CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY: HOW THE IRISH BECAME EUROPEAN

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February 2023

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Hudson Meadwell for his support, patience, and invaluable insight throughout the process of writing this thesis. It would not be what it is today, in its current form, without his knowledge and advice. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Juliet Johnson for giving me the nudge I needed to begin this research project. Her encouragement was the reason I took on this task, and I am grateful to have seen it to the end.

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In a referendum held on the 10th of May 1972, the Republic of Ireland voted to join the European Economic Community in overwhelming fashion. With turnout as high as 70.9 percent, the 'Yes' campaign managed an impressive 83.1 percent of the total vote. Such high levels of enthusiasm for EEC membership, which would remain unmatched for decades, hint at an Irish vision of Europe as a place for economic development, stability, and positive cultural exchange. This vision was the result of a long process of identity formation in Ireland which goes back before even Irish independence. Beginning with the formation of the Irish Free State in 1921, this project traces the origins of a pan-European identity in Ireland, and its relationship with Irish national identity. Using primary and secondary source documents from three crucial time periods in the 20th century, it shows how Ireland's political elite drew from their country's rich cultural and mnemonic history to functionally equate the emerging Irish national identity with a larger pan-European identity. By placing Ireland firmly within European narratives of cultural and political development, I hypothesize that these leaders fostered in Ireland an optimistic vision of Europe and its institutions—a vision which would translate into popular support for EEC membership, and which can still be found in Ireland today. This successful campaign to brand Ireland as a distinctly European nation remains an understudied topic in the otherwise well-developed field of Irish political, social, and cultural history.

Le 10 mai 1972, la République d'Irlande a voté massivement afin de rejoindre la Communauté économique européenne d'une manière écrasante. Le taux de participation a atteint 70,9 pourcents, et le « Oui » a remporté 83,1 pourcents des votes : un résultat très impressionnant. Ce niveau d'optimisme pour le CÉE fut inégalé pendant des décennies, et démontre la manière dont les Irlandais perçoivent l'Europe comme un espace propice au développement économique, la stabilité, et aux échanges culturels positifs. Cette vision est le résultat d'un long processus de de naissance de l'identité irlandaise qui a débuté même avant l'indépendance du pays. Débutant avec la formation de l'État d'Irlande libre en 1921, ce projet retrace les origines de l'identité paneuropéenne en Irlande, ainsi que sa relation avec l'identité nationale irlandais. Ce projet utilise des documents de sources primaires et secondaires pour démontrer la manière dont les élites politiques irlandaises ont puisé dans la riche histoire culturelle et mnémotechnique de leur pays afin de lier cette identité nationale irlandaise émergente avec l'identité paneuropéenne. En ancrant l'Irlande dans les récits européens du développement culturel et politique, j'avance l'hypothèse que ces élites irlandaises ont encouragé l'adoption d'une vision optimiste de l'Europe et de ses institutions. Celle-ci se traduirait alors par un soutien général vis-à-vis de l'adhésion à la CÉE, que l'on retrouve encore aujourd'hui en Irlande. Cette campagne réussie pour définir l'Irlande une nation européenne distincte est sous-étudiée aujourd'hui, notamment dans le domaine pourtant bien développé de l'histoire politique, sociale, et culturelle d'Irlande.

Chapter I: Overview

Introduction

The 1973 enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC)[1] was a watershed moment

for the European project. In adding Denmark, the Republic of Ireland (henceforth Ireland), and

the United Kingdom (UK), the EEC showed for the first time that it was committed to expanding

its mandate beyond the 'Six' core founding members (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the

Netherlands, and West Germany). In the case of Ireland, accession to the EEC was the final

result of over a decade of extensive internal planning and debate. From political elites to

everyday citizens, the possibility of 'joining Europe' offered a tantalizing—or

frightening—vision for Ireland's future. In the years preceding the referendum, political factions

fought to influence public opinion, making their cases for why Ireland should or should not join

the EEC. There was, of course, a clear winner in this contest: in the 1972 referendum, 70.9

percent of potential voters turned out, of which 83.1 percent voted to join the EEC (RTÉ

Archives, 2017). Such a popular mandate for European membership was unprecedented at the

time, and would not be surpassed until the 2004 Eastern enlargement.

This result prompts the question: how did such a strong pan-European identity develop in

Ireland, given the country's peripheral role in the 'founding myths of Europe' of the twentieth

century? I hypothesize that Ireland's national identity, which developed into a recognizable form

over the last decades of the colonial period, harkened back to a somewhat mythicized 'European'

Ireland which preceded British colonialism. Ireland's national identity was thus built upon and

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[1] The EEC would merge with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and Euratom to become the
European Communities (EC) in 1965. For purposes of clarity and convenience, this paper will use the terms EEC or
'the common market' to refer to these institutions, as the common market was the main source of motivation for
Ireland's membership; its coal and steel production was minimal, and its nuclear energy industry was nonexistent.

justified by its historical status as a free, equal, and integral part of Europe, broadly understood, and which denied or downplayed the importance of the colonial relationship in the construction of Irish nationhood. Even as the idea of 'Europe' shifted in the postwar years toward a collective political identity, the conflation of 'Irish' with 'European' remained, although it was not yet politically mobilized.

Following the election of Seán Lemass as Taoiseach in 1959, however, this identity was activated in framing the debate about Ireland's future place in Europe. My analysis shows that Lemass, his successor Jack Lynch, and many of their political contemporaries understood that a European dimension remained embedded within the Irish national identity, and consciously played to this dimension in order to garner public support for Irish accession into the EEC. The result is a European identity which has flourished alongside, rather than at the expense of, the national identity, such that 'being Irish' became a sufficient condition for 'being European.'

This project will focus on three important moments in Irish political history: the birth of the Irish Free State in the early 1920s, the establishment of a republic and exit from the Commonwealth in the late 1940s, and finally the long process of EEC accession from 1959–1973. These moments were chosen carefully as time periods in which Irish political and social elites wrote extensively on the Irish-European relationship, leaving behind a number of primary source documents.

While the phenomena of a pan-European identity in Ireland cannot be completely explained by examining the rhetoric of political elites, it is nonetheless useful to understand how these leaders spoke about Europe and Ireland's place within it, given how crucial they were in bringing their country into Europe's institutions. A more thorough examination of the benefits and shortcomings of this methodological approach will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Ireland is in many ways a unique member of the European community, defying several of the standard dichotomies of European identity, be they East-West, continent-anglosphere, or colony-colonizer. By better understanding the circumstances surrounding Ireland's accession to Europe's institutions, and the process through which Ireland came to see itself as a European nation, we can better understand modern European identities in all their nuance and diversity.

Literature Review: Ireland and Europe

Modern research on Irish political, social, and cultural identity is dominated by postcolonial and memory studies frameworks. In particular, postcolonial studies of Irish identity have flourished over the last few decades, much stemming from the seminal work *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Culture* by Cairns & Richards (1988). A large body of work studying the Republic of Ireland and Irish identity through a postcolonialist frame has been published since (Bartolovich & Lazarus 2002; Kearns 2013; Kenny 2004; Livesey & Murray 1997; McCusker & Soares 2011; Ryan & Hayes 2006; Silvestri 2009; White 2010).

Critiquing the postcolonialist approach, other works have called into question the classification of Ireland as a colony and expressed concerns over the limitations of postcolonialism as a reference frame for Ireland (Cleary 2002, Howe 2008). This movement has led to a limited albeit promising canon of work on Irish identity outside of postcolonialism, including what some authors have called 'indigenous studies' (Scanlon & Satish Kumar 2019). Even more recently, the emergence of memory studies as a distinct field in political science research has opened up new ways of examining both the Republic of Ireland (Beiner 2007; Caufield 2014; Corcoran 2002; Frawley 2011; McBride 2001; Pine 2011; Whelan 2001) and

Northern Ireland (Hackett & Rolston 2009; Hearty 2017; Kelleher 2004; Lundy & McGovern 2001; McQuaid 2017; Robinson 2017; Rolston 2010). These works often focus on the collective memory of colonially-charged events, and the role they play in preserving the collective Irish identity.

Although it is clear that much has been written about Irish identity, none of these works explicitly focus on Ireland's relationship to the rest of continental Europe, and how this relationship has influenced that identity. Indeed, outside of descriptive historical accounts of its long and complex accession process (Holmes 2005; Laffan & O'Mahony 2008), the relationship between Ireland and the rest of Europe has been somewhat taken for granted, or at least dismissed as a mere consequence of the country ditching its colonial baggage. The role of political, social, and cultural identity in facilitating Ireland's turn towards Europe over the course of the twentieth century remains understudied.

This thesis contributes to the study of Irish memory and identity formation outside of a postcolonial framework, exploring instead how Ireland came to see itself as a distinctly European nation in its own right. By joining the EEC, Ireland was symbolically separating itself from its former colonial status and reconnecting with a bygone 'European' past. Examining this turn towards Europe is better suited through a lens of comparative historical analysis. With the data available, qualitative discourse analysis lends itself as a useful strategy. The next section goes into greater depth on the particular advantages and challenges of these methodological approaches.

Data & Methodology

Although this thesis takes a qualitative approach using discourse analysis, there is room for additional methods with further data collection. In particular, Cullen (2010) has compiled a comprehensive list of speeches by Seán Lemass including date, topic, and location, which would be an excellent resource for large-N studies on Lemass's rhetoric towards Europe, as well as a host of other topics. Full access to Lemass's speeches, many of which are carbon-copy and kept in archives at the National Archives of Ireland and The Irish Times in Dublin, would be an excellent starting point for further research. Without physical access to these archives, this thesis is left to examine an otherwise much smaller dataset which can be accessed online. The methodological implications, however, offer particular strengths.

Data

This project will focus primarily on elite Irish conceptions of Europe, including those of politicians and top diplomats, both domestic and foreign. While focusing on elite narratives can limit the scope of findings, it considerably streamlines the process of data collection, and allows for better comparison over the long time periods within which this project will be working. The role of mass opinions in identity formation cannot be completely overlooked, however. The efforts of Seán Lemass and his Fianna Fáil party would have been all for nought if Ireland's population had not consistently voted them into power, or if it had rejected joining the EEC in the 1972 referendum. It will therefore be useful to incorporate, when possible, indications of mass opinion alongside those of political elites: election and referendum results, for example. This data will be less consistently available, and the scope of their utility will be significantly

limited. Yet their inclusion is a necessary supplement to the primary dataset for this project. Elites make political decisions, but identity formation is strongly dependent on mass opinion. Understanding the limitations of an elite-focused approach, I argue that it is nonetheless a useful first step in answering the relevant questions. By including indications of mass opinion when possible, this project can get closer to tracing the relationship between elite and non-elite ideas of identity in Ireland during this time period.

