In response to this, bachelors in the National Liberal Club formed an Anti-Taxation League, though they still claimed that they would 'rather be taxed than marry'.²⁹³ At the end of April, 'rumours of a tax on bachelors' were still circulating and the *Freeman's* suggested it might take the form of further tax abatements for married people up to a certain income.²⁹⁴ In May 1919, Chamberlain expressed his frustration at being constantly interrogated about a bachelor tax, explaining that while he had heard many suggestions 'from married gentlemen for taxing bachelors and from bachelors for taxing spinsters, and from everybody to tax somebody else', he

²⁹⁰ 'Items of Interest', *Irish Independent*, 8 Mar. 1918.

²⁹¹ HC Deb 18 March 1919 vol 113 c19001900.

²⁹² 'Bachelors May be Taxed', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Apr. 1918.

²⁹³ 'Items of Interest', *Irish Independent*, 14 Apr. 1918.

²⁹⁴ 'The Bachelor Tax', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Apr. 1918.

only wanted to hear proposals from people for taxes that would affect themselves as well as others.²⁹⁵

The press demonstrated a distaste for bachelors by providing ample coverage of suggestions that they should be taxed more than married men. However, during the First World War there were also expectations placed upon single men to enlist before and instead of married men, because they had fewer dependents and their sacrifice was consequently seen to be less tragic. Although roughly two million men had voluntarily enlisted in the British Army between August 1914 and September 1915, more men were desperately needed and the 'Derby Scheme' was introduced to see whether enough recruits could be raised without conscription.²⁹⁶ The scheme involved asking men all over Britain to sign a form demonstrating their willingness to enlist, however, this clearly showed that there were not enough men willing to volunteer. The investigation found that of 2,179,231 available single men in Britain only half had enlisted and ensured that conscription became a reality in Britain.²⁹⁷ Although conscription was not applied in Ireland the Irish press followed debates about conscription closely and Irish MPs were often vocal in the House of Commons when conscription was debated.

In December 1915, Asquith made an 'Appeal to Unmarried Men' in the House of Commons, calling on them specifically to enlist because the British Army was in desperate need of more recruits.²⁹⁸ Following Asquith's speech, Richard Holt, Liberal MP for Hexham, remarked that 'single men are of the exactly the same flesh and blood as

²⁹⁵ HC Deb 01 May 1919 vol 115 cc389-509.

²⁹⁶ Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillan, 1986), pp. 38-39.

²⁹⁷ Alan Simmonds, *Britain and World War One* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 52.

²⁹⁸ HC Deb 21 December 1915 vol 77 cc213-437.

married men, and surely it cannot be suggested that the mere fact of getting married immediately converts a lazy man or a shirker into a full-blooded patriot'.²⁹⁹ John Dillon also disputed the view of bachelors as unwilling to fight, claiming that there was 'not a single figure, nor a single proof, that there [was] more slackness or cowardice amongst the unmarried than there is amongst the married', though he blamed the *Daily Mail* for spreading rumours about bachelors.³⁰⁰

The same month that bachelor recruits were discussed in the House of Commons the *Independent* reprinted a report from the *London Express*, which claimed that inquiries into enlistment figures for London bachelors demonstrated that they had not come forward in significant numbers and that similar reports were coming in from the provinces.³⁰¹ It was felt that conscription for married men could not be introduced until all potential bachelor recruits had been enlisted. The *Independent* described Lord Derby saying in London that it would be 'absolutely impossible to call up the married men until the country was absolutely convinced that only a negligible quantity of single men were unaccounted for'.³⁰²

In January 1916, when conscription was debated in Westminster, there was speculation in the press as to whether married men would be included. 'To-day & Yesterday' in the *Independent* warned on 4 January 1916 that by the 'evening the civilian under forty will learn something about his chance of wearing a belt and putties. The point agitating the public is no longer shall there be conscription - that seems taken as answered - but must

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ 'The Derby Scheme', *Irish Independent*, 14 Dec. 1915.

³⁰² Ibid.

the married men go'.³⁰³ It emphasised that in Ireland the custom of late marriage resulted in more bachelors, suggesting that Irish men would be disproportionately affected by the change in law.³⁰⁴ The Bill for 'military compulsion of eligible bachelors and widowers without dependent children' was debated in the House of Commons on 5 January 1916 and the *Independent* suggested that it had 'a very troubled debut'.³⁰⁵ Conscription was introduced in Britain for single men in 1916, but later that year expanded to include married men as well, however, despite an attempt to conscript Ireland in April of 1918, conscription was not introduced there.³⁰⁶

3.3.5 'Bachelor men' and 'bachelor girls'

After the First World War, some advertisements suggested that young men and women were carving out contented, single lives in 'bachelor flats'. Interestingly, however, polemic referred to 'bachelor men' and 'bachelor girls', implying that young single women were living alone, but only until they reached full maturity and married. Humorous commentary on the younger generation was also prominent in the press. Marriage continued to be discussed in transactional terms, but discussions of new marriage partnerships practised by the younger generation were described as less romantic than previous ones and founded on friendship, mutual interests and shared plans for the future.

Advertisers sought to appeal to this market, promoting a positive image of single life. Oxo ran an advertising campaign that suggested its stock cubes were perfect for cooking on

³⁰³ 'To-day & Yesterday', *Irish Independent*, 4 Jan. 1916.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ 'Doings on the Other Side', *Irish Independent*, 6 Jan. 1916.

³⁰⁶ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 7.

small stoves in bedsits and for the busy bachelor or bachelor girl.³⁰⁷ It stressed the ease and convenience of Oxo, which could offer 'a warming, nourishing meal-in-a-moment'.³⁰⁸ In March 1921, the 'charm of screens' was proposed for separating bed sitting-rooms for bachelor men or girls.³⁰⁹ The inclusion of women in advertisements for single people and using 'bachelor' to describe both sexes suggests a more progressive attitude towards single women and that they were an accepted part of the singles market for products.

³⁰⁷ 'Oxo', *Irish Independent*, 1 Dec. 1920.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ 'Charm of Screens', *Irish Independent*, 18 Mar. 1920.

Think what a help OXO is in Cooking.

Think what Oxo and Oxo Cubes mean in a large house where a lot



of cooking has to be done with less help than formerly—a n ever-ready nutritious basis for soups, gravies, sauces, etc.

Consider

what they mean in a smaller house, making cooking easier and better, improving all foods they enter into, aiding assimilation & increasing nutrition.



OXO in Bottles is sold as follows
1oz. net 2oz. net
4oz. net 8oz. net
16oz. net

The larger the bottle the cheaper it is.

Think what a splendid standby OXO is for chefs in busy hotels and restaurants, enabling them to prepare any number of appetising dishes quickly and at reasonable cost.

Think of the advantage of OXO in Hospital kitchens where hot OXO is wanted at any critical moment

Think what a boon Oxo is to the bachelor and bachelor girl—a warming, nourishing, meal-in-a-moment.



OXO Cubes are sold in packages of 6, 12 & 30 Cubes.

"A CUBE TO A CUP."

There is no person in the community that OXO cannot help, building up health, increasing vitality and promoting general well-being.



OXO Ltd., Thames House, London, E.C.4

DANCING
JAZZ, One-Step, Fox-Trot, Jigs, Reels, Waltzing,
etc., etc., learned immediately, without master;
Tutor, 2/6, mailed. Monroe, Duke St., Dublin.

Figure III: 'Oxo', Irish Independent', 1 Dec. 1920.

In the more general discourse of the press, however, spinsters could still be vilified. In May 1921, John McCaffrey wrote an article for the *Independent* on women's 'choice in reading'.³¹⁰ McCaffrey declared that spinsters read incessantly, which bore out a statement he had heard from a London publishing manager: 'women buy and read novels because they have nothing else to do'.³¹¹ This statement reinforced traditional views of spinsters as unnecessary women, because they were not fulfilling women's roles, such as taking care of a husband and children. It implied that a central purpose for women was to support men and therefore without this spinsters read to keep busy.

While spinsters could occasion derision, the lifestyle of a bachelor continued to be portrayed as convivial. In July 1921, 'To-day & Yesterday' considered whether some types of bachelors had disappeared from everyday life, such as the 'worldly bachelor type'. It declared:

We haven't forgotten him. He was semi-young, neatly dressed, and confident of making an impression. The formal and spectacular side of life was his speciality. He went to the theatre pretty regularly, and was satisfied with the ground floor unless he had a lady with him. He spoke correctly, was particular about his boots, and took a casual interest in sport. Sometimes his talk showed that he read a little. It also proved, if you conversed with him, at length, that he wasn't a genius. That didn't prevent him from being a success. It would be hard to say what his means were. There were houses where he got things on credit, yet one couldn't describe him as being in debt. He travelled second, took small interest in politics, and re-guarded his annual holidays as the most important event of the year. Without being downright selfish, he complacently viewed himself as the centre of the movements of the universe. He was a passable companion - Has he really disappeared?³¹²

This description of the worldly bachelor suggests a man who chose a single life and relished travel, learning and fashion.

³¹⁰ 'Woman's Choice in Reading', *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1921.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² 'To-day & Yesterday', *Irish Independent*, 11 Jul. 1921.

Reports did not suggest the figure of the bachelor had receded from popular imagination and discussion. In September 1921, J. P. Finegan, secretary to the Bishop at Mullingar Cathedral, spoke about the impediments to marriage in Ireland. He regretted that 'Meath was literally honey-combed with bachelors, many of whom were wealthy men in possession of broad acres' and that some 'stated that they were happier as they were'.³¹³ He feared they were 'too happy, and did not disturb their peace of mind by the serious national aspect of the matter'.³¹⁴ Finegan saw marriage and procreation as a duty and responsibility owed to the nation by all citizens.

In May 1922, Gertrude Atherton wrote a column in the *Independent* under the broad section 'Of Interest to Our Women Readers'.³¹⁵ Atherton discussed the saying that 'a woman can marry any man she wants' and decided that there was some truth in it, although it did not suggest a 'very high order of intelligence in men'.³¹⁶ Therefore she suggested that 'really intelligent men are those that remain bachelors, because they never meet the highest type of woman and will not compromise on the second best', which she concluded 'may or may not be the mother complex' as some 'things are not yet explained by psychoanalysis'.³¹⁷ Atherton proposed that not marrying was a psychological pathology in men, making a striking reference to newly fashionable ideas drawn from Freud's work that were not frequently discussed in the nationalist press.

³¹³ 'Meath a Bachelor Preserve', *Irish Independent*, 28 Sep. 1921.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ 'Are Men Intelligent?', *Irish Independent*, 12 May 1921.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Humorous discussions about single people, which had been present before the First World War, began to re-emerge in the later years of the revolutionary period and were re-articulated to take into account not only the idea of the 'New Woman', but that of the 'New Man'. This man was fashionable and had broken with tradition. There was a focus on the newness of young people's customs and their courting and marriage habits were an integral part of this. In May 1922, an article in the *Independent* discussed modern men's 'crawling, willing servitude' to tailors and fashion.³¹⁸ The bachelor was affected even more than a 'married serf'.³¹⁹ It despaired that women who men often smile at for being 'the slaves of fashion[...] dress ten times as suitably and as comfortably as men', while men wore both uncomfortable and 'colourless heavy clothes'.³²⁰ It concluded with the hope that revival of Gaelic culture would bring back the kilt, giving men some relief.

A few days later, Geoffrey Delamere wrote an article in the *Independent* on the difference between old and modern marriage proposals. He suggested that 'there was a time ere the days of the flapper or the modern young man when proposing was recognised as a graceful art', whereas in modern times men were secretive about proposals and there were some who doubted proposal were 'made at all' by modern 'type of man'.³²¹ Instead of poetry and going down on one knee, Delamere imagined a young man, who played tennis and bridge with a young woman, turning to her at an afternoon party on a 'two-seater' and mentioning arrangements for their wedding in June.³²² He also observed that women had little to say about modern proposals, perhaps because they 'fell short of the

³¹⁸ 'Man's Sartorial Servitude', *Irish Independent*, 19 May 1922.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ 'Proposals Ancient and Modern', *Irish Independent*, 25 May 1922.

