Introduction

Any historian exploring Ireland in the period of Union faces a conflict of (national) identity. The Acts of Union effected, from 1 January 1801, a United Kingdom between Britain and Ireland. The state of the Union, thus, constituted the overarching framework for understanding the British-Irish experience between 1801 and 1922. As Alvin Jackson has observed, 'one of the great paradoxes of modern British and Irish history is that (against the odds) the union provided a lasting, if clearly vitiated, constitutional settlement'.[1] 'Invented nations' both defied and defined this legal bind. Was the United Kingdom British? The currency of post-Brexit political discourse notwithstanding, the historical truism of 'British' state and nation has been under sustained intellectual scrutiny for two decades. Defining that polity, and the people who identified with it, has provoked cultural, political, and indeed constitutional debate. Linda Colley's *Britons*, published as early as 1992, posited the argument that Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the 'other', and above all in response to conflict with the 'other'.[2] Ireland, according to Colley's thesis, 'was always difficult to accommodate within the framework of the United Kingdom' and was considered external to identifications of Britishness.[3] Later scholarship, alternatively, presented subjective readings of national identity. Britishness during the Union was recognisable in the forms of institutions, aesthetics, imperialism, patriotism, and democracy.[4]

[1] Alvin Jackson, *The two Unions: Ireland, Scotland and the survival of the United Kingdom, 1707–2007* (Oxford, 2012), p. 188.
[2] Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707–1837* (London, 1992), p. 6.
[3] Linda Colley, 'Britishness and otherness: an argument' in *Journal of British Studies*, xxxi (1992), p. 327.
[4] Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: identities, institutions and the idea of Britishness* (Harlow, 1997); Dana Arnold (ed.), *Cultural identities and the aesthetics of Britishness* (Manchester, 2004); Catherine McGlynn (ed.), *Britishness, identity*

Others, presciently, have re-discovered 'England' in the history of the United Kingdom. Paul Langford, Robert Colls, and Peter Mandler have successively identified an Englishness of manners, class, and character in the period of Union.[5] Krishan Kumar's *The Making of English National Identity*, most provocatively, has proffered that the 'British' imperial mission in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was coterminous with 'English' nationalism.[6] Where did nation-state begin and end? Scottish, Welsh, and Irish nationalisms, long identified against 'British-English' other, have further come under historiographical scrutiny for their parts in 'British' imperial projects.[7] Collectively, this body of historical scholarship charted the intellectual lineage of the United Kingdom's 'crisis of national identity', prefacing later contentious public debates. However, as Peter Mandler has advanced of future scholarship on the 'English-British question': 'questioning that link will also help us to consider more fully other group identities that might complement or even substitute for the "national"'.[8] One group is located at the centre of these concentric circles of scholarly enquiry: the Irish in Britain. To explore their history is to interrogate a 'crisis of (national) identity' in terms of both 'self' and 'other'. The national identity of the Irish in England, Scotland, and Wales has not yet been fully hyphenated.

Chronicling the 'long' nineteenth-century Irish experience in Britain, the Irish-born Liverpool-based MP, T. P. O'Connor, observed in 1917: 'the Irishman in Great Britain occupies a curious middle place between

and citizenship: the view from abroad (Oxford, 2011); Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: the making and unmaking of British national identity* (3 vols, London, 1989); Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London, 2004); Richard Weight, *Patriots: national identity in Britain, 1940–2000* (London, 2002).

5 Paul Langford, *Englishness identified: manners and character, 1650–1850* (Oxford, 2000); Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford, 2002); Peter Mandler, *The English national character: the history of an idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London, 2006).

6 Krishan Kumar, *The making of English national identity* (Cambridge, 2003).

7 Richard Finlay, 'National identity, Union and Empire, c. 1850-c. 1970' in John MacKenzie and T. M. Devine (eds), *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011), pp 280–316; Kenneth Morgan, 'Welsh nationalism' in William Louis (ed.), *Adventures with Britannia: personalities, politics and culture in Britain* (London, 1995); Peter Gray (ed.), *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837–1901* (Dublin, 2004).