This project will first examine two 'inflection points' in Irish history. Beginning in 1921 and the establishment of the Irish Free State, it will examine existing literature on Irish national identity and nationhood in the run-up to the Free State, including records of Anglo-Irish negotiations, exploring how identity rhetoric was used to justify the establishment of the Irish state. A similar process will be employed to examine a second inflection point: Ireland's exit from the Commonwealth and the formal declaration of a Republic in 1949. Of particular interest will be the strategies employed by political elites at the time to construct the dual concepts of an Irish identity and Irish 'nation' among the general population. Both of these historical moments have been studied extensively, and the project will make use of their well-developed secondary literature to reconstruct their political dynamics.

With this backdrop, it will then consider the main period of 1959-1973, during which Ireland's political elites spoke and wrote most extensively on the Irish-European relationship. Using primary source data from the time period, this main section's goals will be twofold: (1) to explore if, and if so then how, the Irish elite acknowledged a European identity among the Irish people; and (2) to examine the extent to which this process resembled the development of Irish national identity which occurred several decades earlier, including how European identity was framed in terms of Irish identity.

Aside from the use of a rich secondary literature written by political scientists and historians, the primary evidence will mainly be in the form of political speeches, parliamentary floor debates, government memorandums, and other primary source documents, beginning in 1921 but especially after 1959. Given the heterogeneity of the primary evidence (both chronologically and topically), its relatively small size, and the type of research question posed, qualitative discourse analysis will be the most effective method of analyzation. The majority of data will be taken from online databases, specifically the University of Luxembourg's CVCE.eu database on European integration, the Archive of European Integration at the University of Pittsburgh, and Documents on Irish Foreign Policy through the Irish Royal Academy.[2]

These databases provide access to a diverse number of political documents relating to Irish independence and accession, including diplomatic negotiations, speeches, floor debates, newspaper articles, political pamphlets, labor union manifestos, and clerical documents. The diverse makeup of the dataset presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, having data from such a wide range of sources means that findings can be corroborated across different types of data; if similar ideas are present in different types of sources, their pervasiveness into greater Irish society is more likely. On the other hand, diverse datasets can pose methodological problems. Political speeches have different functions than newspaper articles, and both are different in function and form than opinions from labor leaders. Applying the same analytical framework to fundamentally different types of data must be done carefully. Furthermore, all of these data sets suffer from a potential survivorship bias. Which documents are included in the databases, and which are left out, will ultimately introduce difficulty. Whether a specific narrative is being prioritized or not, one must be careful when analyzing these databases not to assume that they are by any means comprehensive.

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[2] The databases can be found at cvce.eu, aei.pitt.edu, and difp.ie.

Methodology: Comparative Historical Analysis

The most general methodological approach for this study is comparative historical analysis (CHA). At its core, CHA is concerned with identifying causal relationships, examining historical sequences, and considering the effects of temporal processes as they unfold. This fits well with the chronological structure of this project, and the causal nature of my hypothesis. Recalling the three time periods of this study, it becomes clear that the causal process behind my core thesis—that specific features of early Irish identity influenced later developments—can be best tested in this manner. In addition, CHA's emphasis on contextual comparison between cases will be useful for comparing Ireland's relationship with Europe to that of the UK or other states. Finally, CHA is compatible with diverse methodologies, allowing me to analyze the available data in the most effective way without compromising the methodological integrity of the study. More specific information on strategies for data collection and analysis can be found further below, following a deeper analysis of the specific benefits and drawbacks of CHA in this particular case.

The growth of CHA as a research method in recent decades has been facilitated by a focus on the importance of causal pathways, and of emphasizing contextual differences between distinct cases (Mahoney & Thelen 2015). This is important, as the purpose of this thesis is not to endorse the paradigmatic nature of the Irish case, but rather to identify what distinguishes Ireland from other European narratives of identity. In so doing, the importance of time as a contextual factor cannot be understated. In the book *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, contributor Paul Pierson describes the time horizons of different causal accounts, categorizing both causes and outcomes into 'short' and 'long' timespans (Pierson 2003, 179). In the Irish

case, both the cause and outcome can be described as unfolding in the long term. The emergence of Irish national identity (and its hypothesized embedded European dimension) has been the result of a long culmination of sociopolitical factors, which this project will address through the examination of particular inflection points. While these time periods are moments of significant socio-political change, they are also periods of rapid institutional consolidation and political contestation, in which long-term developments were given permanence in political institutions and materially-preserved documents. The term 'inflection point' is meant to indicate this complex status. Finally, the timeline has a clearly identifiable endpoint: the 1973 referendum on accession and the legislation that enabled Irish membership in the EEC.

In his book *Politics in Time* (2011), Pierson describes the three types of slow-moving, *longue durée* causal processes: cumulative causes, threshold effects, and causal chains. The final type, causal chains, indicates a relationship where "ultimate outcomes of interest reflect a sequence of key developments over extended periods of time" (Pierson 2004, 87). This categorization effectively captures important aspects of this project—which is, at its core, an examination of the key developments which over the course of the 20th century led to the outcome of interest. Exactly when a causal chain begins or ends can often be a source of criticism for causal chain theories. However, this section has hopefully made clear that the beginning and end of this study's time frame are carefully chosen as periods in which long-term development is consolidated in politically momentous episodes which yield easily-accessible data. These are the time periods in which the processes of identity formation and political mobilization are most theoretically relevant and easiest to access.

It should be noted that this process is also in some ways a cumulative one, in which "important social conditions...change dramatically over extended periods of time but at a very

slow pace" (Pierson 2004, 82). The events of 1973 are very much indebted to those of 1949, and those again to 1922. In this sense, the slow but steady incorporation of the European dimension into Irish national identity clearly has features which resemble a cumulative process. By focusing on specific time periods, this study will be able to identify the causal chain through which events unfolded. Yet at the same time, treating these time periods as moments of consolidation allows this project to appreciate the truly expansive time frame of this study, and the important changes which slowly accumulate.

Methodology: Qualitative Discourse Analysis

Having carefully defined the time and scope of this study, it will be useful to explain in further detail the method with which data will be analyzed. Discourse analysis is a methodological tool often applied in CHA to study speeches and political documents (see Milliken 1999). The chapter "Passions of Identification: Discourse, Enjoyment, and European Identity" by Yannis Starvakakis (2005) is a good starting point to examine how discourse analysis might be useful in the study of European and national identity construction. Starvakakis draws heavily from Jacques Lacan (1962) to argue that, in the study of constructed identities, it can be helpful to apply psychoanalytic concepts while employing discourse analysis. Since "the problem of identity is not a question of people *discovering* or *recognizing* their true, essential identity but of *constructing* it" (Stavrakakis 2005, 70, italics in original), it is useful to understand how identities are constructed. What makes an identity? Who constructs them? And if a national identity itself contains another dimension (i.e., European), where and how do they intersect?

National identities have complex and diverse origins, but top-down diffusion from political elites can be effective in constructing or reviving identities, especially when anchored

by dramatic political and/or socioeconomic changes. Pan-European identities, for their part, are highly normative and also usually constructed from the top-down: "There seems to be little doubt that the preoccupation with 'European identity' emerges as a primarily top-down strategy to foster popular support for the project of European integration and unification" (Stavrakakis 2005, 81). Yet building a pan-European identity which includes enthusiasm for further integration has not been easy. These shortcomings, and the perpetual relevance of national identities, offer clues at what might constitute effective identity constructions, and what to look for in rhetorical and political documents which seek to do it.

According to Stravrakakis, what is missing from European identity-building is "the substance behind the projected image of Europe," which "can clearly be associated with the libidinal/affective dimension of identification" (2005, 82). This 'dimension of affect and enjoyment' is a crucial aspect of the potency of national identity, which despite Enlightenment and modernist interpretations cannot escape its cultural and deeply emotional foundations. In the Irish case, national identity was firmly established in the long struggle for independence; the mnemonic significance of events such as the Easter Rising function as historical touchstones (Beiner 2007), while art, literature, parades, and festivals reinforce a shared cultural heritage (Collins & Caufield 2014; Kilberd 1996; Livesy & Murray 1997; McBride 2001; Pine 2011). The most effective strategy for building a European identity among the Irish populace was not to supersede being 'Irish' with being 'European,' but rather to equate the two. As the national identity became more synonymous with the European identity, the affective dimension of the former diffused into the latter.

This process of identity construction best characterizes that which took place in Ireland over the twentieth century. By equating their images, Ireland's political elite painted 'Irish' as a

sufficient condition for 'European.' They did not deconstruct the Irish identity, but rather built a European one within the same framework. This method for European identity-building proved effective, and is one of many reasons why the Irish were especially supportive of the European integration project (with notable exceptions later on; see Holmes 2005).

Background

Before going further, it will be necessary to provide some historical context to the three main time periods of this project. While this section is not comprehensive, it should serve as a good baseline for understanding the events of interest.

The Irish Free State

The first time period under examination is the birth of the Irish Free State, which was officially established in December 1922, following the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. This treaty ended the Irish War of Independence, a three-year conflict in which Irish Republican forces of various factions fought against forces of the British Crown. The treaty, which granted 26 of Ireland's 32 counties Dominion status within the British Commonwealth, established a constitutional monarchy with executive power vested in the Crown in the form of the Governor-General and his appointed cabinet, known as the Executive Council. Legislative power was vested in a three-tier parliament, known as the Oireachtas. This consisted of the King, the Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) and the Dáil Éireann (Irish Commons). While this political arrangement was enough to end the Irish War of Independence, it was still fiercely opposed by hardline Irish republicans who wished for complete separation and independence from the

British Crown. These tensions culminated in the Irish Civil War, fought between pro- and anti-Treaty Irish forces until May 1923, when the latter group agreed to disarm.

Yet despite the ceasefire, political tensions between moderates and hardline republicans persisted; Sinn Féin, an anti-Treaty party which would not accept anything short of a united and fully independent Ireland, would refuse to take its seats in the Dáil until well into the latter half of the 20th century. Many of Sinn Féin's members would eventually leave the party due to widespread frustration with this policy, and when Sinn Féin president Éamon de Valera left the party to establish Fianna Fáil in 1926, widespread defection followed. Fianna Fáil would enter the Dáil in 1927, and in 1932 became the majority party in government, marking a significant shift in the political ambitions of the Free State.

The political institutions of the Irish Free State would remain in place until the 1937 Constitution of Ireland, which was passed by popular referendum under the leadership of de Valera. The Constitution made Ireland a republic in all but name, with a largely ceremonial President elected by the public, and a head of government (Taoiseach) appointed by the President. Passed in conjunction with the new Constitution, the Executive Authority Act (also known as the External Relations Act) of 1936 limited powers of the British Crown to matters of external relations, effectively ending the influence of the monarchy over internal Irish affairs. The Constitution of 1937, which has been amended several times over the course of its history, remains the oldest republican constitution still in force in the EU.

The Republic of Ireland Act

The Constitution of 1937 had made Ireland an independent republic in all but name. However, it was not until the Republic of Ireland Act of 1948 that this status became official and the last

vestiges of British monarchical authority were removed from Ireland's political institutions. The Act—which formally repealed the External Relations Act and officially declared Ireland a republic—was formally voted on following the 1948 election of Taoiseach John A. Costello and his Fine Gael party, and came into effect on Easter Monday of 1949—thirty-three years after the Easter Rising. The largely symbolic nature of its passage, and the clearly symbolic date on which it came into force, served to reinforce the nation's collective identity and history, and tied the Irish republican state to the memory of those who fought and died for Irish independence. The symbolism of this era would take inspiration from Ireland's leaders a quarter-century before, and would itself serve as inspiration for later leaders who would seek to unite an independent Ireland with the greater European community.