³²² *Ibid.*

imaginary drawn by certain literary bachelors who write novels'.³²³ Delamere's description of modern courtship suggests a change from high romance, towards a more companionate approach to selecting a partner, which was based on mutual enjoyment and respect of one another's talents and shared interests. Catriona Clear argues that while marriage partners were increasingly seen to be chosen for pragmatic reasons in this period, this did not preclude affection or desire and it was possible for a suitable partner and a love match to be found in one person.³²⁴

The increased freedom of young people to direct their own courtship, despite conservative social commentary that condemned it, also extended to their lifestyles. The woman's section of the *Independent* claimed in November 1922 that many bachelor men and girls preferred to take a room of their own and not be tied to the schedule of a boarding house.³²⁵ In November 1922, Dreena wrote in the *Independent* that the English press declared that the marriageable age for women had 'been extended to an almost undreamt-of limit' and that women of 30 were still referred to as girls. Relishing this fact, she wrote 'with that exceedingly cheering bit of news, spinster sisters o' mine, I bid you good-day'.³²⁶

Throughout the revolutionary period singleness was seen as outside the norm. For men, it was portrayed as selfish because men were the ones imbued with the agency to propose and thereby make a marriage occur. For women, it was more often depicted as pitiable and unhappy, although this was being increasingly challenged. Class was pervasive in

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland*, p. 85.

³²⁵ 'The Interests of Eve - A One-Room Home', *Irish Independent*, 3 Nov. 1922.

³²⁶ 'In Town and Out of It', *Irish Independent*, 27 Nov. 1923.

discussions of singleness in the Irish nationalist dailies, often the middle classes sought to pressure or coerce others, often the working classes, to marry. Marriage was seen as a duty to the nation because the rhetoric surrounding marriage largely indicated that it was about procreation. In discussions of single people, marriage was not spoken of in terms of love or romance, but necessity and acceptability. In the later years of the revolutionary period, however, singleness was being marginally redefined by advertisers and some journalists as a fun lifestyle, which provided freedom. Some of the disdain for bachelors, who had been castigated for choosing this lucrative life abated. Alongside more conservative polemic, the press suggested single people could be fulfilled living alone. The implications of this were greater for spinsters, who unlike bachelors had been portrayed as forlorn creatures and who it was acknowledged could, although it was far from ideal, live happy and contented lives.

3.3.6 Conclusion

Discussions of single people and widows in the early twentieth century were influenced by an evolution in popular thought as to what was an appropriate level of state involvement in individual lives and society as a whole.³²⁷ During the revolutionary period, organisations like the Mothers' Pension Society began to push for the state to take a more active role in investigating and financing welfare, particularly for widows and

³²⁷ Susan Pederson argues that in Britain this amounted to 'an endowment of motherhood': Susan Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 107.

Although Pederson's work on separation women cannot be extrapolated directly to Ireland because less is known about Irish separation women some Irish women did receive separation allowances and there was some discussion of these women in the Irish nationalist dailies, for example: 'Pension Scheme', *Irish Independent*, 19 Nov. 1914; 'Navy Separation Money', *Irish Independent*, 17 Feb. 1915; 'Separation Allowances', *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Jan. 1917.

orphans.³²⁸ While the state stopped short of substantially supporting single, childless women, the introduction of separation allowances during the First World War bound taxpayers and government to providing basic welfare for mothers and their children, who did not have the support of a husband.³²⁹

While the state supported a larger number of women through separation allowances, bachelors were viewed as unacceptable tenants in state-funded cottages and coerced into marriage. Conservative gender norms, which suggested single men could not clean or maintain a household without a woman and that family life was the ideal for both sexes, dictated, in theory if not always in practice, who received state subsidised housing.³³⁰

Individual men and women were also affected by the relationship between gendered ideals and monetary concerns. Polemic in the press throughout the period suggests a pre-existing and increasingly transactional approach to marriage. This is not to suggest that there was no genuine love or affection in these relationships, but that there was a carefully considered element of give and take. The burgeoning industry of products marketed to 'bachelor' men and women demonstrated that despite panic caused by the

³²⁸ Numerous articles in the nationalist daily newspapers cover the Mothers' Pension Society's calls for women to receive more financial support from the state: 'Mothers' Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 31 Oct. 1917; 'Children's Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 17 Nov. 1917; 'Letters to the Editor', *Irish Independent*, 20 Nov. 1917; 'Mothers' Rights', *Irish Independent*, 6 Dec. 1917; 'Mothers' Pensions', *Irish Independent*, 5 Mar. 1918; 'Dublin Workhouses', *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jul. 1918; 'Mothers' Pension Flag Day', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Oct. 1918.

³²⁹ Earner-Byrne, *Mother and Child*, p. 13.

³³⁰ This is evident from the number of reports of Rural District Councils evicting bachelor tenants from labourers' cottages because they wanted the homes to be reserved for married men, ideally with families, for example: 'All Ireland', *FJ*, 17 Apr. 1913; 'All Ireland', *FJ*, 3 May 1913; 'All Ireland', *FJ*, 4 Dec. 1913.

census and discussion of 'surplus' women, there were increasing options available for single people in terms of where and how they lived.³³¹

³³¹ Concerns about 'surplus' women were printed in the nationalist dailies: 'A Census Report', *Irish Independent*, 13 Mar. 1913; 'Matrimony', *Irish Independent*, 4 Nov. 1914; 'The Wily Widow', *Irish Independent*, 11 Oct. 1922.

However, some advertisers in the press promoted single living: 'Oxo', *II*, 1 Dec. 1920; 'Charm of Screens', *II*, 18 Mar. 1920.

Gendering Defiance: From the Irish Volunteer Force to the Irish Civil War

4.1 Introduction

In recent years, numerous extensive studies have discussed men's participation in the political and military events of the revolutionary period.¹ However, although some historians have gestured towards thinking about masculinity their work has tended to not consider these men as gendered beings. This part of the thesis will gender the defiance and militarism men displayed during the revolutionary period. The nationalist daily newspapers are an essential source for gendering Irish nationalism because they can be mined for information about revolutionary activities and events, but also because they can be used to trace how popular attitudes towards the Irish Volunteer Force formed and evolved from a gendered perspective.

This chapter argues that men during the revolutionary period joined the Irish Volunteers and undertook instruction in drill and military training to demonstrate their rejection of solely constitutional politics as emasculating. After 1916, cultural practices and objects that had been constructed by revivalists since the nineteenth century as peculiarly representative or symbolic of the unique Irish culture they sought to revive became the instruments of young Irish men performing a more militaristic expression of nationalism. The Irish language and hurley sticks were both integral to these kinds of

¹ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996); Charles Townshend, *The Republic The Fight for Irish Independence* (London: Allen Lane, 2013); R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces* (London: Allen Lane, 2014); Matthew Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal in Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (Woodenbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006); James McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013); Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999); Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

nationalist display. The Irish language had long been associated with inspiring revolution in Ireland, with roots reaching back into the preceding century.² In the 1840s, Young Ireland emphasised the need for Irish cultural regeneration and was particularly concerned with language revival, as well instigating an uprising against British rule in Ireland in 1848. Thomas Davis, founding member of Young Ireland, had proposed the Irish language as 'an antidote to Anglicisation'.³ The fenian movement of the 1860s, always overtly revolutionary, perpetuated these ideas, particularly in the 1880s, as it moved away from physical force, embracing 'a fresh separatist dynamic based on the nurture of a distinctly Irish culture' in the wake of the unsavoury Phoenix Park murders of 1882 and the development of constitutional nationalism under Parnell's leadership.⁴ In 1892, Douglas Hyde, founding member of the Gaelic League, famously warned that losing the national tongue was 'the sorest stroke' for Ireland.⁵ As a result of the emphasis on cultural nationalism and language revival, Sarah McKibbin argues that during the nineteenth century the language became 'a talisman of the lost manly virtues of independence and fidelity'.⁶

This chapter does not intend to offer a full account of the political and military history of the revolutionary period, which has been well covered by historians. Nor does it provide much discussion of Irish republican women. Republican women and femininity have been the subjects of enlightening work in recent years by Louise Ryan, Cal McCarthy and Senia

² Tony Crowley, *War of Words: The Politics of Language in Ireland 1537-2004* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

³ Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987), p. 234.

⁴ Matthew Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), p. 16.

⁵ Douglas Hyde, 'The Necessity of the De-Anglicisation of Ireland' ed. by Breandán Ó Conaire (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1986).

⁶ Sarah McKibbin, 'The Poor Mouth: A Parody of (post)Colonial Irish Manhood', *Research in African Literatures*, 34:4 (2003), 96-114 (p. 96).

Pašeta.⁷ When femininity is discussed here it is in relation to masculinity and nationalism; the focus is more often on ideals of womanliness or the political uses of Irish women's femininity than on individual women.

4.2 Reclaiming Irish Masculinity: The Formation of the Irish Volunteer Force

In late-nineteenth-century Ireland organisations proliferated that sought to regenerate Irish culture and revise stereotypes of Irishmen as weak, childlike and effeminate. The Gaelic League, founded in 1893 by Douglas Hyde, worked to curtail the decline of Irish speakers in Ireland and create more works of Irish literature, while in 1884 Michael Cusack established the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). Patrick McDevitt argues that through their sporting prowess Irish men not only demonstrated their athletic ability, but also the strength of Ireland's manhood.⁸ McDevitt suggests that this was intended to send a message to Britain that Irish men's physical strength could be used in sport but also military resistance.⁹

There had long been an association between male sporting and paramilitary culture in Ireland. At Parnell's funeral in 1891, which has been described as fenian in style, members of the GAA carrying hurley sticks escorted the coffin in the funeral procession.¹⁰ When the Irish Volunteers formed in November 1913, the organisation, much like the GAA, had the implicit- and at times explicit - aim of reinvigorating Irish masculinity and rejuvenating young Irish male bodies to demonstrate Ireland's readiness for

⁷ Louise Ryan, *Gender, Identity and the Irish Press, 1922-1937* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, 2002); Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Dublin: The Collins Press, 2007); Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸ Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (Gordonsville: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal*, p. 63.

independence by harnessing and displaying the strength and muscularity of its youth.

Irish men had long been associated with military prowess, but this had in part been connected to a tradition of Irish men serving in the British Army.¹¹ The formation of the Irish Volunteers reclaimed Ireland's martial masculinity and directed it towards defending Irish interests.

Ben Novick suggests that the Volunteer force always focused on men's bodies, dwelling on the 'physicality of the Volunteers'.¹² Even before the Volunteer organisation was officially formed, commentators in the press suggested that it would attract Irish men by offering them an opportunity for socialising in a hypermasculine, homosocial environment. In September 1913, 'Ex-Sub' from Ballinacurra, Co. Limerick, wrote to the *Independent* indicating that the organisation would have 'physically and morally' beneficial effects on Irish men and instil in them 'a sense of duty and self-sacrifice'.¹³ 'Ex-Sub' felt the association would also promote a fraternity of young Irish men by offering them 'comradeship' and 'something to do in the evenings, ie., to attend drills or other instruction of a military nature'.¹⁴

Although the military nature of the Irish Volunteers posed a potential challenge to constitutional nationalism the organisation was welcomed by the nationalist dailies, including the *Freeman's*, because both the Volunteers and the Parliamentarians wished to

¹¹ For information about men Irish men often serving in the British Army see: Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 247; Ben Novick, *Conceiving Revolution* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 25.

For more information about the formation of the Irish Volunteers see: Matthew Kelly, 'The Irish Volunteers: A Machiavellian Movement?' in *The Ulster Crisis: 1885-1921* ed. by David George Boyce (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), pp. 64-85.

¹² Foster, *Vivid Faces*, pp. 189-191.

¹³ Novick, *Conceiving Revolution*, p. 136.

¹⁴ 'Irish Volunteer Corps,' *Irish Independent*, 8 Sept. 1913.

¹⁵ Ibid.

ensure Ireland achieved Home Rule. On 17 November 1913, the *Freeman's* reported warmly the 'remarkable new development' to be called the 'Irish Volunteers'.¹⁵ The organisation promoted a range of manly ideals, including physical health and strength, often framed in language that suggested Irish men had been feminized and weakened by British rule. For example, 'Northern Iron' wrote to the *Independent* on 22 November 1913 describing how through 'open-air life' and 'healthy exercise' the Volunteers would rejuvenate Ireland's youth and be 'a godsend to thousands of young men'.¹⁶ Simultaneously, 'Northern Iron' stressed that this would be done in militaristic fashion, as through the 'possession of arms, the sign and right of free people,' the Volunteers would drill outdoors and conduct martial training so as to 'enforce our rights and safeguard our liberties, like any self-respecting nation'.¹⁷

Three days after 'Northern Iron's' letter was published in the *Independent*, the Irish Volunteers held its inaugural meeting at the Rotunda, with reportedly nine thousand men and women in attendance - three thousand overflowed into neighbouring gardens.¹⁸ The main purpose of the meeting was to inaugurate a military organisation with a core belief in the right of Irishmen to bear arms in self-defence. From the podium, Alderman Mackie proclaimed, 'no nation whose manhood did not know anything of the use of arms or military discipline could claim to be a nation'.¹⁹

Calls for young men to commence drilling were often parcelled with a pervasive fascination with guns, which Matthew Kelly describes as drawing young men to the Volunteers, noting the rise of firearms offences over the decade preceding its

¹⁵ 'Irish Volunteers', *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Nov. 1914.