8 Peter Mandler, '"What is national identity"? Definitions and applications in modern British historiography' in *Modern Intellectual History*, iii (2006), p. 296.

the nationality to which he belongs and the race among which he lives'.[9] A century of scholarship, significantly, has located that experience. Local studies of the Irish in London,[10] Liverpool,[11] Manchester,[12] and Glasgow[13] have successively identified Irishness in communal urban context, a geographical approach, which has radiated out to regional analyses of the Irish in Cumbria and Lanarkshire.[14] Synoptic histories of the Irish in England, Scotland, and Wales have further widened the boundaries to national enquiry.[15] Roger Swift's and Sheridan Gilley's invaluable edited volumes have bound these local histories into historiographical approach.[16] Archival research on the broader Irish experience of Britain has tended to thematic or temporal focus. Alan O'Day's study, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, signified a continued interrogation into the political representation of the Irish in Britain between the Famine and the First World War.[17] Enda Delaney,

[9] T. P. O'Connor, 'The Irish in Great Britain' in Felix Lavery (ed.), *Irish heroes in the War* (London, 1917), p. 32.
[10] Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester, 1979). See also Daniel Renshaw, *Socialism and the diasporic other: a comparative study of Irish Catholic and Jewish radical and communal politics in East London, 1889–1912* (Liverpool, 2018).
[11] John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: the history of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800–1939* (Liverpool, 2007).
[12] Mervyn Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c. 1750–1921: resistance, adaptation, and identity* (Manchester, 2016).
[13] Terence McBride, *The experiences of Irish migrants to Glasgow, Scotland, 1863–1891: a new way of being Irish* (Lewiston, 2006).
[14] Donald MacRaild, *Culture, conflict and migration: the Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998); Martin J. Mitchell, *The Irish in the west of Scotland, 1797–1848: trade unions, strikes and political movements* (Edinburgh, 1998).
[15] Steven Fielding, *Class and ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880–1939* (Buckingham, 1993); J. E. Handley, *The Irish in modern Scotland* (Cork, 1947); T. M. Devine (ed.), *Irish immigrants and Scottish society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Edinburgh, 1991); Martin Mitchell (ed.), *New perspectives on the Irish in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008); Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798–1922* (Cardiff, 2000); Paul O'Leary (ed.), *Irish migrants in modern Wales* (Liverpool, 2004).
[16] Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in the Victorian city* (London, 1985); Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Great Britain, 1815–1939* (London, 1989); Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local dimension* (Dublin, 1999); Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *Irish identities in Victorian Britain* (London, 2010).
[17] Alan O'Day, *The English face of Irish nationalism: Parnellite involvement in British politics, 1880–86* (Dublin, 1977).

meanwhile, has published seminal works on the Irish experience of migration to Britain over the interwar and post-war periods.[18] This has been followed by Jennifer Redmond's study of women's emigration to Britain from post-independent Ireland.[19] Bronwen Walter's extensive scholarship on Irish female experiences,[20] Mary Hickman's examination of the education of the Irish in Britain,[21] and Sean Campbell's wide-ranging study of music and second-generation Irish identity[22] have further profiled the Irish in Britain in contemporary history. Surveying this extensive field in 2011, however, Donald MacRaild noted 'with regret' that little had been published comparatively on the Irish in Britain and the Irish Revolution.[23] Few scholars, indeed, have attended to Irish nationalism during this period in general histories of the Irish in Britain. John A. Jackson and Kevin O'Connor each offered brief treatments on the revolutionary period in their books.[24] In an influential survey essay, meanwhile, David Fitzpatrick illuminated aspects of Irish nationalism in Britain between the Third Home Rule Bill and Anglo-Irish Treaty, concluding: 'Irish nationality would never again be the focus of political activity for Britain's Irish population'.[25] History, thus, became historiography.

This study, for the first time, investigates Irish nationalism in Britain over the course of a historic decade in United Kingdom history: constitutional crisis, war, and revolution. The Irish Question interrogated British political life between 1912 and 1916 as never before since

[18] Enda Delaney, *Demography, state and society: Irish migration to Britain, 1921–1971* (Liverpool, 2000); Enda Delaney, *The Irish in post-war Britain* (Oxford, 2007).
[19] Jennifer Redmond, *Moving histories: Irish women's emigration to Britain from independence to republic* (Liverpool, 2018).
[20] Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders inside: whiteness, place, and Irish women* (London, 2001); Bronwen Walter, 'Personal lives: narrative accounts of Irish women in the diaspora' in *Irish Studies Review*, xxi (2013), pp 37–54.
[21] Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, class and identity: the state, the Catholic Church and the education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot, 1995).
[22] Sean Campbell, *'Irish blood, English heart': second generation Irish musicians in England* (Cork, 2011).
[23] Donald MacRaild, *The Irish diaspora in Britain, 1750–1939* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 262.
[24] J. A. Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1963); Kevin O'Connor, *The Irish in Britain* (Altrincham, 1972).
[25] David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871–1921' in W. E. Vaughan et al (eds), *A new history of Ireland, vi: Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp 653–702.