The Long Path to Accession

The accession of Ireland into the EEC was a long, alinear process which has been well documented and studied. This thesis does not attempt to provide a rigorous history of how Ireland joined Europe's institutions. However, it is important to know at least the major details of this process as it unfolded over the fourteen-year span between Lemass's election as Taoiseach in 1959 and Ireland's eventual accession in 1973. For a more thorough explanation of this process, see Chapter 1 of Laffan & O'Mahony (2008).

Ireland's motivations for joining the EEC were strongly connected to the UK's own pursuits to join the common market. Although by 1959 Ireland had been nominally independent for decades, its economy was still largely dependent on Britain: as of 1959, the UK bought 75 percent of all Ireland's exports, and was the source of 52 percent of its imports (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008, 19). This meant that any attempt by the UK to join the common market (as it

tried to do in 1961 and 1967, the latter attempt eventually being successful) would mean economic disaster for Ireland unless they too joined. It also meant that Ireland could not join the EEC on its own; the result is a non-negotiable caveat that Ireland and the UK join at the same time, or not at all. This reality had profound implications for the status of Irish membership, as French President Charles de Gaulle's two-time rejection of UK membership effectively killed Ireland's attempts as collateral damage.
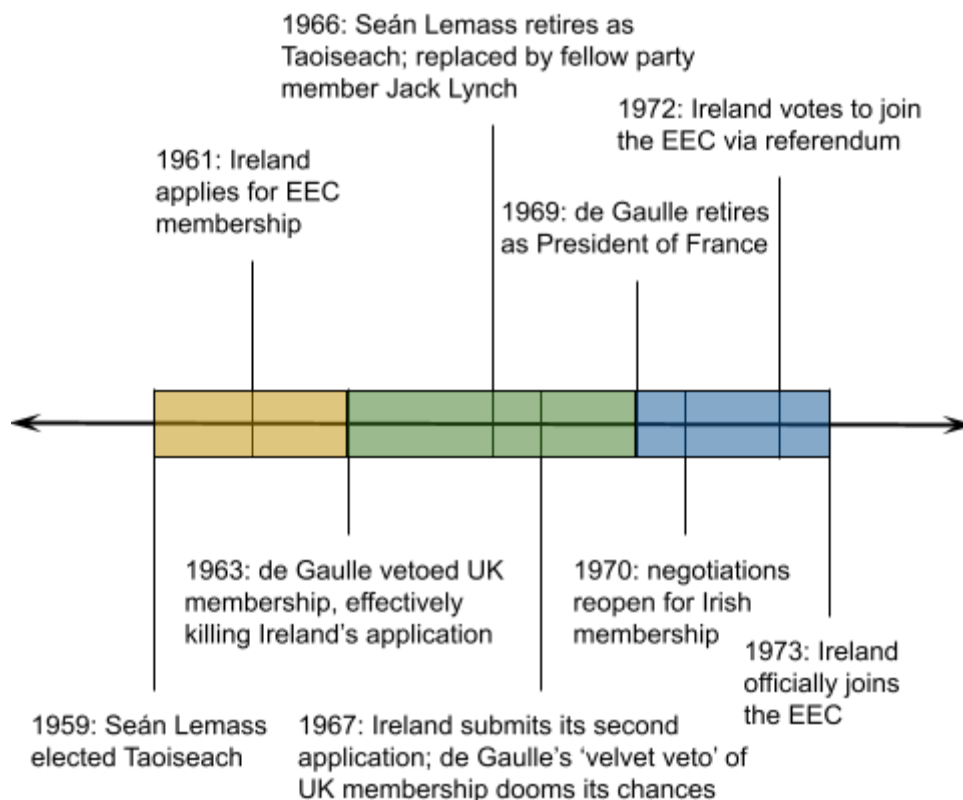
Beyond the UK, Ireland had significant motivations for joining the EEC in its own right. Being a largely agricultural economy at the time, the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and internally fixed prices on agricultural goods would be greatly beneficial to Irish farmers. Consequently, organizations representing Irish farmers and agriculture were some of the strongest supporters for accession.

Ireland's economy, however, lagged well behind those of the Six. In general, the social welfare of the average Irish citizen was far below the Western European standard through the 1950s and 60s. Lemass, over his seven years in power, made several attempts to industrialize and modernize the Irish economy in preparation for EEC accession, with relatively positive success. Still, the wide economic gap between Ireland and the Six remained a constant source of discomfort for officials both in Ireland and on the continent. Even as Ireland was joining the EEC in 1973, it was well understood by both sides that Ireland would be a net beneficiary of funds for the foreseeable future (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008; see Chapter 1).

Still, the prospect of economic growth within the common market, along with the geopolitical and symbolic benefits of becoming a full member in a wealthy and multilateral organization (which was, crucially, not dominated by the UK), remained overwhelmingly tempting for Irish politicians in both the major Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael parties. Despite

reservations regarding the Irish economy, and concerns regarding its perpetually non-aligned status in international affairs, the Six tended to see Irish accession as a net positive for the EEC, as Ireland would hopefully become an example for the potential of developing economies to rapidly progress within the framework of the common market.

For the purposes of this thesis, it can be useful to think of the process of Irish accession into the EEC as divided into three time periods: 1959-1963, 1963-1969, and 1969-1973. These time periods align roughly with Ireland's three attempts to join the EEC (though only two applications were submitted). The first begins with the election of pro-European politician Seán Lemass as Taoiseach in 1959. It includes the submission of Ireland's first application for EEC membership in 1961 (on the heels of the UK's), and ends with de Gaulle's veto of UK membership in 1963, after which Ireland's application for membership was de facto dead. The next period is marked by Seán Lemass's retirement as Taoiseach in 1966, succeeded by fellow Fianna Fáil member and pro-European Jack Lynch. Ireland submitted its second application in 1967, a full fifteen minutes after the UK's own reattempt, but de Gaulle's 'velvet veto' of the UK application again dashed Ireland's hopes. The third period began with de Gaulle's retirement in 1969, which finally reopened the door for expansion of EEC membership. It includes the reopening of negotiations in 1970, Ireland's 1972 referendum, and ends with the formal admission of Ireland, Denmark, and the UK in 1973. A timeline of important dates and events can be found below in Figure 1.

1966: Seán Lemass retires as Taoiseach; replaced by fellow party member Jack Lynch

1972: Ireland votes to join the EEC via referendum

1961: Ireland applies for EEC membership

1969: de Gaulle retires as President of France

1963: de Gaulle vetoed UK membership, effectively killing Ireland's application

1970: negotiations reopen for Irish membership

1973: Ireland officially joins the EEC

1959: Seán Lemass elected Taoiseach

1967: Ireland submits its second application; de Gaulle's 'velvet veto' of UK membership dooms its chances

A timeline of major events regarding Irish accession

Over this fourteen-year time period, the EEC itself was evolving into a closer and more consolidated union, such that the organization which Ireland eventually joined in 1973 was much more extensive than that which Lemass and his Government initially sought to join in 1961. During the Hague Summit of 1969 the Six committed the EEC to expansion, while also setting goals for further political integration. Ireland's long tradition of non-alignment in international conflicts, and crucially its absence from the NATO alliance, made this a somewhat awkward goal in the Irish context. Fears of losing political sovereignty also upset more radical Irish nationalists, who saw accession as undoing the long and painful fight for independence from Britain only a few decades past. Other sources of opposition to accession came from labor and the protectionist left, as well as most socialists, who disliked the idea of economic rules being imposed on Ireland from a capitalist and (in some eyes) quasi-imperialist EEC still exploiting the

Global South. Yet Ireland's labor movement was only in its infancy during this time period, and it lacked the resources and raw voting power to make much of a difference; the country on the whole remained overwhelmingly pro-European.

The process of Ireland's accession to the EEC was long and certainly not guaranteed. While major setbacks in 1963 and 1967 dampened hopes, Ireland's political elite remained optimistic that with time and preparation, Ireland would be able to join the common market as a full member. These hopes did not change as the EEC grew beyond just a common market and moved towards a closer political union—indeed, by some accounts this only strengthened the Irish resolve not to be left behind. By 1973, Ireland was joining an organization which was increasingly identifying itself as synonymous with Europe.

As the Six started to wonder what it really means to be European, and how to go about constructing and consolidating a modern European identity within the framework of the EEC, Ireland's political elite began to explore how Ireland fit into this emerging narrative. Their success in doing so prompts the question: How could a nation relatively untouched by World War II and the Holocaust identify so strongly with the postwar European project? The remainder of this project examines this phenomenon.

Chapter II: The Irish Free State

Introduction

Before analyzing identity rhetoric surrounding the accession of Ireland into the EEC, we must first look closer to the origins of the Irish national identity itself. Specifically, how did political elites frame this identity at the time of Irish independence? How did they describe Ireland's place in, and relationship with, Europe? Understanding these issues will allow us to better trace how the Irish identity, and its European dimension, was later utilized to bolster support for EEC accession.

While the emergence of an Irish national consciousness can be traced well back into at least the 18th century, this chapter will focus on the years immediately preceding the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Specifically, the primary sources for this section date between the years 1919 and 1922, during which Ireland was locked in a struggle for independence from the UK. In this time period, the leaders of the fledgling Irish state sought to consolidate the new nation's identity domestically, while gaining international sympathy and support for their cause. As a result, a great number of written documents from Irish political leaders directly engaging with the concept of an Irish nation and people have emerged from this era, making it ripe for study.

The data for this section consists of documents taken from the online database Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, published in cooperation between the Royal Irish Academy, the National Archives, and the Department of Foreign Affairs. These documents include letters between Irish political leaders, internal memorandums from the Department of Foreign Affairs, and external memorandums sent to foreign leaders. It becomes clear through an examination of

these documents that Ireland's leaders were well in tune with the international zeitgeist following World War I, and were eager to take advantage. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and the rise of support for national self-determination for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, led many in Ireland to hope that their own struggle for independence could be tied into these narratives. To serve this end, Ireland's political leaders would come to stress the distinct nature of Irish society compared to that of England.[3] Catholicism would of course become a core tenet of the Irish identity for these reasons (see White 2010). In addition, the country's Gaelic cultural and linguistic heritage functioned as a social foundation wholly distinct from the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the island's former elites (O'Mahony & Delanty 38). Ireland's leaders hoped that emphasizing Ireland as a distinct nation and people who had suffered under the yolk of English oppression would allow their cause to garner the same type of international sympathy which the Poles, Serbs, or Hungarians enjoyed. In particular, the great number of Irish immigrants in the United States, and their increasingly strong political presence there, led many of these men to hope that the US would become a strong ally to the Irish cause.