¹⁶ 'Should Irishmen Arm?' *Irish Independent*, 22 Nov. 1913.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ 'The Irish Volunteers: Inaugural Meeting', 26 Nov. 1913.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

formation.²⁰ Roy Foster's aptly entitled chapter 'Arming' in *Vivid Faces* also discusses this, describing how the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a secret, separatist organisation, procured arms for the Volunteers.²¹ The idolisation of arms by the Volunteers associated militarism and Irish masculinity, using rhetoric that linked citizenship, gun ownership and maleness.

The Irish Volunteers mediated between Home Rule agendas and those of more radical republicans. Despite prominent moderate nationalists in the Volunteers, like Eoin MacNeill and the Home Rule MP, Tom Kettle, it was undeniable that it sparked the imagination and support of more radical nationalists.²² An editorial in *Sinn Féin* optimistically reported that in time the Volunteer Movement might unite the Irish nation through manly 'comradeship'.²³ It questioned whether manliness and love of arms might:

beget a comradeship of purpose in North and South, *whether as manliness is in itself hostile to meanness and littleness*, the soldier sympathy of North and South will beget national oneness - we cannot prophesy. But these things may be so, and a national army, strong to hold Ireland for the Irish be eventually evolved[...]It is the clear duty of every able-bodied man to arm in his country's cause, let the event be what it may[...]If it succeeds why if it succeeds the name of Irishmen will be a title of nobility in all the people's eyes.²⁴

This suggests a hope that an innate and homogenous masculinity had the potential to unite different shades of nationalists and even unionists through a shared fetish for arms and discipline overriding political and social divisions. Equally, it demonstrated an emerging rhetoric that blurred the distinction between constitutional and separatist manifestations of nationalism.

²⁰ Kelly, 'The Irish Volunteers: A Machiavellian Movement?' p. 76.

²¹ Foster, *Vivid Faces*, pp. 189-191.

²² For more information about Tom Kettle's involvement see: Senia Pašeta, *Thomas Kettle* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2008), pp. 74-78.

²³ 'The Volunteers', *Sinn Féin*, 6 Dec. 1913.

²⁴ 'The Volunteers', *Sinn Féin*, 6 Dec. 1913 (emphasis added).

Tom Kettle's involvement in the Volunteers exemplified this apparent convergence of constitutional and radical nationalism.²⁵ Pařeta suggests Kettle joined the movement to ensure constitutionalism was represented within it for he believed nationalist Ireland had a right to defend itself against the Ulster Volunteer Force which had been created by Sir Edward Carson, a prominent unionist, in January 1913 to resist Home Rule.²⁶ Kettle was both a loyal follower of John Redmond and a supporter of Irish men drilling and arming in pursuit of 'the restoration of self-respect', which was a common trope in Volunteer polemic.²⁷ However, James McConnel emphasises that the Party leadership was not present at the inauguration and had not wanted a 'nationalist militia', John Dillon being especially concerned by its formation.²⁸ The movement progressed nonetheless. The men shared a fascination with firearms, but also began to acquire other signifiers of a traditional army, such as uniforms. As early as 3 December 1913, the *Freeman's Journal* printed a picture of the Volunteers that showed they had not quite mastered the discipline of a military force, but they had procured uniforms, caps, sashes and rifles (Figure I).²⁹

²⁵ Kelly, 'Machiavellian Movement', p. 73.

²⁶ Pařeta, *Thomas Kettle*, pp. 74-75.

For more information on the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force see: Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

²⁷ Kelly, 'Machiavellian Movement', p. 74.

²⁸ McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 278.

²⁹ 'The National Volunteers', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Dec. 1913.



Figure I: 'The National Volunteers', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Dec. 1913

Pictures of the Irish Volunteers in the Bureau of Military History often show the men not standing in perfectly regimented straight lines or all facing in the same direction (Figure II and Figure III). The pictures give the impression of a rather amateur military group, but nonetheless the men in their uniforms holding rifles look proud and happy to be part of the movement. This suggests that part of the attraction of the Volunteers was camaraderie and that Volunteers revelled in the opportunity to gain military training.³⁰ Volunteers wanted to emphasise their possession of weapons, so in some photographs large guns were positioned in front of the men pictured.

³⁰ Vincent Comerford has suggested that camaraderie was also a motivating factor for men joining the radical nationalist fenian movement in the 1880s. Comerford describes the fenians in the 1860s as a fraternity of young men, united by shared grievances and 'in need of social and recreational outlets.' R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society 1848-1882* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1998), p. 111.



Figure II:BMH P:20 available at:

<http://bmhgallery.test.roomthree.com/displayimage.php?pid=45> [Last accessed: 3 Sep. 2016].



Figure III: BMH P:20 available at:

<http://bmhgallery.test.roomthree.com/displayimage.php?pid=44> [Last accessed: 3 Sep. 2016].

The Volunteers were quick to begin obtaining uniforms and guns. Kelly argues that widespread acknowledgement and lack of condemnation of this in the nationalist dailies suggests a common understanding of the link that existed between citizenship, manliness and possession of firearms.³¹ Foster describes radicals acquiring arms, such as Michael Stainer, an IRB member and ironmonger, who redirected weapons and ammunition to other IRB men.³² He also notes Sean T. O'Kelly's less successful attempt to purchase arms for the force in London.³³

³¹ Kelly, *Fenian Ideal*, p. 76.

³² Foster, *Vivid Faces*, p. 202.

³³ *Ibid.*

The Irish nationalist dailies accepted, if not welcomed, the idolisation of arms. In early December 1913, an editorial in the *Independent* described the proclamation against importing arms in Ireland as 'futile', largely because it was not accompanied by any regulations on arms already in the country.³⁴ It made reference to the large-scale unionist importation of guns at Larne, by noting the hypocrisy of allowing arms into Ireland if they were in unionist hands, but not nationalist ones.³⁵ Following this, it printed interviews with leading Volunteers, including Tom Kettle and Eoin MacNeill.³⁶ Kettle claimed to already have five thousand Volunteers enrolled who would practice shooting and equip themselves with mini rifles.³⁷ MacNeill declared that in their manifesto they had made clear the belief that 'every Irishman has the right to carry arms. We entertain no fears at all for our fellow countrymen. We proclaim the *right of the citizens of every free country to carry arms*, and we are not going to make an exception now'.³⁸

The Volunteer movement's obsession with guns was also clear in the Volunteer newspaper, *The Irish Volunteer*, which commenced printing in February 1914. The first edition of the *Irish Volunteer* established the Volunteer ethos. This promoted a militaristic and united conception of manliness, requiring all men involved to become part of the fraternity, but also subscribe to the same ideals of masculinity: idolisation of arms, soldiering, self-control and discipline. On the first page, it discussed the suggestion that 'each member should be made to kiss a rifle or sword, in the presence of the corps' demonstrating a substantial fascination with weapons.³⁹ It was decided that a declaration

³⁴ 'Importation of Arms', *Irish Independent*, 6 Dec 1913.

³⁵ For more information on the Larne gun running see: McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 283; Alvin Jackson, 'The Larne Gun Running of 1914', *History Ireland*, 1 (1993), 35-38.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid* (emphasis added).

³⁹ 'Should the Recruit be Sworn?', *Irish Volunteer*, 7 Feb. 1914.

was 'sufficient bond' for entering the organisation. The newspaper described 'the sacredness' of a Volunteer's obligations'.⁴⁰ Swearing men into the organisation in this way was an early example of the Volunteers performing nationalism through ceremony that carried religious undertones and linked the sanctity of the oath to that of the sacraments. The *Irish Volunteer* intended to maintain Irish rights and liberties, 'train, discipline, arm and equip the Volunteers, and to unite Irishmen'.⁴¹

Interestingly, the Ulster Volunteer Force's importation of arms into Larne in April 1914 also demonstrates the *Irish Volunteer's* fascination with guns. The paper was admiring, if not supportive, of the gunrunning at Larne. It editorialised: 'For sheer audacity, perfect organisation and determination the gun-running expedition carried to a complete success on Friday night and early Saturday morning by the Ulster Volunteer Force will rank equal if not superior to any similar undertaking in history'.⁴² The *Irish Volunteer* was inspired and the following month declared 'Rifles, rifles and more rifles. Until the time comes when rifles will be served out as part of the Volunteer equipment, every Volunteer should make an effort to procure a rifle'.⁴³

While Volunteers sought their own guns, commercial entities were quick to act in providing them with uniforms. Ben Novick and John Strachan and Claire Nally have all noted the common use of images that indicated masculinity and soldiering in Irish advertising during the First World War and commerce surrounding the Irish Volunteer Force was no exception.⁴⁴ An advert from Hearne & Co, a Waterford-based supplier, ran

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ 'The Irish Volunteer', *IV*, 7 Feb. 1914.

⁴² 'Getting the Guns', *IV*, 2 May 1914.

⁴³ 'From the Outpost', *IV*, 16 May 1914.

⁴⁴ Novick, *Conceiving Revolution*, p. 230; John Strachan and Claire Nally, *Advertising and Print Culture in Ireland 1891-1921* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 218.

twenty-five times in the *Independent* between July and December 1914. It carried an image of a man in Volunteer uniform (Figure II). An equally hypermasculine and militaristic image was used by Gleeson's, based in O'Connell Street, Dublin, and by Thomas Fallon, another Dublin-based distributor, who highlighted their 'Irish Tweed' (Figure III and Figure IV).⁴⁵ All three advertisers used similar images and depicted men with rifles, using the gun motif common in Volunteer polemic to help sell their uniforms and unavoidably associating the phallic imagery of a gun with Irish military masculinity. They also emphasised the discipline and bearing of a trained soldier in the stance and expression of the men pictured. They boasted that their products were Irish-made, indicating the importance of the Irish-Ireland movement within both Irish nationalism and the Volunteer movement.



Figure IV: 'Volunteer Outfits', *Irish Independent*, 13 Jul. 1914.

⁴⁵ 'Gleeson', *Irish Independent*, 25 Aug. 1914.



Figure V: 'Fallon', *Irish Independent*, 5 Dec. 1914.



Figure VI: 'Volunteer Outfits', *II*, 13 Jul. 1914.

Advertisers were tapping into a broader desire for Irish goods, with which the Irish-Ireland movement was keen to inculcate the Volunteer movement by stressing the

importance of buying Irish to the nation's economy. Diarmuid (J.L) Fawsitt, Secretary of the Cork Industrial Development Association and founding member of the Volunteers in Cork City, wrote to the *Independent* that while it was a 'commendable enterprise' that Volunteer bandoliers were 'made from Irish-tanned leathers', there 'should be little need to impress upon the Volunteer committees to use Irish-made stationary'.⁴⁶ Despite this, he feared that the 'use of foreign-made writing paper by secretaries of Volunteer corps' was common.⁴⁷ The respect shown to Irish Ireland by the Volunteers was evident by their links to Irish Ireland organisations. Professor McDonagh declared at Bridgetown, Co. Wexford, that 'Gaelic Leaguers and Young Irelanders would find in the Volunteer movement the national occupation for which they had been preparing'.⁴⁸

It was not just men who were vocal advocates of Irish Ireland ideology, Pašeta argues that widespread involvement in Irish Ireland activities such as buying Irish, and learning or teaching Irish, drew nationalist women towards more revolutionary activities in this period as Irish Ireland acted as a bridge between constitutional and radical circles.⁴⁹ The centrality of Irish cultural and economic revival to all shades of nationalist in discussions of the Volunteers and nationalist women indicates that ideals of masculinity and femininity were associated with men and women who supported the cultural and economic revival of the Irish nation. Irish Ireland also offered an opportunity to physically display nationalist feeling by wearing Irish goods.

⁴⁶ 'Irish Volunteer Equipment', *Irish Independent*, 13 Jun. 1914.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ 'Progress Everywhere', *Irish Independent*, 24 Jun. 1914.

