The University of Liverpool

The Irish Migrant Experience in Leeds, 1960-2020.

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Anna Róisín Walsh, July 2020.

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Abstract - The Irish Experience in Leeds, 1960-2020

This thesis analyses the everyday experiences of Irish migrants to the city of Leeds in the post-war period. It does this through twenty-two oral history interviews conducted to explore three key areas of migrant lives: leisure, work, and home.

The thesis therefore investigates the leisure footprint of Irish migration to Leeds. It considers the development of pubs and sports clubs, as well as Irish specific venues and events such as Leeds Irish Centre and the St Patrick's Day parade. It considers how these microcosms of society function and self-police; the role of respectability and authenticity within a culture; and the ways in which symbols of Irish identity are used or shunned in social events and venues. In addition, it assesses changes in the associational cultures of the city, particularly in respect of generational differences in socialising and sports culture.

This research also explores the work lives of Irish migrants in the city, contrasting the experiences of earlier and later migrants, and the impact of changes to the education system in Ireland on migrant education and work patterns. It considers commonalities in work narratives, particularly in relation to masculinity, and the effect of wider educational choice on working patterns and self-perception. It analyses the ways in which class, gender and age can make a difference to people's work history, and how they reflect on this. It also scrutinises how migrants incorporate the way they are perceived by the host population, particularly during the Northern Irish Troubles, and how this can lead to internalised oppression, and the exclusion of those whose experiences do not fit with the dominant narrative.

Finally, this work details the ways in which 'home' is expressed, embodied and felt by Irish migrants to Britain. It considers abstract elements – how 'home' is expressed through poetry, or the language used to describe home, and the rhetorical tropes, such as land and soil, contained therein. It also interrogates the ways in which migrants spoke of their new home in Leeds, and particularly their first impressions of the city. It looks at how second-generation migrants conceive of home, and of identity. The more concrete elements of home are also covered: the relationship migrants have with food; their physical homes; their negotiation of living arrangements; and the way in which household objects tell stories of home and identity.

This thesis thus builds on the existing corpus of post-war Irish migratory history, and uses an interdisciplinary approach to provide a deeper analysis of certain aspects of this, using Leeds as a

localised city case-study. It explores the physical and social legacy of Irish migration, the changes to the migrant experience, and the reasons behind this.

List of pictures and illustrations

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Dedication

To Mum and Dad

Thanks for all your emotional, financial and practical support. It has been a pleasure to learn more about your lives, and the lives of those around you.

Author's parents on their engagement, St Francis's Dancehall, 1960s.

Epigraph

'But I've no spade to follow men like them.' - Seamus Heaney, *Digging*. From *Death of A Naturalist*, 1966.

The Irish Experience in Leeds, 1960-2020.

Introduction

> To discuss Irish emigration in the twentieth century is virtually the same as to discuss Ireland, since there is scarcely a single political, social, economic, intellectual or religious problem which has not been influenced directly or indirectly by emigration. Emigration is the mirror in which the Irish nation can always see its true face.[1]

Irish migration to the UK traditionally focussed on large urban centres such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool. In consequence, 'non-classical' cases such as Leeds are often overlooked, but its Irish community increased considerably in the mid- to late-20th century. This was a later pace of migratory settlement than experienced in cities such as Liverpool, and indicates the different conditions in which migration took place. For Leeds, Irish migration can be attributed in part to post-war building schemes. This thesis focusses on the lives and experiences of the Irish in Leeds in the post-war period, and considers how Irish migration changed and shaped the physical, economic and social landscapes of twentieth-century Yorkshire.

Leeds' development was built on the wool trade, and it reached city status relatively late, in 1893. By this juncture, the first wave of Irish migration to the city had happened – post-Famine, a number of Irish migrants moved to Leeds, settling in the Bank area in the east of the city.[2] Their impact can be seen in the imposing, Gothic structure of Mount St Mary's Church, a totemic monument to the Catholic faith of the Irish in the Bank. The church now sits derelict, in an area still blighted by poverty. The Irish population there is long gone, their homes destroyed in the slum clearances of the 1930s, and the tenants dispersed into new developments across the city, including the utopian, but fundamentally flawed, Quarry Hill Flats.[3]Irish migration to the UK began to accelerate again in the mid-twentieth century, and particularly in the post-war era, when economic migrants could find well-paid work on building and infrastructure projects, or in the newly established National Health Service.

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[1] Liam Ryan, "Irish Emigration to Britain since WWII," in *Migrations*, ed. Richard Kearney (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1990).p47-63. This thesis uses the Chicago 16th Footnote style of referencing throughout.
[2] Mary Patterson, *The Ham Shank* (Bradford: University of Bradford, 1993).
[3] Louise Ryan et al., "Irish Census Analysis Report," ed. Social Policy Research Centre (2014).

This migration continued throughout the 1950s and the economic boom of the 1960s, only declining in the 1970s and 1980s when the economy began to contract again. For example, the M1 motorway from London to Leeds was completed in 1968, literally ending at Leeds as it was constructed from South to North. A great deal of Irish migrant labour was used, and afterwards many settled in Britain, including Leeds. Many of the Irish workers that came to Leeds subsequently established relationships and homes in the city, and chose to stay there. In the process, they built a community and a network of associational culture that could sustain and support them and their families in the new city.

This research considers the current literature on the Irish in Britain, and in Leeds in particular, in the literature review in the next section. It recognises the lack of a significant literature that relates to historic and current migration, and compares the two experiences: this thesis explores these different migrant life stories, through original interviews and also through the interviews recorded by Corinne Silva in her photography collection *Róisín Bán*.[4] This research is centred around the themes of leisure, work and study and home, as these were the key topics that emerged from qualitative analysis of the interviews: each chapter coalesces around similar themes, which contribute to the main findings of the thesis. These include an analysis of the importance of hard work and the appearance of success; the changes to and reflections on identity, ruminated on by first and second-generation migrants; the change in migrant experiences and networks over time, and the key actors in these changes; and the legacy of Irish migration to the city, in physical and social form. It also reflects on elements of social control and respectability, which is certainly a by-product of the Catholic religious upbringings of the majority of the interviewees. With this in mind, it is apposite to explain why this thesis does not maintain a significant focus on religion. The reasons for this are twofold: first, there is already a substantial literature detailing the impact and import of religion in twentieth century migration. Delaney, for example, dedicates a significant amount of his monograph *The Irish in Post-War Britain* to religion: John Archer Jackson does likewise in his work.[5]

It is clear from the detail that their work covers that any primary focus on religion would need to be substantial, and perhaps this would be at the expense of other, less studied elements of life such as home life, and material and physical consumption, which are considered here. The other reason is more prosaic, and methodological: religion simply did not occur as a key theme in the interviews in the same way as the other topics. This is returned to in the conclusion.