the United Kingdom's late nineteenth-century Home Rule 'crisis of conscience'. These years were marked by recurring political reforms and crises in which the promise of Irish self-government lurched from the safe constitutional passage of the Third Home Rule Bill through the British legislature to extra-parliamentary mobilisation both for and against its particular presentation of Irish sovereignty. Labour, 'new' liberal, and suffrage politics, further, framed representations of Home Rule across late Edwardian 'crises' and 'summers'. The extraneous demands of the home front at once ended and extended this period drama. The Irish in Britain were at the centre of this political maze. Between 1912 and 1914, the Home Rule movement in Britain attracted almost 50,000 members annually; hundreds of thousands, meanwhile, followed Edward Carson and John Redmond to mass rallies in Edinburgh, Newcastle, and Leeds. Ulster and Irish Volunteers, further, mobilised in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Cardiff bringing the spectre of an Irish Civil War to mainland Britain; Michael Collins was but one London-Irish Edwardian radicalised by the 'strange death of liberal England'. Female activists such as Sophie Bryant, alternatively, were visible on the suffrage platform. Irish men and women in British centres actively enlisted volunteers during the First World War, recruiting the Irish in Britain into armies with conflicting political aims. By the spring of 1916, almost 150,000 Irishmen had joined the British armed forces; almost 100 others would join the Irish republican forces in Dublin during the Easter Week.

Between 1916 and 1919, Sinn Féin eclipsed the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) as the foremost political force in Ireland and established itself as the 'brand leader' of Irish nationalism. The transfer of 'old wine' into 'new bottles' transformed the stated Irish nationalist ideal from Home Rule self-government to republican self-government between 1919 and 1922. The re-emergence of the Irish Volunteers as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) converted public defiance of British rule in Ireland into sustained attacks of political violence. Across the Irish Sea, the limitations of demobilisation, democratic politics, and economic opportunity further destabilised public life in Britain after the Armistice. Lloyd George's Coalition government simultaneously failed to win the war in Ireland and the peace in Britain. The Irish in Britain were at the intersection of these changing post-war politics. Hollowed by the First World War, the Home Rule movement was succeeded by republican-inspired organisations such as Sinn Féin and

the Irish Self-Determination League (ISDL) in British centres. Mass rallies addressed by 'Sinn Féin celebrities' such as Arthur Griffith and Countess Markievicz generated over 50,000 Sinn Féin and ISDL members, from Lanarkshire to Lancashire. Capital events at the Albert Hall, Trafalgar Square, and Wormwood Scrubs generated interest from British policymakers from the Home Office to the Colonial Office. Irish political violence on mainland Britain, meanwhile, arrested the attention of the British Cabinet. Irish republicans traded arms with British criminal gangs, ex-combatants, and Communists; threatened the assassination of high-profile public figures such as King George V; and carried out an extended campaign of IRA incendiary attacks in British cities.

The wide-ranging politics of Irish nationalism in Britain, and their significance to the Irish Revolution, have not been the subject of a cohesive, archival-focused historical study. Alan O'Day has surveyed the development of the Home Rule movement in Britain in a series of important essays, concentrating on the 'internal dynamics' of Irish migrant communities and their engagement with ethnic organisations.[26] Alan O'Day and John Hutchinson's essay, 'The Gaelic Revival in London', has interrogated the typology of an Irish 'ethnic community', through an analysis of the social and intellectual strata of cultural nationalism in the capital.[27] Richard Kirkland's recent monograph, *Irish London*, has explored cultural representations of Irish identity in the metropole between 1850 and 1916, from the social deprivation of post-Famine migrants to the literary respectability of Edwardian Gaelic revivalists.[28] John Hutchinson's article 'The Irish in London between Nationalism, Catholicism, and Labourism' has charted the shifting political allegiances of the Irish community in London between 1900 and 1922, profiling the changing political orientations of Irish

[26] Alan O'Day, 'Irish diaspora politics in perspective: the United Irish Leagues of Great Britain and America, 1900–14' in Donald MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Famine and beyond: Irish migrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 2000), pp 214–39; Alan O'Day, 'The political representation of the Irish in Great Britain, 1850–1940' in Geoffrey Alderman et al (eds), *Governments, ethnic groups and political representation* (Aldershot, 1983), pp 31–83.

[27] John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900–22: limits of ethnic identity' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp 254–76.