⁴⁹ Pašeta, p. 23.

4.3 Discipline: The Irish Volunteers and the Irish Parliamentary Party

The popularity of the Irish Volunteers and its military nature led to concerns being raised about whether it was advisable or safe to have a large nationalist militia group in Ireland. A letter to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* from William Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, Co. Clare, warned that 'serious thought should be taken lest the young manhood of Ireland be misled into an orgie [sic] of misplaced militarism.'⁵⁰ Fogarty drew on a traditional anti-fenian, clerical rhetoric; he advised that whilst the 'splendour of freedom; the right to bear arms; the duty to dare or die - are attractive themes - glorious themes if you will - but good, well-intentioned men have time and time again, brought about untold misery by fine writing and flamboyant oratory which took no count of contemporary circumstances.'⁵¹ Fogarty cautioned against 'frittering away the resources of the country in comic opera heroics.'⁵² In a letter responding to Fogarty, 'Seoirse MacNiooail' refuted the implication that the Volunteers were unplanned or lacked caution and declared the organisation the 'greatest asset in the National armoury.'⁵³ MacNiooail suggested that Ireland's young men were a valuable resource.

It is not just contemporaries who have viewed the Irish Volunteers as an important tool of Irish nationalism. There has been much scholarly debate about the relationship between the Volunteers and the Irish Parliamentary Party, who were the political representatives of nationalist Ireland when the Volunteers formed. Michael Wheatley argues that there was little outright condemnation of the Volunteers by the Parliamentary Party, with the exception of Richard Hazelton.⁵⁴ Hazelton wrote to the *Independent* and the *Freeman's*

⁵⁰ 'The Irish Volunteers', *FJ*, 15 Dec. 1913.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Wheatley, p. 285.

after a disruptive incident occurred at the initial meeting of the Cork City Volunteers on 13 December 1914.⁵⁵ He advised his constituents to avoid the Volunteers and professed that it was wiser to wait and if Home Rule failed then mobilise armed resistance. Hazelton drew attention to the ceremony and symbolism of arms bearing, remarking that theories about the 'rights of citizens to bear arms are no doubt, sound and admirable. Nobody need give them up; but, whatever else we give up, let it not be our commonsense'.⁵⁶ Even while condemning the Volunteer movement, however, Hazelton had implicitly recognized that volunteering was beginning to shape popular ideas of citizenship along republican lines. 'H. Juvenus' from Cork struck a similar note to Hazelton, writing to the *Independent* to suggest the volunteer leaders should be careful as there was already enough faction fighting in Cork.⁵⁷ The embarrassing incident in Cork prompted Liam de Roiste to write to the *Independent* to assure readers that the meeting had seen order restored and five hundred men enrolled as Volunteers.⁵⁸

The Volunteers balanced the interests of nationalist men who believed drilling was necessary and those who felt that an unruly nationalist force might obstruct Home Rule. To maintain unity an emphasis was placed on manly cooperation and comradeship across the nationalist political spectrum. Despite not openly endorsing the Volunteers until June 1914, there were signs that the established political leaders in Ireland admired it and veiled attempts were made to suggest that the organisation was in fact a tool of the Home Rule Party. Wheatley has studied the private negotiations between the Parliamentary Party and the Volunteer committee, suggesting that by mid-May the

⁵⁵ 'Cork and Volunteers', *Irish Independent*, 16 Dec. 1913; 'The Irish Volunteers', *Irish Independent*, 17 Dec. 1913.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ 'The Cork Volunteer Meeting', *II*, 18 Dec. 1913.

⁵⁸ 'Cork and Volunteers', *Irish Independent*, 16 Dec. 1913.

Parliamentarians had decided to take over the organisation and from the end of the May they made their intentions clear.⁵⁹ From much earlier on, however, there were signs in the press that the Parliamentary Party was supportive of the Volunteers. The *Freeman's* hinted at this in its lead editorial on 18 December 1913:

The meetings which are reported in our columns to-day and those recently held prove that the recent attacks on Home Rule have had their stimulating effect on Ireland[...]The great meetings which assemble thousands, at which their opinions are voiced by their leaders, are of great importance. But they are not so important as the quiet, undemonstrative work that is done constantly by the people themselves in their branch meetings all over the country. Here the steady, solid, enduring work of the National movement is done[...]Wexford County has done this part nobly, and the Gorey meeting shows that the whole county is anxious to join in that demonstration of National faith.⁶⁰

Although this sounded like traditional work for the party it was linked to the Volunteer organisation. A smaller article, a few pages after this, reported a meeting of Gorey District Council where a motion proposed by the Gorey Organising Committee of the National Volunteers asking for approval and support was passed unanimously.⁶¹ In some cases localities were building non-sectarian and cross-community bridges. In the course of the Gorey meeting, John Etchingham, a member of the Volunteer Committee, struck this inclusive note by suggesting that:

the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland, and their duties would be defensive and protective. They would not contemplate either aggression or domination. They would not make any distinction of creed politics or social grade, and the organisation, which was being taken up whole-heartedly in Ireland, would have the widest possible basis. It was founded, as was the manifesto of the Provisional Committee, in the name of National unity, National dignity, and National and individual liberty, and manly, self-respecting citizenship.⁶²

⁵⁹ Wheatley, p. 287.

⁶⁰ 'The Country and Home Rule', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Dec. 1913.

⁶¹ 'All-Ireland', *FJ*, 18 Dec. 1913.

⁶² *Ibid.*

The following day, the *Freeman's* published a letter from Eoin MacNeill in which he suggested that 'the differences of opinion about the Volunteer movement are more apparent than real'.⁶³ MacNeill claimed that nothing would be lost by being ready to fight, should the need arise, whilst acknowledging that the time had not yet come.⁶⁴ As a Home Ruler, he understood that others may be concerned the movement might jeopardize Home Rule, but he made clear that the Volunteers were simply readying themselves.

Rhetoric linking the Volunteers to ideals of self-discipline and self-mastery implicitly suggested the ability of Irishmen to govern themselves and thereby their own affairs. Tom Kettle claimed that it was necessary to push back against Ulster Volunteer aggression, which might hinder Home Rule. If that proved to be the case, Kettle wrote, 'there is only one course open to a self-respecting man: that is to discipline and practice himself in the art of communal self-defence - in the art of war.'⁶⁵ This statement encapsulated Kettle's belief that the Volunteers were the necessary threat of force that would ensure the passage of Home Rule through constitutional methods. It also indicates his view that every man was a potential soldier, an idea which gained traction during the First World War. This resulted in the promulgation of a hegemonic ideal of manliness that was intimately associated with martial physical strength.

On 28 May 1914, the main editorial in the *Independent* captured the evolving attitude of Ireland's political leaders to the Volunteers, as well as the need to show Ireland armed and united in calls for Home Rule.⁶⁶ It praised the Volunteer organisation for promoting

⁶³ 'The Irish Volunteers', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Dec. 1913.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ 'The Irish Volunteer', *IV*, 7 Feb. 1914.

⁶⁶ Wheatley suggests that the Curragh mutiny in March 1914 made it clear to the Parliamentary Party that the Volunteer had to be harnessed, because Home Rule was in peril as it the Ulster Volunteer Force threatened it through unconstitutional means and an equal display of nationalist strength was necessary. The 'Curragh Mutiny' occurred in March 1914 when the British military troops stationed at the Curragh

militaristic recreation for young men, which had fostered discipline, health and manliness by providing 'healthy recreation', such as 'sports, combined with drills'.⁶⁷ In June, over five hundred volunteers were reported to have drilled for over two hours.⁶⁸ Two days later, Michael Judge, a prominent member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and founding committee member of the Irish Volunteers, wrote to the *Independent* that: 'Our motto should be drill all the time, live up to the constitution, and maintain steadiness and discipline' and 'standing shoulder to shoulder defy anyone to sow dissension in our ranks'.⁶⁹

In early June, Redmond made clear his intentions for the Irish Volunteers, endorsing the movement and binding it to Home Rule.⁷⁰ This was not a last minute attempt to control the movement, which threatened the Home Rule Party by exposing its weaknesses, but saw the Party incorporate the Volunteers into their future vision of a free Ireland.⁷¹ On 17 June, John Redmond's letter was printed in the *Freeman's* explaining the takeover.⁷² The editorial above this referred to Redmond as the 'Irish leader', suggesting his proper place was at the head of the Volunteers and that they were legitimately a military force for the defence of the nation.⁷³ Both Redmond and the *Freeman's* papered over the cracks in the movement, obscuring from the mainstream media that separatists did not welcome his ascension to the leadership of the Volunteer force. In his letter, Redmond also denounced

camp just outside of Dublin stated that they would not act against the UVF to enforce Home Rule even if it meant defying orders received from commanding officers in Britain. For more information on the Curragh mutiny see: Mark Connolly, 'The army, the press and the 'Curragh incident', March 1914' *Historical Research*, 83 (2011), 535-557; Joseph E. Connell, 'The Curragh 'mutiny', *History Ireland*, 22 (2014), 66-66; Wheatley, p. 189.

⁶⁷ 'The Irish Volunteers, *Irish Independent*, 28 May 1914.

⁶⁸ 'Longford', *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jun. 1914.

⁶⁹ 'Shoulder to Shoulder', *Irish Independent*, 8 Jun. 1914.

⁷⁰ McConnel, p. 286.

⁷¹ Kelly, *Fenian Ideal*, p. 212.

⁷² 'The Irish Leader and the Volunteers: The Provisional Committee', *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Jun. 1914.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

the proclamation prohibiting the importation of arms into Ireland, indicating that even the most constitutional nationalists supported a military organisation of armed men within Ireland to support Home Rule.

On 9 June 1914, the Volunteers, swelled with Redmondite supporters, issued a new manifesto, which stated that: 'Ireland to-day possesses an army of men actuated by a common spirit of patriotism, daily acquiring and applying the habits of disciplined and concerted action, and rapidly fitting themselves to bear arms.'⁷⁴ The Home Rule Party was instrumental in arming the Volunteers; McConnel notes that Tom Kettle, William Redmond, Richard McGhee and John O'Connor were all involved in gunrunning for the movement.⁷⁵ Moreover, this continued after the outbreak of war suggesting that the Party did not have full confidence in Britain to enact Home Rule when it came to an end.⁷⁶

The unity between constitutional and radical nationalists striven for in the early months of the Volunteers was shattered by the United Kingdom's entrance into the First World War on 4 August 1914. An immediate outburst against the Volunteers being conscripted into the British Army arose, as it seemed apparent that a ready and trained army would so tempt Britain. Equally, with the suspension of Home Rule, others felt that the Volunteers might ensure the Act's safe passage in peacetime by joining the British Army as a show of good faith. On 20 September 1914, John Redmond made a controversial speech at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, during which he pledged the Volunteers to the war effort not just within Ireland, but abroad. This split the organisation. The majority - about 158,000 - remained loyal to Redmond (the National Volunteers) and a breakaway

⁷⁴ 'Volunteer Manifesto', *Irish Independent*, 10 Jun. 1914.

⁷⁵ McConnel, p. 292.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 293.

faction - about 12,000 - followed MacNeill and the men who would become the leaders of the Easter Rising in 1916 (the Irish Volunteer Force).⁷⁷

Redmond's speech revealed that he viewed the war as a legitimate cause, fought 'in defence of the highest principles of religion, morality and right,' and he therefore called upon Ireland's 'manhood' to use the innate soldierly ability that had historically 'distinguished' the Irish.⁷⁸ His speech reiterated ideals of Irish manliness associated with military qualities as he called on Irish men to both make themselves efficient soldiers and 'account' for themselves. This gave expression to a masculine ethos that required men to be defenders of 'right', 'freedom', and 'religion' not just in Ireland but in the wider context of the war.⁷⁹

As discussed in relation to separation allowances in Ireland, Irish recruitment figures were proportionately lower than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Many young men therefore remained in Ireland during the war and those who opposed supporting the British war effort became increasingly confrontational. There was a breakdown in the restraint that had seemingly characterised the Volunteers before the war. Minor conflicts between Volunteers and authorities began to be reported in the press. These reports often connected the disorder to the Defence of the Realm Regulations, which gave the authorities in Ireland the power to restrict many things including travel, communications, publications and speeches, among other things.⁸⁰ In February 1915, Sean O'Hegarty and Jim Bolger were arrested in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford and charged with possession of

⁷⁷ Kelly, *Fenian Ideal*, p. 208.