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[4] Corinne Silva, *Róisín Bán.* (Leeds: Leeds Irish Health and Homes, 2006)

[5] Enda Delaney *The Irish in Post-War Britain.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); John Archer Jackson, *The Irish in Britain.* (London: Routledge, 1963).

Migration is a common phenomenon in Irish life and culture: this thesis investigates the everyday experiences of migrants, and extrapolates common themes in the narratives to develop a fuller picture of daily reality for these people.

Literature Review

'Migration means life and progress; a sedentary population, stagnation.'[6]

Migration has been a contentious and popular topic of social and historical investigation for hundreds of years. A seminal writer on the topic, on whose work many others built, was Ravenstein. Writing in 1886, his revised *Laws of Migration* considered the following: national and international instances of migration; counties of dispersion and absorption; and the reasons behind this movement. His first writings looked at the UK in general, and his models of migration devised from contemporary censuses still influence much migration theory today. In particular, in Europe and in the USA, the numbers of foreign-born migrants was significantly higher in cities and urban areas than in rural areas, something still borne out today. He also found that 'foreign emigrants are for the most part content with going no further than the nearest foreign province or the most convenient centre of absorption,' that many migrants do not wish to travel great distances, and are willing to travel only as far that they can be safe and settle in a community. Ravenstein identified a number of 'sites of absorption' across countries; in England for Irish migrants, this included major cities such as Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham, as well as obvious and very accessible locations such as London and Liverpool. Irish migrants to London would often have migrated there in stages rather than going there immediately, but overall Ravenstein concluded that big cities augmented not just through rural flight but mainly through foreign migration.[7]

Ravenstein's findings influenced many future writers. Indeed, Everett Lee rightly states that there have been few theorists who have expanded adequately on Ravenstein's work. Lee determines that all migration acts on 'factors associated with the area of origin' (push factors) and 'factors associated with the destination' (pull factors). The obstacles *en route* and personal factors make up the suite of influencing factors.[8] Lee hypothesises that 'the volume of migration varies with the diversity of people;' that places which are already diverse become more so, while migration to homogenous (often rural) areas is much less marked. He also found that 'it is a common finding

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[6] E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52, no. 2 (1889).p288
[7] Ibid.p288
[8] Everett S. Lee, "A Theory of Migration," *Demography* 3, no. 1 (1966).p50

that immigrant groups specialize in particular occupations and become scattered throughout the country wherever the need for such work is found'.[9]

This is especially relevant to studies of the Irish in Britain, whereby particularly those involved in construction works in the post-WWII era could be mapped by their movements around the country, on infrastructure projects such as power stations and motorways. This has parallels with the nineteenth-century itinerant labourers known as 'spalpeens'.[10] Lee also considers migrant characteristics, and one of the most pertinent to a study of the Irish in Britain is that 'the characteristics of migrants tend to be intermediate between the characteristics of the population at origin and the population at destination':[11]

> It is because they are already to some degree like the population at destination that they find certain positive factors there, and it is because they are unlike the population at origin that certain minus factors there warrant migration.[12]

This reasoning can certainly be seen in some high profile later twentieth-century migrants from Ireland to England, such as John McGahern, whose discomfort with Ireland's conservatism and censorship was widely documented.[13] Many of Lee's findings on migrant identity are mirrored in the ample writing on Irish migration, especially the nineteenth-century era of migration. Work on the mid-nineteenth-century exodus from Ireland during the famine, for example, sees writers such as Ó Gráda and Kinealy explaining at length how Irish people made their homes in new communities. Indeed, in Leeds, where this study is based, and in Liverpool, where it is being written, the famine was a key period of Irish migration.[14] In Liverpool, Irish people settled in vast numbers and completely changed the outlook of the city: a once suburban, well-off and Conservative area became known for its unions and its support for workers' rights.[15] Even the accent has a recognisable Irish influence. In relation to the mid-twentieth century there are however significant gaps in the historical literature as the experiences of those still living have not been considered.

The historiography of the Irish in Britain that is most relevant to this study can be broadly divided into three themes: identity, material culture and associational culture. Identity is defined, perceived and displayed in varying ways by Irish migrants. Much of the literature considers how

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[9] Ibid.p52
[10] Daniel Corkery, "The Spanceled," *The Irish Review (Dublin)* 3, no. 25 (1913).p19
[11] Lee, "A Theory of Migration." p57
[12] Ibid.p57
[13] Nicholas Wroe, "Ireland's Rural Elegist," *The Guardian*, 5 January 2002.
[14] Cormac O'Grada, *The Great Irish Famine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin: Gill & McMillan, 2006).
[15] John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool University Press, 2007).

cultural phenomena such as Irish folk music and Irish dancing can be used to display identity.[16] County loyalty is also central to the Gaelic Athletic Association games of hurling and football. Yet, some areas are less considered, such as how migrants consider their identity in relation to the way that they describe who they are to others and to officials; how they show their identity through the way they decorate their homes; and how a one-size fits all approach to defining an Irish identity can be problematic. This thesis intends to draw on these concepts with a local case-study.

Smith categorizes Ireland's national identity as a 'vertical' type of ethnie; a national identity that encompasses different strands of identity. These can be both lateral and vertical ethnie, but the latter was:

> More compact and popular. Its ethnic culture tended to be diffused to other social strata and classes. Social divisions were not underpinned by cultural differences: rather, a distinctive historical culture helped to unite different classes around a common heritage and traditions, especially when the latter were more under threat from outside.[17]

Smith's vertical ethnie categorization is, however, problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it glosses over the issue of class. Writers on the diaspora in particular rightly consider class to be an important and defining factor in signifying identity and shaping experience; Delaney and Jackson especially see class, among twentieth-century Irish migrants to the UK, as a dividing rather than uniting element of identity.[18] Delaney's *Irish in Post-War Britain*, for example, considers the theme of identity, and particularly its correlation to class. He identifies that the middle-class Irish migrants may have had a completely different relationship with Ireland and with Britain than the more widely-discussed working-class migrants. He relates this to the migrants' cultural choices: 'the middle-class Irish who came to London in the 1940s and 1950s knew little of the dancehall worlds of Cricklewood and Kilburn'.[19] In addition, the Irish Club, a meeting place for middle-class Irish migrants, 'provided a common meeting ground for clerks, doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and civil servants, active and retired army officers, people whose social interests are in any case not limited by their Irish interests.'[20] Delaney also explores the relationship between class and employment, and how the members of the Irish Club were keen to disprove stereotypes of the Irish in post-war Britain by demonstrating to 'the English that we weren't all

