

Ireland in Ruins

The representation of cultural property destruction during the Irish Revolution in Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers, 1916-1923

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ABSTRACT

The Irish Revolution (1916-1923) was one of the bloodiest and most violent conflicts in Irish history. Irish paramilitaries fought for an independent Ireland free from British rule. The Easter Rising (1916) lasted a week, in which the Irish Volunteers held out against the British military. During the War of Independence (1919-1921), the IRA fought the military, police and British paramilitary forces, resulting in the Anglo-Irish Treaty that granted Ireland Dominion status and established Northern Ireland's own Parliament. The Civil War (1922-1923) concluded the Revolution, in which the Pro-Treaty and Anti-Treaty IRA fought each other. The Civil War ended in 1923 with a victory for the Pro-Treaty forces.

This study focusses on the representation of cultural property destruction and the actors involved in Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers during the Revolution, in which the representation in newspapers will be studied from a framework of nationalism and othering. During this period, many buildings that are considered to be cultural property were destroyed. The study approaches the subject by means of a qualitative content analysis of newspapers articles which allows for a comparison of the newspapers. The research conducted is based on three case studies: the destruction of historic buildings during the Easter Rising, the destruction of Big Houses during the War of Independence, and the destruction of (Catholic) premises during the Belfast Pogroms in 1920-1922. Throughout all these periods, there were censorship regulations in place which influenced the newspapers.

It is argued that during the Easter Rising and the War of Independence, the English and Anglo-Irish newspapers were irrationalising the destruction of buildings by the Irish, stating that the Irish paramilitaries were the enemy of Ireland and Britain, whereas the British troops were attempting to save the buildings or their contents, while also fighting the Irish forces. These newspapers negatively depicted these Irish paramilitaries as the 'other' to create a positive image of the self. However, during the pogroms the English and Anglo-Irish newspapers were rationalising the destruction, which was instigated by 'their (national) community.' The newspapers negatively depicted the Irish forces, whereas they were justifying the actions of their own troops. The Irish newspapers were doing the opposite. These newspapers were rationalising the destructions of the Easter Rising and Big House destruction, but depicting the Catholics in Belfast as the victims of British troops. Where they attempted to offer a moderate view of the destruction in the first two cases, they irrationalised the destruction of premises during the pogroms. In all cases, the newspapers attempted to present their own nation in a favourable way, by negatively depicting the opposing forces as 'the other.'

KEYWORDS: *Irish Revolution, Destruction, Cultural Property, Othering, Nationalism, Newspapers, Representation, Censorship, Heritage*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

G.P.O.	General Post Office
IRA	Irish Republican Army
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

PREFACE

I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Robbert-Jan Adriaansen and Dr. Pieter van den Heede for guiding me through the process of writing this thesis in these challenging times. They provided me with great feedback. I would also express my thanks to my peer students who made this process educational and pleasant. They gave me feedback as well that helped me improve this thesis.

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1. Introduction

Ireland has a long-shared history with the United Kingdom, of which it has been part for more than a century. Already in the medieval period there were several clashes between England's army and the Irish clans, and over the centuries England, and later Great Britain, was able to gain control over Ireland. From the Norman conquest onwards, Great Britain attempted to, gained, and maintained control over Ireland. Irish history has seen numerous risings, riots, and clashes between the Irish and their British rulers. This longstanding history resulted in the Irish Revolution. The Irish Revolution (1916-1923) was a violent and intensive war in which the Irish Republican Army (IRA) fought against the British crown forces in Ireland. The Revolution consisted of several events: the Easter Rising (1916), the War of Independence (1919-1921), and the Irish Civil War (1922-23). During the Easter Rising, Volunteers of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (predecessor of the IRA) besieged multiple strategically important buildings in Dublin and proclaimed the Republic of Ireland. The War of Independence was fought to gain independence from Britain. The IRA and British forces – consisting of several groups that were deployed in Ireland during the conflict – were involved in a guerrilla war initiated by the IRA, which is seen as one of the bloodiest and most violent conflicts in Irish history. The War of Independence ended by signing the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921, in which the Irish Free State accepted Dominion status and remained an independent entity under the British Crown. This directly led to the Irish Civil War, because the IRA became split over the Treaty into the anti-Treaty IRA and the pro-Treaty IRA. The anti-Treaty IRA considered it a betrayal to the Irish Republic proclaimed during the Easter Rising, and therefore fought the Irish Free State forces, which included the pro-Treaty IRA. The Free State forces won the Civil War and the conflict ended in May 1923.

Apart from the many human casualties, many buildings were destroyed in the fighting, often as a counter-reprisal for actions taken by the opposite forces. For instance, Big Country Houses were regularly the target of these destructions. Sometimes the owners were allowed to take some possessions with them, but more often the houses were destroyed including its contents, which consisted of valuable paintings and unique libraries. What remains interesting is the symbolic value of the destruction, not only for its owners, but also for the Irish population. If there was a symbolic meaning attached to the destruction of these buildings, it could have had a profound impact on the population. Was a cultural impact the objective when a structure of importance was destroyed? If a cultural impact was the objective in the destruction, it was of importance to report the correct message to the public.

1.1 Research questions

The Irish Revolution witnessed a tremendous amount of properties being destroyed in the fighting, for several reasons. These properties can be perceived as part of the (lost) cultural heritage of Ireland and in

the intense fighting in some parts of Ireland, many cultural properties, ranging from country houses to monuments, were destroyed or removed.¹ There is plenty of research about the political, cultural, economic, and social motivations for and outcomes of the Irish Revolution, and related to heritage destruction, numerous studies have focussed on the (Protestant) Country “Big” Houses that were burned down or destroyed and the removal of monuments in Dublin after the Revolution. However, there seems to be little research on the representation of this destruction in the newspapers. Therefore, I will position my research into this void, by answering the following question:

“How were the destruction of cultural property during the Irish Revolution and the actors involved represented in Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers (1916-1923)?”

It aims to analyse the ways in which the newspapers presented the destruction of cultural property and the actors responsible for this destruction, by focussing on how the newspapers depicted the events. It will focus on three key groups which were involved in the conflict in Ireland: the Irish, the Anglo-Irish, and the English, due to British rule over Ireland. Each of these groups had their own newspapers with their own interpretation of the events. This interpretation of the events is what this research will focus on. To answer the research question, I have three sub-questions that each represent a chapter of this study:

- How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of historic buildings in Dublin during the Easter Rising in 1916?
- How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of the Big Houses in County Cork during the War of Independence, 1919-1921?
- How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of premises during the Belfast Pogroms, 1920-1922?

These sub-questions will each address a case in which the destruction of buildings were a common feature, and these cases have been selected based on when they took place, in order to cover the entire Revolution, and where they occurred to make sure that this thesis is geographically balanced. These sub-questions serve as examples of the numerous cases of cultural property destruction, and provide a representational overview of how the newspapers represented the destruction of these events, thereby making it possible to answer the research question.

1.2 Theoretical framework

To conduct this research, I will use two main bodies of literature for my theoretical framework to provide a basis on which my research is built. The two concepts related to these works are nationalism and othering.

¹ Glenn Hooper, *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2, Kindle.

Nationalism, especially the community that accompanies it, is a key element in this research, therefore the theory of Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* will be applied. Anderson assigns nationalism to the group of religions and kinship due to the characteristics of nationalism, something that I find convincing and strongly believe.² Only when a nation is seen as an imagined political community, people are willing to go to great lengths to achieve a certain goal. Anderson considers this imagined political community to be “inherently limited and sovereign.”³ The nation, according to Anderson, is:

“... *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. ... imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, ... has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. ... imagined as *sovereign* because [...] nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state. ... imagined as a *community*, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁴

The nation is therefore something that lives in the minds of the people, and even if there are physical limitations to it (geography), the idea that a people believe they govern themselves and their land, as a homogeneous group (us vs. the other), is what Anderson believes to be the driving force of nationalism. During the Irish Revolution, there have been terrible acts of violence undertaken by the involved parties, which I believe could have only occurred when they were fighting for something as great as ‘their nation.’ For the (Catholic) Irish, this was an independent Ireland, while the British wanted to maintain control over Ireland and keep it within their empire.⁵ Keeping the Empire together and maintaining British power in Ireland, was also an attempt to maintain the status Britain had internationally as hegemon, especially because Ireland was part of the United Kingdom since the Union in 1801. In addition, in the case of Ireland, the imagined community would consist of all Catholic Irish, united by the dream of a Free Republican Ireland, an independent nation free from British control, confined to the borders of the island of Ireland. In the British case, this would comprise its entire empire, with a diversity of peoples in all parts of the world.

Furthermore, Anderson also mentioned the importance of a shared language in a nation.⁶ Gaelic had been the common language for centuries in Ireland, until the English language slowly took over, partly due to British rule over Ireland. Before and during the Revolution, efforts were made to promote Gaelic again as a national language. Anderson argues language was key to create a nationalistic consciousness, and print capitalism was a key factor in the development of a national language.⁷ For print capitalism to make a profit,

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 5.

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵ Anthony Daly, “‘The true remedy for Irish grievances is to be found in good political institutions’: English radicals and Irish nationalism, 1847-74,” *Historical Research* Vol. 86, No. 231 (February 2013): 53.

⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

it needed a language that could be understood by a larger public.⁸ Due to the “human linguistic diversity,” print capitalism had to print in several overarching languages, that could be understood by the majority of the people within a territory.⁹ Thus, each territory had its own general language. People who were reading printed papers, were conscious of the fact that they were “connected through print” to fellow-readers, which formed the “embryo of the nationally imagined community.”¹⁰ This connects to this research, since the newspapers played an important role in the creation of the imagined community, and in the case of Ireland, it relates to the power of the newspapers to present a certain image to the people which can either strengthen or weaken the feeling of a community.

Related to Anderson is the concept of othering, which can be understood as “an undesirable objectification of another person or group,” that accentuates “one’s own positive alterior identity.”¹¹ As stated in *Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research*, othering contains a certain dualism that provides one with the power to define what “other” is, thereby creating a hierarchy determining “civilized-uncivilized, developed-undeveloped, human-not human.”¹² However, in my research this hierarchy of power determines who is part of the national community.

Othering is often applied to colonised countries or countries that “suffered a form of imperial relation.”¹³ In addition, cultures resistant of colonial rule, were depicted as barbaric, thereby offering the colonial power a justification for controlling and exterminating them, whereas the cultures “which accepted colonial rule, and perhaps collaborated with the colonial authorities in establishing settlements, were generally characterised as civilised and peace-loving.”¹⁴ Although Ireland was an integral part of Britain, during the Revolution the majority of Irish people perceived Britain as a coloniser of Ireland, and the newspapers, as I will argue in the following chapters, presented the “other” party involved, whether it was the British Government or the Irish paramilitaries, as the one that needed to be exterminated. This “fearful framing,” as the editors of *Historicizing Fear: Ignorance, Vilification, and Othering* call it, “is ever-present in our society,” and this creation of fear of the other group, is central to my theory in combination with Anderson.¹⁵

Finally, I will provide a short definition of cultural property, which is the focal point of this study on which the analysis is based. Cultural property, in the broader definition, “are tangible (physical, material) items that are part of the cultural heritage of a group or society,” and examples of these items are “cultural landscapes, historic buildings, works of art, archaeological sites, as well as collections of libraries, archives,

⁸ Ibid., 39-40.

⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 42-43.

¹⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹¹ Colleen MacQuarrie, “Othering,” in *Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research*, ed. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2012), 2.

¹² MacQuarrie, “Othering,” 2.

¹³ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 95, Kindle.

¹⁴ Mills, *Discourse*, 105.

¹⁵ Travis Boyce and Winsome M. Chunn, *Historicizing Fear: Ignorance, Vilification, and Othering* (Louisville, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2019), 3, Kindle.

and museums.”¹⁶ This definition is easily applicable to two case studies of this research – the buildings destroyed during the Easter Rising and the Big Houses were historic buildings. However, it becomes slightly problematic for the final case study focussing on the pogroms, during which many Catholic houses and businesses were destroyed. Neither can be seen as cultural property, but I believe these buildings are part of the cultural landscape of the Catholics in Belfast. In Chapter 4, I show that the Protestants intended to evict the Catholics from Belfast altogether, and therefore, as I argue in Chapter 4, I believe that the destruction of Catholic houses and businesses can be understood as a means to erase the physical presence of Catholics in the streets of Belfast, thus the cultural landscape that reminded people of Catholic presence is eradicated.

1.3 Historiography

In the literature there seems to be a void in the research regarding acts of destruction, because most of the literature appears to be focusing on a few big events, for example the Burning of Cork or the destruction of Big Houses in Cork or other counties in Ireland. In addition, there is an abundance of literature about nationalist politics, the economic motivations, and the social implications of the Revolution, for instance the work of Fergus Campbell on the relation between land and revolution, or the research done on Irish identity and migration.

In the following discussion, the literature has been divided in four overarching themes: the destruction of (cultural) properties, the paramilitary forces, nationalism and politics, and reporting the Revolution. The first theme discusses the most important and relevant section of the literature, related to the subject of this research. The second theme follows with some works on the paramilitaries, which also play a key role in this study. Then a brief overview of literature on politics and nationalism is provided, because these two topics are not only heavily intertwined in Irish history and especially in the Revolution, but are also addressed in every work on modern Irish history. Therefore, it will be shorter than other sections. The final theme will address literature that discusses newspapers in relation to conflicts between Ireland and Britain.

1.3.1 The destruction of (cultural) property

In his article “The Lloyd George Government and the Strickland Report on the Burnings of Cork, 1920,” Martin Frederick Seedorf – a historian specialized in British history – discussed how the Burning of Cork in 1920 – one of the most devastating burnings in the Revolution – was denied by the British government to be caused by British soldiers.¹⁷ Seedorf analysed how the Burning of Cork proceeded and especially focussed on the reaction of the British government to the accusations. He described the event as “one of the

¹⁶ “Cultural property,” Wikipedia, last modified 13-06-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_property.

¹⁷ Martin Frederick Seedorf, “The Lloyd George Government and the Strickland Report on the Burnings of Cork, 1920,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1972): 60.

many outrageous acts of British forces in Ireland in late autumn 1920,” and argued that “the burning of a large part of the centre of Cork resulted largely from IRA attacks in late November.”¹⁸ The Strickland Report he analysed – written by Major-General Sir E.P. Strickland – was the result of the investigation into the destruction of Cork, although it was never published.¹⁹ Seedorf concluded by stating that it took the British government until 1922 to acknowledge their responsibility for the burning of Cork and that the burnings has caused “greater destruction in one evening than in the weeklong Dublin Rising of 1916.”²⁰

The following volume is related to the burning of country houses in Ireland more generally. In *Lost Mansions: Essays on the Destruction of the Country House*, edited by James Raven, a British Professor in Modern History, it is discussed how country houses and their destructions relate to the wider historical context.²¹ The various chapters debate the “reactions to the destruction of great houses in modern Britain and Ireland,” thereby attempting to answer questions related to “causes of their loss, their reputation at the time of their disappearance and the implications of current resurgent interest in great estates.”²² The majority of the volume is relevant for my thesis, especially because some chapters explicitly focus on the *development* of the destruction of the country houses in Ireland.

Related to this, is the work of John Dorney, a historian who independently authors articles about Irish history and is chief editor of *The Irish Story*. He authored an article “The Big House and the Irish Revolution” concerning the destruction of Big Houses in relation to the Irish Revolution, in which he focussed on the destruction of the Big Houses during the War of Independence. He argued that “the Irish nationalist narrative had always maintained that the land of Ireland had been stolen from its rightful, native Irish and Catholic owners by the alien ‘Protestant Ascendancy’ in the 15 and 1600s.”²³ Dorney argued that accordingly during the Civil War, the anti-Treaty IRA “took the opportunity to sweep away the symbols of the old order in the countryside, ... once British protection had been withdrawn.”²⁴ He believed that the agrarian land struggle played a part in the burnings as well.²⁵ He stated that the Big House burnings during the War of Independence had acted as counter-reprisals, while during the Civil War its objective was to clear Ireland of “the class who had once been masters of the country.”²⁶

However, a few years after the publication of the article he revisited it. In the article “The Burning of the Big House Revisited 1920-23,” Dorney added new insights to the former article, in which he focussed on two regions that he knew well: the border region at Dundalk and the area surrounding Dublin. He argued

¹⁸ Seedorf, “The Lloyd George Government and the Strickland Report,” 59-60.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

²¹ James Raven, *Lost Mansions: Essays on the Destruction of the Country House* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1, Kindle.

²² Raven, *Lost Mansions*, 2-3.

²³ John Dorney, “The Big House and the Irish Revolution,” *The Irish Story*, last modified 21-06-2011, https://www.theirishstory.com/2011/06/21/the-big-house-and-the-irish-revolution/#.X_IuMhbvJPZ.

²⁴ Dorney, “The Big House and the Irish Revolution.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

that the Anglo-Irish landed class still had quite some economic power, but that this differed per region.²⁷ According to Dorney, the more populated areas were more likely to have a balanced power between the various classes than the more rural, less populated areas, where the landed elite still had great economic power with large estates.²⁸ Also, he withdrew his comments that the agrarian struggles played a significant part in the burnings, because these were mere strikes.²⁹ He strongly believed that the “IRA’s prejudices against ‘Imperialists and Freemasons’ certainly played a part in the selection of targets for burning.”³⁰

Another historian who focussed on destruction of properties in Cork is James S. Donnelly Jr., a professor specialised in nineteenth-century Irish history. His article “Big House Burnings in County Cork during the Irish Revolution, 1920-21” highlights the destruction of the Big Houses in County Cork. (These Big Houses were largely inhabited by Protestant loyalists, descendants of the Protestant colonizers, although “there were many smaller landlords [in county Galway, at least] who were Catholic”³¹). Already in his introduction, Donnelly emphasised that unlike Peter Hart – a well-respected Canadian historian in Modern Irish history – and a few other academics, “Protestants were rarely or never targeted because of their religion alone.”³² Donnelly argued that the attacks of the IRA on the Protestant-Irish, “can generally be explained by the staunch loyalism of most southern Protestants – a loyalism that before the Truce of July 1921 often took active forms of supporting the military or police forces or resisting republican enterprises.”³³ Therefore, to partly solve this controversy of whether Protestants were attacked due to their religion – as is believed by Hart – or out of political and military consideration – which is widely believed – Donnelly examines in this article the IRA motives for the burning of Cork Big Houses.³⁴ He also addresses “the agrarian facet of these Big House Burnings.”³⁵ According to Donnelly, research has shown that, in the West of Ireland, “agrarian violence and intimidation directed mainly against the landowners and graziers were major features of the revolutionary events there in 1920-21.”³⁶

To investigate this, he addresses case studies of Big House burnings and their cause. He argued that the troops of the British forces needed accommodation, therefore the IRA destroyed Big Houses that were offered as billets by their owners, or that were considered to be used as such.³⁷ The fact that “these quarters [Big Houses] could put them in close striking distance of their quarry – was to become one of the main

²⁷ John Dorney, “The Burning of the Big Houses Revisited 1920-23,” *The Irish Story*, last modified 06-11-2015, https://www.theirishstory.com/2015/11/06/the-burning-of-the-big-houses-revisited-1920-23/#.X_TNpBbvJPZ.

²⁸ Dorney, “The Burning of the Big Houses Revisited 1920-23.”

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5, Kindle.

³² James S. Donnelly Jr., “Big House Burnings in County Cork during the Irish Revolution, 1920-21,” *Éire-Ireland* Vol. 47, No. 3&4 (Fall/Winter 2012): 143.

³³ Donnelly, “Big House Burnings in County Cork,” 144.

³⁴ Ibid., 144.

³⁵ Ibid., 144.

³⁶ Ibid., 144.