⁷⁸ John Redmond, 'Woodenbridge Speech', available at: <http://historyhub.ie/statement-to-the-irish-volunteers>, [Last accessed: 10 April 2015].

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ William Murphy, *Political Imprisonment & The Irish, 1912-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.34.

explosives but eventually acquitted.⁸¹ Known radicals, including Ernest Blythe, Herbert Moore Pim, Liam Mellowes and Denis McCullough were imprisoned for anti-recruitment action in July 1915.⁸² Before 23 November 1915, Augustine Birrell claimed that there were twenty-two men prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Act who were known to the authorities as separatists.⁸³ Michael Wheatley suggests that unfair treatment by authorities became a common nationalist complaint in 1915.⁸⁴ Kelly describes conflict occurring in 1915 and 1916 between Volunteers and others when the Volunteers engaged in anti-recruitment activity, particularly if this was in any way pro-German.⁸⁵

Just over a month after this incident, roughly two thousand Volunteers and about two hundred members of Cumann na mBan were involved in an uprising against British rule in Ireland, which lasted less than a week. On Monday 24 April, Patrick Pearse read a proclamation from in front of the General Post Office in Dublin, which declared an Irish republic.⁸⁶ In the aftermath of the 1916 rebellion, fifteen men were executed in Ireland and Roger Casement was hanged in Britain. Hundreds of Irish men were also interned in British camps, where radical nationalism spread. From the summer of 1916 many prisoners were returned to Ireland and in December 1916, Frongoch, the most renowned

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 37.

⁸² Ibid, p. 38.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Wheatley, p. 102.

⁸⁵ Kelly, *Fenian Ideal*, p. 246.

⁸⁶ For more information about the Easter Rising see: Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916* (London: Penguin, 2005); Alan J. Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2013).

of the internment camps, was closed.⁸⁷ Many of these men joined the Irish Volunteer Force from late-1916 when it regrouped and grew in numbers.⁸⁸

4.4 Hurley Sticks Become Weapons

In early 1917, the Volunteer movement found itself at a pivotal moment. More ardent, physical force nationalists, particularly those who had been prominent in the Rising and men who had adopted radical republicanism in the internment camps, were being looked to as legitimate potential leaders by more volunteers.⁸⁹ In March 1917, the convention of the Irish National Volunteers was delayed by John Redmond who feared that he might lose control of the organisation. The *Independent* attacked Redmond for postponing the convention, claiming that he had no time for any organisation with 'the slightest smack of independence'.⁹⁰

As public opinion about the Easter Rising altered to be supportive of the rebels from the summer of 1916 onwards (influenced by revulsion at the executions of the rebel leaders and the mass arrests in its aftermath), Sinn Féin, which was regularly associated with the Rising by many people, began to expand its membership and encompass a range of groups which wanted to see Ireland achieve independence.⁹¹ As Sinn Féin evolved and became increasingly tied to the Irish Volunteer Force, who were unaffiliated to the Irish

⁸⁷ Joost Augusteijn suggests that by imprisoning these men together the British 'had associated men from all over the country with the movement and had made soldiers of nationalists armed solely with enthusiasm'. William Murphy argues that this was facilitated by a standoffish approach from authorities and a friendly atmosphere in the camps, where men played Gaelic football, learned Irish and practiced science experiments together.

Augusteijn, *Public Defiance*, p. 57; Murphy, *Political Imprisonment*, p. 60.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 63.

⁹⁰ 'The National Volunteers', *Irish Independent*, 31 Mar. 1917.

⁹¹ Francis Costello, *The Irish Revolution and its Aftermath 1916-1923* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011), p. 26.

Parliamentary Party and Redmond's National Volunteers, conflict between young Irish men and the police became more common. In these affrays, cultural practices and aspects of Irish cultural nationalism, like the Irish Volunteer uniform, particularly the iconic Volunteer cap, and hurley sticks, featured prominently.

Guns were the Volunteers' weapon of choice and where possible they owned and trained with them, however, they were unable to access as many guns as they wanted and had since 1914 held far fewer than their rivals, the Ulster Volunteer Force.⁹² Even the most well-known attempt the Volunteers had made to import arms to Ireland – the Howth gun-running in July 1914 – had only brought into Ireland 1,500 rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition.⁹³ In 1915, the British estimated that the National Volunteers (loyal to John Redmond) had just 9,000 old rifles and the radical breakaway Irish Volunteers had no more than 2,000.⁹⁴ Augusteijn suggests that the lack of a gun was a limiting factor for many Volunteers, as some activities like firing practice, rifle maintenance and some drills required them, therefore not having a firearm meant a Volunteer would be left out.⁹⁵ Many Volunteers opted for substitute weapons and there was a clear pattern visible in press reports of Irish men (often members of the Irish Volunteer Force) using hurley sticks when marching and drilling, or even as weapons of opportunity. Augusteijn mentions that men often drilled using 'sticks or made wooden rifles' in this period, but does not mention specifically that these were often hurleys.⁹⁶ Although guns would have been preferred, Volunteers' use of hurley sticks in militaristic activities was important because

⁹² Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), p. 165.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 167

⁹⁴ Ben Novick, 'Gunrunning and the Great War' in *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'* eds. Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.94-112 (p.94).

⁹⁵ Augusteijn, *Public Defiance*, p. 92.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 66;

Also, Charles Townshend mentions that guns were scarce and in drill Volunteers often used pikes. Townshend, *The Republic*, p. 42.

it associated all the revivalist ideals connected with Irish sporting prowess – physical strength, coordination, discipline and camaraderie - with militarism and defiance.

In May 1917, a mass was held in Dublin commemorating the souls of James Connolly, Michael Mallin and Sean Heuston, executed for their parts in the Rising the previous year. Forty to fifty nationalists left after attending the mass, carrying at 'least two Republican flags' and 'at intervals' singing 'the usual Sinn Féin marching and other songs'.⁹⁷ Police intervened and one was struck on the head by a hurley stick. Then in June, a hurley proved fatal when Inspector John Mills received a blow to the head attempting to control a crowd protesting against the arrest of Count Plunkett in Beresford Place. Count Plunkett was an MP and father to Joseph Plunkett, one of the rebels executed in 1916. Although the press had shown some support for the Volunteers in police confrontations in the past, this act was condemned. Mills and his career received considerable coverage, as did his grieving widow.⁹⁸ £100 reward was offered to anyone who gave information leading to the arrest of the aggressor.⁹⁹

The following month Joseph Harman, a job-carriage driver, was arrested and charged with the murder of Inspector Mills largely thanks to the evidence of the only citizen to come forward with information, who reported to have seen Harman strike Mills and then run away.¹⁰⁰ Harman was later defended by Tim Healy and released, but not granted any compensation for his legal costs.¹⁰¹ The consequences of Mills' death are often overlooked, but were significant. Two days following Harman's arrest, military uniforms,

⁹⁷ 'Police Attacked', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1917.

⁹⁸ 'Late Inspector Mills', *Irish Independent*, 12 Jun. 1917.

⁹⁹ '£100 Reward', *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jun. 1917.

¹⁰⁰ 'Inspector Mills', *Irish Independent*, 24 Jul. 1917.

¹⁰¹ 'Beresford Place Charge Fails', *Irish Independent*, 4 Aug. 1917.

aside from those of the military or naval forces, were banned in Ireland and no hurleys were permitted to be carried in public.¹⁰²

In her witness statement to the Bureau of Military History, Rose McNamara, a member of Cumann na mBan who had been involved in the Easter Rising, recalled being at the incident where Mills was killed. She claimed to know 'the lad who dealt the blow... He had no intention of killing the Inspector and we prayed hard that he would not be caught and he was not'.¹⁰³ McNamara's statement on the incident emphasises that often the more ardent nationalist displays in this period were not carefully planned and there was an element of haphazardness to men becoming revolutionaries.

Whilst Harman's case was being tried, the Volunteer organisation underwent a change of leadership. John Redmond resigned the presidency and the Volunteer headquarters were taken over by more radical, republican Volunteers.¹⁰⁴ The new leadership and direction of the movement was inclined towards physical force and supported Sinn Féin. In August, at a Sinn Féin meeting Alderman Thomas Kelly, a member of Dublin City Council, spoke out publically against the ban.¹⁰⁵ Kelly would go on to be elected Sinn Féin MP for St. Stephen's Green in the 1918 election.

Following this, the *Independent* reported a string of arrests for men carrying hurley sticks. James Joseph O'Sullivan from Phibsborough, Dublin, and Thomas Connolly of Ballinagh were arrested in Ballinagh, Co. Cavan, and charged with carrying hurleys, but declined to speak in court.¹⁰⁶ The next month a further twelve men were tried for carrying hurley

¹⁰² 'Military and Volunteers', *Irish Independent*, 12 Jun. 1917.

¹⁰³ BMH, WS. 482.

¹⁰⁴ 'Volunteers Eject Party Men', *Irish Independent*, 19 Jul. 1917.

¹⁰⁵ 'Sinn Féin Activity', *Irish Independent*, 18 Aug. 1917.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

sticks; their defence attorney argued that their intentions had been to play hurley and the court accepted this as a valid defence, which was backed up by two policemen, Constables Meara and O'Brien. Constable O'Brien said 'he once played hurley for a county team, and thought it was a fine pastime, which, he supposed, it would be a pity to extinguish'.¹⁰⁷

From September 1917, the pattern of young men using hurleys in their resistance continued. When arrested these men used speech and silence as tools of rebellion; when they spoke it was often in Irish or simply to state that they refused to recognise the court. On 8 September there were many reports from courts around Ireland of men who would not recognise their authority. John Liddy and William McNamara were both tried for training men in illegal drill, neither entered a plea and John Liddy remarked that anything he had done he would do again.¹⁰⁸ In Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary, John Treacy would not enter a plea to charges of wearing a military uniform and carrying a hurley.¹⁰⁹ John Minahane from Ballykinacurra in Cork and Michael Murray from Newmarket-on-Fergus in Clare responded to charges of illegal drill by declaring themselves 'soldiers of the Irish Republican Army'; this was an early example of the use of this term and was followed by the claim that they should be 'treated as war prisoners'.¹¹⁰ Joost Augusteijn describes these acts of public defiance and demonstration as the start of a progression towards increased revolutionary and political violence, resulting from the failure to achieve independence through 'political agitation and international pressure'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ "'Caman" Trials in Belfast', *Irish Independent*, 7 Sept. 1917.

¹⁰⁸ 'Carrying Hurleys', *Irish Independent*, 8 Sept. 1917.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Augusteijn, *Public Defiance*, p. 14.

At the end of September, the spate of arrests took on new meaning in light of the tragic death of Thomas Ashe, in prison in Lewes. Thomas Ashe had been sentenced to death for his part in the Rising, but this was commuted and he was later released, consequently becoming an iconic nationalist figure.¹¹² In August 1917 he was re-arrested for sedition and sent to Mountjoy. On 20 September 1917, he commenced a hungerstrike that lasted just five days, as he died from pneumonia on the day that he suffered the trauma of forcible feeding. Charles Townshend describes his death as unleashing 'an emotional tsunami'.¹¹³ The *Independent* reported that thirty thousand people came to view his body which, 'in Volunteer uniform, lay in state in a private ward of the hospital'.¹¹⁴

The article showed sympathy for Ashe and other nationalist prisoners, blaming the prison authorities for his death and describing the horrors of prisoners being force-fed milk and battered eggs.¹¹⁵ William Murphy argues that contemporaries, like Paddy Doyle, realised later that Ashe's death achieved more than he could have done in a lifetime for the Irish cause.¹¹⁶ Hunger strike was not a new phenomenon in Ireland - British and Irish suffragettes in the 1913 had effectively trialled it - but Ashe's death indicated how useful a tactic it could be for male nationalists.¹¹⁷

At the inquest into Ashe's death a thousand people in Wexford took part in a memorial procession and four hundred men carried hurley sticks.¹¹⁸ This mirrored Parnell's funeral and demonstrated the close links between sport, militarism, physical sacrifice, republican

¹¹² Charles Townshend, 'Thomas Ashe', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹³ Townshend, *The Republic*, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ '30,000 View the Body', *Irish Independent*, 23 Feb. 1917.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Murphy, *Political Imprisonment*, p. 88.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ 'Mountjoy Prison Tragedy', *Irish Independent* 8 Oct. 1917.

men and ideals of manliness that had long been associated with Irish nationalist masculinity. During the funeral the Rosary was recited in Irish, this ritual again linking Ashe's manly sacrifice to an ideal of Irish Catholic nationalism. The following month all over Ireland crowds gathered to commemorate the Manchester Martyrs and similar rituals were enacted; Sinn Féiners and Volunteers were prominent 'marching in many cases in military formation with uniforms, hurleys, etc., and the Rosary was recited in Irish in several places'.¹¹⁹ Hurley sticks continued to be an iconic and visible part of Irish male nationalists' displays of defiance throughout the revolutionary period, but as Anglo-Irish relations deteriorated further during the War of Independence many more incidents began to involve firearms, which the Volunteers preferred and were pleased to find more accessible.