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[16] SJ Connolly, "Culture, Identity and Tradition: Changing Definitions of Irishness," in *In Search of Ireland; a Cultural Geography*, ed. Brian Graham (London: Routledge, 1997). Nuala O'Connor, *Bringing It All Back Home: The Influence of Irish Music at Home and Overseas* (Merlin Pub, 2001). Philip Ullah, "Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 12, no. 2 (1985).
[17] Anthony D Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991).p53
[18] John Archer Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1963).
[19] Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*.p93
[20] Ibid. p131

navvies and chambermaids'.[21] This research will therefore engage with ways in which class – or perceptions of class, and structural concepts such as respectability – affect relationships between Irish migrants, and how these migrants engage with existing class structures in Britain.

Hickman and Gray's approach is more gendered, and considers how the formation of identity has an impact on women in work and social spheres. Irish women, in their view, experience a form of marginal belonging which involves being positioned as 'nearly British' but 'never English'.[22] The status of 'nearly British' is a consequence of their assumed whiteness, which makes them 'potential insiders'. If they challenge the conditions of that apparent or potential inclusion by asserting their Irish identities, they are often defined as 'making a fuss', 'never being satisfied', of fabricating stories of exclusion or of being nationalistic. Hickman and Gray thus argue that it is difficult for Irishness and Britishness to coexist – that Britishness overarches Scottish and Welsh identities, but they infer that because many of the Irish fought to stop being British, the issue of identity for the Irish in Britain is problematised, particularly for second-generation migrants. This research tests Hickman and Gray's gendered hypothesis as some of the participants in this study have experienced discrimination or attempts at integration that have given them different views on identity.[23]

A further conundrum facing scholars of Irish identity is the ways in which Irish people can and do define their ethnic identity. Until changes were made to the 2001 census, due to pressure from the Campaign for Racial Equality and Irish interest groups, there was no way to identify as ethnically Irish in the UK unless someone was born in Ireland. Hickman *et al* thus found confusion in the way in which many of the second-generation Irish in Manchester identified, although she stressed that many were keen to maintain an Irish identity.[24] The new census tick-box for 'White Irish' for Irish people, and those of Irish descent who live in the UK, introduced in 2001, is also not without issue for Irish people who are not white. This is supported by O'Toole, and Garratt, who suggest separate boxes identifying race from ethnicity on the basis that a conflation of skin colour and ethnicity limits demographic study, and that it fails to recognise modern, multifaceted modes of identity. This draws attention to further problems with Smith's focus on ethnic similarities, which fails to engage with the rights of ethnically-mixed

[21] Cited in Kevin O'Connor, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1972), p84.
[22] Mary Hickman and Breda Gray `Mixed Blessings/Belongings - Acting ``White'' - Irish Women in London/Luton', paper presented at conference on *Women and Ireland: Social, Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, 27 June 1998.
[23] This is explored further through the oral history interviews that take place in this study.
[24] Mary J. Hickman et al., "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness: Second-Generation Irish Identifications and Positionings in Multiethnic Britain," *Ethnicities* 5, no. 2 (2005).

people to identify as Irish.[25] The conundrums facing first and second-generation migrants in this context are explored further in this research.

Hickman also highlights the shifting position of the Irish in multi-ethnic Britain, and how their self-perceived identity, and the identity given to them by British people, changed when Britain became more multi-cultural in the 1950s, with the immigration of Commonwealth migrants from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. The example of Albania and Italy illustrates this point – at first Albanian immigrants were welcomed. They were not noticeably different like Africans – in fact they looked like Southern Italians. This familiarity changed to shock when the Albanians did not always behave like Italians: they were then widely hated and blamed for criminality in Italy. Therefore, the very thing that had made them welcome (their invisibility) now made them alien – like a more savage version of Italians.[26] The 'invisibility' of the Irish (in Britain and other predominantly white host countries such as Australia and Canada) was, then, a double-edged sword – one could pass as British but any 'misbehaviour' could be perceived as due to inherent Irishness with roots in the 'myth of cultural homogeneity'.[27]

There are many other influences on the identity of Irish people living in Britain, particularly those, like Leeds' Irish population, who lived, in the later part of the twentieth century, in primarily ethnically mixed areas such as Chapeltown and Harehills, alongside recent migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia.[28] Comparative literature, which considers the experiences of Irish migrants alongside those of other nationalities who migrated at the same time, is therefore valuable in this context.[29] Holohan's interviews with Irish individuals who worked and lived in Britain also reveal the complexity of identity and note the nature of the relationship between Britain and Ireland in the mid-1990s. She gives the example of Doreen Jansen, whose father hid his Irishness from her in order that she would have a better life with less discrimination if she was 'English:' she later returned to Catholicism and embraced her Irish heritage. An Irish accent, however, was often believed to mark migrants as 'other':

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[25] Smith, *National Identity*.p53

[26] Mary Hickman, "'Binary Opposites' or 'Unique Neighbours'? The Irish in Multi-Ethnic Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2000).

[27] Mary J. Hickman, "Reconstructing Deconstructing 'Race': British Political Discourses About the Irish in Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (1998).This article discusses whether 'whiteness' was the reason for the exclusion of Ireland from the 1962 immigration controls, and problematizes the notion of a cultural homogeneity between Ireland and Britain.

[28] David Thornton, *The Story of a City* (Ayr: Fort Publishing, 2002).

[29] Mohsin Zulfiqar, *Land of Hope and Glory: The Presence of African, Asian and Caribbean Communities in Leeds* (Leeds: Roots Project, 1993). This book includes a series of contextualised quotations from African, Asian and Caribbean migrants to Leeds, detailing often troubled relations with the white British communities where they were trying to make their new homes.