³⁷ Ibid., 145.

reasons for Big House burnings in Cork.”³⁸ Furthermore, as another reason for destruction, Donnelly argued that reprisals were complemented with “spur-in-the-moment decisions,” when rumours would claim that British troops were to occupy a close-by mansion.³⁹ He concluded by stating that “what especially invited the hostility of the IRA were the political and social entanglements of particular landed families with the Crown forces.”⁴⁰

Despite the critique offered by Donnelly on Hart’s work, Hart was perceived as a great scholar of Irish History. The book *Terror in Ireland 1916-1923* was edited by David Fitzpatrick, an Irish historian known for his work on Irish independence and emigration, and dedicated to Peter Hart.⁴¹ In the introduction, Fitzpatrick clearly stated that “this book is not an apologia for ... Peter Hart, but an attempt to restore balance and decorum to a debate of crucial importance to modern Irish history. Terror, more than most topics, is best discussed calmly and dispassionately.”⁴² Therefore, the aim of the book is to “present fresh findings by historians, who have worked on aspects of terror and its victims [in Ireland].”⁴³ It is pointed out that “responsibility for terror in twentieth-century Ireland has been shared by many groups, including republicans, social radicals, loyalists and agents of the state.”⁴⁴ The book addresses various events of terror in Ireland, ranging from the the Kilmichael Ambush to the Sack of Balbriggan. It is demonstrated that in the case of “those attacked by the IRA on Bloody Sunday morning, terror directed against unarmed or off-duty targets, often misidentified as intelligence agents, was a recurrent and bloody ingredient of terror in revolutionary Ireland.”⁴⁵ In addition, it is argued that:

“Terror in revolutionary Ireland was instilled by a variety of means. These included violent attacks on individuals or their property; indiscriminate attacks on crowds, ‘suspicious’ strangers, public buildings or transport; ‘boycotts, exemplary punishments, abuse or humiliation; threats of violence calculated to inspire fear; and displays of power designed to awe and intimidate both enemies and recalcitrants.”⁴⁶

Most contributors to this book focus on the “Anglo-Irish struggle,” apart from a single chapter on “the civil conflicts that ravaged both Southern and Northern Ireland in its aftermath.”⁴⁷

1.3.2 The paramilitary forces

In his work *The I.R.A. and its Enemies*, which was criticised by Donnelly, Peter Hart examines the motives

³⁸ Donnelly, “Big House Burnings in County Cork,” 146.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 189-191.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁴¹ David Fitzpatrick, *Terror in Ireland 1916-1923* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2012), 3.

⁴² Fitzpatrick, *Terror in Ireland*, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

behind the killings of both the British forces and the IRA, the reasons how these killings began and why they escalated, the people that joined the IRA and for what reasons and how they justified their actions, and who fell victim to the violence of the IRA and who the enemies were of the IRA.⁴⁸ Hart's main focus is the IRA, although he intends to examine both forces. Hart aspires to "elucidate the mythologies and understand the fear, but also to identify and understand those who fought and suffered and died in obscurity."⁴⁹ However, Hart confirms, with various other scholars, that the "little cycle of killings reveals the runaway tit-for-tat logic of the guerrilla war in Cork, driven by fear and the overwhelming need to respond."⁵⁰ Among various scholars it is indeed believed that (part of) the violence was a reaction to an act of terror of the opposing forces, better known as reprisals.⁵¹

However, Donnelly is to a certain extent correct about Hart's argument that Protestants would be targeted due to their religion. Hart expresses similar ideas in his book *The I.R.A. at War 1916-1923*. He addresses many aspects of the Revolution from the viewpoint of the IRA. As Donnelly already mentioned, Hart appears to be quite focussed on the "social origins and nature of the revolutionary movement; the origins and dynamics of violence; and the role of ethnic identity and conflict in shaping both."⁵² Hart even addressed "the question of ethnic violence and its consequences for the southern Protestant minority."⁵³ This implies that he believed that the conflict was positioned around religious groups. In addition, Hart argued that "it was not merely individual families that were to be 'deported,' but whole communities."⁵⁴ Hart even claimed that campaigns like this "might be termed 'ethnic cleansing.'"⁵⁵

Hart's extensive account of the IRA will be complemented with a chapter written by Anne Dolan in *War In Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, which focusses on the British paramilitary groups. These are best known as the Auxiliaries and the Black and Tans. The chapter discusses how these paramilitaries – initially policemen and soldiers that were recruited to supplement the British Army with more men to fight in Ireland – were transformed to symbolize "everything that regular army life was not: indiscipline and disorder, the reprisals and murders that Ireland's war of independence had already come to signify."⁵⁶ Over the course of the Irish independence struggle, it had come to suggest "paramilitarism as disruption, as defiance or disarray, as a state of mind where the bounds of acceptable behaviour were aggressively crossed by army, paramilitaries and police."⁵⁷ Dolan argued that "British

⁴⁸ Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 19, Kindle.

⁴⁹ Hart, *The I.R.A. and its Enemies*, 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵¹ Donnelly, "The Burning of Big Houses in County Cork," 145.

⁵² Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War 1916-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), vii.

⁵³ Hart, *The I.R.A. at War*, ix.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁵⁶ Anne Dolan, "The British Culture of Paramilitary Violence in the Irish War of Independence," in *War in Peace. Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 201.

⁵⁷ Dolan, "The British Culture of Paramilitary Violence," 201-202.

paramilitarism was certainly shaped by the IRA's violence, by the nature of Ireland's guerrilla warfare, by the imagined dangers as much as the real threats."⁵⁸ However, it can also be argued that the IRA intensified or changed the nature of their reprisals in reaction to the violence of the British forces, especially since there is no clarity on who or what party started the cycle of reprisals during the War of Independence. Dolan even describes how Westminster itself acknowledged that the lines between military and police had disappeared in the conflict, and that the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) – the Irish police force – had had to become military in the conflict “in order to survive.”⁵⁹

1.3.3 Nationalism and politics

Fergus Campbell examines the role of Irish rural Nationalism in relation to County Galway (West of Ireland) and the agrarian conflict between the Irish (Catholic) tenant farmers and the Protestant landlords in his book *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921*.⁶⁰ He places the events in the east of the county in greater national context, by which he approaches the subject from a social historical perspective with a focus on the people.⁶¹ According to Campbell, “to understand the dynamics of popular political activity, ... it is necessary to examine a particular locality in detail; and underpinning this book is a detailed exploration of nationalist politics and agrarian conflict in the eastern part of County Galway.”⁶² His approach starts at the local level, in which the village Craughwell – which he calls “the quintessential east Galway village” (“for the evolution of nationalist politics”) – is the main focal point that represents the broader national developments in the Revolution.⁶³ In addition, he considers “the contribution of the IRA in Connacht to the War of Independence.”⁶⁴ He argues that the Land War (Land League) of 1879 was connected to the nationalist movement and people's motives to join it.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the theory Campbell discusses on the connection between land agitation and nationalist struggle, is often seen as an additional cause for the destruction of Big Houses and other properties of landed elites.

The second body of literature deals with the culture of nationalism and its use in politics. Timothy J. White's article about Irish nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century focusses on the role myths played in its creation and how politicians used it for their nationalist political movements.⁶⁶ As a Professor in Political Science specialised in Irish politics, he concentrates on the dynamics between Irish politicians (Sinn Féiners, who often had a relation with the IRA) and Irish nationalism.⁶⁷ He argues that “while the

⁵⁸ Dolan, “The British Culture of Paramilitary Violence,” 202.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶⁰ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 2-3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁶⁶ Timothy J. White, “Where myth and reality meet: Irish nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century,” *The European Legacy* Vol. 4, No. 4 (1999): 49.

⁶⁷ White, “Where myth and reality meet,” 52-54.

cultural dimensions of Irish nationalism may have inspired the political aspirations of Irish nationalists, their use of political means to attain an idyllic Gaelic culture indicates the symbiotic relationship between culture and politics in the Irish nationalism of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.”⁶⁸

1.3.4 Reporting the Revolution

This section will investigate some of the literature that addresses newspapers or news reporting in Ireland and Britain in relation to the Revolution or a preceding struggle. However, as it appears, most research use reporting as a framework, while another subject is their main focus. Newspapers and journals are often used to make an argument, and therefore are not often the object of study themselves.

The first article is “The nation against the State: The Irish question and Britain-based anarchists in the Age of Empire,” of José Antonio Gutiérrez and Federico Ferretti. They are both affiliated with University College Dublin – Gutiérrez is a Dr. of Philosophy and Ferretti is PhD at the School of Geography. Their article discusses “the relationship between early anarchism and republican/nationalist ideas,” based on the “case of British-based activists grouped around the journal *Freedom* and their engagement with Irish nationalism during the Age of the Empire.”⁶⁹ They use the *Freedom* as a framework in which they place the anarchist community, instead of focussing on the journal itself. Gutiérrez and Ferretti, for their primary sources, use writings and networks of these anarchist community, as a means to “explore the complex intermingling of anarchism, anti-colonialism, and republicanism.”⁷⁰ They argue that “anarchist views of nations, while rejecting the novel notion of the nation-state, were associated with anti-colonial struggles and with republican anti-monarchical and egalitarian notions.”⁷¹

The second article, “The true remedy for Irish grievances is to be found in good political institutions: English radicals and Irish nationalism, 1847-74,” written by Anthony Daly – Professor in History and Political Science – examines how “English radicals reacted to the challenge of Irish nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century.”⁷² Basing his argument on the (British) radical press and manuscripts, he argues that “a belief in the exceptional nature of the United Kingdom constitution, together with the growing importance of the imperial interest, convinced English radicals to reject Irish nationalism.”⁷³ The radical press is thus used to analyse the perspective of the British radicals.

The final article focusses on how Ireland was represented in the periodical press in 1848. In “Representing Ireland in the Periodical Press During 1848,” Malcolm Ballin, an Independent Researcher at Cardiff University, discusses the debate of Irish politics in British and Irish periodicals.⁷⁴ Although his

⁶⁸ White, “Where myth and reality meet,” 49.

⁶⁹ José Antonio Gutiérrez and Federico Ferretti, “The nation against the State: The Irish question and Britain-based anarchists in the Age of Empire,” *Nations and Nationalism* Vol 26, No. 3 (July 2020): 611.

⁷⁰ Gutiérrez and Ferretti, “The nation against the State,” 611.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 611.

⁷² Daly, “The true remedy for Irish grievances is to be found in good political institutions,” 53.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁴ Malcolm Ballin, “Representing Ireland in the Periodical Press During 1848,” *ABEI Journal* Vol. 11 (2009): 111.

research focusses on the turbulent situation in Ireland after the Famine and the momentum nationalism gained in Ireland, its focus on periodicals offers a new perspective. According to Ballin, periodicals were used by governments to justify their policies, and were “quickly suppressed when they were accounted treasonous and as promptly replaced.”⁷⁵ However, he also mentions how “periodicals represented every shade of opinion across a spectrum extending from the reactionary to the liberal to the revolutionary. ... This coloured the reporting of the Famine and the debate about measures taken in response to it, and influenced the different responses to agitation, agrarian discontent and sectarian violence.”⁷⁶ He addresses several issues that were discussed in these periodicals and how it presented Ireland, after which he concludes that “the treatment of these issues illustrates the difficulty of constructive interchange between the zealots of the nationalist press and the conservative writers of the reviews.”⁷⁷ While the Irish were trying to be heard in Victorian societies, English journals were “oscillate[d] between repression and sympathy, between revulsion against the primitive character of Catholic peasant life in Ireland and a desire to construct a more romantic and civilised image of a sensitive, celticised, humorous, but essentially subordinate people.”⁷⁸

This historiography addressed the various debates in academic literature on the destruction of cultural property in Ireland, in which it discussed the different perceptions of Peter Hart’s work, and showed how among others the Big Houses were the central theme within the literature. It went on to discuss the paramilitary groups in Ireland, a section in which Peter Hart’s accounts of the IRA were addressed, and it was argued that he did seem to be favouring the view that the Protestant population was targeted due to sectarian beliefs. It also addressed the British paramilitary groups and how paramilitarism became something unfavourable. In addition, Irish nationalism was shortly discussed, and the works of Fergus Campbell and Timothy White were addressed. Finally, newspapers and periodicals were addressed, and how they are mostly used to offer a framework, and much less are the object of study themselves. However, within the articles there was a gradual shift towards the periodicals being the object of study.

1.3.5 Contribution

By examining the literature addressed above, I came to the conclusion that a greater part of the literature either focusses on Irish nationalism, the paramilitaries, identity or (in)tangible heritage. The literature that is relevant for my thesis, thus the literature on the destruction of tangible heritage and properties, and Irish nationalism, mainly focusses on events and places such as the Burning of Cork, the destruction of Big Houses and the destruction of monuments in Dublin.

Apart from destruction and nationalism, various academic literature in Irish history tend to focus on

⁷⁵ Ballin, “Representing Ireland in the Periodical Press During 1948,” 111.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 111.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 119.

the political, cultural, social, and economic aspects of the conflict. Literature that does relate to cultural property, often examines intangible heritage like identity, or these well-known events. Literature on the armed forces, especially about the IRA, is relevant, because this was one of the main actors in instigating the destruction. It has long been proven by many scholars in the field that Irish nationalism was closely intertwined with politics. Within the literature there is a clear targeted period: the revolutionary period of 1919-1923.

Due to these apparent voids in the existing literature, I will position my research in the vacuum that concerns the representation of the destruction in the newspapers, since it appears that they are barely discussed in relation to the Revolution. The research will focus on the ways in which events are represented, and thus follows a bit in line with the article of Ballin, although my time frame will concern the Revolutionary period, several decades later.

I intend to research newspaper archives, which contains most of the newspapers of Ireland. English newspapers are also included, due to the key role played by British forces in the destruction. It will contribute to the existing literature in the sense that this research complements the current bodies of literature, by focussing on the representation of these destructions and the actors involved in the newspapers, and comparing these between the three major “ethnic” groups in Ireland and Britain: the Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English. This research can focus on the same events, because the representation in newspapers is central, and a variety of cases will be addressed. Each newspaper has different perspectives, thus they are likely to address varying cases of destruction differently.

1.4 Sources

The primary sources on which this research is based are newspapers, which are also the subject of study. The targeted “cultural” groups are the Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English, therefore the selected newspapers for this research will also represent these groups. The major limit to this research project is its dependency on digital resources, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Sources have been drawn from two newspaper repositories: the *Irish Newspaper Archives* and the *British Newspaper Archives*. These digital archives cover together almost all British and Irish newspapers of the period, and due to the overlap of some collections of newspapers, the archives could complement each other. A drawback of these resources is that some of the scanned newspaper articles cannot be read digitally, because the quality of the text is not sufficient for reading or because the scanned newspapers were damaged.

For each group, three newspapers were selected, thereby including varying views, which allows me to analyse and compare viewpoints from all parties involved in the conflict. The newspapers were selected according to the following criteria: a) they had to cover both regional and national news; b) there were more than a 10,000 articles available in the archives; c) the newspaper selection had to cover the entire political spectrum within each group; d) the newspapers had to be published during the entire Irish Revolution, for

them to cover the revolutionary period in their reports.

For the first group, the Irish newspapers, the *Irish Independent*, the *Freeman's Journal*, and the *Cork Examiner* were selected. They all published regional, national, and international news and were national newspapers. The *Irish Independent* is one of the best-selling newspapers since its founding, and is an extreme Nationalistic, Catholic newspaper, and the main competitor of the *Freeman's Journal*.⁷⁹ The *Freeman's Journal* is seen as one of the most important newspaper sources of the Irish Historical Studies.⁸⁰ In addition, it was the leading newspaper of the Irish Parliamentary Party, who campaigned for Home Rule.⁸¹ The *Cork Examiner* is the oldest, national daily newspaper in the South of Ireland.⁸² It is a nationalist newspaper.⁸³

For the Anglo-Irish newspapers, the *Irish Times*, the *Belfast News-Letter*, and the *Londonderry Sentinel* were selected, all publishing regional, national, and international news, and the *Irish Times* is the only national newspaper. The *Irish Times* was Conservative and Unionist during the Irish Revolution, after which it became more liberal.⁸⁴ The *Belfast News-Letter* is anti-Nationalist newspaper, and was the first newspaper that was published across Ulster (provincial).⁸⁵ The *Londonderry Sentinel* is a Unionist newspaper, and is based in Derry, Ulster.⁸⁶

The last group, the English newspapers, comprises of the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph*. These newspapers are national newspapers. The *Times* is the oldest newspaper of Great Britain, and attempts to be independent from Labour and Conservative.⁸⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* is the predecessor of the *Guardian*, and is a Liberal newspaper.⁸⁸ The *Daily Telegraph* has developed itself into one of the largest newspapers of Great Britain, and is Conservative.⁸⁹

After carefully selecting the newspapers for this research, I need to find relevant articles. Due to the vast amount of newspaper articles available, and to keep the materials organized, it was best to collect the archival material per chapter, analyse it, and write the chapter, before I continued with the next chapter. To select relevant newspaper articles, a selection of destroyed buildings was made for each of the case studies, on which the archival research focussed. This choice was based on the secondary literature. These selected

⁷⁹ "Irish Independent," Wikipedia, last modified 25-01-2016, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Independent; "Irish Independent," Irish Newspaper Archives, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/irish-independent-newspaper-archive>.

⁸⁰ "Freeman's Journal," Irish Newspaper Archives, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/freemans-journal-newspaper-archive>.

⁸¹ "Freeman's Journal," Wikipedia, last modified 12-01-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeman%27s_Journal.

⁸² "Irish Examiner," Irish Newspaper Archives, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/irish-examiner-newspaper-archive>.

⁸³ "Irish Examiner," Wikipedia, last modified 13-04-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Examiner.

⁸⁴ "About the Irish Times," *The Irish Times*, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.irishtimes.com/about-us/the-irish-times-trust>.

⁸⁵ "Belfast Newsletter," Irish Newspaper Archives, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/belfast-newsletter-newspaper-archive>.

⁸⁶ "Londonderry Sentinel," Wikipedia, last modified 09-01-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Londonderry_Sentinel.

⁸⁷ "About us," *The Times*, accessed 26-05-2021, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/static/about-us/?region=global>.

⁸⁸ "History of the Guardian and the Observer," *The Guardian*, last modified 16-11-2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/gnm-archive/2014/dec/18/histories-of-the-newspapers>.

⁸⁹ "The Daily Telegraph," Wikipedia, last modified 16-02-2020, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Telegraph.

buildings served as case studies within the chapters to narrow the results for newspaper articles to an achievable size for the analysis. To maintain an organised collection of materials, the archival research will focus on one chapter at the time. Finally, irrelevant articles were eliminated by adding terms as “arson” or “destruction” to the search within the archives.

1.5 Methodology

I will investigate the representation of the destruction of cultural property in the Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers, in which I focus on the representation of the actors involved and how and why they described the loss of the destroyed buildings. The articles of the selected newspapers were central in this research. In the previous section, I explained my choices for newspapers and selection criteria of the articles. In this section, I focus on the way I dealt with and analysed the articles.

At the core of my research are the concepts othering and nationalism, and I study how these two themes come together in newspaper representations of the destruction. As I will show in the following chapters, the newspapers apply othering in several ways, for example by using certain words to address a group they wish to depict positively, by rationalising certain acts to passively defend ‘their’ group, or by glorifying the British military in some instances. Depending the way the newspapers applied othering in their reports, nationalistic ideas or suggestions of an imagined community can be implied by these reports. Whereas othering normally focusses on civilized-uncivilized, I focus on the application of othering to define the community.⁹⁰ I trace these implications in the newspapers by looking at the presentation of the actors involved in the conflict – the Irish paramilitary forces, the British (para)military forces and the buildings destroyed by these actors.

This allows me to analyse how the newspapers perceived the ‘other’ and thus how they perceived their nation and/or Empire. In some cases, this was clearer than in other news reports, as I will show in the chapters, because othering is relatively easy to detect in written works of the past.⁹¹ In the end, I will draw some general conclusions on the representations in the Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers regarding the implications of othering and nationalism, which allows me to answer my research question on the representation of the destructions and the actors involved in the destructions of buildings during the Revolution.

The following chapters will analyse the case studies of the Easter Rising, the Big Houses and the Belfast Pogroms, in which the analysis of the newspaper articles of the selected Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers focusses on the presentation of the Irish paramilitary groups, the Crown forces, and the destruction of cultural properties within the framework of the cases. Before beginning the analysis, I started

⁹⁰ MacQuarrie, “Othering,” 2.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

each chapter with an outline of the historical background of the case studies and provided some information on censorship regulations that were applied onto the newspapers. After the analysis of the newspapers, I reflect on the chapter and its broader implications in the chapter's conclusion.