4.5 The Irish Language as a Tool of the Revolutionaries

In 1915, the Gaelic League was taken over by 'proxy delegates' of the IRB, the leaders of the Irish Volunteers, and following this its membership grew larger and more radical.¹²⁰ Anthony Hepburn suggests that Sinn Féin was able to capitalise on broad support for Irish culture among nationalists, while the parliamentarians were castigated for not having been active supporters of the language movement.¹²¹ John McNamara describes how intrinsic language is to nationalism and how both Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins believed language restoration was as important as independence.¹²² When Sinn Féin began to gain popularity in the wake of the Easter Rising they cloaked themselves in the

¹¹⁹ 'Commemorating the Martyrs', *Irish Independent*, 27 Nov. 1917.

¹²⁰ Timothy McMahon, *Grand Opportunity* (New York: Syracuse Press, 2008), p. 18.

¹²¹ Anthony Hepburn, 'Language, Religion and National Identity in Ireland since 1880', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 2 (2001), 197-220 (p. 205).

¹²² John McNamara, 'The Irish Language and Nationalism', *The Crane Bag*, 1 (1971), 40-44 (p. 40).

mantle of protectors of the Irish language. Eamon de Valera, President of Sinn Féin, claimed in September 1917 that, 'the greatest praise that could be given to Sinn Féin at present was that its representatives so often spoke Irish'.¹²³

The Parliamentarians discovered how strongly identity was tied to Irish culture and nationality in the post-war election of December 1918 when Sinn Féin won an extra sixty-seven seats and the IPP lost sixty-one. Reasons for Sinn Féin's victory and the Irish Parliamentary Party's defeat have been discussed at length: Sinn Féin was better at political canvassing and appealed to people disillusioned by the lack of Home Rule and an electorate that had not voted in an election since 1910, there were many more voters enfranchised, including more younger people and some women, and the Irish Parliamentary Party had been hindered by the conscription scare in April 1918.¹²⁴ However, it is also significant that Sinn Féin affiliated itself with the Irish language and an image of manly, Catholic nationalism that mirrored ideals in the mainstream and radical press.

Like hurley sticks, the Irish language was also a central component of Irish men's resistance against British control in Ireland after the First World War. The nationalist press is a compelling source for considering how the Irish language was conscripted by nationalist men as a tool of defiance against British authority in Ireland. As the War of Independence developed, the press became increasingly critical of the Crown and police forces during this time. Ian Kinneally notes that at this time Nevil Macready, general officer commanding the British army in Ireland, accused both the *Independent* and the

¹²³ 'Mr. De Valera on Sinn Féin Policy', *Irish Independent*, 24 Sept. 1917.

¹²⁴ Jackson, *Ireland*, pp.141-172.

Freeman's of printing 'daily propaganda of rebellion'.¹²⁵ Charles Townshend, however, tempers this view by suggesting that the newspapers were in fact 'the last bastion of Home Rule constitutionalism, even if their instinctive distrust of Britain made their coverage look "disloyal" to British eyes.'¹²⁶ Many press reports that detail men refusing to give authorities their names in English in a sympathetic tone suggest that the Irish nationalist dailies were actually situated somewhere between Macready and Townshend's summations.

In July 1918, nine boys were arrested for playing hurley in Phoenix Park, the first 'gave his name in Irish, and having done so, mounted a bicycle and rode away.'¹²⁷ A few days later a teacher, M. O'Donachadha, was stopped by police in Cloughjordan and arrested for giving his name in Irish.¹²⁸ In August 1918, the *Freeman's* reported that Padraic MacCearailt was stopped by police in Wicklow because his bicycle light was broken, he 'gave his name, and as his name is an Irish one, it was necessarily in Irish[...]for this offence he was arrested, kept in prison for four days after spending a night in a police cell.'¹²⁹ As the tone of this report suggests, placing emphasis on Padraic 'necessarily' giving his name in Irish, the press coverage of these young men was sympathetic. This was understandable as their resistance was peaceful protest and occurred before any violent acts attributed to the War of Independence.

Just over one year after Padraic's arrest, 'Edmond O'Brien from Hawthorn Terrace, North Strand, when challenged by a military picket... gave his name in Irish, and was placed

¹²⁵ Ian Kenneally, 'Nationalist in the Broadest Sense: The *Irish Independent* and the Irish Revolution' in *Independent Newspapers A History* ed. by Mark O'Brien & Kevin Rafter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp.40-58 (p. 45).

¹²⁶ Townshend, *The Republic*, p. 94.

¹²⁷ 'Banned Games', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Jul. 1918.

¹²⁸ 'Irish Teacher Arrested', *Irish Independent*, 17 Jul. 1918.

¹²⁹ 'Prison for Speaking Irish', *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Aug. 1918.

under arrest'.¹³⁰ Through speaking Irish these men demonstrated themselves protectors of the nation and its language. As the *Freeman's* argued in September 1919, 'one's name is one's name and it only has one form, the form of the name in the language of the race to which it belongs.'¹³¹ That the press - especially the onetime organ of Home Rule - indicated some sympathy for this opinion, demonstrates both the altered political climate in Ireland after Sinn Féin's 1918 electoral success and the *Freeman's* adaptation to the new atmosphere within Ireland.

Irish nationalist men also used speech to defy authorities in Ireland. In Ballina, Thomas Ruane, a member of Sinn Féin, was charged with drilling thirty-eight men. His family were removed from the courthouse because his father interrupted proceedings and his uncle shouted out, 'I hope God will save us from the slavery and chains of England.'¹³² T. Welsh and D. Jeffers were arrested in Tralee for drilling, a 'policeman removed the caps of the accused, and when Jeffers, who was smoking a pipe, was asked had he any questions to put he replied in Irish to the effect that he had no respect for the court. The prisoners refused to give bail.'¹³³ When John Duffy, a draper's assistant, and Thomas Rogers, a solicitor's clerk, were charged with drilling in Tipperary, a crowd of two hundred men with hurleys gathered but were prevented from reaching the courthouse by a cordon.¹³⁴ Inside, Duffy refused to speak and Rogers explained that 'as an Irish soldier he denied the right of a foreign court to try him'.¹³⁵ The *Independent* reported that in the court there

¹³⁰ 'City Detectives Search', *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Sep. 1919.

¹³¹ 'His Name in Irish', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Nov. 1919.

¹³² 'Relatives Removed', *Irish Independent*, 20 Mar. 1918.

¹³³ 'More Volunteers Sent to Prison', *Irish Independent*, 22 Mar. 1918.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

was 'loud applause' for Rogers and nothing about the tone of the report suggested the paper disapproved of his behaviour.

In June 1919, Thomas Hayes, a seventeen-year old from Cork, who had served twelve months in prison under the Defence of the Realm Act, was sentenced to a further three months with hard labour for assaulting Sergeant McKelroy in the jail.¹³⁶ Hayes had to be forcibly brought into the courtroom and when he arrived he sat down, refused to stand or to answer the charge and declined to remove his cap. Consequently, the 'headgear was taken from him' but the *Independent* described Hayes in a way that made him sound daring and resilient, suggesting that 'he recovered it and put it on again. He was lifted to his feet during the hearing, but he at once commenced wrestling and threw himself on the floor. He had to be held on his feet.'¹³⁷ Hayes declared that he did not recognise the court and shouted "Up, the rebels" and "Go on, Sinn Féin", as he was taken from the courtroom.¹³⁸

In April 1920, three young men, Purcell, Bradshaw and Tobin, were charged with loitering and possession of seditious literature, including a copy of Patrick Pearse's O'Donovan Rossa graveside oration. They entered the docks with their caps on and pretended not to hear the judge; eventually a policeman removed their caps.¹³⁹ Examples of men refusing to recognise the court or speak to magistrates were more than just acts of defiance. Men's use of speech – often in Irish, or silence when in what they perceived to be a foreign court, suggest that these men were performing nationalist displays, which were

¹³⁶ 'Arms Found by Police', *Irish Independent*, 2 Jun. 1919.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ 'Dublin Court Incident', *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Apr. 1920.

inherently manly because they were associated with cultural signifiers that were linked in nationalist culture to Irish masculinity.

4.6 The Irish Volunteers: Discipline and Law

The Irish Volunteer executive sought to capitalise on popular expressions of nationalism by disseminating their propaganda and instruction to local groups through *An tOglac* (*The Irish Volunteer*). The newspaper was edited by Piaras Beaslai, who was supported by J. J. O'Connell, author of columns on tactics, weapon use and maintenance.¹⁴⁰ After the Armistice in November 1918, *An tOglac* reminded Volunteers that the fight had not ended and that Irishmen were both capable and willing to stand up to England in peacetime. It also used socialist rhetoric, demonstrating the influence of remnants of the Irish Citizen Army and labour within the reformed body of Irish Volunteers:

against these soldiers of England stand the young manhood of Ireland, enrolled in the Irish Volunteers to fight for the freedom of Ireland. Not slave soldiers are these men, but[...]men who voluntarily accept discipline and danger in the cause of the country they love. No[...]puny anaemic products of English factory towns, but the pick of Irish manhood, the product of our Irish soil, clean-limbed, strong and wholesome. We, too, are, armed and drilled; on any fair field one Irish Volunteer is a match for four of such British soldiers as we have seen in Ireland-creatures rather to be pitied than hated, as the pitiful products and slaves of a capitalistic Imperialism built on the exploitation of the many for the benefit of the few.¹⁴¹

By the start of 1919 the political situation in Ireland had altered. Sinn Féin had won a staggering victory in the December 1918 election, disposing of the Irish Parliamentary Party as the political leaders of Ireland. True to their abstentionist beliefs, Sinn Féin MPs

¹⁴⁰ Townshend, p. 75.

¹⁴¹ 'No Armistice', *An tOglac*, 30 Nov. 1918.

did not travel to Westminster in January 1919, but instead set up Dáil Éireann, an independent Irish parliament in Dublin. In the wake of Sinn Féin's triumphant victory in December 1918, *An tOglac* reminded its readers of the importance of physical force. It positioned Irish male bodies between Britain and the oppression of Ireland, claiming that 'the existence of an armed organisation of young Irishmen ready to shed their blood for Ireland's freedom constitutes the one argument that no lies or hypocrisy of the enemy can get over. The presence of the Irish Volunteers is an eternal challenge and menace to British rule in Ireland.'¹⁴²

In December of 1919 *An tOglac* stressed the need for continued discipline, alongside soldierly action, describing how:

the Volunteer **spirit** must be absorbed by all within the ranks. It is a spirit which produces prompt and cheerful obedience to orders, efficiency in executing them, and an unflinching courage and determination in every emergency[...]Only men animated by such a spirit can make the Irish Republic a living reality. That we have a supply of such men has been the cause of our success so far. To carry on guerrilla warfare of an intensive kind, to harness the enemy's troops to break down his machinery, to baffle his spies, to counter his offensives, to render the work of his agents difficult and dangerous, men must be prepared to take risks. They must also exercise their ingenuity. We have had many fine examples of the required courage and ingenuity on the part of the Volunteers in recent times, and still more of this will be required to achieve our objects.¹⁴³

As the ingenuity of Irish Volunteers in acquiring weapons and raiding police barracks during 1919 drew adverse responses from the Crown forces in Ireland, it became even more crucial to maintain discipline in the ranks as the Volunteers engaged in guerrilla warfare. *An tOglac* sternly reminded Volunteers that:

The necessity of strict discipline cannot be too often emphasised. No military activities against the enemy should be undertaken by Volunteers, without the

¹⁴² 'The Irish Volunteers, *An tOglac*, 16 Dec. 1918.