A key aspect of this mission to garner international sympathy was to tie Ireland into the larger European identity. In many ways, the international legitimacy of the Irish national project was *dependent* upon being successfully viewed by the rest of Europe as a truly distinct European people. There were two key steps to accomplishing this task. First, as previously mentioned, Ireland's leaders sought to firmly distinguish Ireland from England on a linguistic, cultural, social, and religious level. Aside from being an important step in the process of nation-building, this also served to emphasize the injustice of Ireland's experience under English colonial rule. Secondly, these leaders then sought to place this identity within the larger European narrative, in

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[3] Throughout the documents which serve as the data for this chapter, Ireland's leaders refer to England rather than Britain or the UK. Thus, for the sake of continuity, this chapter will also use England rather than these admittedly more accurate terms.

particular stressing the idea of "an exalted, Gaelic civilisation that, far from being the subject-matter of derision, had in their eyes actually guaranteed the continuity of European civilisation in early medieval Europe" (O'Mahony & Delanty 78). By appealing to this historical, precolonial history of Ireland, the nation's leaders were able to paint it as a crucial member of the European civilizational community, and thus, in the eyes of Europe, as deserving of independence and self-determination as any people formerly under Hapsburg or Ottoman rule.

This chapter will incorporate primary source documents written by Ireland's political leaders from 1919-1922 to show how these leaders sought to portray Ireland's political and social identity, both domestically and internationally. As we will see, these men largely followed the strategy laid out above. Its successful implementation is a testament to the power of appealing to a pan-European identity to the Irish people, and indeed to Europe as a whole. The power of this rhetorical tool would not be forgotten by Ireland's leaders.

'Irish' As Distinct from 'English'

A crucial part of constructing the Irish identity was to firmly distinguish it from that of England. Plenty has been written about the catholic and Gaelic dimensions of Ireland's identity, and their importance in distinguishing Irish history and culture from Anglo-Saxon; this section will not rehash those arguments. Rather, this section will examine how Ireland's leaders framed the distinction between Ireland and England, seeing it as an important step in garnering international recognition of Ireland as a European nation in its own right. So long as Ireland was considered by Europe as a cultural (and therefore political) extension of England, it would struggle to garner

much sympathy for independence. On the domestic front, distinguishing Irish from English was

equally important, serving to foster a durable national consciousness.

One of the ways this distinction was fostered was to emphasize the 'ancient-ness' of the

Irish people, which long precedes the arrival of the English on the island; references to an

'ancient Irish people/nation' can be found throughout these documents. Ireland's own

Declaration of Independence, written at the beginning of the War of Independence in 1919,

contains the words:

> Now, therefore, we, the elected Representatives of the *ancient Irish people* in
> National Parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the
> establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make
> this declaration effective by every means at our command…(italics added)[4]

It is clear from the wording of this document that through the phrase 'ancient Irish people,'

Ireland's leaders are seeking to give their new nation a historical legitimacy that predated English

colonialism. This rhetorical tactic is even more pronounced in a second document, published the

same day as the Declaration of Independence, titled 'Message to the Free Nations of the World.'

One of the first paragraphs of the document reads:

> Nationally, the race, the language, the customs and traditions of Ireland are
> radically distinct from the English. Ireland is one of the most ancient nations in
> Europe, and she has preserved her national integrity, vigorous and intact, through
> seven centuries of foreign oppression: she has never relinquished her national
> rights, and throughout the long era of English usurpation she has in every
> generation defiantly proclaimed her inalienable right of nationhood down to her
> last glorious resort to arms in 1916.[5]

This language reinforces the idea of an ancient Irish nation and its distinct nature from England.

Yet it also seeks to emphasize that, even throughout English colonization, Ireland's 'national

integrity' has remained 'vigorously intact.' In other words, the English colonial project has

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[4] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/declaration-of-independence/1/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

[5] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/message-to-the-free-nations-of-the-world/2/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

failed; even hundreds of years later, the Irish people have retained their independence and national spirit. Asserting the ancient sovereignty of the Irish nation would become a common feature throughout this era of rhetoric. Consider this excerpt from a document titled 'Official Memorandum in Support of Ireland's Demand for Recognition as a Sovereign Independent State.' The document was presented by Irish representatives at the Paris Peace Conference to Georges Clemenceau and other high-ranking foreign officials in June 1919. One section reads:

> IRELAND IS A NATION, not merely for the reason which, in the case of other countries, has been taken as pre-sufficient, that she has claimed at all times, and still claims to be, a nation, but also because, even though no claim were put forward on her behalf, history shows her to be a distinct nation from remotely ancient times.
>
> For over a thousand years Ireland possessed, and fully exercised, Sovereign Independence, and was recognised through Europe as a distinct Sovereign State. (capitals in original)[6]

Again we see the appeals to a precolonial, ancient nation of Ireland—and one recognized by the rest of Europe as such. Reasserting this status in Europe was a key aspect of Irish foreign policy throughout this era. This is explicitly laid out in a memorandum entitled 'The Future of Our Foreign Affairs,' published after independence in April 1922. One section of the memorandum reads:

> The insularity which for a hundred years had characterised Irish modes of thought and life was the most fruitful source of the disappearance of Ireland from the perspective of the Continent prior to the Rebellion of 1916.
>
> To be ignored was to be non-existent and broadly speaking the Continental [*sic*] considered Ireland up to half a dozen years ago as part and parcel of England. And she was not even a separate part except when her supposed drunken and lazy habits were emphasised by English propaganda.

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[6]
https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/official-memorandum-in-support-of-irelands-demand-for-recognition-as-a-sovereign-independent-state-presented-to-georges-clemenceau-and-the-members-of-the-paris-peace-conference-by-sean-t-oceallaigh/13/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

> What a change from the two preceding centuries! Ireland was treated as a country with distinct national rights by every Nation on the Continent, and her Envoys sent in secret were received by foreign Sovereigns. The tradition of Ireland's contribution to World civilisation was still strong. Her Armies fought on every battlefield and if they fought under foreign Princes their battles were nevertheless waged for Ireland.[7]

Continental recognition of Ireland as a distinct and independent European state seems to be the fundamental building block of Ireland's post-World War I strategy for foreign affairs. As these examples show, reasserting Ireland's national identity and its place in Europe required first and foremost distinguishing Ireland from England. This is why, in the negotiations which ended the War of Independence, Ireland's leaders steadfastly refused the term 'Dominion,' such as that which Canada was labeled at the time. They felt such a label would diminish the status of the Irish nation, and imply that the newly independent country is somehow beholden to English cultural dominance. This can be directly seen in the document 'Memorandum of the Proposals of the Irish Delegates to the British Representatives.' Dating directly to the negotiations which brought an end to the War of Independence in 1921, the second paragraph reads:

> The nation is sacred and eternal to the mind and heart of the people of Ireland. Any attempt to dishonour or disrupt it is resented by the individual in Ireland with a more passionate intensity than he would resist attack upon himself. This fact, whatever view people of another nationality may hold of it is the dominating fact of Ireland, and no statesmanship can, therefore, leave it out of account. If Irish National aspirations are to be reconciled with the British community of nations, British statesmanship must keep the fact constantly before its mind that Ireland is no colony or dependency but an ancient and spirited nation.[8]

The next year, a newly independent Ireland would seek membership in the League of Nations. In a document titled, "Memorandum on Irish Membership of the League of Nations,' Irish leaders hold steadfast to the idea of the historical Irish nation:

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[7]
https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1922/memorandum-the-future-of-our-foreign-affairs-by-george-gavan-duffy/276/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

[8]
https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1921/memorandum-of-the-proposals-of-the-irish-delegates-to-the-british-representatives/175/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

> [Membership in the League of Nations] would do more than this. It would give Ireland at once secure international recognition, not as a British Dominion on the same level as Canada but as the Historic Irish Nation; it would place us at once in the mind of Europe, on a level with the fundamental Nations of Europe, more especially as our outlook and our policy as Members of the League would be those of a Nation with historical associations and not those of a Dominion.[9]

Clearly, building the Irish national identity required clearly defining Ireland as an ancient historical nation, rather than as some extension or mere dominion of England. The idea of an ancient, distinct, precolonial Irish nation with a fundamental role in building European and Christian civilization permeates political rhetoric in the years preceding independence. This view of precolonial Ireland would come to serve as a core tenet of the Irish national identity.

Ireland's Place in Europe and the World

Having firmly distinguished Ireland from England, and having clearly laid out the historical and cultural foundations of the Irish nation, Ireland's leaders were faced with the task of placing their new country within the larger European and international community. What was Ireland's place in the post-World War I landscape? How did it see itself on the international stage? There are a multitude of documents from this time period which give us insight into how Ireland's elite viewed these issues.

First and foremost, a newly independent Ireland sought to claim its place among the community of European nations. Its geographic location placed it on the periphery of the continent, and this status led its leaders to emphasize the status of Ireland as a sort of 'gateway to

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[9]

https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1922/memorandum-on-irish-membership-of-the-league-of-nations-by-patrick-sarsfield-ohegarty-with-covering-note-by-j-j-walsh/320/#section-documentpage [accessed 26 May 2022]

Europe.' In the previously quoted Message to the Free Nations of the World, published in

January 1919, Ireland's leaders give voice to this sentiment:

> Internationally, Ireland is the gateway of the Atlantic. Ireland is the last outpost of
> Europe towards the West: Ireland is the point upon which great trade routes
> between East and West converge: her independence is demanded by the Freedom
> of the Seas: her great harbours must be open to all nations, instead of being the
> monopoly of England. To-day these harbours are empty and idle solely because
> English policy is determined to retain Ireland as a barren bulwark for English
> aggrandisement, and the unique geographical position of this island, far from
> being a benefit and safeguard to Europe and America, is subjected to the purposes
> of England's policy of world domination.[10]

This status as 'the last outpost of Europe toward the West' would be Ireland's entry point into the

greater European and international community. As previously mentioned, Ireland's leaders

during this time period sought to connect the Irish struggle for independence with those of other

newly independent European nations. To this end, one of Ireland's chief foreign policy objectives

during the struggle for independence was to engage diplomatically with friendly European

nations; to remind them of the great deeds of Irishmen on the Continent; and emphasize their

common purpose and mutual values. In an extract from a memo on Dáil Éireann policy, sent to

Sinn Fein founder and chief Irish negotiator Arthur Griffith, this strategy is clearly laid out:

> Similarly the Association of Ireland with the European countries should be
> individually dealt with. Serbia's first organiser and Leader against Turkey 1810
> was Colonel O'Rourke. Italy and Germany, Belgium, Austria - (See association of
> missionaries, soldiers, and teachers) - and Portugal (Look up O'Dunn, Premier in
> 18th century). Remind Liberia and Haiti that Ireland is the only European country
> that never engaged in the Negro slave trade. Remind Bohemia, Poland, Roumania
> and Bulgaria of the similarity of our struggles.[11]

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[10] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/message-to-the-free-nations-of-the-world/2/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

[11] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/extract-from-a-memo-on-dail-eireann-policy-attached-to-a-letter-by-arthur-griffith/3/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