[28] Richard Kirkland, *Irish London: a cultural history, 1850–1916* (London, 2021).

activists in the capital, from Gaelic revivalism to British labourism.[29] Keiko Inoue's unpublished thesis on the Irish in Liverpool, Glasgow, Tyneside, and South Wales between 1919 and 1925 has documented comparative changes in Irish political activity – including ISDL organisation – on the ground in these British centres.[30] Elsewhere, scholars of the Irish Revolution have specialised in period-specific case studies. Political violence between 1919 and 1923 has been the subject of recurrent research. Peter Hart's pioneering essays on the execution of republican military campaigns in British centres during the Irish War of Independence and Civil War have been followed with book-length treatment by Gerard Noonan.[31] Máirtín Ó Catháin's research on Irish republicanism in Scotland has examined Fenian activities in the pre-revolution and revolutionary periods.[32] Mo Moulton's path-breaking *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England*, finally, has explored representations of Irishness between the Anglo-Irish War and Second World War, critiquing aspects of revolutionary Irish nationalism, such as the 'English lives' of ISDL activists and the 'social and cultural contexts' underlying IRA activism.[33] These valuable studies address strands of the Irish nationalist experience in British centres. Irish nationalism in Britain, from the Third Home Rule Bill to the Anglo-Irish Treaty, however, still awaits a full history.

This book has three overarching objectives. Firstly, this research aims to evaluate the political significance of Irish nationalism in Britain to the Irish Revolution. Secondly, it aims to identify the influences of overlapping contemporary themes – Irish Revolution, British politics, Irish diaspora, and British Empire – on the development of

[29] John Hutchinson, 'Diaspora dilemmas and shifting allegiances: the Irish in London between nationalism, Catholicism and labourism (1900–22)' in *Studies in ethnicity and nationalism*, x (2010), pp 107–25.
[30] Keiko Inoue, 'Political activity of the Irish in Britain, 1919–1925' (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2008).
[31] Peter Hart, '"Operations Abroad": the IRA in Britain, 1919–23' in *E.H.R.*, cxv (2000), pp 71–102; Peter Hart, 'Michael Collins and the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson' in Peter Hart (ed.), *The I.R.A. at War, 1916–1923* (Oxford, 2003), pp 194–220; Gerard Noonan, *The IRA in Britain, 1919–1923: 'in the heart of enemy lines'* (Liverpool, 2014).
[32] Máirtín Ó Catháin, *Irish republicanism in Scotland 1858–1916: fenians in exile* (Dublin, 2007); Máirtín Ó Catháin, 'Michael Collins and Scotland' in Frank Ferguson and James McConnel (eds), *Ireland and Scotland in the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2009).
[33] Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in interwar England* (Cambridge, 2014).

Irish nationalism in British centres over this decade. Thirdly, this study aims to establish the impact of late Edwardian, First World War, and post-war political cultures on representations of Irish nationalism in Britain. How was Irish nationalism re-constructed across Britain between 1912 and 1922?

Interrogating Irish nationalism, traditionally, has been a Cartesian proposition. 'The land of Ireland is the unifying principle', Irish scholar Eoin MacNeill wrote in 1919, 'thus we find the clearly formed idea of one nation, composed of diverse peoples, but made one by their affiliation to the land that bore them – the cleanest and most concrete conception of nationality to be found in all antiquity'.[34] Belief in the natural creation of the Irish nation – and *a priori* identifications with the people of that island – formed the basis of an essentialist primordial nationalism in early twentieth-century Ireland and its diaspora communities. Documenting what, where, and how nationalism developed in Ireland, conversely, was one of the founding principles of scholarly revision in *Irish Historical Studies* from the late 1930s.[35] Prefacing his tour de force, *Modern Ireland*, R. F. Foster impressed upon the reader the significance of understanding Irish nationalism in terms of 'varieties of Irishness': 'in 1600, as later, Ireland was characterised by a fragmented polity: varieties of peoples, defining their "Irishness" differently, many of whom denied the legitimacy of the official state apparatus'.[36] R. V. Comerford, in his eponymously titled study, further, posited that identifications with Ireland were constituted through the 'gross concerns' of the people; Irish nationality was the 'contingent and ever changing product of time and place, opportunity and "construction"'.[37] Richard English's *Irish Freedom* has gone furthest perhaps to explicate the intellectual and ideological formation of Irish nationalism, sustaining the argument that the concept was developed through the collective interactions of community, struggle, and power: 'nationalism involves not just community but community in organised struggle … as a national group'.[38]

[34] Eoin MacNeill, *Phases of Irish history* (Dublin, 1919), pp 96–7.
[35] See D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *The making of modern Irish history: revisionism and the revisionist controversy* (London, 1996).
[36] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London, 1989), p. 3.
[37] R. V. Comerford, *Ireland* (London, 2003), pp 266–7.
[38] Richard English, *Irish freedom: the history of nationalism in Ireland* (London, 2006), p. 480.