¹⁴³ 'The Present Struggle', *An tOglac*, 15 Dec. 1919.

authority of the responsible officer for the district. A number of cases of raiding the houses of private citizens for arms have recently been reported in the newspapers. The majority of the offenders were not Volunteers; but cases undoubtedly have arisen where so-called Volunteers have shown so little sense of discipline and such a curious failure to to (sic) grasp the Volunteer point of view as to engage in such undertakings without authority.¹⁴⁴

In the chaos of guerrilla warfare and reprisals that accompanied the War of Independence, the Irish Volunteers sought to establish themselves as providers of law and order. In doing so, they emphasised the manly ideals of discipline and militarism, and through their actions demonstrated the link between manliness, citizenship, soldiering and social order. In the Land War 'people's courts' had been established, but the Volunteer leadership at General Head Quarters intended to instigate a system of National Arbitration Courts that Charles Townshend argues equated to 'the popular takeover of the justice system.'¹⁴⁵ The new courts took some time to be installed, but by June 1920 Sinn Féin courts had practically ended the Quarter Sessions and Petty Sessions. Local Volunteers, aided by having physical force on their side, ran the courts and distributed justice through them.¹⁴⁶

The press never explicitly endorsed these courts, but did describe Irish Volunteer involvement in local justice favourably. In May, two thieves stole cattle from a woman's farm in Kilfinane, Co. Limerick.¹⁴⁷ The Irish Volunteers accosted the thieves and took them to a secure location where they arranged a trial, complete with prosecution and defence, which found the prisoners guilty. The *Independent* was happy to report that following this the cattle were returned. Later that month in Listowel, Co. Kerry, Mr. Edgar, an Excise

¹⁴⁴ 'We must Not Fail', *An tOglac*, 15 Mar. 1920.

¹⁴⁵ Townshend, p. 124.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁷ 'Volunteers Try Robbers', *Irish Independent*, 5 May 1920.

Officer was burgled.¹⁴⁸ The *Freeman's* praised Volunteers who made six arrests and ensured that almost all the goods were found in the prisoners' homes and returned. In Sligo, the Volunteers again stepped in when an 'aged woman' was compelled to give away money; the Volunteers made the robbers return it and apologise in person.¹⁴⁹ The Irish Volunteers also investigated the burglary of a haberdashery on Main Street in Wexford.¹⁵⁰ They arrested the suspect and tried him in a Sinn Féin court, which the *Freeman's* hailed as the first of its kind.¹⁵¹ The culprit was banished from the town and the goods returned.

An anecdote in the *Independent* described an 'amusing' incident which occurred when the Irish Volunteers arrested and charged an unnamed man with stealing two bicycles, beating his father, and stealing firearms and mail bags.¹⁵² Despite the prisoner's father complaining to the police, the offender had not been located or arrested. Within a few hours of commencing a search, it was reported that the Irish Volunteers had him in custody. He was held for a week and, according to the report, treated well, given good food and a fair trial, which concluded with his guilt established and banishment from the province.¹⁵³ Police incompetence was highlighted and mocked as the report ended by explaining that whilst the Volunteers had been tracking the perpetrator in the western part of the town, the police had been seeking to arrest some of the Irish Volunteer leaders involved by searching for them in the eastern part.

The nationalist dailies became increasingly supportive of the new proto-regime set up by Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers. The *Freeman's* described the remarkable

¹⁴⁸ 'Volunteers Arrests Suspects', *Irish Independent*, 21 May 1920.

¹⁴⁹ 'Volunteers Recover Money', *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1920.

¹⁵⁰ 'To Be Deported', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 May 1920.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² 'Volunteer Trial in a Bog', *Irish Independent*, 3 Mar. 1920.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

demonstrations in Kanturk for two Volunteers, P. J Clancy and J. O'Connell, both shot by the British military.¹⁵⁴ The report detailed that the coffins were draped with Republican flags on which rested the caps and other insignia of the deceased officers'.¹⁵⁵ Over two thousand Volunteers were present and it was reported that the town became congested with five hundred motorcars, five thousand pedestrians and hundreds of cycles, which was almost certainly the press exaggerating the numbers for effect.¹⁵⁶ However, implicit press bias against the police and military, combined with a tendency to favour the Volunteers, remained clear in reports of funerals for those who died in the continuing conflict.

4.7 The Truce and the Irish Civil War

The violence of the War of Independence was largely halted by a truce in the summer of 1921. While the truce was in place the Irish Volunteers busied themselves with commemorative work for their fallen friends. This valorised the act of dying for the nation and the manly image of the dead soldier. Some bodies were taken from their resting places and moved to more appropriate burial sites. In September 1921, the remains of Captain W. Freeney, I.R.A., were disinterred at Athenry Cemetery and buried at Derrydonnell.¹⁵⁷ At the burial two thousand volunteers were present and out of respect volleys were fired for the Captain. In October, Captain Horan of the Limerick Brigade of the I.R.A., was re-interred at Kilcolooney.¹⁵⁸ In November, Dick McKee, Peadar Clancy and T. C. Clune were remembered, having been shot by the military a year previously, just

¹⁵⁴ 'Dead Volunteers', *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Aug. 1920.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ 'Volunteers Body Reinterred', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Sep. 1921.

¹⁵⁸ 'Volunteers Re-interred', *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Oct. 1921.

prior to the introduction of martial law in December in the south of Ireland. McKee had been an HQ staffer for the I.R.A and Clancy had been one of the men to have his death sentence commuted for his part in the 1916 Rising, only to be re-arrested and act as Prison Commandant during the 1920 hunger-strikes.¹⁵⁹ The *Freeman's* reported it as the largest gathering of its kind since the commemoration of Richard Coleman in December 1918, putting this down to the earlier British ban on public assemblies. Five thousand marched to Glasnevin.¹⁶⁰ Evidently, republican traditions of memorialising deaths and events became quickly established, which was linked to the rituals of commemoration already in place in Irish nationalist cultural life, such as the annual marking of the deaths of the Manchester Martyrs of 1867.

Following the truce, a team of negotiators were sent to Westminster to agree a treaty with the British. The treaty, which Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith, Robert Barton, George Gavan Duffy and Eamon Duggan signed on 6 December 1921 with plenipotentiary power from de Valera and the Sinn Féin government in Dublin, was controversial. When they returned, de Valera was outraged that they had not checked with Dublin before signing, although Laffan points out that the negotiators had been in a difficult position to do anything else.¹⁶¹ The treaty was debated, openly and in private, between 14 December 1921 and 7 January 1922, when a close vote revealed the Dáil to be in favour of the treaty by 64 votes to 57.¹⁶² At the end of June, Ireland was pushed to civil war by the anti-treaty faction of the IRA. They forced hostilities by assassinating Sir Henry Wilson, a well-known unionist, and kidnapping J. J. O'Connell, IRA chief of staff on the pro-treaty side.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Laffan, p. 348.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 360.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 412.

The press was largely supportive of the government and denounced the actions of 'irregulars', as the anti-treaty IRA became known.¹⁶⁴ Reports demonstrated sorrow on both a personal level, with numerous reports of funerals during this period, and through a broader conversation about the breakdown of discipline and unity. The *Freeman's* reported *An tOglac's* belief that the 'irregulars' had been misled by their leadership and that no one wanted war:

The men who rose in arms against the National Government relied mainly on one thing for success. This was the sympathy and support of the people.[...] They believed - or at least led those who followed them to believe - that the nation would rally to their side after the first few days' fighting.¹⁶⁵

Reports on those killed during the Civil War suggest that the same ideals of manliness persisted from the Irish War of Independence, which stressed militarism, fascination with arms and camaraderie between men. This allowed funerals of irregulars and Free State soldiers could to be reported side-by-side. On 17 July 1922, the *Independent* reported on 'The Toll of Battle', describing Volunteer Sweeney's death during a drunken ambush and the resulting 'military funeral'.¹⁶⁶ It also detailed the funeral of Thomas Markey from Dundalk, who had fought in the irregulars, but was given a 'public funeral' and his coffin was 'draped with the tricolour' as had been practiced during the War of Independence.¹⁶⁷ A few days later Volunteer Costello was laid to rest in Dundrum, again given a 'military funeral' and having his coffin, which was covered in the tricolour, 'covered with a profusion of floral tributes'.¹⁶⁸ This sad scene was one of several in the following months

¹⁶⁴ Townshend, p. 358.

¹⁶⁵ 'Unerring Instinct', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Jul. 1922.

¹⁶⁶ 'Toll of Battle', *Irish Independent*, 17 Jul. 1922.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ 'Tributes to the Dead', *Irish Independent*, 25 Jul. 1922.

as the Civil War continued. On 23 May 1923, the final order to end the war was issued by the republicans.¹⁶⁹

4.8 Conclusion

In his witness statement for the Bureau of Military History Sean Prendergast quoted *Irish Freedom's* editorial from December 1913:

... modern Irishmen with their eyes open have allowed themselves to be deprived of their manhood; and many of them have reached the terrible depth of degradation in which a man will boast of his manliness, for in suffering ourselves to be disarmed, in acquiescing with perpetual disarmament, in neglecting every chance of arming, in sneering (as all Nationalists do now) at those who have taken arms, we in effect abrogate our manhood. Unable to exercise man's rights, we do not deserve man's privileges. We are in a strict sense, unfit for freedom; and freedom we shall never attain.¹⁷⁰

The formation of the Irish Volunteers represented the reclamation of Irish manliness in an overtly militaristic style associated with previous Irish rebellions. Descriptions of the Volunteers in the nationalist dailies suggest that the organisation was central to the formation of an ideal of martial manliness that was integral to Irish nationalist culture, and which persisted throughout the revolutionary period. Multiple interests were represented in the Volunteers, so the ideals of manliness the organisation promoted were numerous: discipline, independence, brotherhood, soldiering, citizenship and gun ownership.

The Volunteers provided young men with the chance to socialise or pursue enjoyable and exciting recreations such as rifle practice and military drill, which attracted many to the organisation in its early months. The nationalist dailies often printed articles and

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 446.

¹⁷⁰ BMH, WS 0755.

correspondence from radical and constitutional nationalist supporters of the Volunteers, which suggested Irish men were physically weaker than they had been in previous generations. Much rhetoric about the Volunteers throughout the revolutionary period positioned the organisation as vehicle for the regeneration of Irish male muscularity and lauded the benefits it would have on men's health. This resulted in a close association between the Irish Volunteers and organisations for Irish cultural revitalisation, such as the GAA and Gaelic League. Consequently, signifiers of Irish culture and strength, like hurley sticks and the Irish language, became associated with Irish nationalist men's acts of defiance and nationalism, which was a component of their masculinity.

The Volunteers was welcomed as a cure for the muscular and moral decline of men's bodies. After 1916, the executions of the rebel leaders positioned male bodies as central to Irish nationalist ideals of sacrifice and bravery. Descriptions of the emaciated male bodies of prisoners on hungerstrike, like Thomas Ashe, were venerated for providing the most pathetic contrast to the image of a healthy, strong Irish Volunteer and like those executed after the rising were welcomed for rousing popular support for republicanism. The veneration of male bodies was also seen during the Irish Civil War, when press reports beside one another described men on both sides of the conflict being mourned for and buried.

Running throughout descriptions of the Volunteers in the nationalist dailies was discussion about the need for the movement to be disciplined. There was, however, a constant tension between portraying the Volunteers as disciplined, or indeed, the providers of justice and law, and the Volunteers as a group of armed, young men who were physically threatening and potentially dangerous. This was a natural fear of groups of young men, which was a well-established cause of social anxiety.

These concerns were not without grounds. By assembling an armed group of Irish men the Volunteers brought many into contact with increasingly radical republicanism. The nationalist dailies are brilliant sources for tracing polemic about the Volunteers because their editorials and letters contained a plethora of views on the organisation. The effect of changing popular political opinions can also be seen in the newspapers, as from 1916 there were many sympathetic reports of Irishmen defying the police and military authorities in Ireland. After the IPP's defeat in the 1918 general election, the national dailies became more supportive of radical politics. Volunteers were increasingly described as the creators and maintainers of law, order and justice. Supporters of the Volunteers wanted to legitimise the organisation as a proper army, which was advanced in the later revolutionary years by the adoption of the name Irish Republican Army.