In a letter from future Irish President Sean T. O'Ceallaigh to Georges Clemenceau in February 1919, Ireland continues to assert its right to independence, connecting its cause with the newly founded states of Europe:

> The National Assembly has also caused a detailed statement of the case of Ireland to be drawn up; that statement will demonstrate that the right of Ireland to be considered a nation admits of no denial and, moreover that that right is inferior in no respect to that of the new states constituted in Europe and recognised since the war; three members Eamon de VALERA, Mr. Arthur GRIFFITH and Count PLUNKETT, have been delegated by the National Assembly to present the Statement to the Peace Congress and to the League of Nations Commission in the name of the Irish people. (capitals in original)[12]

This message was reserved not just for foreign diplomats or politicians; in the early years of its struggle for independence, Ireland appealed often to religious leaders, and particularly the Pope. Ireland's status as a majority Catholic nation (and by the admission of its own leaders one of the most devout), paved the way for multiple appeals to the Vatican for support in the cause of Irish independence. In a memorandum to Pope Benedict XV, published in May 1920, Sean T. O'Ceallaigh employs some admittedly racist language to appeal for his nation's cause:

> The Irish National Movement (now commonly known as SINN FEIN) aims simply and solely at the achievement of the sovereign independence of Ireland - in other words, our aim is to obtain that independence which every other white race in the world has already won. We claim merely the same sovereign independence that Poland has won after one hundred and fifty years of slavery and struggle. We claim the same sovereign independence recently granted to many new nations, unfamiliar in name, Protestant as well as Catholic, whose claims fall far short of Ireland's. Ireland's righteous and time-honoured claims have been frequently recognised by Your Holiness's Predecessors and even actively assisted by them as far back as the sixteenth century. Ireland alone of all white nations is denied the universally accepted right of self-determination - that loudly proclaimed and oft-repeated war cry of so many of the contending powers in the late world war, a cry accepted by all of these as one of the basic principles of peace. (capitals in original)[13]

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[12] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1919/sean-t-oceallaigh-to-georges-clemenceau/4/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

[13] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1920/memorandum-by-sean-t-oceallaigh-to-pope-benedict-xv/35/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

Here we see Ireland's leaders asserting their country's place as a 'white' nation. The European status of Ireland seems to have become the source of its justification for independence. This reality is one of the many reasons that Irish leaders were so eager to stress their Catholic credentials. In a 1921 letter to Cardinal Gasparri, Irish politician George Gavan Duffy exclaims that "the Irish Nation is one of the most ancient in Christendom, and the Irish Race one of the most faithful."[14] Ireland's leaders saw that by stressing their own European and Christian civilizational heritage, they could appeal to other European nations from a place of common understanding.

Finally, among the European community, Ireland saw additional opportunities for support among the 'small nations.' With the Great Powers exhausted and distracted, Ireland saw that these smaller countries could become important partners both before and after independence. In addition to appealing to their common Chrstian and European heritage, Ireland's leaders also sought to emphasize their shared experiences under imperial rule to foster sympathy and support from the 'small nations of Europe.' In a letter to British Prime Minister Lloyd George during post-war negotiations, Éamon de Valera expresses this sentiment, saying:

> The Irish people's belief is that the national destiny can best be realised in political detachment, free from Imperialistic entanglements which they feel will involve enterprises out of harmony with the national character, prove destructive of their ideals, and be fruitful only of ruinous wars, crushing burdens, social discontent, and general unrest and unhappiness. Like the small states of Europe, they are prepared to hazard their independence on the basis of moral right, confident that as they would threaten no nation or people they would in turn be free from aggression themselves. This is the policy they have declared for in plebiscite after plebiscite, and the degree to which any other line of policy deviates from it must be taken as a measure of the extent to which external pressure is operative and violence is being done to the wishes of the majority.[15]

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[14] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1921/george-gavan-duffy-to-cardinal-gasparri/94/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

[15] https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1921/eamon-de-valera-to-lloyd-george/147/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

This same view can be found in a 1921 letter from Robert Brennan to fellow Irish revolutionary-turned-politician John Chartres:

> But we are not prepared to yield without resistance to an aggression based on claims which, if allowed, would deprive any small nation in Europe of its independence at the hands of an Imperial neighbour.[16]

We can see that Ireland is firmly tying its destiny in with the small nations of Europe, seeing their mutual emancipation from imperial rule as a building block to its budding foreign policy. Following independence and the establishment of the Irish Free State, the new nation began to assert its political identity on the diplomatic front. Being accepted into the European diplomatic community was one of, if not *the* chief goal of Irish foreign policy during these early years. In the previously quoted memorandum 'The Future of Our Foreign Affairs,' George Gavan Duffy gives us perhaps the greatest proof yet that for the budding Irish nation, asserting their European identity was of the utmost priority:

> Besides the obvious quality of sound judgement a diplomatic representative must be highly educated and must possess a European culture. The degree of a man's success as a foreign representative depends entirely on his power of adapting himself to the milieu in which he will inevitably find himself, and if he is a stranger to the culture of European society he will in nine cases out of ten - do more harm than good whatever his gifts of character may be. We can- not force our narrow farouche insularity on continentals. The only alternative is to come out of the slough and be European with the Europeans.[17]

Certainly, the Irish identity would not remain static over the course of the next fifty years. The country would go through several periods of societal change and growth before it began to formally join the emerging European institutions. Yet the foundations of the Irish identity, rooted in this time period and the struggle for independence, would retain many of their core tenets;

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[16]
https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1921/robert-brennan-to-john-chartres-edward-seaton-berlin/150/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

[17]
https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1922/memorandum-the-future-of-our-foreign-affairs-by-george-gavan-duffy/276/#section-documentpage [accessed 1 June 2022]

Ireland is an ancient society distinct from England—politically, culturally, religiously, and linguistically; Ireland, perhaps more than any other nation in Europe, has suffered under the yoke of imperial domination, and has retained its national spirit through centuries of repression; the Irish people, both at home and on the Continent, have made lasting contributions to the cultural and religious landscape of European and Christian civilization, and they have asserted their right to self-determination as much as the Poles, Serbs, or Hungarians; finally, Ireland is firmly a member of the greater European community, and an independent Ireland can and ought to assert this status.

These fundamental aspects of the early Irish identity would have lasting effects. From the very inception of Ireland as an independent state, the Irish national identity had a European dimension incorporated into the national psyche. Fifty years after the establishment of the Irish Free State, this European dimension would once again be activated as Ireland sought to join the EEC. For a nation on the periphery of World War II and the Holocaust, the two events so crucial in justifying the early European integration project, Ireland joined both early and enthusiastically. This phenomenon has its roots in this era of Irish history, where the country's national identity was built upon its European credentials.

Chapter III: Irish Republicanism

Introduction

Following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, Ireland existed in a sort of limbo on the international stage. The passage of the External Relations Act in 1936 had stripped the British Crown of its last vestiges of influence over internal Irish affairs, investing domestic executive power in the new office of the Presidency. Yet by the same piece of legislation, the British monarchy continued to play a symbolic role in the realm of foreign affairs as the de jure Head of State. Thus, although the Crown had de facto disappeared from the workings of day-to-day Irish politics, its continued symbolic role would remain a point of contention and ambiguity concerning Ireland's international status. This ambiguity would ultimately beg the question—was Ireland truly a Republic?

Under the leadership of Éamon de Valera, Ireland seemed content to let this question remain unanswered. De Valera and his Fianna Fáil party hoped that by maintaining at least some type of symbolic attachment to the Crown, Ireland might eventually facilitate reunification with the northern counties. However, elections in 1948 would see de Valera's party ousted from power, replaced by an ideologically diverse coalition known as the first Inter-Party Government.[18] The government was formed by a coalition of both left- and right-wing parties in an attempt to oust de Valera and the centrist Fianna Fáil from power. Though few could have known at the time, this unlikely alliance would eventually oversee the end of Ireland's association with the Commonwealth and the British Crown.

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[18] The unique phrase 'Inter-Party Government' is an attempt to avoid saying 'coalition government,' a term which was highly stigmatized in British and Irish politics at the time for its association with instability (Mansergh 1991, 325).

The re-emergence of republican rhetoric was a key aspect of the 1948 elections, especially from the left. The left-wing republican Clann na Poblachta, which would become a coalition partner, ran on the promise of repealing the External Relations Act and declaring Ireland a Republic. However, once in power the Inter-Party Government initially made no claims to a republican mandate; while Clann na Poblachta held a modest proportion of seats, true power in the coalition came from the conservative Fine Gael. With such diverging interests represented, the internal stability of the government was initially doubtful. Yet key officials, eager to distinguish themselves, were given portfolios which would have significant effects on the future of Ireland's foreign policy. Seán MacBride, leader of Clann na Poblachta, was appointed as Minister of External Affairs. John A. Costello, of Fine Gael, became Taoiseach.

Despite their initial hesitancy, the leaders of the Inter-Party Government would change their tune on the idea of a Republic within a remarkably short timespan. While the issue was discussed as early as the summer of 1948, true momentum supposedly came following a visit in September 1948 by Taoiseach Costello to Canada, during a ceremonial dinner hosted by the Canadian Governor-General. An Ulsterman by the name of Lord Alexander, the Governor-General decorated the room with loyalist symbols and proposed just one toast—to the King. Affronted at this insult to his nation's sovereignty, Costello came out of the dinner with a renewed vigor for removing the British Crown completely and permanently from Irish political institutions. While many within the government insisted that the declaration of a Republic had already been discussed in cabinet meetings prior to this event, it is undeniable that this incident lit a fire under Costello and his government, who would soon after make their intentions public. Within months of the Canadian visit, the Republic of Ireland Act was introduced in the

Oireachtas. It would not be long before Ireland had left the Commonwealth completely, and finally declared itself a Republic (Mansergh 1991, 330).

This chapter will briefly discuss the origins, influences, and manifestations of Irish republicanism from the late 18th century through 1949. Republicanism has remained a core pillar of Irish political thought for centuries, and the modern Irish state—that which joined the EEC in 1973—was in many ways 'founded' in its current republican form during this era under the Inter-Party Government. The importance of this era in the development of Irish national identity should not be understated. In particular, I argue that republican principles played an important role in tying Ireland's struggle for independence with continental political narratives. In many ways republicanism was the ideological thread which served to connect Irish politics with the rest of Europe—and finally sever all ties to the British.

Origins: Universalism and the United Irishmen

According to Richard Kearney's 1997 book *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*, "Irish republicanism was frequently American in practice…(yet) largely French in theory" (43). That is to say, while Irish republicanism often manifested in the pragmatic nationalism of the United States, its foundation lay firmly in the universalist republican ideals of revolutionary France. Certainly, educated Irishmen with the means to follow the events of the American Revolution found in it great inspiration for their own cause. However, the nature of the American Revolution as one of established colonial elites overthrowing rule from the metropole meant that it could only truly resonate with a small and privileged section of Irish society—one not all that predisposed to Irish independence in the first place. It was not until the truly

continental turmoil of the French Revolution, and France's several attempted revolutionary expeditions to Ireland, that republican principles became embedded in the national psyche. In short, 1789 (or perhaps more accurately, 1792) would remain a far more important touchstone in the Irish republican story than 1776. Accordingly, the 1790s would become a critically important decade in the development of republican ideas on the island.