2. Dublin: A city destroyed during the Easter Rising, 1916

The Easter Rising was the first major event of the Irish Revolution, during which the Irish Volunteers occupied several buildings in Dublin to overthrow British rule in Ireland. The military was called upon to remove the Volunteers from those buildings, and in the fighting that followed, various structures were destroyed. This chapter will focus on the destruction of significant buildings in Dublin during the Easter Rising, by answering the following question: *How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of historic buildings in Dublin during the Easter Rising in 1916?*

By answering this question, the newspapers will be investigated to gain insight into their presentation of the destruction of three buildings that were destroyed in the fighting and had been taken by the Volunteers: Four Courts, General Post Office (G.P.O.), and St. Stephen's Green. First the context of the Easter Rising will be explained, before I analyse the presentation of the Volunteers, the Empire and Ireland, and the destruction of cultural property.

2.1 Historical Background

To understand the events of the Easter Rising, it is important to explain why the Volunteers* planned and executed it. The Irishmen and women who fought during the Easter Rising strived for an independent Irish Republic. When the Volunteers seized the G.P.O., Patrick Pearse declared the Republic, who the Volunteers had chosen as the first President of the Irish Republic.¹ Pearse was an Irish teacher, poet, nationalist, republican politician, and a revolutionary, and he became the embodiment of the Rising after his execution in consequence of it by the British government.² He had preached for Irish nationalism many times.³ He had said, before the Rising was planned, that “every generation ... must make protest in blood against foreign dominion; otherwise Ireland's claim to independent nationhood would be annulled.”⁴ Pearse believed that Ireland “must fight, if not with hope of success, then in the spirit of a blood sacrifice to demonstrate her undying resolve to win ultimate freedom.”⁵ This blood sacrifice was made during the Easter Rising. Pearse wrote in his final manifesto, hours before the surrender, that “a localised rising was enough to give Ireland her blood sacrifice.”⁶

The Rising commenced on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, and ended on the following Sunday, April 30, with the surrender of the last Volunteers. It was concentrated in the centre of Dublin. The Volunteers took several buildings as their strongholds, strategically positioned around the city centre. Their

* This term is chosen to describe the Volunteers, because it is the common use in secondary literature, and the Volunteers involved in the Rising were mainly members of the Irish Volunteers and other paramilitary groups.

¹ “Patrick Pearse,” Wikipedia, last modified 26-01-2021, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Pearse.

² “Patrick Pearse,” Wikipedia, 08-05-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Pearse.

³ Seumas MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race* (Old Greenwich, Connecticut: The Devin-Adair Company, 1978), 695.

⁴ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*, 695.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 696.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 702.

headquarters was the General Post Office. At noon they marched through the city to the various locations they had chosen as strongholds. The Volunteers could occupy the various buildings relatively easy, because the authorities were in the belief that there would be no Rising, due to contradictory newspaper announcements, therefore many policemen were out of town to celebrate the holiday. The most important battles turned out to be fought for the Four Courts, the G.P.O., and St. Stephen's Green. The Four Courts' destruction mostly concerned its contents (legal documents), which were used for barricades, and its exterior suffered most by the loss of all its windows. A few shells caused several holes in the Eastern wall. After the Volunteers had surrendered, some bombs were found in the library, but these were safely removed. The G.P.O. was a ruin with only its outer walls still standing. The entire Sackville Street, the main thoroughfare of Dublin, on which the G.P.O. was located, had been destroyed by fires caused by a combination of Volunteers' incendiary fires and shells of the military. All the contents of the G.P.O. were lost in the fire. Its perimeter was nothing but ruins, tattering walls, and ashes.

The Four Courts was the most important court of Ireland, and it had a strategical position at the north side of the quay, while the G.P.O. served as headquarters where the Volunteers could easy keep control of Sackville Street. St. Stephen's Green is a park on the edge of the centre, from which the Volunteers could fire in every direction. As the fighting intensified, the Volunteers evacuated the Green to the College of Surgeons, located on the west side of the park. The G.P.O. and the Four Courts were held by the Volunteers until the surrender. At St. Stephen's Green the main damage was caused to houses used by the snipers and College of Surgeons, which had various bullet marks in its front wall.

Throughout the Rising, a military cordon closed in around the city centre, enclosing the Volunteers inside. After a week, when the G.P.O. had gone up in flames, Pearse surrendered unconditionally, and ordered all other Volunteers who were still fighting to do the same. Ireland had had her blood sacrifice.

2.1.1 Censorship

Ireland had become an integral part of the UK with the Union of 1801, in which Ireland merged its Parliament with that of Great Britain (represented in Westminster). When Britain introduced censorship to its newspapers during the War, it applied to Ireland as well. A Press Bureau was installed that monitored the newspapers throughout and after the First World War. Irish (radical) newspapers were more restrained and suppressed than their British counterparts.⁷ Sometimes the radical Irish press were seized to exist, while in other cases, "less stringent penalties including warnings, seizures or dismantlement of equipment were used."⁸ Less than a month after the Rising the Press Bureau was replaced by a special Press Censorship Office in Ireland.⁹ The newspapers in both Ireland and Britain were prohibited to make positive comments

⁷ "Press/Journalism (Great Britain and Ireland)," 1914-1918 Online, International Encyclopaedia of the First World War, last modified 08-10-2014, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/pressjournalism_great_britain_and_ireland.

⁸ International Encyclopaedia of the First World War, "Press/Journalism."

⁹ Ibid.

about the Rising, but nonetheless newspapers were capable to feature “some level of anti-establishment sentiment.”¹⁰ Due to the restrictions the censorship imposed on the newspapers, it becomes more interesting how the newspapers reported on the Easter Rising.

2.2 Rebels versus Volunteers

The newspapers had several ways to present the events of the Rising in their reports. If they were sympathetic to the Rising, they had to find other ways in which they could show their stance. One way in which the newspapers could show their appreciation or rejection of the Volunteers’ actions was by characterising them in a certain way, for example when the newspapers presented the reader a particular narrative. These narratives could be interpreted by the reader in several ways. Therefore, this section will focus on the presentations and implications of the ways in which the newspapers displayed the Volunteers.

The Volunteers were presented in the newspapers in four ways: rebels, insurgents, Sinn Féiners, and Volunteers. Each of these terms implied a perspective, a narrative which the newspapers delivered in their reports, related to the destruction caused in the fighting. Whenever the term “rebel” was used, the report contained resentment towards the Volunteers and their actions. For example, the Anglo-Irish newspaper *Belfast News-Letter* reported that the Nelson Pillar, which was one of Dublin’s well-known monuments located in front of the G.P.O., remained intact, despite the shell fire of the military and the “destructive propensities of the rebels.”¹¹ The shell fire of the military is casually mentioned, while the choice of words focusses attention to the destructive character of the “rebels.” It implies that the Volunteers bore a larger responsibility for the destruction than the military. This implication is also present in a report of the *Times*, when it informs the reader that “official news confirms the suspicion that [the fire in Sackville Street] was due to arson and not to accident.”¹² Arson must be prepared and lit by a person, and by presenting it in this manner, it implies that the Volunteers were the only ones who could have done it, because, according to *The Observer* – a newspaper owned by the *Manchester Guardian* – they had had in their possession the whole of Sackville Street.¹³ The military had no access to this area until the last days of the Rising, when their cordon had closed in on the Volunteers. The same narrative can be found when investigating the destruction of the G.P.O. According to the English newspaper *Manchester Guardian*, the Volunteers were entirely responsible for its destruction:

“Most of the damage ... has been caused by fires kindled by the rebels themselves in a last desperate effort to cover their escape to other positions. ... Only two shells were fired at the Post Office, where they had mounted a machine-gun on the parapet, and on Friday they sprinkled the building with oil when further resistance had become impossible.”¹⁴

¹⁰ International Encyclopaedia of the First World War, “Press/Journalism.”

¹¹ “Scenes of Desolation,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 3, 1916, 5.

¹² “Suppressing The Revolt,” *The Times*, May 1, 1916, 9.

¹³ “Rebels’ Strongholds,” *The Observer*, April 30, 1916, 10.

¹⁴ “Fires Lit by the Rebels,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 3, 1916, 5.

The *Manchester Guardian* implies here that not only were the Volunteers the main instigators of the fires, but they did so in an attempt to escape. It implies that the Volunteers hopelessly tried to escape from the advancing military, after they had realised that they could not defeat the British military, and by kindling fires they slowed the military down. By adding the phrases “a last desperate effort” it suggests that the Volunteers knew they were on the losing hand. This is emphasized by the argument that the Volunteers sprinkled the roof when any resistance was futile.

However, the English newspaper *Daily Telegraph* provides an example of how the same narrative can be given a different meaning. It reports that the Volunteers saturated the roof of the G.P.O., which implies that the Volunteers not only wanted to make it catch fire, but their minds were set to achieve the greatest possible destruction of the building.¹⁵ Simply by using “saturated” instead of “sprinkled,” the *Daily Telegraph* gave the Volunteers’ action another meaning by the extent of the implication of the word “saturation.” In addition, the *Daily Telegraph* indicated the Volunteers were the main destroyers of Dublin’s city centre by stating that “they are evidently determined to end their inglorious revolt with the destruction of as much property as possible.”¹⁶ The use of “inglorious” alone, indicates that the Rising is nothing to be proud of.

Interesting is that the Volunteers appear to be presented as both rebels and insurgents when it concerns reporting on the destruction caused during the Rising. For example, the Anglo-Irish newspaper *Irish Times* reported that “a party of rebels fortified themselves in the Henry Street Warehouse. The windows of the floor over the shop were barricaded with costly goods in a manner that showed how regardless the insurgents were of others’ property.”¹⁷ The *Irish Times* saw the Volunteers as rebels when they actually seized the warehouse, but they were insurgents when they barricaded the windows. Also, it describes how the Volunteers are regardless of other’s property, implying that the Volunteers were indifferent when it concerned the material damage they caused. In addition, the *Belfast News-Letter* reported that the “insurgents” were digging trenches in St. Stephen’s Green and throwing up barricades to block the entrances.¹⁸

Likewise, the Anglo-Irish newspaper *Londonderry Sentinel* informed its readers that “one of the first actions of the insurgents was the wrecking of the printing machine in the newspaper offices.”¹⁹ Both examples relate to the destruction of something, whether it is a machine that the newspapers use or the destruction of a park, the word “insurgent” does not seem to be applied any differently that the word rebel, other than that “insurgent” appears to reflect a less aggressive perspective than “rebel.” When a newspaper

¹⁵ “Petrol on the Post Office,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1916, 9.

¹⁶ “Experts at Incendiarism,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1916, 9.

¹⁷ “Incidents of the Rebellion,” *The Irish Times*, April 29, 1916, 3.

¹⁸ “The Scenes in the City,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 2, 1916, 5.

¹⁹ “No Dublin Newspapers,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, May 2, 1916, 3.

used “rebels” to indicate actions of the Volunteers, it took a stronger stance in the matter. “Insurgent” resembles a less political stance. This lesser political stance is observed more clearly in a report of the *Freeman’s Journal*, in which it describes how the Volunteers seized St. Stephen’s Green:

“At Stephen’s Green the operations of the insurgents were comparatively simple. They arrived in the vicinity in twos and threes and at noon calmly walked inside the gates and closed them against the public, placing armed guards on duty. The insurgents then quietly ordered out all civilians and in fifteen or twenty minutes the place was in absolute possession of the insurgents. ... Inside the park and some distance from the railings the insurgents proceeded to dig trenches, as well as barricade the railings with seats, etc.”²⁰

In this article the writer used insurgent, but it carries less weight, even less blame. Since the newspapers were censored and forbidden to publish any positive reports of the Rising, it is believed that this report can serve as an example of how newspapers, especially nationalistic Irish newspapers, handled the censorship. The Volunteers are seen as insurgents, which is naturally a negative word, but the situation is described in a way in which the Volunteers did not cause great nuisance, because they arrived in small groups, entered the park calmly and closed the gates to prevent anyone from entering. Then they *quietly* ordered the civilians out of the park, all within a brief period. Presented in this way the Volunteers showed respect to the people and no force seemed to have been involved. This presents a completely different picture than one that is presented of the same situation in the *Belfast News-Letter*, in which an article “Fortifying St. Stephen’s Green,” sets the tone of the remainder of the article, which stated that “nearly all the holiday-makers were ejected from the Green, the gates were closed, and the rebels put the position into a state of defence.”²¹ This report implies that the people were more forcefully removed from the Green, and that the “rebels” caused quite some nuisance. It is situated in a negative light in the *Belfast News-Letter*, whereas the *Freeman’s Journal* presents it as something more civilized.

Characterising the Volunteers as rebels and insurgents was not the only way the newspapers expressed their contempt. The newspapers applied another term to the Volunteers, one which in the future would have far-reaching consequences: Sinn Féiners. Apart from the *Irish Independent* and the *Freeman’s Journal*, all the newspapers reported that the men involved in the Rising were “identified with Sinn Féiners.”²² An article in the *Belfast News-Letter* had a heading “Wild Scenes at Stephen’s Green,” followed by a report stating that “Sinn Féiners had stormed the Green, had closed the gate, were digging themselves in, and were firing upon all men, soldiers and policemen alike, in uniform.”²³ Its heading already suggests that the situation was unusual, in which the Volunteers are depicted as barbaric, something that returns in the article itself, when it stated that the Volunteers fire at all men in uniform, which is at the least considered

²⁰ “Four Courts and Stephen’s Green,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1916, 3.

²¹ “Fortifying St. Stephen’s Green,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 1, 1916, 5.

²² “Chief Secretary Announcement,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, May 4, 1916, 10.

²³ “Wild Scenes at Stephen’s Green,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 2, 1916, 5.

as uncivil behaviour.

The Volunteers are not only seen as Sinn Féiners where St. Stephen's Green is concerned. Also, in reports on the Four Courts the newspapers address the Volunteers as such. The *Daily Telegraph* reports that the Four Courts, "a stronghold which the Sinn Féiners held most tenaciously, exhibits few signs of the fray, though the legal library has suffered by the use of its contents to form barriers against bullets in the windows from which the revolutionaries fired."²⁴ Although the report stated that the Volunteers were able to defend the Four Courts to the end, which in itself is a little praise for the Volunteers' capabilities, it mostly focusses on the use of the contents that suffered most due to bullet holes. What is most interesting, is that the newspaper then refers to the Volunteers as "revolutionaries," which implies that the Volunteers are radical, which indicated that the message the *Daily Telegraph* wanted to convey was that these radicals were something the people had no need for in the uncertain times of the War.

Apart from the way the newspapers presented the Volunteers as Sinn Féiners, it is important to remember that this term directly referred to the political party Sinn Féin, which had no connection to the Volunteers during the Rising. Sinn Féin was a nationalistic party at the time, which gained increasing popular support after the Rising. By stating that the Volunteers were identified with Sinn Féiners, and addressed as such, the political implications of the actions of the Volunteers were highlighted. By presenting the Volunteers as Sinn Féiners, the newspapers attempted to misrepresent Sinn Féin as the party which was partially responsible for the events in Dublin, thus not something the people would want to give their support to.

The last recurring term used to identify the Volunteers in the newspapers was Volunteers. No English nor Anglo-Irish newspaper addressed them as such. The newspaper most supportive of the Volunteers and the Rising was the *Irish Independent*. In an article on the destruction of the Four Courts it states that the building had suffered little damage "other than that caused by Volunteers in taking possession and protecting themselves."²⁵ This is rather positive towards the Volunteers, because although it acknowledges the damage caused by the Volunteers, it justifies it by arguing that it was caused while they took possession or were protecting themselves. It suggests that the Volunteers only damaged something when they had no other choice. It presents them as thoughtful men and women who did regard other people's property, even if other newspapers claimed differently. The second notable report of the *Irish Independent* regarded the destruction of the G.P.O. It stated that after the first shell of the military had struck and had caused a fire, the Volunteers went up the roof and put it out, and the second shell started the fire that would burn the building.²⁶ Instead of claiming that the Volunteers used oil on the roof to begin a fire, the *Irish Independent* claimed they tried to stop the fire from spreading and destroying the entire building. Therefore, it appears to take more of a stance that could indicate support of the Volunteers.

²⁴ "Damaged Sackville-Street," *The Daily Telegraph*, May 4, 1916, 10.

²⁵ "Four Courts taken. Insurgents surrender," *The Irish Independent*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 1916, 3.

²⁶ "Appaling Fires," *The Irish Independent*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 1916, 3.

The *Cork Examiner* only addressed them as Volunteers in a report made by one of their journalists, stating that St. Stephen's Green was closed and "no view can be had of the trenches dug by the Volunteers or any other works ... by them."²⁷ The report is relatively objective and hollow, but it does show that the journalist of this report was of a milder opinion than others who wrote for the *Cork Examiner*, whose reports could be opposing of the Rising. The *Cork Examiner* applied all four terms to address the Volunteers, but the overall opinion of the newspaper could be observed in other ways. For example, their reports spoke of an awful civil strife that caused the massive destruction in Dublin.²⁸ It was expressed how the destruction "attested the violence of the struggle waged last week."²⁹ In addition, another report observed the situation in and around St. Stephen's Green as the Volunteers who made "a trap for themselves in Stephen's Green."³⁰ Furthermore, the *Cork Examiner* states that the Volunteers, when they had dug trenches and took positions in St. Stephen's Green, they started "firing at every officer and soldier they saw, most of whom were unarmed."³¹ These phrases are indicative for the overall opinion of the newspaper. An awful civil strife is not as radical as a Rising or a revolt, but it does carry some level of condemnation in it. It disapproves of the situation and the actions taken by the Volunteers. The same can be said of the other comments, of which some disapprove of the violence of all parties, while others almost express pity for the Volunteers because they made a mistake at the Green, thus creating a trap for themselves. The *Cork Examiner* seems to position itself quite moderate regarding the Volunteers, even though it condemns the shooting of unarmed men, something that goes against every code of honour.

In general, it can be concluded that the Irish newspapers were supportive of the Rising. As already discussed, the *Irish Independent* reported quite moderately on the events, and the *Freeman's Journal* praises the Volunteers for the work they carried out systematically at the Four Courts, even if afterwards their barricades offered only slight protection.³² It expresses pity that the Volunteers were not that well protected by the barricades, which implies that it was thought the Volunteers had hold out longer if their barricaded had been better. Also, they called the Rising an "amazing revolution that was in progress."³³ If it saw it as such, it must have had some form of sympathy for it.

The other newspapers were less enthusiastic to embrace the cause of the Rising. The *Irish Times* published a statement of Sir John Maxwell regarding "certain misguided persons" and "their armed resistance to the law."³⁴ These powerful words depict the Volunteers as ill-informed, even idiotic, men who took up arms against "the law." Indirectly, Maxwell's words also make clear that he believed the Rising cannot be taken seriously by calling it an armed resistance against the law, implying that the Volunteers are

²⁷ "Journalists' View of the Devastated Area," *The Cork Examiner*, May 6, 1916, 6.

²⁸ "Remarkable Scenes of Destruction," *The Cork Examiner*, May 3, 1916, 5.

²⁹ "Sparing Property," *The Cork Examiner*, May 3, 1916, 5.

³⁰ "Editorial," *The Cork Examiner*, May 3, 1916, 5.

³¹ "Attack on Post Office the Signal," *The Cork Examiner*, May 1, 1916, 5.

³² *The Freeman's Journal*, "Four Courts and Stephen's Green."

³³ "Scenes In The Streets," *The Freeman's Journal*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1916, 3.

³⁴ "Sir John Maxwell Adopts Rigorous Measures," *The Irish Times*, April 29, 1916, 5.

just disagreeing about something, but that it is not a serious matter. The newspapers also called the Rising a rebellion while it was still going, thus implying that it would be unsuccessful – as rebellions often are – and that the Volunteers would be crushed by the military. Some newspapers even made statements about the positions held “by the enemy” – the Volunteers – on Saturday.³⁵ The *Belfast News-Letter* goes as far as to report that the Rising was “the most ridiculous, wanton, outrageous, and, at the same time, farcical proceeding that men, calling themselves sane, ever undertook.”³⁶ They condemned the Rising and the Volunteers, even suggesting that the Volunteers were insane to think that what they had done, had followed a certain logic. It characterized the Rising as ridiculous, but by defining it as “farcical,” they implied that the Rising was, due to its pure ridicule, somehow even comic because it could have happened at all. This serves as a prime example of how othering can be applied to depict the other negatively.

This perception, in which the people are slightly shocked that the Rising could have happened at all, was present in other newspapers, which used various terms to define the Rising or the Volunteers, even if they were slightly impressed with what the Volunteers had achieved. Some newspapers, like the *Londonderry Sentinel*, gave small praise for what the Volunteers had achieved with the seizure of all the places, but despite that described the Rising as “days of terror.”³⁷ The other two Anglo-Irish newspapers condemned the Rising as well. They even state that the rising was indeed “‘the mad rising,’ as it has been aptly termed.”³⁸ The overall trend appears to be one that sees the Rising and the actions of the Volunteers as preposterous, and their articles imply this as well.