> On the phone, if someone says 'I don't understand your accent', I say 'yeah, I can't understand yours either' and I'd start again, but the implication is that it is your accent that is wrong.[30]

Accent is a key factor in understanding different migrant approaches to their new homes, as it is one of the only obvious identifying factors separating white Irish migrants from their white British counterparts.[31] It can also be used to prove or disprove ideas about second-generation assimilation and ethnic fade. Accents are a common theme in this project's interviews, and the interviewees' perception of the relationship between accent and identity is therefore explored further in this thesis.

Care worker Joan Kane, whose quote about accent is cited above, seems to be of the understanding that Irishness, in London of the 1990s, was disadvantageous due to the Irish cultural stereotyping of the authorities and the general public, whether institutionally or intentionally. This contrasts with some of Nagle's findings, who found the Irish in Britain were generally quite contented, and horrified to think that they might be deliberately disadvantaged on account of their Irishness.[32] When he asked students and tutors in the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith about their experiences, they said that they had not had problems with racism but many – particularly from the middle class – seemed to think this related to not identifying themselves as part of a specific Irish community. They thought they could not be victims of racism because the Irish were not a race apart from their white British counterparts.[33]

These views fostered the belief amongst some that elements of the London Irish (the allusion is to working-class migrants) had effectively ghettoised themselves and their demands for separate funding and special treatment alienated other Londoners:

> These 'trouble makers' had effectively brought on the spite of the host population because they had sought to differentiate the Irish. When I posed the issue of discrimination against the Irish, Rory, one of the tutors and an Irishman originally from Belfast laughed and told me, 'I've had nothing but positive experiences living and working in London … English people are always complimenting me on my accent. In my line of work as a singer, being Irish has always helped me progress.'[34]

These experiences are only a snapshot of the complicated association between Irish migrants and the British host population at what was a very volatile time for this relationship. What this study

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[30] Anne Holohan, *Working Lives: The Irish in Britain* (Hayes: Irish Post, 1995). p133

[31] Hickman et al., "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness: Second-Generation Irish Identifications and Positionings in Multiethnic Britain."

[32] John Nagle, *Multiculturalism's Double-Bind: Creating Inclusivity, Cosmopolitanism and Difference* (Farnham, Surrey ; Ashgate, 2009).

[33] This relates to the discussion of internalised oppression in the second chapter of this thesis.

[34] Nagle, *Multiculturalism's Double-Bind [Electronic Book] : Creating Inclusivity, Cosmopolitanism and Difference / John Nagle*.p186

considers is how this relationship played out for Irish migrants in a particular area: what were their experiences like, and were they similar to those of Irish people in other cities in the UK?

Another key aspect of migrant literature relates to visual and material culture. What becomes apparent is that we show our identity in different ways: in the music we listen to; the cars we drive and the clothes we wear. We can also show aspects of who we are in the way we choose to decorate our homes; the objects to which we give pride of place, and those that we hide in cupboards or under beds. As Adorno notes: 'The positive element of kitsch lies in the fact that it sets free for a moment the glimmering realisation that you have wasted your life.'[35] The homes of Irish migrants in the UK often betray the roots of their inhabitants with items of mass-produced ephemeral decoration that proclaim something of the Irish about them. Areas of some migrants' homes, often living rooms, are dedicated to items relating to Irish identity: for example, a lamp behind the television with a Mayo flag printed on the front of it.[36] *Roisín Bán*, a photo collection about the Irish in Leeds, also references this relationship between kitsch and identity, including pictures of religious statues and thatched cottages in the Leeds homes of Irish people.[37]

Theoretically, the links between kitsch and identity have been established by David Lloyd, who calls kitsch 'popular culture's indecorous revenge on aesthetic illusion'.[38] Lloyd posits that kitsch can be seen as a gesture towards a trauma. In the case of the Irish diaspora, he suggests that it is a nod towards the wrench of leaving home, and the traumas that migrants have faced in host societies. The kitsch (and migrants may not define it as such) is a badge of honour, of survival of both the journey and the destination, that:

> even the most traumatic memory is never forgotten. If kitsch preserves, in its congealed and privatised, mostly portable forms, the memories of a community that cannot quite be a people, does it not also represent a repertoire which can, in given political circumstances, be redeployed for collective ends? In the contradictory range of feelings that attach to it, often simultaneously, lies the secret of the sudden mobility to which the icon can attain in spite of its debasement and devaluation as mere kitsch.[39]

Rains concurs on the relevance of kitsch to the cultural lives of the diaspora, and reflects how the emotional attachment to kitsch has led to a cottage industry selling items that represent Ireland to Americans: traditional companies such as Waterford Crystal and Belleek now actively market their products to a diaspora seeking authenticity:

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[35] Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).
[36] Living rooms, as the heart of the home and the room most likely to receive visitors, could also be conceived of as a 'public space': certainly in opposition to the rest of the home.
[37] Corinne Silva, *Róisín Bán*.
[38] David Lloyd, *Ireland after History*, Field Day Essays (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999).p91
[39] Ibid.p94

> In later marketing to the diaspora… factory workers are referred to as either artisans or craftsmen (sic), and the company's historical background and continuation of traditional working practices, despite the fact that it is now part of the Waterford Wedgwood multinational conglomerate, with annual sales of more than $900m… touristic representation of consumption therefore works to reinforce the portrayal of the tourist experience in Ireland as being one based on authenticity and the possibility of sharing the 'real' culture of the country. [40]

An Irish American in Boston could, for example, buy a mug with shamrocks on it from an American website, which would be made in a factory in China: no-one involved in the process of its manufacture, shipping or consumption need ever have even visited Ireland.[41] The spread of availability of Irish kitsch online – that one need not visit Ireland to acquire it – adds another layer of distance to the 'congealed, inauthentic' kitsch experience:

> The effect of the availability of Irish material culture via e-commerce has been to further remove it from its original context, heightening the impression of kitsch already conveyed by the objects themselves. Indeed, the very methods of presentation employed to market Irish goods on the internet often contributes to this process, as there is inevitably an even stronger emphasis upon the visual elements of many of the goods.[42]

Kitsch home decoration reinforces the identity of diasporic migrants. This in turn relates to the different ways in which a migrant community can create and sustain their identity at a remove from its origins. On a wider scale, kitsch ephemera is used by organisations, in pubs and social spaces, to immerse consumers, clients and customers in a type of authentic, or even hyper-authentic, experience. This cultural experience is further explored in the thesis.