The story of Irish republicanism begins with the Society of United Irishmen, a group of revolutionaries formed in Belfast in 1791. While originally made up of primarily Presbyterians of Scottish descent, the society sought to foster a common cause between Protestants, Presbyterians, and the Catholic majority. This universalist bent uniting the three main cleavages in Irish society ('Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter') would remain at the heart of the Society's political philosophy throughout its existence. One of its most important figures, regarded by many as the father of Irish republicanism, was Wolfe Tone. Along with his contemporaries, Tone envisaged Ireland "as part of a broad 'Republican Alliance' on a European scale," united against reactionary *ancien regime* states (Kearney 1997, 45). This clear connection between early Irish republicanism and universalist Enlightenment principles imported from France would become even more salient when the French Directory attempted to invade Ireland in the name of liberation multiple times in 1796 and 1798. Though aided by chapters of the United Irishmen scattered throughout the island, these expeditions would ultimately fail in their mission to free Ireland from British rule. However, they served to permanently and unambiguously connect Irish republican ideals with those of France and her sister republics on the continent.

The United Irishmen were ultimately a failed organization, whose vision of a united, secular, republican Irish state remains unrealized to this day. The Society's final gasp in the early 19th century was easily suppressed, and by the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815 any momentum

toward Irish liberation had already been thoroughly stamped out. What is more, the legacy of the United Irishmen in the story of Irish republicanism remains contested. The modern association of Irish republicanism with Catholic nationalism does not mesh cleanly with the reality of the Society's origins in Ulster Presbyterianism, and the contemporary association of Ulster Scots with unionist sympathies in the North further complicates their legacy. Finally, Tone's uncompromising secularism and disdain for catholicism would clash with later generations of Irish republicans.

This disconnection points to two competing vision of a republican Ireland: the universalist vision of the United Irishmen, in which Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter were all "equal" citizens of a secular Republic; and the nationalist vision, in which the Catholic majority took back control of their homeland from the English and Scottish colonizers. This latter vision, for better or worse, would eventually become the dominant strain of republicanism in Ireland over the course of the 19th century. Yet this transition does not mean that Irish political theory began to separate itself from continental narratives. In fact, as the universalist ideals of the original French Revolution began to give way to the nationalist revolutions of 1848 and beyond, Irish republicanism evolved in a similar manner. The next section will trace how the republican legacy of the United Irishmen transitioned into a Catholic nationalist vision that would eventually form the basis of Ireland's final and successful push toward complete independence.

Republicanism vs. Nationalism

The seemingly dramatic transition of northern Ulstermen from early champions of Irish republicanism to fervently anti-catholic loyalists is not such a big change when one looks closer

at the nature of their movement. The United Irishmen were primarily Protestants who found themselves swept up in the winds of the American and French Revolutions, dissatisfied with the colonial policies coming from London. Though theoretically supportive of a united Ireland of equal citizens, the United Irishmen often viewed the Catholic majority of Ireland with thinly veiled disdain. Colonial mindsets remained prominent, and many took for granted that an independent Ireland would remain controlled and run by the Protestant minority, with little change to the socioeconomic structures over which they dominated. Kearney argues:

> For many of the Planter communities, the great appeal of the 'common name of Irishman' lay in its power to galvanize and exploit the support of the colonized Catholic majority against the imperial nation of England which was now oppressing the Protestant colonizers themselves. (1997, 28)

In other words, the men of the United Irishmen sought the liberation of the Catholic majority only to the extent that it helped their cause in freedom from what they saw as unfair English laws. One can imagine that an independent Ireland under the designs of the United Irishmen would be little better for the Catholic natives than the current situation; it is almost certain that their religious freedom would have been curtailed, even while their economic situation remained relatively unchanged. Even "when a sufficient number of United Irishmen overcame such inherited prejudice to campaign for the emancipation of Catholics, they frequently did so on the pretext that it was they, the settlers, who had 'educated the indigenous populace to liberty'" (Kearney 1997, 26-7). It becomes clear why this generation of Irish republicans found inspiration in the American Revolution! Like their American counterparts, "the ideology of the United Irishmen was marked, almost from the outset, by a curious confection of radicalism and reaction" which would do little to gain the sympathies of the Catholic majority (28).

For these reasons, the brand of republicanism espoused by the United Irishmen could not last. Inevitably, the Catholic majority would find their own interpretation of Ireland's republican

future, inspired not by Protestant liberalism but by a return to a 'traditional' and decolonized Ireland. Secular universalism would give way to catholic nationalism, and as continental Europe began to transform into a patchwork of nation-states, the Irish republican identity would follow a similar path.

It is this strain of republican ideology which would eventually morph into what Kearney describes as 'romantic nationalism,' which in the Irish context describes a people longing for the return of a pre-colonial, 'Celtic' Ireland, uncorrupted by Anglo-Saxon influence. While not necessarily republican by default, the anti-English sentiment embedded within Irish romantic nationalism played into a certain dichotomy: if England is a monarchy, then Ireland would be a republic. Furthermore, this nostalgia for a long-lost Ireland would serve to further connect the Irish cause of independence with continental European narratives. As Celts, the Irish could connect their symbolic heritage with the Gauls of France. A 'Celtic' Irish nation ruled under a republican constitution would become the unequivocal end goal of Irish independence for many, and this vision would serve as a great unifying force within the country. From 1789 to 1848 and beyond, Irish republicanism played a crucial part in connecting the nation with the rest of Europe on a political level. Romantic nationalism further served to distinguish Ireland from the British, instead placing Ireland within the continental European cultural spectrum.

In 1988, the now famous Irish MP John Hume would publish an influential essay titled 'Europe of the Regions," in which he described Ireland's republican tradition and its relationship with Europe. In his own words, Hume describes the ongoing project of European unification, and its potential impact on both Ireland and Europe as a whole:

> This is the real new republicanism, the development of processes which will allow people to preserve their culture, rights and dignity; to promote their well-being and have a means of controlling the forces which will affect their lives…this will allow us better to fulfil our potential as a people; to contribute to

our world; to rediscover the cultural interaction between Ireland and Europe; to reinvolve ourselves in political relationships with those on the Continental mainland and to enjoy properly the inchoate European outlook and vision which was lost in our oppressive and obsessive relationship with Britain. It maintains the necessary synchrony between the scope of democracy and economic and technological circumstances…. On this basis we can provide a social, regional and Irish dimension to our Europe (1988).

From its origins to the modern day, Irish republicanism was not just about claiming independence from Britain; it also connected Ireland with Europe on a political, cultural, and even spiritual dimension. Fifteen years after declaring itself a republic, Ireland would seek to formalize its relationship with Europe by joining the EEC. The next chapter will describe how during this process, Ireland would recall the same romantic nationalism that inspired earlier generations toward independence.

Chapter IV: EEC Accession

Introduction

Ireland's journey to EEC accession was long and difficult. The eventual success of the project can be attributed to the determination of its leaders to make dramatic changes to the country's economic structure, and continue trying after multiple failures. Seán Lemass (1959-1966) and Jack Lynch (1966-1973) both served as Taoiseach of Ireland during the country's long process of accession to the EEC. Both members of the Christian democratic Fianna Fáil party as well as ardent pro-Europeanists, Lemass and Lynch used their time in office to advocate and plan for Ireland's accession into the EEC and other European institutions. Along with other party leaders such as Patrick Hillery (Ireland's Minister of External Affairs from 1969-1973), Lemass and Lynch played a significant role in bringing Ireland into the European institutions.

There were a large number of issues facing Ireland as it attempted to join the EEC. Many of the most important issues were economic, and much of the debate surrounding accession focused on these issues. But the European project is far more than an economic union—it is a political, social, and cultural union as well. For Ireland to be a complete member of the EEC, it needed to see itself as a European nation on these grounds. Lemass, Lynch, and Hillery understood this; whether addressing a public audience or behind closed doors, they and their contemporaries carefully incorporated Irish history and culture into a greater European narrative, and successfully equated a national Irish identity with one that was also indisputably European.

In addition to speeches from Lemass, Lynch, and Hillery, this section draws from transcripts of debates in the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament); government memorandums, pamphlets, and notes from EEC negotiations; statements and articles from Irish journals and

labor leaders, both for and against accession; and written platforms from Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil, and the Irish Socialist Party, again both for and against accession.[19] From these documents, which (with one exception) all date between 1959 and 1973, there is a great deal to be discovered about how Irish political and social elites talked about Europe, and how they viewed their Irish identity within greater Europe.

Sources

The flurry of literature which circulated Irish society in the years leading up to accession represented a diverse range of opinions on Ireland joining the EEC. Some advocated for full membership, others for associational membership, and others to stay out altogether. This diversity is represented in the data collected for this thesis: while figures like Lemass and Lynch fully supported accession, the Irish Socialist Party, industrial labor groups, and hardline nationalist organizations were distributing pamphlets and other material arguing for Ireland to go it alone. Unsurprisingly, it is largely those in favor of accession who made an attempt to connect Ireland with Europe. However, it can still be useful to look at opposing arguments.

Of the three major eras of Irish accession, by far most documents date from the third period between 1969 and 1973, as this time period saw Irish accession go from a distant possibility to an active choice before the Irish people, and the resulting battles for public opinion prompted the publication of plenty of material. There is likely a survivorship bias at play: as the first two eras did not lead to Ireland joining the EEC, documents from these time periods were less likely to find their way onto databases whose *raison d'être* is documenting European

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[19] It should be noted that while many types of documents have been analyzed, only a chosen few are quoted in this section.

enlargement. As mentioned earlier, there is a large amount of untapped data from earlier time periods, especially in the form of speeches given by Seán Lemass which exist only in carbon-copy. A more comprehensive analysis would certainly include these documents. However, there is still a sufficient amount to analyze from the data available.

Findings: Constructing Identities

By 1959, Irish identity had been thoroughly reclaimed. Irish republicanism, though rarely ideologically united, was consistent in its determination to reclaim Irish identity and define it as entirely distinct from England and the UK. This effort was not completely effective (especially in regards to language reclamation), but it was successful enough such that a distinct Irish political, social, and cultural identity had been established for decades by the time Ireland considered applying for EEC membership. This identity was built around collective memory of historical events such as the Easter Rising (Beiner 2007), pride in Ireland's long and celebrated art and literary tradition (Collins & Caufield 2014; Kilberd 1996; Livesy & Murray 1997; McBride 2001; Pine 2011), and their intersection in the expression of historical memory (Frawley & O'Callaghan 2011; Frawley 2012; Frawley 2014; Frawley & O'Callaghan 2014).