In a consequent article in *Irish Historical Studies*, English framed the United Kingdom as integral to future interpretations of Irish nationalist history: 'scholars of Irish nationalism can evince a rather shallow understanding of how the details of British politics have related to Irish historical development … one cannot understand either island fully without properly understanding both'.[39] In a later influential article, Enda Delaney interrogated the historiographical pre-occupation with late modern Ireland as 'island story', presenting the argument for a 'wide-angled' reading of Irish nationalism to account for its 'precocious mobilisation' across the Irish diaspora: 'the challenge of writing such a national history is that it demands knowledge of more than one national history, and requires an engagement with broader conceptual issues'.[40] This study, in turn, follows these calls to situate Irish nationalism within reflexive conceptual frameworks and methodological praxis.

This research explores the evolution of Irish nationalism in Britain through four thematic lenses: the Irish Revolution, British politics, the Irish diaspora, and the British Empire. Read collectively, these analytical frameworks can sharpen historical perspectives on the ideological development, communal function, and individual expression of Irish nationalism. Historians of the Irish Revolution have become increasingly interested in the processes of political radicalisation.[41] What experiences of the 'organised struggle' in Ireland precipitated the mobilisation of Irish nationalist communities in Britain? Scholars of British political history have become increasingly pre-occupied with explicating the relationship between 'party' and 'people' in the age of democracy.[42] Through which political cultures and languages

[39] Richard English, 'Directions in historiography: history and Irish nationalism' in *I.H.S.*, xxxvii (2011), p. 453.

[40] Enda Delaney, 'Directions in historiography: our island story? Towards a transnational history of late modern Ireland' in *I.H.S.*, xxxvii (2011), pp 612, 619.

[41] See R. F. Foster, *Vivid faces: the revolutionary generation in Ireland, 1890–1923* (London, 2015); Senia Pašeta, *Irish nationalist women, 1900–1918* (Cambridge, 2013); Fearghal McGarry, *The rising. Ireland: Easter 1916* (Oxford, 2010); Charles Townshend, *The Republic: the fight for Irish independence, 1918–1923* (London, 2013).

[42] See Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the people: party, language and popular politics in England, 1867–1914* (Cambridge, 1998); Helen McCarthy, 'Whose democracy? Histories of British political culture between the wars' in *Historical Journal*, lv (2012), pp 221–38.

did British-based parties represent the 'gross concerns' of the Irish in Britain? Recent scholarship on the Irish diaspora has interrogated the social networks, and internal mechanisms, through which ethnic identities are constructed.[43] How did Irish diasporic networks channel the 'precocious' development of Irish nationalist identities in Britain? Imperial historians have examined the impact of the empire on the British 'metropole', debating the extent to which expressions of imperialism, loyalism, and race suffused British society.[44] How did Irish nationalists negotiate the 'varieties of Irishness' in British life, from self-identifications of belonging to state-imposed categories of citizenship? These reciprocal areas of enquiry can inform the identity politics of 'state' and 'nation' underpinning ideas of the United Kingdom. As Eugenio Biagini has noted, 'a more sophisticated approach is necessary to account for the plurality of identities and experiences in a multinational context unified by a shared institutional framework'.[45] This scholarship, accordingly, attempts to transform linear explanations of Irish nationalism into reflexive, transnational interpretations.

Original conceptual frameworks are supported by 'new' methodological approaches. Post-structuralist readings of history have increasingly identified past political experiences, and their meanings, in the 'cultural' space between 'high politics' and 'history from below'.[46] Scholars of the 'new' political history, interested in the discursive relationship between 'party' and 'people', have reframed political language, texts, and public ritual as 'discourses' through which political cultures and identities

[43] See Alan O'Day, 'A conundrum of Irish diasporic identity: mutative ethnicity' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, xxvii (2009), pp 317–39; Enda Delaney and Donald MacRaild (eds), *Irish migration, networks, and ethnic identities since 1750* (London, 2007); Kevin Kenny, 'Diaspora and comparison: the global Irish as a case study' in *The Journal of American History*, xc (2003), pp 134–62.

[44] See J. M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: the manipulation of British public opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester, 1984); Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose (eds), *At home with the empire: metropolitan culture and the imperial world* (Cambridge, 2006); Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the place for me: black Britons, citizenship and the politics of race* (Oxford, 2016).

[45] Eugenio Biagini, 'Introduction' in Eugenio Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and community: liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 2.

[46] See Lynn Hunt 'Introduction: history, culture and text' in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The new cultural history* (Los Angeles, 1989), pp 1–22.