The literature on the social side of Irish migrant life is scant, ranging from the very general to the very particular with little to bridge the gap in-between.[43] Most writers agree that the social scene was dominated by men, and was an important part of social and work-related networking for Irish people. The ways in which women socialised, and the ways that the pubs linked to the wider community, are not considered in a great deal of detail, and suggest that at this time women were on the periphery of the social circle for the migrant Irish. As Delaney notes, however, in the later post-war years women began to spend more time in pubs, which made them more of a venue for young men and women to meet someone to settle down with. Delaney is one of the few to consider the social lives of Irish migrants, highlighting the waning influence of the church in this sphere; his work in this area again focusses mainly on men's experience. He notes that commercial rather than religious concerns dictated the way the

[40] Stephanie Rains, "Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture," *Circa*, no. 107 (2004).p56
[41] This is echoed – and discussed in more detail – in the third chapter of this thesis.
[42] Rains, "Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture."p57
[43] Local case studies such as Ewart's and Moran's consider the specifics of certain cities, while Delaney, Jackson and O'Connor look to a wider national picture.

dancehalls, a key site of Irish associational culture in the mid-twentieth century, were run.[44] Certainly, the church's influence on the post-war Irish migrant social scene, as with politics, is surprisingly negligible. Church networks attempted to keep the young Irish in Britain – particularly women – on the straight and narrow.[45] Despite or maybe because of this, the social events organised by the church were often eschewed for more secular events.[46]

This import of the dancehall as social phenomenon is also emphasised by Ryan and Ewart:

> The…Irish dancehalls indeed always exhibited an enviable gaiety; they were always very lively and very Irish, but one needed these same qualities in one's heart and in one's feet to find them inviting. They tended to be dominated by a younger set recently arrived from Ireland, and those past thirty did not usually find them an attractive place to spend an evening.[47]

Ewart further stresses the class dimension of the dancehalls:

> (they) fitted in to the prevailing working-class culture. They were transitional forms, acting as a bridge between Irish and other working-class people. Their transitional nature is also reflected in their demise.[48]

This suggests that dancehall culture was partly a transient phenomenon, which could be due to the small and declining sector of society to whom they appealed; Ryan posits that age was a factor, while Ewart suggests they were only a temporary necessity for integrationist migrants and this thesis explores the significance of the dancehall in the lives of Irish migrants in Leeds. The more mixed gender clientele of pubs provides another explanation for the demise in dancehalls as the latter's use as a meeting place was no longer paramount.

Most of the literature identifies the Irish pub as the central focus for the social lives of migrants. For Ryan, assessing the London Irish, the pub was a place to spend time with other Irish people: 'the talk was good and the crack was good, and there was a reversion to a completely Irish way of life.'[49] He suggests that Irish men could loosen up from having to fit in to the British way of life, and, like Delaney, that this would be somewhere they could perhaps meet a potential partner. Ryan also recognises how the pub was integral to migrants' day to day existence, and subsistence:

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[44] Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*.p170
[45] Louise Ryan, "'I Had a Sister in England': Family-Led Migration, Social Networks and Irish Nurses," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34, no. 3 (2008).
[46] As noted, religion is not a primary focus of this thesis.
[47] Ryan, "Irish Emigration to Britain since Wwii."p46
[48] Henrietta Ewart, "'Coventry Irish': Community, Class, Culture and Narrative in the Formation of a Migrant Identity, 1940-1970," *Midland History* 36, no. 2 (2011).
[49] Ryan, "Irish Emigration to Britain since Wwii."p46

> For those who had neither, the Irish pub also held out the prospect of employment and living accommodation. At very worst an Irishman looking for a bed for the night would always find someone who would let him sleep on the floor if nothing better were available. But above all else, the Irish pubs were the labour exchanges for the building sites. They were the places where a man looking for a job was always sure to meet someone who knew someone, and certain foremen from certain sites were known to frequent certain pubs, and there was always the chance of a favourable introduction.[50]

Delaney similarly stresses the pub's importance in finding a job and in feeling at home in a strange country:

> Pubs… acted as informal labour exchanges, especially for those involved in construction, and apparently even some wages were paid over in this sacred space…But 'belonging' could mean different things to different people. The predominantly young migrants sought out other Irish exiles to socialize with in their hard-earned leisure time, in pubs, sporting venues, and dancehalls across Britain. This does not imply that they did not belong, but rather that the draw in the first instance was to essentially Irish-dominated spaces outside of work. It was an inevitable stage in the process of adjustment that the familiar—a world that was neither truly Irish or British but somewhere in between—would offer migrants solace after the displacement of emigration.[51]

This study thus seeks to find out the extent to which Irish people during this period drank, and the places where they chose to do so. It is also interested in the extent to which drink played a part in aspects of migrant life, and the effects of heavy drinking on the older Irish people now supported by Leeds' social care institutions.

The link between the Irish pubs and casual manual work reinforces the idea that where you socialised could depend to some extent on your social class. This was the case in London particularly, where the Irish population was of such a size that there were options for people to choose different types of venue and social occupation. Middle-class Irish people went to great lengths to distance themselves from the Irish clubs, and set up social networks of their own. The aforementioned Irish Club as well as the National University of Ireland Club, and the Ulster Club gave London professionals a place to socialise. For example in the Irish Club, 'great emphasis is placed on 'cultural' activities: dramatics, debating, Irish and ballroom dancing. It is claimed with some pride that politics are not discussed in the club, or at least only among intimate friends.'[52] Jackson concurs:

> These organisations are almost exclusively limited to the white-collar members of the Irish community in Britain. They provide a common meeting ground for clerks, doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and civil servants, active and retired army officers, people whose social activities are in any case not limited by their Irish interests. The middle-class

[50] Ibid.p46
[51] Delaney *The Irish in Post-War Britain* p174
[52] Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*.p130

> Irishman's club is like much of middle-class Ireland – only Irish by definition with the extremes of Irish interest carefully avoided or played down and social and cultural activities are encourages at the expense of more controversial issues. The atmosphere is Irish in so far as draught Guinness and the Mountains of Mourne can make it, but it is a middle-class Ireland essentially different from the Ireland of the working class immigrant.[53]

The relationship between the people of Ireland and Britain, considered here, has changed unrecognisably since the 1960s, but is still a valid area of concern for this research. An analysis of the difference between how the subjects felt they were treated during the Northern Irish Troubles, and how they feel they are treated now, has not yet been undertaken. This is explored in this study through the historical reflections of its narrators. The cultural side of Irish migration is also an area where there is much more to be written. Although Delaney, Jackson, O'Connor and Ewart look at the social lives of the Irish, they produced general accounts with the exception of Ewart's work which is specific to Coventry. A comprehensive study of the social scene for Irish migrants from the 1960s onwards in a large British city has not been attempted, and forms a large part of this thesis.