The English newspapers go further. They addressed the Volunteers mostly as rebels and insurgents, and the *Daily Telegraph* uses similar terms to describe the Rising. For example, in a report on the Four Courts, it calls it a “siege warfare.”³⁹ In another report it was again called a “mad adventure.”⁴⁰ The term “mad” seems to be applied to the Volunteers by all newspaper except the Irish newspapers. Furthermore, the *Times* published an account of one of their trusted correspondent, in which he reported that he “[has] been allowed to see enough of the deadliness of our [military] gunfire to persuade me that the traitors have paid dearly for their mad enterprise, and that the rebellion has been crushed.”⁴¹ Here again the Rising is called a mad enterprise and rebellion, which have been crushed by the military. The most interesting aspect of this report is that it implies that the correspondent had access to certain areas that were held by the military. His account stated that he had seen enough to believe the Volunteers were completely defeated, thus implying that nobody could win from the Empire. Interesting is also the framing of the Volunteers as traitors, implying that these people need to be exterminated for the safety of the country, that they were ‘the

³⁵ “Clearing the Barricades,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 2, 1916, 5.

³⁶ “Record of A Terrible Week,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 1, 1916, 5.

³⁷ “Pathetic Scenes and Incidents,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, May 2, 1916, 4.

³⁸ “Wholesale Destruction of Buildings,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 4, 1916, 5.

³⁹ “Law Courts Saved,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1916, 9.

⁴⁰ “Historic Buildings Saved,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 4, 1916, 10.

⁴¹ “Sackville Street in Flames,” *The Times*, May 1, 1916, 10.

other.’

2.3 Empire versus Ireland

The Volunteers strived for an independent Ireland, while Great Britain saw Ireland as an integral part of its own political entity. These opposing perspectives played a significant part in the presentation of the destructive consequences of the Rising in the newspapers. This section will focus on the representation of the Empire and Ireland in the newspapers, and the implications this would entail for the story presented.

Some newspapers presented the Volunteers as “traitors,” which implied the Volunteers had to be dealt with effectively, but also that the concerned newspaper positioned itself politically on the side of the Empire. In that instance, the Volunteers were regarded as people that betrayed the country and thus the Empire. Logically, the *Daily Telegraph* is antagonistic towards the Volunteers, something that becomes especially clear when they state:

“... as it is a gross outrage upon the dignity of the British Empire that the capital of Ireland should have been terrorised even for a few hours by a gang of rebels, we hope that the end may speedily be reached.”⁴²

This statement creates a frame in which the Volunteers are set up as the enemy, who has dared to measure up to the Great British Empire. They are outraged that they undertook this Rising at the home front, and it can be interpreted as a reaction to the fact that, if everything had gone according to plan, the Volunteers might have succeeded in establishing an Irish Republic. The reputation of Great Britain was put to the test by this Rising, and since Britain considered Ireland a part of its own nation, it must have shocked many people that such an event could have occurred in their country. The association with terror limits the possible interpretations, leaving the most dominant narrative in which the Volunteers are the enemy at an advantage. The newspaper expresses the hope that the end would be near, but the main reason the Rising was such a threat to the Empire was its long-lasting resistance of a week, instead of a quick victory by the military as was expected.

The English newspapers presented the efforts of the military most positive, together with the Anglo-Irish newspapers. Many newspapers focussed on the efforts of the military to prevent wholesale destruction of buildings. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that the military used “gas in an effort to drive out the rebels rather than inflict serious damage to the building.”⁴³ The *Manchester Guardian* reported that emphasis should be placed on the successful “efforts of the military to limit serious destruction of property to the central citadels of the rebels in and near Sackville Street.”⁴⁴ The *Belfast News-Letter* published an article praising the military and Dublin’s fire brigade for their successful attempt to remove explosives from the

⁴² “Sinn Fein Rising,” *The Daily Telegraph*, April 27, 1916, 9.

⁴³ “Traitorous Women,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1916, 11.

⁴⁴ “Well-known Buildings that Escaped Damage,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 4, 1916, 6.

Post Office before the flames reached it.⁴⁵ Even the *Irish Independent*, which showed some support for the Volunteers, reported that tactics of the military had limited additional damage to the Four Courts.⁴⁶ The newspapers thus celebrated the efforts of the military, especially the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers. Various reports in the *Belfast News-Letter* and *Daily Telegraph* mentioned that “adequate forces were at the disposal of the military authorities to cope with the situation,” and that the authorities were doing everything in their power to return to normal conditions.”⁴⁷ The reports position the government and its forces as the institutions that protected the inhabitants of Dublin against the Volunteers and their destruction, by publishing reports like these in which the authorities are praised, therefore appear in a positive way.

In addition, the *Belfast News-Letter* reported that the Four Courts was in “possession of the insurgents and war had upsurged the place of law.”⁴⁸ In this report the Volunteers are presented as the persons that brought war into the building that houses the most prominent courts of Ireland. Noteworthy is that the newspaper is not speaking about a revolt, or rebellion, or rising, but about a war. The implication that the Volunteers brought war to Ireland is a direct reference to the First World War happening in Europe at that moment, and comparing the Rising to the Great War meant that people were presented a picture of the Volunteers as soldiers who could be compared to German forces, and thus were associated with German atrocities. The *Belfast News-Letter* made another reference to the War when they stated that:

“The seizure of the Post Office, the cutting of telegraphic and telephonic communication, and the interruption of railway traffic would be grave events at any time, but no one can deny that during a great war in which the whole Empire is fighting for its existence they constitute high treason.”⁴⁹

By accusing the Volunteers of high treason, they again position the Volunteers directly as an enemy and in opposition to the nation. The Empire was already in a precarious position due to the war, and the Volunteers added to the gravity of this position by choosing this time for the Rising, because the Empire had to focus on the War effort. For the Volunteers it was convenient, but the newspaper narrated it as a betrayal to the country.

The *Times* reported that all that was left of the G.P.O. was “the outer walls with a flagstaff upon which the rebel flag had flown hanging crazily over the cannice.”⁵⁰ Although the G.P.O. was completely destroyed, the mentioning of the condition of the rebel flag in the newspaper can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand the flag could be a symbol of the shocking reality that a Rising like this could have

⁴⁵ *The Belfast News-Letter*, “Scenes of Desolation.”

⁴⁶ *The Irish Independent*, “Four Courts taken. Insurgents surrender.”

⁴⁷ “Situation Now Well in Hand,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, April 27, 1916, 5; *The Daily Telegraph*, “Historic Buildings Saved.”

⁴⁸ “The Four Courts,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 5, 1916, 6.

⁴⁹ “The Rising in Dublin,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, April 27, 1916, 4.

⁵⁰ “The Post Office Ruins,” *The Times*, May 1, 1916, 10.

happened, while on the other hand, the condition of the flag of the Volunteers was celebrated because it represented the success of the military to crush the Rising, thereby the victory of the Empire over the Volunteers.

However, the newspapers did not only report in favour of the military and the Empire. The *Cork Examiner* reported that the Four Courts “was subjected to a terrible fusillade from the military, who operated a machine gun against the building from the Castle.”⁵¹ Thus, some newspapers celebrated the efforts of the military to limit the destruction of buildings, while they did open a salvo of gunfire towards one of these buildings. So, the pedestal on which some newspapers put the military and their efforts, may not be as high as it was suggested by the English newspapers, which depict Britain more negatively.

Another aspect with which the newspapers try to depict the Volunteers as the enemy is by addressing the pride and fame of Dublin and Ireland. For example, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the Volunteers had “succeeded in reducing some of the fairest parts of the beautiful capital of Ireland to ruins and ashes and shambles, but they have not ruined the fair fame of Ireland or the cause for which the great mass of Irishmen stand.”⁵² It praises the capital for its beautiful architecture, which the Volunteers reduced to ruins. The newspaper presents it in a way that the Volunteers were the ones that turned the city into a shamble, but at the same time, it addresses the Irishmen and their fair fame that the Volunteers could not ruin. The cause the newspaper refers to is most likely Home Rule, and it is as if the newspaper implies that the Volunteers endangered this. Although the *Manchester Guardian* does not write it, its report implies that they want the people to feel part of Ireland, of the country, yet by referred to that great cause, they show that Ireland, whether united as a people, belongs to the United Kingdom.

The *Belfast News-Letter* also addresses the pride of Dubliners, by reporting on the devastation in Sackville Street and the destruction it has undergone, while this street was “the pride of every true Dubliner.”⁵³ Although this report is clearly to be meant to depict the Volunteers as the common foe, it also contains a hint of exclusion: if you, as a Dubliner, are just happy that your family was unharmed in the Rising and a street in the city is the least of your worries (for instance the huge food shortages), you apparently were not a true Dubliner. You may feel extremely proud of your city, but by the way the *Belfast News-Letter* phrases this sentence, some people may become opposed to the perspective presented in it. The *Irish Independent*, however, handled it more diplomatically. It reports as well on the destruction of the buildings, but it states that “the beauty of whose architecture was a legitimate source of pride to the citizens of the capital.”⁵⁴ Written in this way, it has less political tension, and it includes everybody that lived in the capital. Where the *Belfast News-Letter* addressed the people as if they did not belong, the *Irish Independent* makes them feel like they belong to the community. This community could share a sense of loss for the

⁵¹ “Incidents of the Revolt,” *The Cork Examiner*, May 4, 1916, 3.

⁵² “The Two Irish Risings,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1916, 4.

⁵³ *The Belfast News-Letter*, “Scene of Desolation.”

⁵⁴ “Criminal Madness,” *The Irish Times*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 1916, 2.

thoroughfare, which was Irish for some, and British for others.

2.4 Destruction of Historic Buildings

The previous section investigated how the newspapers presented the military and the Volunteers, and this in turn can be applied to the presentation of the importance of historical buildings that had been lost in the fighting. To analyse this correctly, it is important to realize the context of the War in relation to the destruction. Britain had depicted the German army as barbarians who destroyed buildings of historical value.⁵⁵ Therefore, it had to be important for Britain to not be depicted in the same way regarding the destruction of the Irish capital. This can be understood as one of the reasons why the British Press Bureau had forbidden the newspapers to publish any positive accounts of the Rising. In addition, The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 specify, among other things, the prohibition of the attack or bombardment of undefended towns or habitations.⁵⁶ Although the military was aiming for buildings occupied by the Volunteers, their artillery and shell fire led to the destruction of a large part of Sackville Street. In the newspapers it is mentioned that the first fires broke out on Wednesday, and as quoted above, the *Times* reported that official news stated that it was “due to arson and not accident, although the military had used shells.”⁵⁷ The censoring of the newspapers in this instance could have been used by the Government to attribute the large fire to the Volunteers, while it remained a reasonable possibility that the shells of the military contributed to it as well.

This would inevitably lead to an analysis of how the various newspapers present the importance of the destroyed buildings in general. Both the *Irish Independent* and the *Belfast News-Letter* spoke of the “beauty of the architecture” of the buildings that were destroyed.⁵⁸ From the Irish newspapers, only the *Cork Examiner* mentioned the historical value and importance of the Four Courts that “next to the Custom House, which is one of the architectural masterpieces of the United Kingdom, the Four Courts is perhaps the most imposing feature of Dublin.”⁵⁹ This quote is considered to be a good example of how the newspapers, especially the Irish, dealt with the censorship. It mentions the Custom House as one of the masterpieces of the United Kingdom, after which they make a more nationalistic statement by declaring the Four Courts as the most imposing feature of the Irish capital. At this point it was already known that the Four Courts suffered little during the Rising, so this statement, coming from a nationalistic Irish newspaper, could be interpreted as an attempt to show the Irish that not all had been lost for Ireland.

⁵⁵ “The Destruction of the Cathedral of Reims, 1914,” First World War Centenary, Peace Palace Library, last modified 23-07-2014, <https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/2014/07/the-destruction-of-the-cathedral-of-reims-1914/>.

⁵⁶ “Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907,” Wikipedia, last modified 30-03-2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague_Conventions_of_1899_and_1907.

⁵⁷ *The Times*, “Suppressing the Revolt.”

⁵⁸ “Criminal Madness,” *The Irish Independent*, April 26, 27, 28, 29, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 1916, 2; *The Belfast News-Letter*, “Scene of Desolation.”

⁵⁹ “Editorial,” *The Cork Examiner*, May 6, 1916, 5.

The *Manchester Guardian* agreed with the importance of the Four Courts mentioned in the report of the *Cork Examiner*. Although when the same statement is published in an English newspaper, it can be interpreted in another way. Since praise is expressed towards the Custom House, the Four Courts located next to it gets additional value because a British architectural masterpiece is next to it. It implies that the British may have had a hand in the design of the Four Courts and its importance as Court of Ireland, thus it is part of the Kingdom, as is Ireland in general. It even states that the Four Courts, if it had been damaged, would be “an irreplaceable loss.”⁶⁰ In addition, it states that “apart from the Four Courts the rebels do not seem to have seized any buildings of importance.”⁶¹ This statement denied the value of the G.P.O., which was of lesser importance than the Four Courts, as could be seen in other reports:

“[The rebels] have succeeded in reducing some of the fairest parts of the beautiful capital of Ireland to ruins and ashes and shambles, but they have not ruined the fair fame of Ireland or the cause for which the great mass of Irishmen stand.”⁶²

“The buildings destroyed were not of much architectural importance, nor was the Post Office, although it had a handsome portico supported by three allegorical statues...”⁶³

The first part blamed the Volunteers for the massive destruction of these beautiful parts of the capital. It implies that the Volunteers were not striving for a better Ireland, independent from Britain, but that they were trying to ruin it. It tries to bring the attention to the Volunteers who had tried to betray their community. The second comment highlights the newspaper’s belief that the G.P.O. was nice to look at, but was not necessarily of importance to Ireland (thus the Empire). This is almost an excuse for the destruction caused by the military – if the Post Office is of little importance, then its destruction by British shell fire is not that terrible. The *Manchester Guardian* is only apologetic for the damage done to the portico, which could indicate a small confirmation that the military had a hand in the destruction. The destruction of any building is deemed less terrible when its added value to the community or country is lower. Although the *Daily Telegraph* has the same opinion:

“Although things are bad enough, happily Dublin has been spared the greater misfortune of losing any one of her buildings of historic or architectural interest. True, the General Post Office is burnt out, but the fine frontage, with its Ionic pillars, is but little damaged, and will no doubt, be preserved when a rebuilding scheme is drafted.”⁶⁴

It claims that the G.P.O. does not belong to the buildings of historical or architectural interest, but can appreciate the portico which most likely will be saved. It is strange that it declares the G.P.O. as

⁶⁰ “Sackville Street,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1916, 4.

⁶¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, “Sackville Street.”

⁶² *The Manchester Guardian*, “The Two Irish Risings.”

⁶³ *The Manchester Guardian*, “Sackville Street.”

⁶⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, “Damaged Sackville-Street.”

uninteresting, while it, a few days before this article, published a report that declared the G.P.O. “a striking feature” of Sackville Street.⁶⁵ It seems the G.P.O. is of more importance than the quote above suggests. Therefore, it is believed that it adapts the importance of the G.P.O. to position its destruction as less terrible, to support their reports on the efforts of the military to prevent destruction as much as possible. This, however, does not prevent other newspapers like the *Cork Examiner*, to publish about the loss of the equipment in the G.P.O., both mechanic and scientific, which are not easy to supply.⁶⁶ The *Belfast News-Letter* also praised the G.P.O. as one of the architectural features of the thoroughfare.⁶⁷ If other newspapers see the G.P.O. as a valuable building in Dublin, it can be concluded that the English newspapers tried to depict Britain positively.

Within this frame set up by the newspapers, the English newspapers seemed to celebrate the efforts of the military the most, and the Volunteers were seen as the villains, but even the Anglo-Irish newspapers who were supportive of the Government, published a statement of Sir John Maxwell in which he declared that he would not “hesitate to destroy all buildings within any area occupied by rebels.”⁶⁸ The fact that he referred to an area occupied by the Volunteers, already implies that he did not mind if those buildings were destroyed as collateral damage, if the Volunteers were defeated. It makes one wonder how much effort the military put into the preservation of the buildings if this announcement was representative for their orders.

The devastation in Sackville Street after the Rising was described by the *Belfast News-Letter* as a scene characterized by “a terrible completeness.”⁶⁹ The *Times* even called Sackville Street “one of the finest blocks of buildings in Dublin.”⁷⁰ These are just examples of the many reports that refer to Sackville Street as a “splendid thoroughfare with its prominent buildings.”⁷¹ Apparently the *Daily Telegraph* was so shocked and impressed by the destruction of Sackville Street and these prominent buildings, that it states:

“Battered Ypres, one would imagine, can hardly present a sadder picture than Sackville-street, where even to-day fires were still smouldering amid the gaunt and blackened ruins of great buildings.”⁷²

The reference to the situation in France – if it could be compared to Dublin – implies that the newspaper wanted to provoke a feeling of shock, in which the Volunteers instantly were depicted as the Germans of Ireland, who were solely responsible for the many atrocities. It suggested that Dublin, especially Sackville Street, was comparable to Ypres in France that had been completely destroyed in the War a year before. Various newspapers had reported that the biggest damage in Dublin was limited to the Sackville area, where

⁶⁵ “Sackville-Street,” *The Daily Telegraph*, April 29, 1916, 7.

⁶⁶ “Dublin Postal Business,” *The Cork Examiner*, May 6, 1916, 5.

⁶⁷ “Situation South and West,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 1, 1916, 5.

⁶⁸ *The Irish Times*, “Sir John Maxwell Adopt Rigorous Measures.”

⁶⁹ “Scenes of Destruction,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 2, 1916, 5.

⁷⁰ “Examination As Usual,” *The Times*, May 1, 1916, 10.

⁷¹ “A Picture of Desolation,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, May 2, 1916, 5.

⁷² *The Daily Telegraph*, “Damaged Sackville-Street.”

only a few blocks of buildings were destroyed, and few people had been killed. Ypres, however, was destroyed by the many battles over that town. It was used as a striking metaphor, something on which the *Times* built upon as well, when they referred to the War in France as well in a heading “Far Worse than France.”⁷³ These references made by the English press suggest they were aiming to provoke the condemnation of the people and compare the Volunteers’ actions to those of the Germans, while the Volunteers were not solely responsible for the destruction of Dublin’s centre, although the newspapers wanted to depict them as the other.

2.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to answer the question how the newspapers represented the destruction of buildings in Dublin during the Easter Rising in 1916, by means of an analysis of several newspapers and their presentation of the destruction of Four Courts, G.P.O., and St. Stephen’s Green. The analysis focussed on the terminology used in the newspapers to describe the Volunteers, the military, and the destruction.

The general trend discovered in the newspapers was that the English and Anglo-Irish supported the existing government of the United Kingdom, whereas the Irish newspapers supported the Volunteers in their strife for an Irish Republic. The English newspapers favoured the Empire strongly, because Britain was one of the largest and most influential empires in the world. Although Britain’s role as hegemon was diminished before the War, London still was the financial centre of the world. The pride of the newspapers of the Empire is therefore understandable. The Anglo-Irish newspapers favoured the Empire as well because their main audience was Protestants, who benefitted enormously from being in the Union with Britain. The Irish nationalists were opposed to this Union, which was clear with the Home Rule Bills and the Easter Rising, and this jeopardized the economic and political position of the Anglo-Irish people. Finally, the Irish newspapers reflected the view of the nationalists because a portion of the Irish people wanted an Ireland that was independent of British Rule. Their ideal was a Republic in which the entire island of Ireland would govern itself, and would no longer be subjected to Westminster or Britain.

The English and Anglo-Irish newspapers depicted the Volunteers negatively, whereas they praised the Government and military. By referring to the Volunteers as rebels, traitors or enemies, these newspapers made them ‘the other’ who did not belong within the community that was the Union between Britain and Ireland. They also irrationalised the destruction of the buildings, despite the little importance of the buildings, by blaming the Volunteers for it.