Having a national identity which was itself so recently revived seems to have been advantageous in shaping it towards Europe. Ireland's leaders argued that their best days had always come when Ireland was connected with the rest of Europe. There are three major ways in which Ireland's political and social elites recalled an Irish-European identity: (1) by calling back to Ireland's pre-colonial 'European' past; (2) by envisioning for Ireland, Europe and the world a prosperous and peaceful future; and (3) by selling the EEC as an alternative to the postcolonial

shadow of the UK. These methods were advantageous in that they did not require deconstructing

the Irish identity. Rather, they played into some of its most fundamental aspects: pride in past

events and achievements, hope for the future, and a desire for political and economic

independence. Usually placed at the very beginning or very end of a speech or article, these calls

to recognize the Europeanness of the Irish people and the moral cause of joining the EEC are

some of the best examples of the collective European identity which Ireland's political leaders

were attempting to activate among their compatriots.

Although much of this rhetoric is from political elites, often *for* other political elites, the

similarities between these examples and those addressed to mass audiences suggests that no

matter the intended audience, the underlying message remained largely consistent. Hints of the

language from speeches to European ministers can be found in journal or newspaper articles, and

even on private pamphlets and brochures.

Recalling the Past

Instead of constructing a unique European identity, Ireland's elite took a strategy of recalling the

affectual dimension of Irishness itself, using events, figures, and traditions from Ireland's past as

evidence of its 'Europeanness.' One of the first appearances of such rhetoric comes from a 1962

speech by Seán Lemass, to members of the governments of the Six during Ireland's first attempt

at EEC accession:

> Ireland belongs to Europe by history, tradition and sentiment no less than by
> geography. Our destiny is bound up with that of Europe and our outlook and our
> way of life have for fifteen centuries been moulded by the Christian ideals and the
> intellectual and cultural values on which European civilisation rests. Our people
> have always tended to look to Europe for inspiration, guidance and
> encouragement. (Lemass 1962/2012)

Lemass, the most dedicated and effective pro-European politician of his time, set a strong

example for future rhetoric about the place of Ireland within Europe. Eight years later, his

successor Jack Lynch would employ a similar pathos during a particularly heated debate on the

subject of Irish accession at the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament):

> Our culture has flourished in the past when there was active two-way interchange
> between our centres and those of western Europe. While the contemporary world
> has changed dramatically since these earlier periods there is no reason why we
> should not confidently expect that all that is good and valuable in our culture will
> flourish in the enriched climate provided by membership of a wider Community.
> (Lynch 1970/2012)

The particular emphasis on the positive aspects of historical cultural exchange between Ireland

and Europe are clearly an attempt to paint EEC accession as the rebirth of such an exchange and

that membership in Europe's institutions will lay the foundations for Irish culture to flourish once

again. By recalling 'all that is good and valuable in [Irish] culture,' Lemass and Lynch are

connecting Irish identity with a European identity, and allowing the strength of the former to

reinforce the latter. While coming from Ireland's most powerful political figures, this language is

not merely reserved for conversations between elites: it can be found in sources intended for

mass consumption as well. The federalist journal *L'Europe en formation* wrote in 1972:

> The home of St Patrick, Swift, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Shaw and Becket [*sic*]
> can then at last be reconciled with its destiny. Europe is not just a trading and
> institutional entity; it embodies moral values that are an essential basis for
> democracy and federalism. The case of Ireland is but one more example. (Marc
> 1972/2016)

Invoking such quintessentially Irish figures plays again to Irish pride, while also connecting it

with Europe: all of the aforementioned men spent much of their lives in other parts of Europe,

while still holding onto an Irish identity. Some of them, like St Patrick, would eventually return

to Ireland and become symbols of Irish identity. The message is clear: Ireland's full potential has

historically only been realized as part of a greater Europe. This notion is presented in contrast

with the British Empire, which in most rhetoric embodied suppression and decline. In the

provocatively titled 1972 article "*Europe des patries?*" The Irish Times recalls this sentiment:

> Some facts are inescapable. Ireland is part of Europe geographically, culturally
> and historically. More recent history has distorted our natural relationships, and
> put the attempts at cultural revival in the last 50 years at a great, almost
> insuperable disadvantage. (The Irish Times 1972/2018)

The unnamed British are given a clear role opposite Europe: while the former embodies cultural

suppression and decline, the latter embodies revival and growth. The Irish Times is calling for

Ireland to return to a precolonial, 'natural' Ireland, one in which it was connected with and

benefiting from the rest of Europe.

Recalling the historical, cultural, and religious connections between Ireland and

continental Europe was an effective tactic in making Ireland a definitively 'European nation.'

Irish leaders understood that many of the formative events of modern Europe had passed Ireland

by: while the World Wars and the Holocaust played massive roles in creating a shared European

experience, they played out much differently in Ireland. Lacking shared experiences in these

events, Irish leaders instead recalled a more distant past, connecting Ireland to Europe on more

abstract dimensions. The motif of renaissance, in which Ireland is reborn as part of a united

Europe, plays into this strategy perfectly. At a speech given during the signing of the Treaty of

Accession to the European Economic Community in 1972, Lynch eloquently summarizes this

view:

> Ireland is the youngest of the States represented here today. However, we are one
> of the oldest nations of Europe. Geography has placed us on the periphery of the
> Continent. But we are an integral part of Europe, bound to it by many centuries of
> shared civilisation, traditions and ideals. Ireland, because of historical
> circumstances, did not participate in the past in all the great moments of European
> experience but the Irish people have in many periods of our history been deeply
> involved in the life and culture of the European mainland. Since statehood, my
> country, conscious of its European past, has sought to forge new and stronger

links with the Continent. In this we were renewing and revitalizing historic bonds. (Lynch 1972/2013)

He goes on to recall the words of Tom Kettle, a renown Irish economist and statesman who died fighting the Germans on the front lines of World War I:

> A distinguished Irishman has written: 'My only counsel to Ireland is that to become deeply Irish she must first become European.' He also wrote over sixty years ago: 'If this generation has, for its first task, the recovery of the old Ireland, it has for its second, the discovery of the new Europe.' (Ibid. 1972/2013)

The clever equation of an 'old' Ireland with a 'new' Europe lies at the heart of this message. In joining the EEC, Ireland was reclaiming its precolonial, 'true' identity as a participant in greater Europe. Simply put, to be Irish is to be European.

Looking to the Future

Perhaps the most commonly used strategy by Ireland's leaders was appealing to the future. There was much hope (not unfounded, as time would tell) that membership in the EEC would bring unprecedented economic prosperity to Ireland, opening up its markets and modernizing its economy. Appeals to Irish hopes that the nation would turn an economic corner with the help of the EEC were common throughout the accession process. These appeals were often accompanied by statements about Ireland's commitment to the European project, and its potential for the future. Again, the first example of this strategy comes from Lemass, in a 1962 speech to the Six:

> It is thus natural that we in Ireland should regard with keen and sympathetic interest every genuine effort to bring the peoples of Europe closer together, so as to strengthen the foundations of our common civilisation. We were happy at the development in the years following the last war of a strong movement towards closer European union; and we have participated actively from the outset in the two organisations established to promote cooperation between European States, the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation and the Council of Europe. (Lemass 1962/2012)

He goes on:

> As I have already said, the Irish nation has always had a strong sense of belonging to Europe. We are also very conscious of the great advantages which can accrue to all the countries concerned and to world peace from a strong and united Europe. (Ibid. 1962/2012)

Although there is not any mention of economic growth, Lemass is confident that the EEC will 'strengthen the foundations of our common civilisation,' and even claims that a 'strong and united Europe' could help foster world peace. Such high optimism for the future of the European project can be found in later examples from other Irish leaders. Eight years later Lynch would make a similar case before the Oireachtas:

> Finally, we must not forget the part that Europe has played in the development of mankind and the contribution Europe is capable of making in the years to come. We can claim a share in what has been achieved. We wish to contribute fully to Europe's achievements in the future.
>
> If we join the European Community we shall be entering into a partnership with friends and the emphasis must be on what we can do together rather than what we can get out of each other. (Lynch 1970/2012)

The idea that Ireland would be 'among friends' as a member of the EEC can be found throughout several types of documents, hinting that it was a particularly effective argument. Even before becoming a member, calls for additional funding, more ambitious agendas, and further integration seemed to stress the country's dedication to the project. In 1970, then Minister of External Affairs Patrick Hillery told an assembly of EEC negotiators the following:

> The European Communities, with their impressive series of successes, are vital manifestations of a common will and purpose already constituting a European reality. The ideal of European unity which inspired its founding members is not, however, fully realized. My Government is convinced that the realization of this ideal would be best served by the full participation in an enlarged Community of countries who are disposed to accept all these objectives and obligations, and who are ready to join the present member States for the creation of a larger and stronger Europe. (Hillery 1970/2018, translation by the author)

Again, this type of bold rhetoric was not just preserved for meetings between elites, and can be found at other levels of discussion. In 1970 the pro-European organization *Conseil irlandais du Mouvement européen* published a memorandum which included the following appeal:

> Being a political and economic union, the Community should draw its strengths from the diversity of the cultures of its nations and peoples. It is therefore necessary that the Community protect and encourage this diversity of cultural heritage. This should be facilitated by the creation of a culturally European institution directed towards this goal and financed by common funds. (l'Agence Europe 1970/2018, translation by the author)

It appears that both Ireland's leaders and its citizens were aware of the long-term significance that EEC membership would have for their country. Yet on the whole, their outlook remained hopeful and their rhetoric constantly appealed to a distinctly Irish vision of the future. During a debate in the Oireachtas, Lynch appeals to this vision:

> The road we take will determine not only the future of our country for generations to come, but also the contribution we make to the creation of a Europe that will measure up to the high ideals of the founders of the Community. I am confident that the decision we take will reflect our people's faith in their capacity to help fashion for themselves and for future generations of Irish men and women a better Ireland in a better Europe. (Lynch 1970/2012)

Here we see Lynch play on the patriotism of his fellow Irishmen and women. Ireland's people should support EEC membership because it betters their economic and political outlook, which has been evasive for so long. He appeals to the future while subtly calling to the past. Two years later, at the signing of the Treaty of Accession, Lynch brings with him this patriotic fervor and uses it to express hope for the future of Europe as a whole, saying:

> We (in Ireland) have responded to the call made by the founding fathers of the Communities to other countries of Europe who shared their ideals to join in their efforts to establish the foundations of an ever-closer union among the European peoples. My Government sees in the European Communities the best hope and the true basis for the creation of that united and peaceful Europe.