Conclusion

Gendered discourse and Irish nationalism evolved as part of the same historical dynamic. Press polemic about gender norms during the revolutionary period influenced Irish nationalism, just as Irish nationalism affected the ideals of masculinity and femininity disseminated by the nationalist dailies. Gendered discourse was intrinsic to debate in the nationalist dailies, from the militarism that engulfed Ireland between 1912 and 1923, to discussions about home life, families and welfare provision, but has not been sufficiently explored in previous scholarly work. Gender in the Irish revolutionary period existed as an imagined construct, yet it had a real effect on press debates, individual lives and government policy. As gender was constructed the gendered narrative about men and women, their roles, and appropriate behaviour for each sex was not always consistent. There was a discursive tension between portrayals of women as powerful moral agents and women as weak, fragile or needing to be policed. Equally, men were described as protective, strong and soldierly, but this did not fit with the reality of many men's lives. Debates in the press drew attention to men who depended on state welfare or who lived outside the 'ideal' of marriage. This conclusion will summarise the main points that have run through the analysis of gender in the four parts of this thesis and highlight areas for further study that have not been within the scope of this project, but that would add to historical debates about the Irish revolutionary period and gender will also be highlighted.

Kevin O'Higgins, prominent member of the Irish Free State Cabinet, reflected after the revolutionary period that he and other members of Cumann na nGaedheal were 'the

most conservative-minded revolutionaries that ever put through a successful revolution'.¹ Irish nationalists were particularly conservative with respect to women's rights and gender relations. Throughout the revolutionary period gender functioned as a system of power that benefitted certain groups at the expense of others. Irish women were often ostracised or restrained because of pervasive beliefs that women were naturally the morally and physically weaker sex. This meant women's behaviour and appearances were frequently commented upon and judged by both men and women. Before the First World War, the most prominent women in the *Independent* and *Freeman's Journal* promoted traditional home rule politics and were opposed to female enfranchisement. After the First World War and the extension of the franchise to some women in 1918, more female and feminist voices appeared in the Irish nationalist dailies. These women mocked the rigid standards of behaviour that more conservative commentators prescribed for them more so than had been seen in the press in the pre-war years.

Women's consumption of products like alcohol and tobacco came under close scrutiny. Women were simultaneously portrayed as powerful moral guides to their families and men, and as dangerous and weak, liable to cause extreme harm if they behaved immorally. Often portrayed as less in control of their bodies than men, women were held to be more susceptible to addictive substances. Women's indulgence in drinking or smoking was believed to lead to serious disease and to pose a threat to the fabric of family life and society. Women were at once seen as weak and also incredibly important morally and economically to nationalist Ireland.

¹ 'Were Cumann na nGaedheal ministers really 'conservative revolutionaries'?' *The Irish Times*, 18 Dec. 2014.

Women were primarily seen as wives and mothers, and polemic suggested that women naturally belonged in domestic spaces with children. Women were also believed to be the naturally temperate sex, and their smoking or drinking was particularly castigated as going against their nature. Smoking and drinking were actions associated with areas outside the home, like public houses, smoking concerts, political and homosocial clubs, which were perceived to be male physical and cultural spaces. Women were assigned domestic roles and fears were raised that women smoking or drinking would bring the effects of these substances into the home, where ill-effects could be felt by their families. Further research over a longer period into how the treatment of alcoholism, particularly criminal alcoholics, developed and changed as well as the influence of perceived gender norms on the amount, quality and type of care men and women received would be a valuable addition to the work done so far on the history of alcohol and addiction in Ireland.

Women drinking were also remarked upon in the press because of apprehensions that their drinking would lead to promiscuity. Ben Novick argues that during wartime fears of British soldiers infecting Irish women with syphilis led to attempts to 'control the sexual desires and impulses of women, even more than men' because syphilis could lead to infertility which was viewed as the antithesis to 'pure' Irish femininity.² Concerns over immorality were also heightened during the First World War because the state implemented separation allowances, which provided a lot of lower class women with an independent income for the first time. Class disdain for these women was a key theme in this press commentary and part of the hyperbole over women and alcohol during the war was due to the press providing its middle-class readership with scandalous tales of the

² Ben f, *Conceiving Revolution*, p. 150.

working classes. With many men absent because they were serving in the British Army fears of unaccompanied women's sexual impropriety were increased. This resulted in a moral panic over women's drinking. Although panic about women and alcohol gained considerable support in the first couple of years of war, it was countered in the press by the end of the war. Concerns about women and alcohol were not supported by either the *Judicial Statistics* or *Annual Reports of the General Prisons Board*, neither of which demonstrated a significant growth in women's drinking. After the war this hysteria dissipated as quickly as it had arisen and women were once again viewed as naturally more temperate than men, with temperance campaigners appealing to the newly enfranchised female voters to support legislation that would curtail the consumption of alcohol.

When women were not being praised for their temperance or castigated for their drunkenness, they were often described as the victims of inebriated men. Women were often held to be responsible for restraining men's drinking, by administering cures at home, guiding them away from drink or voting for temperance measures. Drunkenness was often portrayed as emasculating in a man, associated with abusive husbands or errant fathers. However, after the First World War drink became a central issue for the Irish Volunteers, who were particularly keen to limit alcohol consumption by their members and promote an image of their ranks as manly, disciplined, sober, strong and soldierly. This was driven by a desire to promote the organisation as providers of law and order within Ireland and to demonstrate that they were civilised and respectable, capable of overseeing the administration of an independent Ireland.

The Irish Volunteer Force had been hailed as an organisation that would bring sobriety and provide healthy recreation to men since the first discussions were held about the

formation of a nationalist counterpart to the Ulster Volunteer Force. A range of interests and ideals were represented by the Volunteer movement in its early years. As well as promoting sobriety the organisation established an ideal of martial manliness that required men to be physically strong, disciplined, and trained in drill. This was intended to rejuvenate men's bodies and increase their health. The Volunteers captured the imagination of constitutional and radical nationalists and in its early months could be represented as an exercise in nationalist unity. The formation of the Volunteers represented a reclaiming of an ideal of martial manliness that had been associated with fenian uprisings in the nineteenth century. In the organisation, Irish men's energies were directed towards ensuring Home Rule.

The Volunteer movement positioned Irish men as soldiers in a national army, casting them in the role of protectors of Irish women, Irish culture and the Irish nation.

Nationalism and masculinity were closely associated, therefore buying and wearing Irish goods, speaking Irish and Irish cultural activities were praised by the organisation. Irish men used Irish made military uniforms as signifiers of a specific Irish military masculinity when grass-roots militarism spread across Ireland in the years before the First World War.

The First World War and the Easter Rising altered the Volunteer movement, which split in 1914 into Redmond's National Volunteers and the republican Irish Volunteers. The Irish nationalist dailies are useful sources for assessing this shift, because they were not aligned to either faction of the Volunteers or to the Crown forces, indeed, coming into regular conflict with both.³ After 1916 both became more radical and supportive of Sinn Féin. Cultural objects and signifiers of a unique Irish culture, such as hurley sticks and the

³ F. M. Larkin, 'The Dog in the Night', p. 116; F. M. Larkin, 'Martin Thomas Fitzgerald'.

national language, became part of an arsenal of nationalist weapons that were used by Irish men to perform resistance against authority figures in Ireland. Augusteijn has described the acts of public defiance these men carried out during these years, but notably did not comment on how they were inextricably linked to notions of manliness and he did not highlight the significance of Irish cultural objects, like hurley sticks, to this form of protest.⁴ Although the preferred weapon of choice for these men would always have been guns, due to a lack of them hurley sticks were used as weapons of opportunity in affrays with police and as symbols of their male and Irish identity. Similarly, the Irish language was used to defy authority in Ireland, which was seen regularly in reports of men refusing to give officials their names in English when arrested or stopped by military picket. These cultural objects that indicated male, Irish defiance against Britain continued to be used and connected to displays of public defiance right up until the end of the Civil War, alongside more organised and brutal violence.

Despite the seismic political shifts that took place in Ireland and the violence of the revolutionary period, everyday life and normal activities such as getting married and having children continued nonetheless. Press polemic about marriage demonstrates the intersection between faith and nationalism, and political and domestic life. Discussions of marriage in the nationalist press were often articulated from a predominantly conservative, Catholic and nationalist perspective. Marriage was portrayed as the ideal for men and women, as well as a necessary restraint on sexuality. Marriage was regularly described in transactional terms that dictated to men and women rigid roles within their union, which revolved around the expectation that the primary purpose of marriage was procreation.

⁴ Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*.

Marriage was also highly political. McConnel suggests that there was general apathy from the Irish public towards debates about Home Rule, but marriage was one area in which the press and the public seemed to have engaged with Home Rule debates.⁵ The Irish nationalist dailies frequently reported on debates in the House of Commons about what powers a Home Rule parliament would have over marriage legislation. Concerns about marriage legislation were also used by both nationalists and unionists to agitate the political situation in Ireland during the Home Rule crisis. This highlights how marriage, as an institution, was integral to framing the Irish state that was being conceived at this time.

Marriage was a political subject not only in debates about Home Rule, but in discussions of mixed marriages and child custody. Discussion of marriage contained rhetoric about women's and children's rights. Press polemic about marriage also exposed the Catholic, middle-class nationalist slant of the *Independent* and *Freeman's*, which sensationalised stories of affluent, Protestant divorce cases and relished human interest stories, in which the victims were predominantly women, either scorned in breach of promise cases or abandoned by their spouses. Unhappy marriages and lurid descriptions of domestic abuse among the lower classes, sometimes involving alcohol, suggested that only the most severe cases of marital breakdown could be grounds for separation.

While generally Irish men benefited from the gender hierarchy, conservative gender ideas also served to exclude men from a significant proportion of early state interventions in welfare provision. Masculinity was far more fragile than was acknowledged in the press and men who did not fall within the 'heroic', soldierly, muscular form of masculinity

⁵ McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 243.

suffered hardship because it was inconceivable that men could be anything other than independent, self-sufficient, and physically and emotionally strong. This affected working-class men most, leaving some with no other option than to work in unsafe conditions to support their families, in emotionally, financially and physically hazardous conditions.

Bachelors also suffered from negative stereotypes perpetuated in press polemic about single men. The Irish nationalist dailies suggested that bachelors were particularly aberrant. The revolutionary period was a pivotal time in the development of popular understandings not only of what the state constituted in Ireland, but the role that the Irish state should take in providing aid to Irish people. Men were less easily constructed as physically or emotionally weak, or as victims of a bad economy, and therefore were less likely to receive state welfare. This kind of thinking was particularly clear in the treatment of rural bachelor labourers who applied for council cottages. State welfare policy and provision was influenced by gender from its beginning and a larger scale project that looks at the development of welfare initiatives in Ireland over the twentieth century and traces how the evolving gendered discourse in the press that interrelated with them would be valuable. This would provide historical contextualisation to some of the laws in Ireland today relating to healthcare provision, family planning, child welfare and state-provided housing.

The early twentieth century witnessed both the first state-provided social housing experiment undertaken by Westminster, and the much larger project of introducing separation allowances to soldiers' wives and dependents during the war on an unprecedented scale throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. When Westminster or the Irish Dáil offered aid to Irish people it was almost always support to women on the basis that money provided was payment for services gained from the men who would

normally have supported them or because there was no man to maintain them. The idea of female physical weakness and inability to earn a sufficient income was influential in government decisions about which people to support, therefore it was not only soldiers' dependents, but also widows of the Irish War of Independence and Civil War who received payments from the British and Irish governments. In these cases, women's deservingness was often linked to their relationship to men and vulnerability without men to look after them.

This thesis has traced gendered ideals in the Irish nationalist dailies through various conversations that were hosted in the *Irish Independent* and *Freeman's Journal*. These discussions demonstrate how gendered polemic was inherent to Irish nationalism; gender norms evolved with and affected the changing political situation in Ireland. This study has highlighted that several discussions about welfare, crime, addiction and citizenship were expressed in gendered language and that debates over state-provided aid and health that have received historical attention in the Free State period had their roots in Ireland's revolutionary years. It has also shown how gender norms influenced everyday life during the revolutionary period making normal events political, as well as affecting the more radical nationalism that proliferated at that time.

In 1996, Mary Robinson said of gender relations in Ireland: 'In a society where the rights and potential of women are constrained, no man can be truly free. He may have power, but he will not have freedom.'⁶ Robinson's statement touches upon the central themes discussed in this thesis. Perceptions of gender norms, ideals and appropriate behaviour hold significant power over men and women, they influenced not only press polemic but

⁶ Rebecca Mae Salokar and Mary L. Volcansek (eds) *Women in Law: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook* (Connecticut: Greenwood press, 1996), p. 263.

informed government policy and had a real effect on individuals' daily lives. Men and women's experiences were often inseparable from and had a direct effect on one another, so understanding past events can be facilitated by considering both genders. Gender in revolutionary Ireland was constructed in relation to other forces in society such as religion, social hierarchies and politics.

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