The Irish newspapers did the opposite. They rationalised, even defended, the actions of the Volunteers and destructions, by presenting the events in a moderated manner. Due to the censorship, they refrained from openly expressing sympathy for the Rising, but indirectly the Irish newspapers succeeded in

⁷³ “Far Worse Than France,” *The Times*, May 1, 1916, 10.

implying passive support, with comments as “an amazing revolution.”⁷⁴ They attempted to depict the military and thus the Government as ‘the other,’ by addressing statements of officials advocating the destruction of buildings or by highlighting the military played a significant role in the destruction.

⁷⁴ *The Freeman's Journal*, “Scenes In The Streets.”

3. Ruined Mansions in Cork: Big Houses during the War of Independence, 1919-1921

“A large amount of the optimism [about De Valera’s coming to London] may be traced to the information that, as an earnest of good faith, the Sinn Féiners are releasing Lord Bandon. Castle Bernard, Lord Bandon’s home in County Cork, was set on fire, it will be remembered, by Sinn Féiners on June 21st and Lord Bandon was carried off in a motorcar.”⁷⁵

After the First World War, Sinn Féin won the majority of votes in the elections in Ireland. It erected its own institutions and parliament: *Dáil Eireann*. They declared the Irish Republic again, leading to the War of Independence in Ireland, which ended in 1921 by the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The above statement was made in the *Times* when the War of Independence came to a truce. The Anglo-Irish Treaty signalled an end to the tit-for-tat terror – a cycle of reprisals and counter-reprisals – that had developed between the IRA and the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries in Ireland.⁷⁶ The Big Houses fell victim to this form of terror. The IRA burned many of them in these years, in vengeance of British paramilitaries’ actions. Ireland was still part of the British Empire when the War of Independence commenced (Ireland got Dominion status with the Treaty), and the burnings of Big Houses were widespread. This chapter will therefore focus on the question: *How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of the Big Houses in County Cork during the War of Independence, 1919-1921?*

The chapter will focus on the Big Houses in County Cork, in the South of Ireland, where most of the Big Houses were destroyed. In Ulster the Big Houses were less affected during the War of Independence.⁷⁷ In the course of Irish history, “landownership, religion and politics became inextricably entwined,” which caused the population in Ulster, both rich and poor, to be less divided along political and religious lines as in the rest of Ireland, because it had a majority Protestant population.⁷⁸ The situation in Ireland and the events leading to the Big House destruction will be discussed, before the analysis of the newspapers is addressed, and the way they present the forces of both sides and the destruction of the Big Houses. The destroyed Big Houses that were chosen for the analysis are: Kilbrittain Castle (destroyed May 25, 1920), Dromagh Castle (destroyed March 16, 1921), Convamore House (destroyed April 30, 1921), Dunboy Castle (destroyed June 9, 1921), and Castle Bernard (destroyed June 21, 1921). These cases were selected to cover the entire period in which the Big Houses were destroyed.

3.1 Historical background

The end of the First World War was followed by national elections in Ireland in December 1918. The war

⁷⁵ “Lord Bandon to be Released,” *The Times*, July 5, 1921, 10.

⁷⁶ Fitzpatrick, *Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923*, 6.

⁷⁷ Terence Dooley, “The Destruction of the Country House in Ireland, 1879-1973,” in *Lost Mansions. Essays on the Destruction of the Country House*, ed. James Raven (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 51, Kindle.

⁷⁸ Dooley, “The Destruction of the Country House in Ireland,” 46.

and Easter Rising made most of the population shift towards the Republican ideal and voted for Sinn Féin.⁷⁹ It was clear that Sinn Féin did not intend to take seat in Westminster. Instead, it erected *Dáil Eireann* in January 1919 –the new Government of Ireland – and declared the Republic of Ireland again.⁸⁰ The Dáil deemed the Treaty of Versailles as important, because it had specified the right of small nations and therefore the Irish Republican government hoped for international recognition and support.⁸¹ However, when the elections commenced, Britain had done everything in its power to prevent people voting for Sinn Féin: “election meetings were prohibited; election agents and speakers were arrested; election addresses were censored or suppressed; election literature was confiscated. Warnings against electing Sinn Féin candidates were posted, and scattered from aeroplanes.”⁸² Despite their efforts, Sinn Féin claimed the victory, and after setting up the Dáil, they started to build the country back up after the war. The Dáil had barely begun “to function, established its Courts, appointed Consuls, started a stock-taking of the country’s undeveloped natural resources, and put a hundred constructive schemes to work, then Britain stepped in, with her army of Soldiers and Constabulary, to counter the work, harassing and imprisoning the workers.”⁸³ Most of the renown Republicans had to live into hiding, on the run or in prison during this period.⁸⁴

Due to the decision of Britain to interfere with the Dáil’s work, the IRA felt the need to intervene and begin a guerrilla war. The British Government needed “an elaborate apparatus of spies, informers, and ‘intelligence officers,’” which was complemented by the RIC to maintain control of the republicans.⁸⁵ To undermine this system of intelligence, the IRA intervened and eventually succeeded in “paralysing the whole English intelligence service in Ireland.”⁸⁶ The IRA was a much smaller force than the British troops, who could easily replace a person, which made the IRA rely on guerrilla warfare to defeated the British. They were successful in clearing vast areas and counties of the RIC and replace it by the system of the Dáil, which had the support of the population.⁸⁷

To clear Ireland from the IRA, Britain sent auxiliary forces to support the military and police.⁸⁸ These forces were paramilitaries as well, and are known as the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries.* The Black and Tans were a force compiled of ex-servicemen to supplement the ranks of the RIC, whereas the Auxiliaries were ex-officers, that operated independently from the military and RIC.⁸⁹

The War of Independence started in 1919, when the British began sabotaging the work of the Dáil,

*The British troops in Ireland consisted of different groups: the military, the police (RIC), the Black and Tans, and the Auxiliaries. Together, these forces are referred to as the Crown Forces.

⁷⁹ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*, 705.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 705.

⁸¹ Edmund Curtis, *A History of Ireland* (London: Methuen & Co LTD, 1961), 408.

⁸² T.A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own. An Outline History of the Irish Struggle* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 410.

⁸³ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*, 706.

⁸⁴ Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, 412.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 412.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁸⁷ Curtis, *A History of Ireland*, 408.

⁸⁸ Dolan, “The British Culture of Paramilitary Violence,” 202.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

and throughout the next two years, took the form of a guerrilla warfare, in which the IRA proved to be successful. In July, 1921, Sinn Féin and Britain came to a Truce, after which a conference in London was held to discuss the terms of a Treaty. This Treaty became known as the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which was signed by both parties on December 6, 1921, and provided Ireland with Dominion status.⁹⁰

3.1.1 Big Houses Become Targets

The guerrilla war began when the Crown Forces undertook a reprisal for an ambush of the IRA. These reprisals included destruction of houses that were suspected to be owned by republicans, whereas the IRA focussed on ambushes and the destruction of the Big Houses, whose owners were mainly Protestant Unionists. These Protestant landlords were seen as informers who were part of the British spying system. The owners of these Big Houses had come to Ireland as British colonizers, after which they built these mansions, thus, for many, the Big Houses were a symbol of British colonization.⁹¹ This made them an easy target for the IRA.

Already at the end of the nineteenth century, nationalistic attempts were made to exclude the landlords of the Big Houses from the community, who were “supposed to be of different stock from the rest of the population.”⁹² Accordingly, the term ‘Big House’ is “a uniquely Irish term which encapsulates the physical size of these gentry and aristocratic homes, but also hints at the alienation felt by the majority of the population towards them.”⁹³

The IRA targeted and destroyed these mansions for several reasons. Although the cycle of reprisals was an important aspect of the destruction, the mansions that were destroyed as a reprisal, were selected for destruction with political and military considerations: often it was believed that these mansions would soon accommodate British troops or their owners were believed to be informers.⁹⁴ The destruction by fire could have a symbolic meaning, because fire prevents salvation of the things it consumes. In the War of Independence, the Big Houses were destroyed between January, 1920, and July, 1921, when the truce came into effect.

3.1.2 Censorship

The censorship regulations of in the First World War continued to be effective during the War of Independence, with which more strict measures were taken to control the Irish newspapers. Britain attempted to sabotage the Dáil in their work, and one way they pursued this was through censorship. The

⁹⁰ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*, 711.

⁹¹ Raven, *Lost Mansions*, 9-10.

⁹² Dooley, “The Destruction of the Country House in Ireland,” 46.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁴ Donnelly, Jr., “Big House Burnings in County Cork,” 144.

editorial regulations remained effective until December 1919.⁹⁵ In this year, Britain decided to end the post of the Censor, who checked the news reports before publication, thereby acting as a safety net for the newspapers. The newspapers predicted that when the Censor was removed, they would certainly publish news that was unacceptable by Dublin Castle. This happened mere weeks after the removal of the Censor – the suppression of the *Cork Examiner* was the most publicised case. The newspaper was closed for five days after troops had dismantled the printing equipment.⁹⁶ After international condemnation of this suppression of Irish newspapers, the British government was forced to end the censorship in Ireland in December 1919. Shortly in the next year, the fighting between the Crown forces and the IRA began.

The Irish newspapers were officially free to publish as they pleased between January 1920 and July 1921, but suppression occurred in other ways. There had been “over forty separate attempts by various sections of the Crown Forces to disrupt the work of newspapers through extreme violence, the arrest and incarceration of editors, or the dismantling of printing equipment.”⁹⁷ The actors involved on the British side – the upper levels of the Administration in Dublin Castle, the Army, and the police – believed “the majority of Irish newspapers to be active enemies of British rule in Ireland.”⁹⁸

These general beliefs were also present among the troops, which led to extreme violent actions of the Crown forces – incendiary bombs, destruction of material, arrests – against some of the newspapers, like the *Freeman’s Journal* and the *Irish Independent*. The violence was not limited to Crown forces; the IRA attacked the offices of the *Irish Independent* and the *Cork Examiner*, but “the number of IRA actions against the press during 1920 and 1921 was far lower than the number undertaken by the Crown forces in the same period.”⁹⁹ The incidents – from slightly damaged equipment to ruined offices – were a warning that “unfriendly eyes were watching each edition.”¹⁰⁰ These events caused the Irish journalists to develop a self-imposed censorship.¹⁰¹ In July 1920, Dublin Castle opened a department that should control “the flow of news in, and from, Ireland.”¹⁰² This department was criticised by various English newspapers, among which the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*.¹⁰³ In extreme cases, newspapers were entirely shut down or ceased to exist, due to the violence they met during the War of Independence.

3.2 Raiders versus Unknown Men

Considering the circumstances in which the War of Independence began, the reference of the *Times* to the

⁹⁵ “Censorship and Propaganda: what happened to the Irish media during the War of Independence?” Raidió Teilifís Éireann, last modified 02-03-2020, <https://www.rte.ie/history/hunger-strikes/2020/0302/1119708-censorship-and-propaganda-media-in-the-war-of-independence/>.

⁹⁶ “Censorship and Propaganda: what happened to the Irish media during the War of Independence?”

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

IRA as “Sinn Féiners” was not a surprise. Although the newspapers referred wrongly to the Irish Volunteers as Sinn Féiners during the Easter Rising, the Irish Volunteers’ successor – the IRA – was cooperating with Sinn Féin, and maintained decisions taken by the Dáil Courts.¹⁰⁴ They also fought as guerrilla’s against the British forces. This was, as the quote of the *Times* showed, reflected in the newspapers when they referred to the IRA as such. What is curious, however, is that not all the newspapers referred to the IRA as “Sinn Féiners.” The only Anglo-Irish newspaper that did this was the *Belfast News-Letter*, which is known for its anti-nationalistic, conservative and anti-Catholic stance.¹⁰⁵ Apart from this newspaper, only the English newspapers depicted the IRA and Sinn Féin as one organisation. The quote showed the antagonism felt towards the Sinn Féiners by stating “it will be remembered” that they set fire to Castle Bernard and they kidnapped a Lord.¹⁰⁶ The *Times* were not the only newspaper expressing its stance in this way. In a report of the *Daily Telegraph* on the kidnapping of Lord Bandon, owner of Castle Bernard, it highlights the crime committed against him by the Sinn Féiners, by focussing on the Lord’s good character:

“Lord and Lady Bandon were popular in all social movements in the South. His lordship held Liberal views in politics, favouring, in public meeting and otherwise, the solution of the Irish problem by the granting of Dominion status. The extreme wing of Sinn Féin did not favour the movers in this scheme, which was prominently before the people last year; in fact, notices were issued warning those participating in the meetings to beware as “traitors” to the Republican ideal.”¹⁰⁷

The focus on the good Lord and Lady Bandon did for the people and their open-minded political stance creates the suggestion that the extreme wing of Sinn Féin was the criminal, who tried to sabotage the good things this couple did for their community. More specifically, by mentioning that these Sinn Féiners warned the people they became traitors to the Irish Republic if they attended a meeting organised by Lord Bandon, implies that Sinn Féin had to be dangerous, because Lord and Lady Bandon were certainly not.

The *Belfast News-Letter* stated that the Earl of Listowel’s Irish estates, of which Convamore House is one, “suffered severely at the hands of the Sinn Féiners.”¹⁰⁸ They humanize the mansion by stating that it suffered, which implies that the newspaper attempted to create an image of the Sinn Féiners as the villains who inflict pain onto others. The *Manchester Guardian* was the only English newspaper that reported relatively little on the destruction of Big Houses, but when they did, they referred to “Sinn Féiners.” For example, in an weekly overview of the events in Ireland, one section addresses “Other Sinn Féin Operations,” under which it addresses, among other things, the destruction of Dromagh Castle and Dunboy Castle.¹⁰⁹ Apart from that, the *Manchester Guardian* only used the term Sinn Féiners in a short report

¹⁰⁴ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 256.

¹⁰⁵ Irish Newspaper Archive, “Belfast Newsletter.”

¹⁰⁶ *The Times*, “Lord Bandon to be Released.”

¹⁰⁷ “Peer Kidnapped by Armed Gang. Castle Burned Down,” *The Daily Telegraph*, June 22, 1921, 11.

¹⁰⁸ “Request by Earl of Listowel,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, July 23, 1924, 5.

¹⁰⁹ “A Week of Ireland. Other Sinn Fein Operations,” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 19, 1921, 6; June 11, 1921, 6.

mentioning the kidnapping of Lord Bandon by Sinn Féiners.¹¹⁰

No newspaper used in this study referred openly to the IRA in relation to the destruction of Big Houses, but used terms as “raiders” or “a party of armed men.” The term “raiders” was sporadically used by a few newspapers, of which the Irish newspaper *Freeman’s Journal* only used it when it cited a statement of Dublin Castle. The other newspapers who used the term were the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. The term itself indicates that the people it refers to, take something that is not theirs. The official statement published in the *Freeman’s Journal* described how the “raiders” entered the castle around 5.30, where they commanded the servants and Lady Bandon into rooms next to the stables, after which they set Castle Bernard on fire.¹¹¹ The *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, chose to use this term to describe the IRA. The *Times* stated that Lord Bandon was “seized by the raiders and carried away to some unknown destination.”¹¹² On the one hand, the English newspapers chose the term well, because a “raider” is someone who attacks its enemies in their own territory, which is what the IRA did when they destroyed Big Houses; they entered the property of a person, or his territory, and caused damage to varying extents. However, it can be taken to another level, by thinking that the IRA attacked the British on their own soil, which is exactly what the general opinion of the British government was. Ireland was not “just a colony,” it had been part of the United Kingdom since the Union in 1801. By naming the IRA raiders positioned them as the other for the British. The same suggestion is offered in the *Daily Telegraph* when they report that “the Earl and Countess were in residence at the castle when the raiders arrived.”¹¹³ Both newspapers attempted to depict these raiders – the IRA – as the enemy in Britain’s home territory by positioning the IRA in this way.

Another way in which some newspapers made clear that they considered the IRA and Sinn Féin as the enemy was by calling them “rebels.” By publishing articles headed “Rebels’ Campaign of Destruction,” which offered a list of the destroyed Big Houses, the *Times* again made it very clear they regarded the IRA as a foe of the British Empire.¹¹⁴ The Anglo-Irish *Londonderry Sentinel* reported that “rebels maliciously destroyed on the night of April 30th-May 1st, 1921, Convamore House, the property of Lord Listowel,” which implied not only that they opposed the IRA and therefore calling them rebels, but also that these “rebels” burned Convamore with evil intentions – using “maliciously” – which could only be seen as work of the enemy.¹¹⁵

Another term widely applied to the IRA was “armed men.” The IRA was armed, and this term bears the least political implications with it. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Irish newspapers used this term the most when referring to the IRA. The use of “armed men” becomes interesting when one studies how the newspapers used it, because the *Times* applied it by stating that Lord Bandon had been “seized by armed

¹¹⁰ “The Earl of Bandon Released Unhurt,” *The Manchester Guardian*, July 14, 1921, 7.

¹¹¹ “Lord Bandon Released. None the Worse of Kidnapping Experience,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, July 14, 1921, 5.

¹¹² “Irish Peer Kidnapped. Lord Bandon carried from Burning Castle,” *The Times*, June 22, 1921, 10.

¹¹³ *The Daily Telegraph*, “Peer Kidnapped by Armed Gang. Castle Burnt Down.”

¹¹⁴ “Rebels’ Campaign of Destruction. Compensation Claims,” *The Times*, October 9, 1922, 8.

¹¹⁵ “Military Reprisals for Cork Burnings,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, May 7, 1921, 8.

men,” instead of “kidnapped.”¹¹⁶ By making this choice, this term became loaded with meaning, because seizing someone implied a more serious offence than kidnapping, suggesting the IRA took possession of Lord Bandon.

The *Freeman's Journal*, an Irish newspaper, also published an article on the destruction of Dunboy Castle, in which the IRA was referred to as rebels. Yet, it made clear that it did not support this view: “Dunboy Castle, Castletownbere district, was (a Castle report states) set on fire by rebels.”¹¹⁷ First, “a Castle report” refers to a report issued by Dublin Castle, the seat of British Rule in Ireland. Second, because it states explicitly that this message is from Dublin Castle, suggests that it disagrees with this perspective of the IRA as rebels, as enemies of Ireland. This suggestion is strengthened by the title this article bears, in which they refer to the IRA as “unknown men.” This signals a view in which a political distance is created, yet the content of the article indicates that it disagrees with the official perspective. It also distances itself from taking a strong stance in a report on the destruction of Dromagh Castle, when it states that “it is alleged that about 100 men, wearing disguises, set the Castle on fire and also the farm buildings.”¹¹⁸ It is again vague about what kind of men it were, but by reporting that it is alleged, the newspaper implies that there may be doubt about the correctness of this information. This in turn indicates that this information, which can be coming from official sources, should not be taken too literally.

Most of the Irish newspapers referred to the IRA in relation to Big House destruction as armed men, which could be an indication that they either, regarding the circumstances in which they reported, did not want to take too strong of a stance, or, since the above is in some cases unlikely, they did not want to depict the IRA too aggressively, because they were sympathetic of the republican ideal, but had to consider the threat of violent attacks. For example, the *Cork Examiner* can be seen as supportive of the ideal, when they stated: “At 6.30 yesterday morning, Castle Bernard, the residence of Lord Bandon, was set on fire and practically destroyed by a party of armed men.”¹¹⁹ This could be seen as an indication of support, because it can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, knowing this is a nationalistic, Irish newspaper, it could imply joy that a prominent building like Castle Bernard is destroyed beyond repair, but, on the other hand, it can as well be an indication of mourning for a fine building. It is likely to be the first, because in that same article the *Cork Examiner* states that “there was little hope of saving the building, as the fire was too well under way,” which supports the thought that they did not necessarily see the burning of one of the biggest Big Houses as a loss to Ireland.¹²⁰ If they had opposed the burning, it is more likely they had said something in the sense that the fire was ‘too ravaging.’ By stating that the “fire was too well under way,” they suggested that it was a job well done by the IRA.

¹¹⁶ “Lord Bandon Free,” *The Times*, July 14, 1921, 10.

¹¹⁷ “Two Co. Cork Fires. Courthouse and Castle Burned by Unknown Men,” *The Freeman's Journal*, June 11, 1921, 4.

¹¹⁸ “D.L.'s Castle Burned. Armed Men Order the Steward to Leave His House,” *The Freeman's Journal*, March 14, 1921, 6.

¹¹⁹ “Castle Bernard Burned Down,” *The Cork Examiner*, June 22, 1921, 5.

¹²⁰ *The Cork Examiner*, “Castle Bernard Burned Down;” Donnelly, “Big House Burnings in County Cork,” 189.