> We attach the utmost importance to the emphasis placed by the Member States at the summit meeting in The Hague on the promotion of rapprochement among the peoples of the 'entire European Continent'. (Lynch 1972/2013)

Clearly, Irish political leaders loved to talk about what the future might hold for both Ireland and Europe. By stressing that Ireland would be 'among friends' in the EEC, they are equating Irish values with European ones. The potential of the European Communities to foster peace and prosperity on a set of common ideals seemed especially appealing; a report issued by Lynch's Government in 1972 (in the lead-up to the referendum vote) does just this:

> There are two fundamental considerations underlying the Government's policy in seeking membership of the European Communities. In the first place membership will enable us to participate fully with other democratic and like-minded countries of Europe in the movement towards European unity, based on ideals and objectives to which we as a nation can readily subscribe.
>
> The Europe envisaged by the member States is one composed of democratic States which, in spite of their different national characteristics, are united in their essential interests. The Government are convinced that these are ideals and aims which will find a ready response in the Irish people. (Irish Government 1972/2012)

Ireland's leaders understood that EEC membership would have dramatic effects on the political and economic future of Ireland, yet their outlook remained hopeful. Even before they officially joined, circles of Irish society were calling for even further expansion and integration of the Communities. Irish politicians found great success painting visions of a prosperous Ireland in a diverse Europe to the Irish public. The sense of hope surrounding accession is evident. These sentiments are perhaps best summarized by Denis Maher, former Member of the Irish Delegation to the negotiations on the accession of Ireland to the European Communities. In his memoirs about the process of Irish accession, *The Tortuous Path,* he offers thoughts about the upcoming referendum on Irish accession, saying:

> If I were to sum up in one word what the European Community will mean for Ireland I would say 'opportunity'. The opportunity to realise our economic and

social potential and ensure the welfare of our people; the opportunity to realise our European heritage in a much fuller and more significant way than heretofore; the opportunity also to play a meaningful and positive role in working for peace in the world. (Maher 1972/2012)

Beyond Colonialism

Lastly, many in Ireland saw joining Europe's institutions as an opportunity to finally shake off the imperial yoke of Britain. Although politically independent for decades by the early 1970s, Ireland was still economically dependent on the UK, especially in terms of trade. This bitter reality was not lost on many of Ireland's political leaders. In a tense debate in the Oireachtas about Irish accession, Irish Labour Party member and Eurosceptic Brendan Corish brings to light the uncomfortable reality:

> Of course, the view is, although it was not stated here today by the Taoiseach, that we have to, according to him, seek membership because Great Britain has also applied and because Great Britain's application has been reactivated and negotiations will commence within the next month or six weeks.
>
> I suppose we are ashamed, so to speak, to say this, that we seek membership because Britain does, because of our continued economic dependence on Britain; this dependence is so great it appears, that we have to. (Corish 1970/2012)

Clearly, there are some who saw EEC membership not as a means from which Ireland could escape British economic dominance, but rather the most recent manifestation of Britain's lingering control over Irish foreign and economic policy. Most, however, did not hold this view. Earlier in the same debate, Fine Gael member Liam Crosgrave expresses his excitement at the prospect of an Ireland that is finally economically independent from Britain:

> The *most important result* of our membership of the EEC will, therefore, be the prospect of escaping from this long period of economic dominance by Britain. We shall have, for the first time since the State was founded, a realistic opportunity to take our place on equal terms alongside the other sovereign nations of Europe and to work with them in building a new kind of European community which embodies the ideals and traditions common to all of us, at the same time safeguarding the special identity of each. (Cosgrave 1970/2012, italics added)

More than any other aspect of membership, Cosgrave considers economic independence from

Britain as the *most important* benefit the EEC has to offer. Pulling Ireland out of Britain's

postcolonial shadow would become a popular argument for Irish citizens of all persuasions.

Ireland was unique among existing and potential EEC members at the time as a country

which had experienced the brunt of, rather than taken part in, colonization. While many on the

Irish left were against accession, some saw it as an opportunity to connect Europe with the rest of

the world. Ireland's unique status as being both European and a former colony meant that it

could appeal to both the colonizer and the colonized. In a memorandum sent to the Director of

the European Communities' Press and Information Service, Denis Corboy, attaché in the

European Communities' Dublin Information Centre, writes:

> Ireland has a unique role to play within the European Community and an
> important aspect of this would be to act as a bridge between the Community and
> the third world. (Corboy 1969/2012)

Cosgrave, Corboy, and other Irishmen and women saw the unique potential of Ireland within the

EEC. In their view, the country's centuries-long struggle for independence was not undercut by

joining Europe, but reinforced. Irish identity, so long defined by its struggle against British

domination, could now look elsewhere for inspiration.

Discussion: Northern Ireland and Reunification

The findings of this chapter are helpful in understanding how the Irish came to see themselves as

European. While the original Six drew their founding myths from the shared experiences of

World War II and the Holocaust, Ireland had to dig deeper to connect itself with the rest of

Europe. In doing so, it harkened back to the same sources which defined its strong national

identity. This method of European identity construction proved especially effective, and can be seen in the language of Ireland's political leaders during the long road toward accession.

There is plenty of room for further research in Ireland's relationship to Europe. The country occupies a unique space in what it means to be European, not really fitting into standard narratives. Yet Ireland's status as a steadfast member of the modern EU speaks to a strong European identity. Examining rhetoric from political elites is only a start, and to really understand how Ireland came to see itself as European, more comprehensive analysis is needed.

Ireland's leaders expressed many hopes for the future of Europe during accession, and many have come to pass in some form. Ireland's economy prospered in the common market, and though it suffered setbacks, would become one of the strongest in the bloc. The EEC continued to expand and evolve, into the EC and later the EU, adopting ambitious political and monetary integration while expanding into Northern Europe, Iberia, and eventually Eastern Europe. War would continue to plague parts of the continent, but war within the bloc eventually became unthinkable. One hope, however, failed to materialize: the reunification of Ireland.

While Northern Ireland was a major factor for all sides in the process of EEC membership, it is largely overlooked in this thesis. Including it would have inflated its scope, and little of the data addresses the Northern Irish question, perhaps because of how delicate the issue really was. There is, however, at least one exception, though to find it we must expand our range. In 1976, three years after Ireland joined the EEC, Patrick Hillery gave a speech in memory of the late Seán Lemass at the University of Exeter. In it, he praised Lemass for all the work he had done to prepare Ireland for membership. Though Lemass did not live to see his country join the EEC (he died in 1971), Hillery credits him with laying the crucial groundwork for his successors. Hillery also offers one last hope for the future of Ireland in Europe:

> Could the European experience of successfully transforming confrontation into conciliation find an echo in the thinking of the people of Northern Ireland? Despite many smouldering hatreds the peoples of France and Germany found it possible to work together in the post-war reconstruction of Europe and the building of the Community. Can we be justified in feeling that any of today's calls for reconciliation are really confronted by a deeper intransigence than that which others have faced and overcome? (Hillery 1976)

Reunification did not happen as a consequence of Ireland joining the EEC, and the next two decades would prove to be long and bloody in Northern Ireland. The imposition of direct rule in Northern Ireland would come shortly after Ireland and the UK joined the EEC, and the Troubles that followed redefined the Anglo-Irish relationship for an entire generation. Reunification with Northern Ireland has long been a policy goal of Irish republicans and nationalists, and yet in this time it has remained a political fantasy.

Only recently, in the wake of Brexit, did Irish reunification reemerge as a potentially feasible course of action. Even now, it remains uncertain what the political future of the island will be. Would a reunified Ireland be home to the violence and hatred which defined the Troubles? Or will a different understanding of the Irish identity emerge, one which finally lives up to the universalist ideals of its foundation? If indeed the departure of the UK from the European Union were to cause the reunification of Ireland in the future, its leaders might find useful ideas in the words of a not-so-distant past.

Chapter V: Conclusion

The Irish political experience from the earliest days of independence to accession into the EEC in 1973 was incredibly dynamic. In the aftermath of World War I, Ireland would see itself emerge from a war for independence only to plunge directly into a civil war. While in hindsight Irish democracy would prove to be strong and stable in the decades that followed, these were uncertain times for those who lived through them. Yet, while Irish politics were constantly changing, one thing seemed to unite Irishmen and women of nearly all political persuasions: a strong national and European identity. While the European dimension of Irish identity was present from the start, it was during the process of EEC accession in which its strength and pervasiveness was truly given salience. Even after two failed bids and decades of frustration, pro-European sentiment in Ireland remained sky-high, and enthusiasm for joining the common market undiminished.

The legitimacy of the project of Irish independence has always been tied to Ireland's identity as a European nation. From the early days of French universalism to the romantic nationalism of 1848, Irishmen and women found inspiration in and common cause with the political movements of their fellow Europeans on the continent. This would culminate in the Irish War of Independence following World War I, where in search of diplomatic allies and international sympathy for their cause, Ireland's leaders associated their struggle with that of the Poles, Czechs, and other Central and Eastern Europeans. As a distinct European people, they argued, their bid for independence was as credible as any discussed in Versailles. From the very birth of the Irish nation, its right to existence was defined on European terms.

Following independence, Ireland's leaders continued to push for more and more separation from British control, including leaving the Commonwealth and declaring a Republic.

In doing so, Ireland was retracing the steps of past generations of Irish freedom fighters, while also acknowledging the roots of Irish republicanism and its close connection with Europe, especially France. Ireland discarded the constitutional monarchy for a Republic not only because it wished to sever all ties with the British; it also wanted to join the European and global international communities as an independent member on equal footing. In 1949, the European community was nothing more than a faint idea in the minds of ambitious politicians. Yet over the next decades, the project of European integration would begin, and Ireland was determined to see itself included in this project.

Although initially on the sidelines, Ireland's desire to be involved in the EEC was clear. Lacking the common experiences and traumas of World War II, fascism, and the Holocaust which served to unite the Six, Ireland staked its claim to membership on the European identity of its people. Indeed, one of the most striking observations about Ireland's EEC accession is how widely it was supported amongst various levels of Irish society. The leftist labor movement, relatively small in Ireland at the time, offered the only sustained resistance to accession. In all, a sizable majority of politicians in the Oireachtas were either enthusiastically pro-accession, sympathetic to the idea, or initially skeptical but ultimately convinced of its merits.

From the language of Lemass, Lynch, Hillery, and their contemporaries, we can see that a significant part of the pro-accession campaign involved appealing to the European sentiments of their fellow Irishmen and women. This tactic was effective not because the European identity was stronger than that of the Irish, but rather that these two identities were so intertwined that an appeal to one necessarily included the other. Ireland belonged in the European project because it is a free and independent European state, whose ancient Celtic origins and medieval tradition of monastic scholarship have been fundamental pillars of European civilization. From St. Patrick to

James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, Ireland's cultural heritage has always been strongest when in close conversation with continental Europe. In short, to be Irish is to be European.

Looking Ahead

For all the efforts of the modern EU to foster a pan-European identity among its member states, European national identities seem to be resurging in importance, if they were ever diminished at all. While not intrinsically negative, in many cases the resurgence of the national identity seems to come at the expense of pan-European sentiment. In addition to being a threat to the EU in its current form, this trend also has the potential to halt any further integration of the European bloc. For those who wish to see a united and integrated Europe, the question thus becomes: how can we cultivate a pan-European identity in a community of nations?

This thesis has shown that Ireland offers an intriguing example of the successful coexistence of a national and European identity. Rather than the former superseding the latter, in Ireland these identities are built within the same framework, and derive from the same national mythos. The relationship of these two identities is both fascinating and relevant to the study of modern European identity politics. National identities in Europe are not going anywhere. By looking to Ireland as an example, Europe's leaders would see that a national and European identity need not be at odds—on the contrary, they can strengthen each other in their mutual foundation.

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