Not only is Leeds overlooked in the more general academic literature on the Irish in Britain; there is little specific writing on the Irish in the city in the twentieth century. This is an area that this project aims to redress with more contemporary and theoretically grounded exploration of the Irish community. The first significant wave of Irish migration to Leeds is covered in *The Ham Shank*, a fictional exploration of Leeds' Irish population in the Bank in the 1850s.[54] Although this was an era of great change – Leeds was not yet a city, and its industrial expansion was typical of that of many cities – the migrant population from this time was almost completely dispersed by the mid-twentieth-century (the slums of the Bank area were destroyed in the 1930s), and the main legacy that the nineteenth-century Irish left for the city was the magnificent, now-derelict, Mount St Mary's Church. The writing is fictional, but it has a basis in the traditions of Irish migrants of the era, and shows an explicit link to Mayo; the story's protagonist is a little girl from Ballina.

The next, and most in-depth, analysis of the Irish in Leeds is Brendan McGowan's *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds 1931-81*.[55] The book covers pre-1931 Irish migration to Leeds, and all aspects of migrant life; the account was published in 2004, and McGowan was the last writer to capture the experiences of those who migrated earlier in the twentieth-century. His interviews

[53] Ibid.p132
[54] Patterson, *The Ham Shank*.
[55] Brendan McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81* (Killala,2009).

are a great source of information, in particular about the 1930s and 1940s generation, whose experiences shape those who came after them, but who themselves are not the main focus of the current study. McGowan's account lacks links to a wider migrant narrative. The book also focusses heavily on Leeds' sizeable Mayo population, including maps and recognising the city's status as a 'Mayo town'; this despite a clear presence, both statistically and through the interviewees, of migrants from other counties across Ireland. McGowan's study also stops at 1981, so later migrant experiences are not covered in his research.

McGowan also provided the introduction to a photo study of Leeds' Irish population: *Róisín Bán*, the end-product of an exhibition and a portrait and interview series by the photographer Corinne Silva.[56] Silva takes again the inspiration of Leeds' Mayo links, and shows this through a series of thoughtful photographs, culminating in a Yorkshire Rose (the symbol of the county) taking a journey to the top of Croagh Patrick. The exhibition toured Europe for two years from 2006, and it paints a fascinating picture not just of people but of the importance of objects and material and visual culture as signifiers of identity. The interviews, like McGowan's, are interesting, but there is no thematic analysis of what the interview data represents. This thesis thus analyses Silva's interviews as a counterpoint or corroboration of the original interviews recorded as part of this research.

Academic historical writing on Leeds is not scarce, but accounts of Leeds' post-1950s incarnation are limited. A collection edited by Derek Fraser, *A History of Modern Leeds*, covers Victorian Leeds in depth, but only the final chapter gives any consideration to the post-war city.[57] The city's heavy involvement in the wool trade, and the twin guides of its Victorian incarnation, the Liberal party and the Methodist church, feature prominently. However, the specifics of immigration to the city are not a focus. Thornton also writes a history of the city, and takes more of an interest in twentieth-century Leeds: it takes into account both the significant post-war rebuilding of the city and the contemporary immigration that accompanied the city's expansion in the second half of the twentieth century. Thornton does not, however, consider the impact of Irish migration on the city at this time, instead focusing on migrants from the Commonwealth:

> Following the patterns of previous migratory groups, the new Commonwealth immigrations settled initially in the less affluent areas of Leeds: West Indians in the Chapeltown area and Asians in the Harehills and Holbeck area, whilst in the Burley area the social mix was multi-racial.[58]

[56] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.
[57] Derek Fraser, ed. *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).
[58] Thornton, *The Story of a City*.p222

Beresford and Jones write at length about Leeds' Caribbean community and its expansion in the post-war era in *Leeds and Its Region* – between 1951 and 1961, Leeds' Caribbean-born community increased from 150 people to 2,200.[59] This provides a useful comparison for this study – the same time period proved to be an expansive era for Irish migration into the city. Along the same lines as *Róisín Bán*, but assessing other migrant groups in the city, is *Land of Hope and Glory: The Presence of African, Asian and Caribbean communities in Leeds.*[60] This uses a series of interviews with migrants from the 1950s and 1960s about their experiences in moving to Leeds: what they enjoyed, what they missed, and, for several interviewees, how overt and institutionalised racism was manifested towards them.

The geography of more recent migration to Leeds is covered in *21st Century Leeds: Geographies of a Regional City.*[61] Here, Unsworth and Stilwell track the movement of different ethnic groups over time using 2001 census data. This is problematic for the Irish in Leeds as the 2001 census was the first to feature as an Irish ethnicity category. Therefore there is no comparative data from the 1991 census for the Irish to feature in Unsworth and Stilwell's movement mapping sections. They do, however, corroborate Ryan's findings that the Leeds' Irish population is 'older in relative terms than the white British, with the largest proportions between ages 50 and 69.'[62]

The Irish in Britain have not just built roads and railways and staffed hospitals; they have become part of the very fabric of the country. Whilst Irish people appear to be assimilated into wider British society, they maintain elements of distinctiveness from other societal groups, and also sometimes from each other; their substantial impact on the country as a whole is also explored in relation to their impact on a small city. The era the study covers is also important; the second part of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first was a time of great change in the relationship between Ireland and Britain, and this research investigates further what it was like to live through such a volatile and unstable period in history. This research therefore provides an overview of the everyday lives of Irish migrants to Leeds, and extrapolates wider themes from interview data which is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section. It provides a comparison between the experiences and perspectives of earlier and more recent Irish

[59] MW; Jones Beresford, GRJ, ed. *Leeds and Its Region* (Leeds: Leeds Local Executive Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1967).
[60] Zulfiqar, Mohsin. *Land of Hope and Glory: The Presence of African, Asian and Caribbean Communities in Leeds.* (Leeds: Roots Project, 1993.)

[61] R; Stillwell Unsworth, J, *Twenty-First Century Leeds: Geographies of a Regional City* (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 2004).
[62] Ibid.p51

migrants to the city, and it charts the physical, social and cultural influences that post-war migration had on the city of Leeds.