3.3 Saviour and Enemy

The way the Crown forces are presented is revealing as well. The Crown forces are only mentioned in two ways regarding the destruction: in their attempt to save Castle Bernard's contents and why these Big Houses were selected to be destroyed. The first relates to their arrival at Castle Bernard a couple of hours after it was set on fire. Most of these reports in the Anglo-Irish and Irish newspapers appear to be factual, in which it is stated that the troops and police were able to save "the furniture, silver, and contents of the library."¹²¹ The Irish and Anglo-Irish newspapers remain rather "neutral" regarding this specific case, whereas the English newspapers take a stronger stance to support 'their' men. For example, in the *Daily Telegraph* there was an article of their own correspondent – suggesting it is trustworthy– stating that:

"Parties of Crown forces arrived with fire appliances and set about endeavouring to check the flames, but their task was a hopeless one. They succeeded, however, in salvaging some valuables."¹²²

It suggests that it was not the fault of the troops that the flames destroyed the entire castle, but that their efforts were successful in saving some of the contents. This implies they can be seen as heroes, for saving those items. The *Times* published a similar report, in which it praises the military for saving the furniture, silver and library contents, but also for their quick arrival "after Lord Bandon's disappearance was reported."¹²³ This indicated that the military and the RIC were concerned for the people and were on the good side.

The Irish and Anglo-Irish newspapers were clear about why they believed the Big Houses were chosen to be destroyed. For instance, the *Freeman's Journal* stated that Dunboy Castle was destroyed because "it was rumoured that the Castle was to be occupied by Crown forces."¹²⁴ The *Irish Independent* published a similar report, and can be interpreted in two ways. It can be seen as a way to express one's support for the Republican ideal in which this is presented as a justification of the destruction. It can also be interpreted as a disapproval of the destruction because it was just "rumoured" that it would accommodate British forces. If one considers the situation in which the newspapers had to publish, with the self-censoring, it can be assumed that the first interpretation is likely, because of their general political stance on the side of Irish nationalism.

This becomes apparent with a statement published in the *Cork Examiner*, another Irish newspaper, about the destruction of Kilbrittain Castle which was also believed to be occupied by Crown forces. Their article was headed "Kilbrittain Caslte. Was To Be Military Camp" which insinuated that it was destroyed

¹²¹ "Magistrates Kidnapped," *The Belfast News-Letter*, June 23, 1921, 5.

¹²² *The Daily Telegraph*, "Peer Kidnapped by Armed Gang. Castle Burnt Down."

¹²³ "Search for Lord Bandon. Three Magistrates Kidnapped," *The Times*, June 23, 1921, 10.

¹²⁴ "No Cycling in Cork," *The Freeman's Journal*, June 10, 1921, 5.

because it was assigned to be occupied by military, according to a Dublin Castle report.¹²⁵ By stating the destination of Kilbrittain Castle as “military camp” fiercely in the heading, the newspaper clearly expressed it is supportive of the destruction of the mansions and the Republican ideal.

This causal relationship between the Big Houses which were to accommodate forces and their destruction is also found in the Anglo-Irish newspapers, although they are discontent with it. The *Belfast News-Letter* implied that there was a causal relation between the accommodation of troops at Dunboy Caslte and its destruction, stating that it “had been reported for a fortnight previously that the castle was to be occupied by military.”¹²⁶ Several years after the destruction of the Big Houses, the *Irish Times* published a report stating:

“It is hardly necessary to inquire into the cause of this destruction. It is a matter of common knowledge that many houses were destroyed because their owners or occupiers showed themselves on too friendly terms with the forces of the Crown. In other cases it was presumed that the Crown authorities had intended to occupy the houses for the purpose of accommodating troops.”¹²⁷

There is a trace of resentment in this report, by stating that it is well-known why these mansions were destroyed, thereby highlighting that the owners were nothing but decent people, strongly suggests that the IRA attacked people who had done nothing wrong. It implies that the IRA was wrongly informed that these mansions would accommodate Crown forces, by using “presumed.” Furthermore, the English *Daily Telegraph* published a report that backed that assumption. It states after the destruction of Kilbrittain Castle that “it is believed that the destruction of the castle was decided upon in consequence of a report current in the district that troops were to be quartered there.”¹²⁸ It suggests that it was destroyed rather spontaneously, as happened in some instances.¹²⁹ However, the insinuation that it was a spur-in-the-moment decision, depict the IRA as uncontrolled and dangerous, like a loose cannon that could not be predicted and thus it can be interpreted as another case in which the IRA proved to be an enemy of the Empire which should be dealt with.

3.4 Destruction of the Big Houses

Apart from the reasons for destruction of the Big Houses, the newspapers also reported on what had been lost. The newspapers expressed some degree of mourning for the lost buildings and their varying importance for Ireland. The *Daily Telegraph* presents the loss of the Big Houses as a loss of British history. In an article on the destruction of Kilbrittain Castle, it states:

¹²⁵ “Kilbrittain Castle. Was To Be Military Camp,” *The Cork Examiner*, May 31, 1920, 6.

¹²⁶ “Castle Destroyed by Fire,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, June 10, 1921, 7.

¹²⁷ “The Ruined Homes of Ireland,” *The Irish Times*, May 1, 1926, 13.

¹²⁸ “Old Castle Burned,” *The Daily Telegraph*, May 27, 1920, 11.

¹²⁹ Donnelly, “Big House Burnings in County Cork,” 191.

“Kilbritten stood on the ruins of an older castle, which was built by the de Courneys, Lords of Kinsale, in the fourteenth century. Subsequently it fell into the hands of the McCarthys, whose territory it adjoined, and these in turn forfeited it during the troubled times of the reign of Elizabeth, when it passed into the possession of the Stawell family.”¹³⁰

It addresses the history of Kilbritten Castle and how this was linked to Britain, implying that it is an integral part of British history. It considers Kilbritten as a “historic building,” suggesting that it had great value and had been worth more than this destruction.¹³¹ The *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* elaborate less on any importance of the destruction. The *Times* only states that Kilbritten Castle was “an ancient building,” in which it created a distance between itself and the burned Houses.¹³² Although the *Manchester Guardian* did not elaborate either on the destruction of Kilbritten, apart from mentioning it, it suggests that it considers it to be a loss, because the newspaper calls it “a fine ancient building,” in which the addition of “fine” shows its appreciation for Kilbritten Castle.¹³³

Related to the destruction of Castle Bernard, both the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* provided a description of the scene of destruction. Since Castle Bernard was quite well-known, it is not surprising that the English newspaper reports contained some shock on the extent of the destruction. For example, the *Daily Telegraph* states that “the building burned fiercely throughout the day, and is now a smouldering ruin,” which indicates the extent of the fire and its outcome.¹³⁴ It also states that it was “practically destroyed.”¹³⁵ The *Times* did not report on the destruction of Castle Bernard in great detail either, but mentioned that it was “completely destroyed by the flames,” which allowed many people who were familiar with Castle Bernard, to imagine its ruins.¹³⁶

The *Irish Times* however, an Anglo-Irish national newspaper, referred very little to the IRA or the Crown forces, yet regarding the destruction of the Big Houses and the importance of this, it publishes extensively on it. It headed with “the Torch of War” and “Ruined Mansions in County Cork” in their articles.¹³⁷ In these articles it recalls Dunboy Castle was built on “the site of the ancient castle of the same name,” indicating its lost history and place in Ireland, and it praises it for its “picturesque structure”.¹³⁸ It suggests that it mourns the loss of the castle, as it mourns other mansions in this turbulent period in Irish history:

¹³⁰ *The Daily Telegraph*, “Old Castle Burned.”

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² “Irish Castle Burnt Down,” *The Times*, May 27, 1920, 9.

¹³³ “Castle Burned Down,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 27, 1920, 7.

¹³⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, “Peer Kidnapped by Armed Gang, Castle Burnt Down.”

¹³⁵ “The Earl of Bandon,” *The Daily Telegraph*, June 22, 1921, 14.

¹³⁶ *The Times*, “Search for Lord Bandon.”

¹³⁷ “The Torch of War. Ruined Mansions in County Cork,” *The Irish Times*, November 5, 1921, 9.

¹³⁸ *The Irish Times*, “The Torch of War. Ruined Mansions in County Cork.”

“One of the most melancholy features of the disturbed state of Ireland during the last two years ... has been the destruction of many of our finest residential mansions. ... Of the mansions destroyed Castle Bernard, the home of the Earl of Bandon, was one of the most notable. ... the interior of the structure and its contents were destroyed, only the walls remaining.”¹³⁹

This report is full of the mourning over the loss of many mansions, and it strongly implies the condemnation the newspaper felt towards the IRA who destroyed these mansions like Castle Bernard. It describes the period in which the Big Houses were destroyed as “the blackest period of the guerrilla war.”¹⁴⁰ It implies that these destructions were seen as the worst events of the war, in which many mansions were “blotted out” by the fires.¹⁴¹ The *Irish Times* also states that the destruction of Castle Bernard caused the loss of many books which were “simply priceless and irreplaceable.”¹⁴² It suggests that the mourning of the losses of these mansions were not only limited to the building itself, but also its contents or its historical outlook. For example, in that same report, the newspaper addresses Convamore House and states it was “one of the most purposeless burnings,” and that the “beautiful residence was burned ... with all its wealth of antique furniture and treasures of art.”¹⁴³ By focussing on its outlook, it implies the importance of these Big Houses and their contents, and their place in Ireland as an integral part of Ireland. The newspaper especially makes clear it condemns the IRA and their destruction of the mansions, in another section:

“But the spectacle of the countryside at the present moment, studded, as it is, with blackened ruins of once stately mansions, cannot have any but the most depressing effect, not only on those immediately concerned, but on all who have the welfare of the country at heart, and who pride themselves in our national institutions, beauty spots, and splendid buildings.”¹⁴⁴

It explicitly expresses its opposition towards the nationalists in Ireland and thereby emphasise that Ireland is part of Britain, by focussing on its national institutions and cultural aspects of the Big Houses. It implies that the Dáil could not compare to the British institutions and culture, thus presenting the destruction of Big Houses as unfavourable.

The *Belfast News-Letter* also addressed the historical importance of the mansions. It praises Dunboy Castle for its “large Gothic structure,” and its prominent location west of the bay, which implied that it mourns the loss of the Big Houses as well.¹⁴⁵ Apart from Dunboy Castle, the newspaper only mentions the “historic seat” Castle Bernard, in which it indirectly implies that it respects the historical value of the mansion and its importance for its history.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹ *The Irish Times*, “The Ruined Homes of Ireland.”

¹⁴⁰ *The Irish Times*, “The Torch of War. Ruined Mansions in County Cork.”

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *The Belfast News-Letter*, “Castle Destroyed by Fire.”

¹⁴⁶ “Irish Peer Kidnapped. His Residence Set on Fire and Destroyed,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, June 23, 1921, 5.

It becomes more difficult to indicate what the Irish newspapers imply regarding the destruction of the Big Houses. Sometimes, the Irish newspapers state facts about the condition of the Big Houses that were destroyed. For example, the *Irish Independent*, which reported very little on the destructions, stated that Dunboy Castle was “totally destroyed,” without further inquiry into the meaning of this.¹⁴⁷ This can be seen as a form of self-censorship, in which the newspaper chooses not to go into detail about the destruction, which could indicate its support of the IRA. However, it also could have thought that by remaining in the middle, the newspaper would stay out of sight of either the IRA or the Crown forces and thus prevent any attacks on its office or editors. The *Freeman’s Journal* also states the condition of Kilbrittain Castle, Dunboy Castle and Castle Bernard after destruction without further implications, thereby acting the same as the *Irish Independent*. Nonetheless, the *Freemans’ Journal* publishes a more elaborate report on the destruction of Convamore House a few years later, stating:

“Convamore, one of the numerous picturesque and pleasantly-situated demesnes along the banks of the lordly and lovely Blackwater in Munster, was the residence when in Ireland of the Earl of Listowel (who has just died) until the house was destroyed by fire a few years ago. ... Convamore commanded charming views of the Nagle and Galtee Mountains, and formed portions of the Roupe or Roche territory in bygone days until their estates were parcelled out amongst a number of greedy English adventurers.”¹⁴⁸

This report is interesting, because on the one hand, it is appreciative of Convamore House and its architecture and locations, while on the other hand it ends with a hint towards great Irish historic times which were disrupted by the English “adventurers” who divided the land of the Irish among themselves. This seems to imply strongly that although Convamore itself was a beautiful mansion, its roots, and especially its meaning, are a reminder for its Irish tenants that they are governed and ruled by a non-Irish person, who does not belong to their community. This view is supported by mentioning that it was Lord Listowel’s residence when he was in Ireland, suggesting he was merely visiting instead of living there.

The *Cork Examiner* reports on the destruction of Kilbrittain Castle and Castle Bernard. It appears that the *Cork Examiner* is against the destructions, while it has been implying to be supportive of the Republican ideal throughout the Revolution. However, it is possible that the newspaper mourns the loss of the buildings, like Kilbrittain Castle, because these castles had been present in Ireland before the English arrived. When the reports are put in this perspective, it falls into place why the (Irish) newspapers are so appreciative of the building, yet still support the Republican ideal. This also features in an article on the destruction of Kilbrittain Castle, in which it states that “a historic building and old landmark disappears.”¹⁴⁹ The reference to an old landmarks indicates the long history the site has, and thus that it represents more than just British rule over Ireland. Therefore, it is not astonishing that the newspaper describes Kilbrittain

¹⁴⁷ “Burning of Dunboy Castle,” *The Irish Independent*, October 19, 1921, 6.

¹⁴⁸ “By the Way. Earl of Listowel’s Home,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, June 11, 1924, 8.

¹⁴⁹ “Kilbrittain Castle Burned Down. Enormous Damage,” *The Cork Examiner*, May 27, 1920, 5.

as “a splendid ancient building,” which “stand[s] on an eminence overlooking one of the most scenic spots in Ireland.”¹⁵⁰ It can be interpreted in two varying ways when it states that it was a “sensational picture of the Castle ablaze.”¹⁵¹ On the one hand, it can be interpreted as a shock that it was devoured by flames, while on the other, it can be seen as a celebratory event, because even though it was an old Irish castle, it was occupied by a Protestant landlord who symbolized British rule, and its destruction also meant that another “pawn” in the British governing system in Ireland was removed, therein positioning the landlords outside of the community.

Regarding the destruction of Castle Bernard, the *Cork Examiner* addresses it less extensively as Kilbrittain Castle, but it nonetheless praises the building for its magnificence and artistic craftsmanship. It states that:

“... a magnificent mansion, built at different times and different dates, but the modern portion of it was constructed on the very best style about 120 years ago. ... There were very fine mantelpieces by distinguished artists, and the whole woodwork and decoration was of such excellent workmanship and material that it could scarcely be done now. ... but the walls were peculiarly good, and suffered less from fire than many of the other structures in this country, ...”¹⁵²

It is another example of how an Irish newspaper can support nationalist Ireland, yet appreciate the fine buildings that were created throughout history, like Castle Bernard, which may have become associated with British oppression, yet was admired by many for their beauty and architecture.

3.5 Conclusion

From January 1920 onwards in the War of Independence in Ireland, there were wholesale destructions of Big Houses throughout the varying counties, though they were extremely intense in County Cork. The owners were often targeted because it was believed they were informers for the British government, but more often because military troops would be accommodated in these mansions. Since the destruction of these Big Houses was a relatively important event in the War of Independence, this chapter focussed on the representation of these destructions in the newspapers. The first section discussed how these newspapers, even though official censorship was ended, had to self-censor their articles, because of attacks by the IRA and Crown forces of news offices or the arrestation of editors when these were openly supporting the Republic by British troops.

In the second and third section, the presentation of the IRA and the Crown forces in relation to the destruction was investigated, and it was found that the English newspapers implied more aggressively that the IRA, and Sinn Féin for whom they had become representatives, were enemies of the Empire and thus

¹⁵⁰ *The Cork Examiner*, “Kilbrittain Castle Burned Down. Enormous Damage.”

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² “Castle Bernard Burning,” *The Cork Examiner*, October 8, 1921, 7.

Ireland as well, by often referring to them as “raiders” or “Sinn Féiners.” The Anglo-Irish and Irish newspapers were more careful in their presentation of the forces, although the first suggested more often to be against them, whereas the second did the opposite, in which they seemed to suggest to be supportive of the IRA. The Irish newspapers rationalised the destructions, by phrasing that its owners were either spies for Britain or that the mansions would be occupied with troops.

In the last paragraph I analysed the representation of the destruction, and how the various Big Houses were depicted. The English and Anglo-Irish newspapers mourned the loss of these historic buildings, and condemned the destruction. The Irish newspapers also implied that they were processing the loss of these mansions, but they had the interesting paradox that on the one hand, these mansions were symbols of British occupation, while on the other hand many castles that belonged to the Big Houses had existed in Ireland before the British arrived, and thus were also part of the Irish heritage. So they praised the buildings for their beauty, yet expressed some relief that British rule had been further broken down in Ireland.

In all newspapers aspects of othering can to the fore, whereby the English and Anglo-Irish irrationalised the destructions and the actions of the IRA, attempting to depict them negatively, to create a better image of the British troops. The Irish newspapers were rationalising the destructions and by focussing on the negative connotations the Big Houses had for many Irish people, they attempted to present an Irish community, where the landlords clearly did not belong to.

4. Belfast Pogroms: the Catholics are evicted, 1920-1922

The focus of the previous chapter was the destruction of the Big Houses during the War of Independence, which began in 1919. The region of attention was County Cork, where the scale of destruction of Big Houses was the largest, and it was seen by some newspapers that the Protestants, who were the main occupants of these mansions, were targeted by the IRA. Whereas the IRA and Sinn Fein targeted the Protestants during the destructions of the Big Houses, Protestant militia's targeted the Catholics during the Belfast Pogroms between July 1920 and July 1922. It has been acknowledged that these pogroms were focussed on the eviction of the Catholic population in Belfast, during which Catholics' houses and business were destroyed.¹ Due to the spread of the pogroms to surrounding towns and regions, this chapter will focus on the question: *How did Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers represent the destruction of premises during the Belfast Pogroms, 1920-1922?*

This question analyses the destruction inflicted upon the city and its inhabitants during the pogroms and the way the newspapers represented this conflict. I focus on the presentation of the instigators of the pogroms, and the buildings that were destroyed and the implication of this in the newspapers. First a historical context will be provided, in which the history of Ulster prior to the pogroms is outlined, and the censorship will be addressed before the presentation of the people involved and the destruction itself in the newspapers will be analysed.

4.1 Historical Background

“The worst feature of Orangeism has been the periodic outbreaks and riots in Belfast, largely due to the rivalries of working-class people of different persuasions and deprecated by the upper-classes. In the province itself hostility between ‘Orange and Green’ and Catholic and Protestant tenants had been a tradition since the eighteenth century.”²

The Belfast pogroms occurred between July 1920 and July 1922, during which the Protestant and Catholic populations of Belfast attacked, murdered, and harassed each other, which was accompanied by the destruction of businesses and houses. The Protestant population instigated it and the Catholics reacted to these atrocities with reprisals. As indicated in the previous chapter, the “native” Catholic population of Ireland and the Protestant “immigrants” were divided. In Ulster, this division was most evident due to the large numbers of settlers that it received during the Plantation in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.³ Landownership, ethnic identity and religion were the core of the divisions, as they were in Cork.⁴ The

¹ Jonathan Tonge, *Northern Ireland: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 19.

² Curtis, *A History of Ireland*, 396.

³ David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland. From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 93.

⁴ Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*, 93.

main difference, however, was that most of the settlers remained in Ulster, thus creating a majority in the share of the population, whereas in the rest of Ireland Catholics remained the majority. Therefore, fewer Big Houses were destroyed in Ulster compared to the rest of Ireland.