Sources and Methodology

Sources

The key primary material for this study is a series of twenty two interviews, conducted mainly with people born in Ireland who moved to or lived in Leeds in the post-war period. These interviews took place either at the homes of the participants or at two different institutions: Leeds Irish Centre and Leeds Irish Health and Homes. The interviews took place between 2015 and 2019. These venues were chosen to allow access to more narrators while in familiar surroundings. These interviews cast light on the experiences of a group of migrants across the demographic spectrum. Respondents across a broad subsection of migrant society were interviewed, including those which are underrepresented in the current prevailing literature, such as the socially isolated. Fifteen interviews were with men, the remaining seven with women. There are also interviews with seven more recent migrants and three second-generation migrants to consider the legacy of migration, and the generational differences in experience.

Other resources include newspaper archives such as the London-published *Irish Post* which commenced publication in 1970; the county-wide publication *The Yorkshire Post* and the daily Leeds-centric *Yorkshire Evening Post*. Online databases such as the *Leodis* photo archive; census data from the *Office of National Statistics*; and locally published and curated photo archives maintained by Irish interest groups are also assessed. As Ewart finds in her study of Coventry in a similar period, Irish migrants at this time left little by way of a written record themselves – diaries and similar written evidence are scant.[63] Thus the key way that the migrants' own experiences are measured in this study, as in that of Ewart, is through the oral history interviews. Material culture research is also central to this study, particularly to explore its role in shaping the identity and home decoration of Irish migrants in Britain. For those interviewees spoken to at home, notes were made of Irish-related home decoration; those interviewed in institutions were asked questions relating to home decoration and the role it plays in displaying identity. Some comparative case studies have also been conducted into the ways in which the institutions in Leeds use material culture and decoration to display Irishness, and whether there is any homogeneity in the way these different institutions engage with this aspect of Irish identity.

[63] Ewart, "'Coventry Irish': Community, Class, Culture and Narrative in the Formation of a Migrant Identity, 1940-1970."

Visual culture is also analysed – for example, how Leeds Irish Centre or other Irish-based associations use certain symbols to display Irishness.

Interviews

Originally, the plan was to conduct interviews for this research using representative samples of the Leeds Irish population, based on 2011 census statistics. However, this became problematic from speaking to people who worked with the Irish community and realising how difficult it is to find large numbers of people who are willing to be interviewed. For each person who has agreed to be interviewed, usually one has declined, or claimed to have nothing to say that warrants their experience being recorded. Therefore, this research was conducted using the snowballing method, which is recommended in cases where traditional sampling methods may fail to yield access to certain groups.[64]

Snowball sampling

> Snowball sampling is a useful way to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest, but it does require that the participants are likely to know others who share the characteristics that make them eligible for inclusion in the study. This method is particularly useful for locating hidden populations, where there is no way to know the total size of the overall population, such as samples of the homeless or users of illegal drugs.[65]

Morgan's summary of snowball sampling gives clarity to the reasons for choosing this method – given the relative invisibility of Leeds' Irish population, a statistical sample using local records would not have been possible. Although numbers of Irish people in the city were recorded in the census, the records remain anonymised for a hundred years, so there was no way to make direct contact with them using this information. The only available method was snowball sampling. Some of this was directly person-to-person – so one person interviewed would be asked for suggestions at the end of their interview and recommend another, as in traditional snowballing – and some was conducted through institutional gatekeepers. For example, the Irish Arts Foundation suggested two of their supporters and arranged the interview, while the Irish Centre's manager publicised the presence of the researcher at an over 55's event at the centre, signposting clients to be interviewed. Other original interviewees were recruited through family, work and institutional networks: Simon, Liam and Sean were relatives of the researcher; Eamonn was a family friend. An Irish institution the researcher had worked with provided access to their

[64] Snowballing involves recruiting new interviewees through existing channels and current interviewees. Leo A. Goodman, "Snowball Sampling," *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics* 32, no. 1 (1961).
[65] David L Morgan "Snowball Sampling" in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* edited by Lisa M Given Sage: London 2012

staff, and made links with other interviewees such as Kevin. The interviews with these staff were significant in advancing some ideas about the social networks of Irish migrants, and could certainly fall into the category of stakeholder sampling.[66] Younger contributors were harder to come by, particularly from the Irish Republic: again, this was compounded by both a lack of visibility of Irish migrants, and also a lack of publicly available social networks of same. Mary, for example, the only female respondent in the younger age group from the Republic of Ireland was recommended by Ronan. Another woman in this subset was ready to be interviewed, but chronic ill-health intervened to make this impossible. Morgan also warns about the likelihood of a 'biased subset' in snowballing: this is an issue we return to later in this chapter, and again in the second chapter of this thesis.

> In practice, snowball sampling poses a distinct risk of capturing a biased subset of the total population of potential participants because any eligible participants who are not linked to the original set of informants will not be accessible for inclusion in the study. The best defense against this problem is to begin with a set of initial informants that are as diverse as possible.[67]

As regards the final number of interviews: the original number suggested was thirty, but some of the interviews were so detailed that there was a significant enough corpus after the twenty-two interviews that had been undertaken. Narrators interviewed later began to cover the same ground as earlier respondents, satisfying the researcher that there was sufficient information to be analysed in the existing corpus. Overall, transcripts of the interviews for this thesis came to over 120000 words.

Formatting the interviews

With regard to referencing interviews, those conducted by Silva, McGowan and Wall *et al* are referenced in the usual way.[68] However, original interviews conducted for this thesis are foregrounded by the narrator's pseudonymised first name in capitals, in the style of Alessandro Portelli's approach, rather than being included in footnotes.[69] This positions the narratives as an integral part of the research project, and allows the reader to return to the list of interviews at the end of the thesis for short biographies and interview details for each participant.

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[66] Palys refers to stakeholder sampling as "identifying who the major stakeholders are who are involved in designing, giving, receiving, or administering the program or service being evaluated, and who might otherwise be affected by it." Ted Palys "Purposive Sampling" in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* edited by Lisa M Given Sage: London 2012

[67] Morgan "Snowball Sampling".

[68] Silva *Róisín Bán*; McGowan *Taking The Boat*; Wall et al *Constructing Post-War Britain*.