The Belfast pogroms have their origins in the nineteenth century, when the industrialization of Belfast attracted more citizens to the city, Protestants and Catholics migrated from other counties in Ulster to Belfast, thus contributing to the expansion the city's population, especially the number of Catholics.⁵ In addition, a section of the Protestants had created an Orange Order, which developed as a solid, supported order during the nineteenth century. It played a crucial role in the riots that occurred in Belfast and the country sides between 1857 and 1886.⁶ Riots also broke out in Belfast after the first two Home Rule Bills in 1886 and 1893, which were "angrily received in Ulster."⁷ The Orange Order had "professed complete religious tolerance under the British Crown for all," but they feared a Catholic domination if Home Rule would be granted due to their support for Home Rule.⁸ By the time the third Home Rule Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1912, "its opponents in Ulster were organised for resistance."⁹

Therefore, it was not a surprise when riots broke out from 1920 onwards. The War of Independence in Ireland had opened negotiations between the leaders of Sinn Féin and Westminster, and the Government of Ireland Act (Home Rule) in 1920 offered Ireland two parliaments, one in Dublin and one in Belfast, under British jurisdiction.¹⁰ However, Sinn Féin turned it down. They wanted independence from Britain. With the Anglo-Irish Treaty partition became official, in which both Irelands got a Parliament – Northern Ireland still as part of the United Kingdom, and Southern Ireland was granted Dominion status. The main concern for the new Northern Irish Parliament was its ability to "treat fairly a dissident minority Catholic population."¹¹ Partition had established a Boundary Commission that assessed the borders of Ulster, and instead of maintaining the borders of the ancient province of Ulster, the boundaries "were redrawn to ensure the creation of a Northern state with a decisive, in-built Protestant and Unionist majority, immune from the threat posed by higher Catholic birth rates."¹² Therefore, the Protestants had not objected when three Ulster counties were granted to Southern Ireland.

Since the Protestant population was opposed to the Government of Ireland Act, a series of pogroms was staged in Belfast, "aimed at driving the Catholics out of the industrial area completely" in July 1920.¹³ The Act was the reasons the pogroms started, but it had been preceded by "inflammatory propaganda meetings," suggesting that the Catholics "were 'creeping in,' and 'were taking away the jobs of the

⁵ Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*, 104.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷ J.L. McCracken, "Northern Ireland (1921-66)," in *The Course of Irish History*, ed. T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (Cork: Mercier Press, 1967), 313.

⁸ Curtis, *A History of Ireland*, 394.

⁹ McCracken, "Northern Ireland (1921-66)," 313.

¹⁰ Tonge, *Northern Ireland*, 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³ Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, 417.

Protestants’.”¹⁴ Hooligans and unofficial special forces were often at the front of the mobs, and “attacked the Catholic quarter – looting and burning down the shops and houses of Catholics.”¹⁵ Sometimes, the pogroms commenced as a demonstration that escalated into fierce fighting and wholesale destruction of buildings. In reaction to the pogroms, the Catholic population began to riot as well against the Protestants, as acts of reprisals for the destructions and murders of Catholics.

Finally, a special police force was erected, the “B” Specials, that were comparable to the Black and Tans, but then based on volunteers, and operated as a reserve police force, but their creation strengthened the idea that Northern Ireland had “institutionalized violence” by establishing an armed volunteer force.¹⁶ The “B” Specials were seen by many Catholics as a “sectarian militia, being exclusively Protestant, often ill-trained and partisan.”¹⁷ The police and its jurisdiction were not seen as neutral in Northern Ireland, but perceived by the Nationalists as “based upon the reduction of their political threat.”¹⁸

4.1.1 Censorship

The Belfast pogroms happened simultaneously with the destruction of the Big Houses, meaning that censorship regulations of the 1920s and the context, are the same as well. The newspapers in Ireland had to adapt to the removal of the post of the Censor at Dublin Castle, until December 1920, when all censorship regulations were officially ended. In the following years, the newspapers were self-censoring to prevent attacks on their offices or the arrests of the editors. Both the Crown Forces and the IRA attacked newspaper offices, where they destroyed or dismantled the printing equipment.

During the Civil War, the Pro-Treaty Government of Ireland imposed new censorship regulations onto the Irish newspapers. It was forbidden for Irish newspapers (*Londonderry Sentinel* and *Belfast News-Letter* were not included, because they were located in Northern Ireland) to use words as “guerrilla” to describe the Anti-Treaty IRA or other opponents of the new Irish Government.¹⁹ Southern Ireland’s (as the new nation had to be called) censorship was more religious than it was political; the state censor “was allowed to ban books and films on moral grounds, [in essence] when they offended Catholic doctrine or values.”²⁰

In Northern Ireland, composed of the Six Counties of Ulster, censorship remained entirely political.²¹ The pro-British Unionist Government passed a Special Powers Act in the 1920s, which was a “draconian piece of legislation” that provided the police “the authority to ban any dubious expression of

¹⁴ Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, 417.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 417.

¹⁶ Tonge, *Northern Ireland*, 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹ “Media Censorship During ‘the Troubles.’ A leading Irish journalist ponders the consequences.” *International Journalism*, Nieman Reports, last modified 15-06-2000, <https://niemanreports.org/articles/media-censorship-during-the-troubles/>.

²⁰ Nieman Reports, “Media Censorship During ‘the Troubles.’”

²¹ *Ibid.*

political thinking and to imprison those responsible.”²²

4.2 Nationalists versus Miscreants

During the pogroms, portions of the Catholic and Protestant populations attacked each other in the city and surrounding towns. When oversimplifying, the Catholics represent the Nationalists and Sinn Féiners, whereas the Protestants represent the Unionists and Orangemen in Belfast. This framed view is also present in the newspapers, which use these terms for the two groups interchangeably. The newspapers also used other terms to describe the factions that were involved in the conflict. In the previous chapters only a few terms were applied to the groups, the newspapers applied a range of terms to these groups in regard of the Belfast pogroms, varying from “terrorists” and “hooligans” to “miscreants” and “rioters” and other terms. Political associations of the factions were also widely used, like “Loyalists,” “Orangemen,” “Nationalists,” or “Sinn Féiners.”

Since the term “Sinn Féiner” is used during the entire Irish Revolution to describe Irish nationalists or volunteers in the newspapers, it makes sense to begin with an analysis of this term, before investigating the meaning of other terms applied. This phrasing was used by all newspapers. The difference is found in the implications of it. The Irish newspaper *Irish Independent* only publishes a case of a woman whose family had been told to leave their house, or it would be burned, because, according to the crowd, her husband was a Sinn Féiner.²³ In the way the newspaper phrased the event, it showed that the only reason it was burned, was because her husband was a Sinn Féiner, indicating the discriminatory aspect of the burnings. The *Freeman's Journal* states that:

“Fresh expulsions are the order of the day; and it is significant that the mob and their ringleaders are now including in the list of the proscribed numbers of Protestant workers who are supposed to be “sympathiser with Socialism and Sinn Féin.”²⁴

By stating that these ringleaders and their mob – Unionists – are also including Protestants who would have affinity with Sinn Féin as possible targets, implies the ridicule of this idea that Protestants would be sympathizers with Sinn Féin. It indicates the hostility towards Socialism and Sinn Féin, and by phrasing it this way, it implies that these mobs are perceived to be foolish for believing the possibility that Protestants would sympathize with anything but Unionism.

The *Cork Examiner* presents the “aggression” of the Unionists towards Sinn Féin in two different ways. When the pogroms started, it published a report on a resolution adapted by the Unionist workers employed in the shipyard, stating that they would not work alongside Sinn Féiners, until “Sinn Féiners

²² Nieman Reports, “Media Censorship During ‘the Troubles.’”

²³ “Belfast Riot Scenes. Evictions and House Burnings,” *The Irish Independent*, December 17, 1920, 5.

²⁴ “The Belfast Pogrom,” *The Freeman's Journal*, August 16, 1920, 3.

cease the foul murder campaign which destroyed the fair name and fame of our beloved country.”²⁵ It states in the report that the resolution adopted declared “that in all future applications for employment we respectfully suggest that first consideration be given to loyal ex-Service men and Unionists.”²⁶ It clearly states that it originated from Unionist workers, which can be perceived as an indication that the newspaper itself does not agree with what was quoted in the article. Additionally, because the resolution quoted states strongly that Sinn Féin was responsible for a murderous campaign, in *their* country – of the Unionists – it clearly places the Catholics or Sinn Féiners in direct opposition to the Unionists. However, the *Cork Examiner* could have reasoned that by publishing this article, which contained a powerful message from the Unionist, the Catholics would be more determined to form a front against a common opposition.

This serves as a good example of the ability of the newspapers to contribute to or resist the creation of the feeling of one group, one nation. In this article, the feeling of “Us” against “Them,” among the Catholic Irish in Ulster and the rest of Ireland is enforced, because it is believed by the Unionist that Sinn Féin is leading a murder campaign, but the Unionists are openly expelling the Catholics from their work, who apparently did not belong to Unionist Ulster, which is their beloved country which fame and name is infected by the Catholics residing within its borders.

The view that the Catholics and Sinn Féiners are perceived as the main cause of the trouble in Belfast, is not only disagreed with in the Irish newspapers. The Anglo-Irish newspaper the *Irish Times* publishes various accounts throughout the Belfast pogroms, that sometimes disagree with each other. For example, a year after the start of the pogroms, it was implied that Sinn Féiners began the fighting, when it reports that Sinn Féin snipers showed great activity, by firing “at Unionists from the tops of houses, windows, and various vantage points.”²⁷ They were hidden from plain sight, thus it could be seen as an ambush of which the Unionists became the victims. However, the following report was also published in the *Irish Times*, in 1922, mere months before the end of the pogroms, stating that:

“Attempts have been made to lay the blame for the horrible condition of Belfast upon Catholics and Sein Feiners, but no reasonable man will believe that Catholics, who form only one-fourth of the city’s population, or Sinn Féiners, who form a much smaller percentage, are the instigators or originators of riots in which they are always the chief sufferers. Moreover, we cannot forget that long before Sinn Féin was heard of, Belfast had gained a notoriety for savage riots and the murder of Catholics in the name of religion. We need only recall the riots of 1864, 1872, and 1885.”²⁸

It blames the Catholics to a lesser extent for the disturbances in Belfast. It even defends the Catholics and the accusations that they would attack their own “kind” to make them appear as victims of Unionists. So the *Irish Times* could have become slightly divided about the pogroms.

²⁵ “Belfast Riots. Unionist Workmen and Catholics,” *The Cork Examiner*, July 29, 1920, 5.

²⁶ *The Cork Examiner*, “Belfast Riots. Unionist Workmen and Catholics,”

²⁷ “The Belfast Rioting,” *The Irish Times*, July 12, 1921, 3.

²⁸ “Deep Distress. Supplied with Arms,” *The Irish Times*, April 27, 1922, 6.

It is a sharp contrast to what the other Anglo-Irish and English newspapers published on the pogroms in Belfast. The English and Anglo-Irish newspapers presented the pogroms that it seems that the Sinn Féiners had begun new riots, like the first article of the *Irish Times* above had suggested, but when the problems were started by Unionists or Orangemen sections, they distanced the rest of the Protestant population from it. The *Belfast News-Letter* published an article “Nationalists and the Riots” in this manner, to indicate that most of the Protestants could not be blamed for the situation or their perception of the Catholics and Sinn Féin:

“These attacks upon chapels and convents were carried out simply by the hooligan elements in the population, and they had absolutely no sympathy whatever from the great bulk of the Protestant people in the province. ...

They could not blame the Ulster Protestant people from thinking that this movement [Sinn Féin] was inspired by the Roman Catholic Church. They believed so, because ever since the Sinn Féin movement began, on not a single occasion had the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church denounced the outrages which that organisation had carried on.”²⁹

By stating that the attacks were carried out “simply by the hooligan elements in the population,” the newspaper dismisses the attacks as unimportant, because it were the hooligan elements of the Protestant population, who also did not have the support of the Protestants. It implies that these attacks were mere skirmishes that should not be taken seriously. The newspaper also states that it is completely justified, even the fault of the Roman Catholic Church, that the Ulster Protestants perceive Sinn Féin and Catholicism to be related. If the Roman Catholic Church had wanted to prevent this, they should have condemned the actions of Sinn Féin. This is also the third remark, because the newspaper blames Sinn Féin for the outrages which they have continued in Belfast, implying that if they had not done anything, Belfast would have been peaceful again after a few riots, thus the current situation was completely to blame on Sinn Féin, thereby the Provisional Government of Southern Ireland.

The cause of the disturbances was also placed on Sinn Féin by the *Londonderry Sentinel*, which reports that the evictions on Kashmir Road – a Nationalist district – had occurred under heavy sniping, but that “no revolver shots were heard coming in from the Unionist side, and that no sniping was seen coming from Cupar-street – the Protestant area,” implying that it were the Nationalists that were firing on the Unionists, who were therefore the victims.³⁰

The English newspapers see Sinn Féin and the Nationalists as the instigators, although they do recognize the role played by the Unionists, but phrase this as a reaction to Sinn Féin. For example, the *Times* reports that “again the Sinn Féiners used firearms, and shots were discharged from both [streets],” which implies that shots were returned from the Unionist side, because Sinn Féin started firing.³¹ In another

²⁹ “Nationalists and the Riots,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, July 27, 1920, 6.

³⁰ “Recent Belfast Riots,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, August 12, 1920, 3.

³¹ “Black Day in Belfast,” *The Times*, August 31, 1920, 11.

article, it explains:

“The origin of the disturbance is difficult to trace, but for a time considerable ill feeling has been developing in the shipyards among Unionist workers against Sinn Féiners employed in the yards, on account of the atrocities perpetrated in other parts of Ireland by members of the Sinn Féin organisation.”³²

Although it remains vague on the reason for the pogroms, it indicates the events in Southern Ireland, implying that Sinn Féin’s actions are a justification for the Unionists’ actions in Belfast. In line with this, is a report published shortly after, stating that “though riots instigated by the professed partisans of Great Britain in Ulster are not less blameworthy than riots in any other part of Ireland, they are a logical outcome of a situation for which Sinn Féin is responsible.”³³ When combining these reports, it is indicated that some responsibility can be ascribed to the Unionists, the main instigators are Sinn Féiners.

The *Manchester Guardian* depicts Sinn Féin in a different way, by describing how “on the one hand there is the Sinn Féin “soldier,” slipping about ... with his petrol can or fire bomb; on the other hand there is the group of Orange corner boys concocting in its self-instituted Soviet the destruction of more Roman Catholic houses.”³⁴ Presented in this way, Sinn Féin appears to be more dangerous, due to the comparison between a “soldier”, and “Orange corner boys.” Framing the two groups in this way, it is implied Sinn Féin is being irrational to fight some ragamuffins, who are harmless to the city.

The English *Daily Telegraph* also depicts Sinn Féin as the dangerous party in the conflict in a report that describes how the military is fighting the Sinn Féin snipers, which made “a picture which has not been witnessed in Belfast on such a scale for over forty years.”³⁵ This thus gives the impression that Sinn Féin is responsible for it. Another instance in which the newspaper implies that Sinn Féin was the villain that disrupted peace in Belfast, is in a report that described how:

“A nationalist mob attacked the police with stones and bottles, and after a long resistance the constabulary had to retire towards the Unionist quarter until troops came to their aid. Sinn Féiners then attacked the military, and order was not restored until the troops had fired.”³⁶

The statement that the police had to retreat to Unionist quarters to be save from the nationalists, indicates that the police was not safe in Nationalist quarters, creating an image of the Nationalists as the outsider of the community, in which they disrespect police and military authority by attacking them, and who are responsible for the situation in the city.

³² “Riot in Belfast Shipyards. Unionists v. Sinn Feiners,” *The Times*, July 22, 1920, 12.

³³ “The Belfast Riots,” *The Times*, July 23, 1920, 15.

³⁴ “Belfast Competition in Arson,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 15, 1922, 7.

³⁵ “Night of Terror. Machine-Guns in Action,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 24, 1920, 11.

³⁶ “Fierce Rioting in Belfast Streets,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 23, 1920, 11.

4.3 Unionists and Orangemen

The newspapers blamed either Sinn Féin for the pogroms, like the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers, or passively defended this party like the Irish newspapers, by implying Sinn Féin was the victim. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse how the newspapers presented the Unionists, who were seen as the opposing party of Sinn Féin. It is not surprising that some newspapers present the Unionists as involved, loyal citizens, by publishing reports that focus on the willingness of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) or Orange Lodges to volunteer in patrolling the streets of Belfast to maintain the peace, assisting the government forces.

The *Irish Times* (Anglo-Irish) and *Daily Telegraph* (English) were two newspapers who reported in this manner. The *Irish Times* published a report from the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast, stating that the Government had to “suppress the disloyal functions who invaded our city at a time when loyal men were fighting for their King and Empire,” thereby positioning themselves on the side of the Government, because these “disloyal functions” are the Nationalists, who invaded “our city”, thus making the Nationalists “the Other.”³⁷ The Grand Orange Lodge stated that if the Government would not undertake action, the loyal citizens of Belfast would feel obligated to cooperate to protect themselves, their property and “the maintenance of public peace.”³⁸ “However,” they concluded, they were “prepared to assist the magistrate and civil authorities in the lawful execution of their duties when called upon to do so.”³⁹ The emphasis is on the loyal citizens of Belfast and their city, which excludes the Nationalists of Catholics from their community. When this is followed by a remark that the Orange Lodges are prepared to assist the authorities in maintaining law and order, it could be interpreted as a threat that they do not mind clearing the city themselves of these “disloyal functions” that are perceived to be illegal inhabitants in the city.

In late July 1920, the *Daily Telegraph* published an article containing the outcome of the report, when the Orangemen had begun assisting the authorities. The Orangemen were complimented for these “peace patrols,” because they were “rendered valuable assistance in keeping down disorder.”⁴⁰ This comment on the good work of the Orangemen implies the newspaper supported the Unionists’ side, and this is confirmed with another comment, stating “members of the UVF and Orange lodges were also assisting, the men doing this duty being provided with rosettes, and they have used all their influence to keep lawless bands quiet.”⁴¹ Not only is this statement a compliment to the UVF and Orange Lodges, it also shows that these men were armed by the authorities to keep “lawless bands” quiet. It refers to the Nationalists and Catholics as illegal persons residing in the city, yet it implies that these men that patrolled are exemplary for the city, otherwise they would not have been trusted with weapons, and that they “used

³⁷ “Orangemen and the Maintenance of Order,” *The Irish Times*, September 2, 1920, 5.

³⁸ *The Irish Times*, “Orangemen and the Maintenance of Order.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “Paving Stones as Ammunition,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 24, 1920, 11.

⁴¹ “A Quieter Day,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 24, 1920, 11.

all their influence” to maintain order.

However, when these statements are copied in an Irish, Nationalistic newspaper like the *Cork Examiner*, which is known to have suffered severely under attacks of the Crown Forces and the self-regulated censorship, another meaning becomes attached. The *Cork Examiner* copied the same report discussed above from the *Irish Times*, but then from the *Belfast News-Letter*, and published it without further comments. But due to the context of the newspaper in which it is published, the entire report could imply a threat at the address of the Nationalists, especially when the Orange Lodges speak of “self-defence” against the violence of the Nationalists, while the Catholics (Nationalists) were the prime victims of the pogroms.

Displays of the “Other” were also common in the Irish newspapers, which used varying terms to refer to the Unionist Protestants. For example, the *Irish Independent* published an article on the atrocities in Belfast, directed against Catholics. It states that “a Catholic lady was kicked, beaten, and sprinkled with petrol and set on fire, a deed so inhuman that it appalled the city,” indicating the kind of violence Catholics had to endure, but most of all it implies that the other group, which excluded Catholics, were seen as inhuman who horrify the city by their actions.⁴² It is described how “a half-drunken, infuriated mob” evicted hundreds of Catholics in their various districts, implying that the “Other” are drunken, thus irrational, when they attacked Catholics in anger.⁴³ Furthermore, it states that there is no end to the “terrible orgies of bloodshed that are disgracing Belfast,” hinting that the Orangemen involved were bloodthirsty for Catholic blood, causing the city harm.⁴⁴ On top of that, the article is headed “Irish Armenia: Belfast Atrocities,” comparing the situation in Belfast with the Armenian genocide (1915), suggesting that a massacre of the Catholic population was taken place in Belfast as well.

The *Irish Times* states that if the Northern Government had to be evaluated on its results, “it must rank more nearly with the government of the Turk in his worst days, than anything to be found anywhere in a Christian State.”⁴⁵ Shortly after, it states that “the condition of things in Belfast,” with its horrifying accounts of murder and destruction, it went against any Christian feeling, or “even the common instinct of humanity.”⁴⁶ These two comments alone show how the situation was condemned, stating that Northern Ireland looked more like Turkey than a Christian state, that the events were anything but human, thereby not choosing a side, but highlighting that all parties involved were responsible. In addition, it states that the Catholics “are subjected to a savage persecution which is hardly paralleled by the bitterest sufferings of the Armenians.”⁴⁷ This comparison between Northern Ireland and the Armenians is particularly strong, because of the belief that the situation in Belfast is almost as severe as those of the Armenians. Although the *Irish*

⁴² “Irish Armenia. Belfast Atrocities,” *The Irish Independent*, June 5, 1922, 6.

⁴³ *The Irish Independent*, “Irish Armenia. Belfast Atrocities.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “Deep Distress. The North-East Corner,” *The Irish Times*, April 27, 1922, 6.

⁴⁶ *The Irish Times*, “Deep Distress. The North-East Corner.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Times first seems to imply that both sides are responsible, with this remark they make clear that the Catholics are the main sufferers, and the Government should act.

The *Irish Independent*, as another example, states that “unionists made a fierce onslaught on Catholics,” implying that they are massacred.⁴⁸ Also, it describes how Unionists attacked the Catholics suddenly, taking them by surprise, but then express a compliment for the Catholics that “in a short space of time a great crowd rallied to the defence,” indicating the capability of the Catholics.⁴⁹ Towards the end of the pogroms, the *Freeman’s Journal* even refers to the Unionists as “armed terrorists,” with which it positions the Protestants and Catholics at opposing ends of the spectrum, while in that same article it hints at the cowardness of the Unionists by stating that they killed Catholics by “hands of secret assassination,” thus not giving Catholics the chance to defend themselves.⁵⁰ The *Cork Examiner* also referred to the “Terrorism” of the Orangemen in headings of their articles, implying as well that they are to held accountable for the situation in Belfast.⁵¹

The *Freeman’s Journal* clearly states who it deems responsible for the widespread pogroms:

“Accounts of yesterday’s and Sunday’s incidents issued by the military authorities indicate very clearly where the responsibility lies for the scenes of bloodshed in the city. It is plain from these reports that the Orangemen are the aggressors in almost every instance.”⁵²

The reference to the military reports provides an indication of the trustworthiness of their statement that the Orangemen should be held responsible. However, the *Freeman’s Journal* could also be considered to hint at support of the reprisals of Sinn Féin and Nationalists in Belfast, due to its following report:

“British legislators are apparently willing to tolerate these tests when they are imposed by Orangemen, and more astounding still, British Labour declines to take up a challenge which cuts at the root of every principle it professes to hold. Ireland has to act on her own account, and the first step towards foiling the Orange reactionaries is to demonstrate to them that it is not in their power to fulfil their threats of starving out workers who refuse to obey their decree.”⁵³

It begins by criticising the British Government, who undermines their own principles by allowing the Orangemen to continue, followed by another example of the power of the newspapers to contribute to the image of the nation, stating that Ireland must act against the pogroms, beginning by showing that the Orangemen have no power in such instances, while also applauding those who refused to obey the Orangemen. It expresses that Ireland is in power to intervene in the situation and put the Orangemen in their place, which could be interpreted as a hint towards sympathies with the reprisals undertaken as revenge for

⁴⁸ “Renewed Belfast Riots. Onslaught on Catholics,” *The Irish Independent*, October 11, 1920, 6.

⁴⁹ *The Irish Independent*, “Renewed Belfast Riots. Onslaught on Catholics.”

⁵⁰ “The City of Death,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, February 28, 1922, 4.

⁵¹ “Disturbed Belfast. Orange Brutality and Terrorism,” *The Cork Examiner*, September 27, 1921, 5

⁵² “No Peace in Belfast,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, September 27, 1921, 3.

⁵³ *The Freeman’s Journal*, “The Belfast Pogrom.”

the violence against Catholics in Belfast.

The English newspapers do the opposite. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that the outrages were carried out by skilful planning, although it gives a strong implication that Sinn Féin and the IRA were mainly responsible, when it states that, apart from some occasions when “a passion-blinded mob” gets involved in the incendiarism, for the most part “the burnings are engineered secretly and dispassionately, and the incendiary does his work with quiet efficiency.”⁵⁴ The reference to the secrecy and dispassion of the incendiary’s efficient work, may remind the people of the guerrilla war in the rest of Ireland during the War of Independence, when the IRA operated in the same manner. This implied vision is strengthened by the statement that the majority of the burned down businesses and houses belonged to Unionists, therefore it must have been the work of the Nationalists.

Finally, the *Daily Telegraph* makes a most striking comparison between the situation in Belfast and France during World War I. It reports on the disturbances in some streets known to be Catholic quarters, and describes the situation as follows:

“Military were compelled to fire in each district, but whereas one or two volleys were sufficient in Cromac-street and Ballymacarrett, there was long-sustained firing about the Kashmir-road, where the rap-rap of Lewis guns, volleys of rifle shots, and the incessant discharge of revolvers made the scene reminiscent of France.”⁵⁵

The statement that the scene is reminiscent of France, is quite striking, because the military was now involved in a war on their own soil, and, as in previous chapters, by referring to the horrors of wars, the newspapers depict the Catholics as the national enemy, like Germany was during the war.

4.4 Destruction of House and Business

It is no surprise that many newspapers compared the situation in Belfast with war scenes because many buildings were destroyed in the riots. Most of these buildings comprised houses and businesses, owned by both Protestants and Catholics. Accounts of the destruction of houses and businesses are plenty, and implications that the Nationalist Catholic community of Belfast were the primary victims of the pogrom can be found in most newspapers, although occasionally it was phrased in a sense that implied that even though the Catholics were the direct victims, the Protestants ended up suffering as well. This is especially clear in an article of the *Manchester Guardian*, wherein it states that “the number of casualties on the Protestant side were greater, but the destruction of Catholic property was enormously more serious: some of the houses destroyed, though inhabited by Catholics, belonged to Protestants.”⁵⁶ By adding the comment that some of the houses belonged to Protestants, even though Catholics rented them, implies that the

⁵⁴ “Plans Cleverly Made,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 13, 1922, 8.

⁵⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, “Night of Terror. Machine-Guns in Actions.”

⁵⁶ Desmond MacCarthy, “Ireland To-Day: Ulster Policy,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 2, 1920, 10.

Protestants not only suffered severely in casualties, but also in the loss of property. Contrasting is the indication that the Protestant casualties seemed less important than the “enormously more serious” destruction of Catholic property, regardless who owned them.

The *Manchester Guardian* publishes some contradictory reports, in which the difference can be seen between the perspective of their correspondent and special correspondent. The normal correspondent presented the Catholics as the victims of Orangemen and Unionists, with reports describing how Unionists mobs burned out a woman who just gave birth to a child, who luckily was rescued, but which also indicated the inhumanity of the Unionists, thus irrationalising their actions.⁵⁷ It also celebrated the efforts of the fire brigade, thus the official authorities. The reports of their special correspondent presented a completely different view of the destructions and evictions of Catholics. It states that “for the most part they are Unionist places of business that are burnt down,” implying that the Unionists and Protestants suffered the most.⁵⁸ In more neutral reports, the newspaper states that:

“The fighting was fiercer and more deadly than in the sectarian shootings at Londonderry last year, while the destruction of property is now seen to be on a scale that recalls the Dublin insurrection of 1916. ... More than 100 houses, most of them in the Catholic quarter, were set on fire, and very many of them burned to the ground.”⁵⁹

The situation is admitted being politico-religiously orientated, indicating that it focusses on the eviction of a group from Belfast. It also refers to the destruction that occurred during the Easter Rising and that it is reminiscent of it. Thus, it implies that the destruction in Belfast has a deeper meaning to it, than the burning of mere houses only. Therefore, the burning of these Catholic homes is a way to wipe Catholic presence from the streets of Belfast, erasing not only the physical persons themselves by forcing them from their homes, but also by erasing the memories of where they used to live.

The Irish newspapers *Irish Independent* also implies that Protestants were taking over licensed businesses of Catholics who were forced to leave. It states that Catholic owners of spirit groceries had not been able to return to their homes, and that “apparently some Protestants are seeking to acquire the wrecked business houses and restore the licensed business.”⁶⁰ The Unionists felt that Catholics were taking the jobs of the Protestants, and now that they had been forced to leave, the jobs they left and the houses they had inhabited, could be assigned to Protestants, which can be seen as another way to erase the Catholics from the scene. This, in a way, is also the destruction of cultural property, when one not only destroyed the buildings of a group, but also replaces them by the ‘favoured’ ethnic group.

The newspapers also focus on the actual loss of property. For example, the Irish *Freeman’s Journal*

⁵⁷ “Ten Wounded by Specials,” *The Manchester Guardian*, July 11, 1921, 8.

⁵⁸ “Steady Destruction of Belfast,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 13, 1922, 8.

⁵⁹ “Curfew Again Enforced,” *The Manchester Guardian*, July 12, 1921, 7.

⁶⁰ “Belfast Pogrom Echo. Protestants take Licensed Houses,” *The Irish Independent*, October 26, 1920, 4.

published an article headed “Havoc of Explosions,” in which it describes how a mob had looted and set fire to a spirit grocer, which had caused a “scene of conflagration” with “considerable damage.”⁶¹ Its heading alone refers to the destruction caused during the Easter Rising, when these kind of headings were widely used by the newspapers, indicating the pogroms’ serious nature. Although it was one of the many spirit groceries burned down, the characterization of the destruction as a conflagration, implies the extensive damage done to the business.

The *Belfast News-Letter* reports most extensively on the destruction, describing the severity of Belfast and the towns involved surrounding Belfast by using various metaphors and vivid descriptions of how the flames devoured the buildings. On one occasion it states that “everywhere there were signs of destruction,” and that “altogether, the scene was weird in the extreme, flames and smoke giving to it a realistic touch as from an episode in Dante’s *Inferno*.”⁶² This reference to a work on Hell, implies that the destruction was comparable to Hell. The *Belfast News-Letter* is the only newspaper that provides one remark that showed the appreciation for a lost building, by describing how Floral Hill experienced the “worst fire of the day,” and that “so well did the incendiaries carry out their dastardly work that the fine building was practically gutted, and the damage done runs into many thousands of pounds.”⁶³ Not only did it condemn the destruction of this building, but also the building’s outlook was a pity to lose. It states that the “premises were doomed,” because the incendiaries had sprinkled petrol throughout the building.⁶⁴ Finally, the newspaper states that the inhabitants of Belfast were “sternly condemning the wanton destruction of property, which has been one of the most regrettable features of the reign of disorder.”⁶⁵ This implies that the newspaper, like the citizens, mourned the loss of all the property.

Another Anglo-Irish newspaper, the *Londonderry Sentinel*, is more direct in implying its position regarding the pogroms. It reports that a document found on Sinn Féiners, “who are to see to it that property belonging to prominent Orangemen is to be destroyed,” positions Sinn Féin (and indirectly the Provisional Government) as the enemy who deliberately is destroying property.⁶⁶

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the representation of the involved actors in the destruction of the Belfast pogroms in the newspapers. The newspapers were officially uncensored by the British Government, although a situation had developed throughout Ireland in which the newspapers had to regulate self-censorship, to prevent attacks on their offices or editors. In addition, the Provisional Government of Southern Ireland had banned all publications in which the Catholic faith was negatively addressed, whereas the Government of

⁶¹ “Havoc of Explosions,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, September 26, 1921, 3.

⁶² “Streets in Flames,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, August 23, 1920, 5.

⁶³ “Disastrous Fire at Cromac Square,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, June 15, 1922, 5.

⁶⁴ *The Belfast News-Letter*, “Disastrous Fire at Cromac Square.”

⁶⁵ “The Fire Brigade Service,” *The Belfast News-Letter*, August 28, 1920, 5.

⁶⁶ “Orangemen’s Property to be Destroyed,” *The Londonderry Sentinel*, June 8, 1922, 4.

Northern Ireland passed an Act which allowed the authorities to ban any expression of dubious political thinking, and imprison those responsible.

The first two analytical sections focussed on how the Unionists and Nationalists were presented in the newspapers, thereby focussing on the political aspect of the pogroms. It was shown that the Irish newspapers implied that the Catholics were the main victims and were expelled from their homes, their work, and their neighbourhoods. Occasionally, there was a report that was exemplary for what Anderson meant with the power of the newspapers in creating the idea of the imagined community, in which Ireland was addressed to act against the situation in Belfast. However, the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers appeared to be justifying the side of the Unionists, and openly appreciated the work of the military and police. In their reports it was repeatedly stated that the Unionists and thus the Protestants were the chief sufferers, although occasionally a newspaper indicated that the Catholics suffered more in relation to property.

The third part of the analysis focussed on the destruction and the implications of the loss of these destroyed buildings. It was argued that even though no specific cultural landmarks were destroyed, the evictions of Catholics from their houses and businesses, and the suggestions at times that Protestants were taking over these places, were also a form of creating the minority as the "Other." The Catholics were not only forced to leave their homes, but they were replaced by Protestants, as if to homogenize the city. This can also be seen as the destruction of cultural property, because the Catholics have been residing in Belfast for a long time, and they are, from the perspective of extreme nationalists, even the original inhabitants of the island.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this research I focussed on the question: “How were the destruction of cultural property during the Irish Revolution and the actors involved represented in Irish, Anglo-Irish, and English newspapers (1916-1923)?” It was argued that the newspapers each presented these events in a different way, whereby the perspective offered in the articles was central for the analysis. The analysis focussed on what the newspapers reported on and how they reported on it, for example whether they highlighted a certain case of destruction or used remarkable language to report an event. During the Easter Rising a large part of Dublin’s centre was destroyed in the fighting between the Irish Volunteers and the British military. The newspapers were restricted in their reports by the censorship regulations imposed by the British Government due to the First World War. It was argued that, despite these circumstances, the Irish newspapers were still able to display a certain level of understanding for the Easter Rising and the Irish Volunteers. Their reports and the terms they used implied that they could understand why the Volunteers undertook the Rising, yet they mourned the loss of some of the buildings. They also appeared to be rationalising the work of the Volunteers, by laying part of the blame for the destruction of the city centre on the military who had used shells and artillery in their attempt to defeat the Volunteers.

In contrast, the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers appeared to be condemning the Rising, in which they depicted the Volunteers as the enemies of Britain and Ireland, and according to them, the destruction caused during the Rising was also at the hands of the Volunteers. In addition, these newspapers praised the military and their efforts to keep the buildings that were destroyed as intact as possible, while clearing the city of these “terrorists.” The destroyed buildings were seen as a loss to the city and Ireland, but the newspapers believed that none of the buildings were of much importance.

The War of Independence was a guerrilla war in Ireland, between the IRA and the British paramilitary forces, referred to as the Crown Forces. In August 1919, the British Government decided to end the post of Censor in Ireland, which left the Irish newspapers with no safety net to filter their news reports. In addition, the censorship regulations in Ireland were officially ended in December 1919, after heavy international pressure onto the British Government. The regulations, however, were replaced by attacks of Crown Forces and the IRA when newspapers reported something unfavourable. Therefore, the Irish newspapers developed a system in which they censored themselves.

In the news reports on the destruction of the Big Houses in Cork, IRA members were often depicted as “raiders” by the English and Anglo-Irish newspapers. They attempted to depict the IRA as the enemy, by naming them raiders, which implied that they took something that was not theirs. The English newspapers also implied that the IRA members were terrorists who attacked innocent, decent people by destroying their mansions. In this way, the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers attempted to portray the destructions as irrational acts. In contrast, the Irish newspapers were expressing an understanding of why

these mansions were destroyed, for example by stating that they were to be a military camp. Such explanations were generally lacking from Anglo-Irish and English newspapers.

The Belfast Pogroms commenced during the War of Independence, and ended when the Civil War had already split the IRA in the Irish Free State. The Treaty had already created a Southern Ireland Government and established the Northern Ireland Parliament. These governments both established some additional censorship regulations, on top of the self-censoring of the newspapers. Southern Ireland censored any publications that presented the Catholic faith in a negative way, while the Northern Ireland Parliament implemented a law that allowed the authorities to ban any publication that expressed an opposing political stance.

The Irish newspapers appeared to be doing the opposite from what they had been doing during the Easter Rising and War of Independence. While they were rationalising the destructions of buildings during these two periods, they irrationalized the destruction of Catholic houses and businesses, implying that the Unionists were attempting to eliminate the Catholics from Belfast. The Anglo-Irish and English newspapers, however, began to rationalise these destructions, by implying that Sinn Féiners had begun fights of which the results were destroyed premises, or by stating that, for example, Protestant suffered more in casualties and that many of the destroyed premises belonged to Unionists, thereby indicating that the Protestants suffered more. There was a significant difference in the depiction of the Unionists in the newspapers. The Irish newspapers depicted them as the main instigators, occasionally suggesting that the Catholics were the native people, thus implying that the Unionists were not authorized to decide who should belong in Ulster. The Anglo-Irish newspapers, although admitting that the Unionists sometimes began the riots and outbursts, seemed to imply that the problem was caused by the Nationalists. The English newspapers sometimes showed more empathy towards the Catholics, but mostly blamed Sinn Féin and the Irish Government for the situation.

Throughout these cases there are a few trends to be found among the newspapers, which keep reoccurring. The aim of the chosen cases was to cover the entire Revolution, thereby having a balanced research of the representation in the newspapers. The cases also served to answer the research question of this study, which focussed on the representation of the destruction of cultural property in the newspapers throughout the Revolution. Throughout the research, the newspapers continued to present 'their' people and nation in a favourable position, compared to the depiction of the opposition as the enemy, the one that does not belong in Ireland. During the Easter Rising and destruction of Big Houses, the Irish newspapers appeared to suggest that British landmarks and symbols, should be removed if the Republic or State of Ireland were to work properly, whereas the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers were depicting the Volunteers and IRA as the enemies that terrorised Ireland and thus the Empire.

I noticed a significant shift in news reports when researching the Belfast Pogroms, where these newspapers did the opposite. The Irish newspapers implied that the Catholics were the victims, as the

English newspapers positioned the owners of the Big Houses that were destroyed as victims, whereas the Unionists were seen by the Irish newspapers as the main instigators of the riots and the pogroms. The English newspapers seemed to suggest that Sinn Féin and the Nationalists in Belfast should be held responsible for the situation. The Anglo-Irish newspapers in general appeared to be Pro-Britain, but sometimes a report highlighted that the Catholics suffered most in the conflict, and that the Unionists were also responsible for the pogroms.

In general, and in accordance with the theory of Anderson, it is not surprising that people and thus the newspapers prefer to present their own group positively, especially when the intellectual imagined community has been established. It then becomes even more important to define the community and who is perceived to be part of it. The newspapers play an important role in this, because they, especially in a time before digital technologies, were the main medium through which the public was reached. Establishing this strong sense of belonging and clearly defining who is part of the community and who is not, is key in building a new nation.

The destructions throughout these cases were often seen as a loss to the country, whether the newspapers were Irish, Anglo-Irish, or English. However, it should be mentioned that the Irish newspapers mourned the loss less than the other newspapers, and could appreciate the Big Houses, but mostly when these were already part of Irish history, like some of the castles destroyed. Other mansions they could appreciate for their craftsmanship, but the overall implication was that another British symbol of oppression was removed from the Irish landscape. During the Pogroms, the Irish newspapers hinted sometimes at the long history the Catholic Irish had on the island, indicating that it were the Protestants that had no right to expel Catholics from their home. The other newspapers seemed to focus on the loss of the Unionists in the Belfast pogroms, and that this group only acted out of self-defence or as a reprisal for actions of Sinn Féin.

By conducting this research, I have shown that the newspapers presented the destruction of buildings during the Irish Revolution in a framework of cultural property destruction – “Us” versus “Them” – in which nationalistic beliefs played a role as well. This is where nationalism and the role of the newspapers merge with othering, thus where the community is defined to an extent that outsiders are seen as ‘the other.’ Generally, othering is applied along lines of civilized-uncivilized or human-not human, but in this research it was applied along the lines of communities, and who belonged to that community, and which ‘others’ did not.

Well-established authors, like Donnelly or Campbell have written extensively about Irish nationalism and the destruction of Big Houses, and there have been studies that focussed on the press in Ireland and Britain, like Ballin. However, I have contributed to the existing literature, by combining the representation in the newspapers, with the destruction of cultural property and nationalism. Departing from a theory combined from Anderson’s imagined communities and othering, I have shown that the newspapers applied othering to varying extents, thereby creating a stronger sense of belonging to a community, by

negatively depicting the 'other' opposing group. For the Irish newspapers, this was Britain, its forces and its government in Ireland, whereas the Anglo-Irish and English newspapers depicted the IRA and Sinn Fein negatively, to make Britain look better.

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