[69] Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Background to the thesis

According to a study of 2011 census data, there are forty-thousand Irish-born people living in Yorkshire; eight-thousand of these are in Leeds, amounting to 1.1% of the overall population of the city. A high percentage of these people arrived in England before 1971- the largest amount arriving before 1961- this makes sense in the context that all migration pre-1961 is bracketed into the same section in the census categorisation. Given the corresponding older age of most of the Irish in Leeds, and that most migrants arrived there before the age of thirty, then the large numbers of pre-1961 migrants must be seen through this prism. The second highest migration era, divided into ten year periods, is 1961-71: 19.9% of the current Irish population of Leeds moved there in this time period. The study however contains this caveat:

> Of course, the figures include only those who have remained in the region and, thus, do not capture the numbers who may have moved on elsewhere or returned to Ireland. Thus, it is somewhat misleading to compare these numbers as an indication of total migration to the region over time.[70]

This is a key point in relation to the interviews. Given the itinerant nature of work for many of the migrants to Leeds in the mid- to late-twentieth century, many who lived in Leeds at this time did not stay there. Their reasons for leaving Leeds, and opinions and reflections of their time there, were important to consider. Interviews with four people who now live in other parts of the UK who were previously in Leeds, as well as one who has now returned to Ireland, were therefore conducted in order to be able to compare their experiences.

Further investigation of census figures reveals significant anomalies. One such issue is the comparative age of the Irish population. The Irish population's age compared to that of the white British population indicates that the Irish population is considerably older. Indeed, from the age of 49 upwards, Irish people per capita are over-represented in each band of the age statistics compared to their white British counterparts. White Irish women are also far more liable than their white British counterparts to be suffering from a limiting long-term illness. Older Irish people are also more likely to live alone, making them more at risk of social isolation; 21% of 2011 census respondents from the Irish population said that they lived alone, as opposed to 13.6% of the white British population:

> it is apparent that the large proportions of older Irish people living alone, as well as the numbers in poor health, have clear consequences for service providers in this region.[71]

[70] Louise; Ryan et al., "Analysis of 2011 Census Data: Irish Community Statistics, England and Selected Urban Areas," (Middlesex: Middlesex University, 2014).
[71] Ibid

The ramifications of this data analysis, and its impact on service provision in Leeds, is therefore discussed in this study, in interviews with community workers such as Saoirse, Grainne, Lauren and Tim, as well as an analysis of relevant council planning documents and organisational reports on social isolation and homelessness.[72]

The interviews were semi-structured – that is, the interviewer had a list of prompt questions, drawn up from suggestions from Thompson, and sometimes used in interviews to open up topics or to further investigate how interviewees feel, or clarify their experiences.[73] However, on the whole the interviews were allowed to flow according to the interviewees' choices, with questioning only used to further the interviewee's story, or to clarify understanding. The core aims of the interview process were to consider the experiences of the interviewees on moving to England, looking in particular at their relationships with certain institutions – that is, how they approached work and social situations, and how they established new networks, or reinforced ones that they had brought with them, such as kinship bonds relating to their home town or home county. A comparative analysis of different sub-groups within the interview group is then key. Experiences can vary depending on the gender of the interviewees, whether they were part of an extended Irish social network, or socially isolated from their peers. With some of the interviewees, props and aides memoires such as photographs and songs were brought to the interviews to try to elicit responses. This approach was first pioneered by Harper with encouraging results.[74] This also provided a model for Wall, who, akin to this study, engaged with material culture in interviewees' homes:

> some people retained an extensive range of artefacts from their working lives – from documents and photographs to large and small physical objects that were retrieved, legally or otherwise, and either stored or displayed in the home.[75]

The interview relationship

Increasingly, oral history practice eschews objectivity in order to reflect on the intersubjectivity and reflexivity involved in the interview process. The position of the researcher, and their relationship with the narrator is key to the interview, if one subscribes to the co-creationist model. Therefore it is important to reflect on the fact that this research had some personal connections for the researcher, as interviewees included former colleagues, friends, family friends and even family members. This was not the case for all interviewees, but even those who were

[72] More detail about these interviews can be found at the end of this thesis.
[73] Paul Thompson, *Voice of the Past : Oral History (3rd Edition)* (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[74] Douglas Harper, "Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation," *Visual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2002).
[75] Christine Wall, *Something to Show for It: The Place of Mementoes in Women's Oral Histories of Work. Sage Biographical Research. Sage Publications Ltd* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd).p382

not known to the interviewer would often have friends in common or knowledge of the writer's family members, some of whom were involved in Leeds institution the Irish Centre. Of course, this raises questions around intersubjectivity and objectivity. This is something considered at length by Yow, who suggests that:

> In the 1980s, Renato Rosaldo became a spokesman for the argument that the ethnographer "occupies a position or structural location and observes with a particular angle of vision." He reminded readers that age, gender, outsider's position, identification with a particular political regime, and certain life experiences all influence what an ethnographer learns in fieldwork. "The truth of objectivity has lost its monopoly status".[76]

She also laments the lack of reflection by practitioners on the process of research, and the effect this has on researcher and narrator:

> As practitioners and instructors we have to be more than just aware of this shift in the paradigm for oral historians, we have to begin incorporating the concept of reflexivity into our writing and teaching. In the past, it was always easier to talk about effects on the narrator than to take a hard look at ourselves, at how we affect the process of research and analysis, how we are affected. And we historians have concentrated on providing full citations for the location of the document rather than on the search itself or on our process during the search and analysis; it has not been our custom to put our reflections on the ways we reacted to the documents into print. But we need to not only question our own work, we need to place the published writing in a total context which includes revelation of our own agendas when the reader needs this information to evaluate the research.[77]

In reflection on this thesis, it was the case that the interviews with people best known to the researcher (parents, aunts and uncles) that were the easiest to conduct. This was partially helped by the fact that in most cases, these were group interviews, which took the form of a conversation between friends, into which the researcher was welcomed but barely acknowledged. This was aided by generational difference – the researcher was able to take up a familiar position of the child or younger family member asking for stories from the older generation: there was also the echo of the past, where the adults in the family group setting would performatively tell stories of the past to the children – this was a comfortable situation for both parties. In concert with other post-positivist oral history research, the researcher was less focussed on finding out the objective 'truth' of situations, such as when exactly someone might have attended a certain event, or what might have happened. Instead, the key focus was on how these recollections fed

[76] Renato Rosaldo, Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989) pp 19-21 cited in Valerie Yow "Do I Like Them Too Much?" In *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Thompson and Alistair Perks. (London: London, 2015.)

[77] Yow "Do I Like Them Too Much?" In *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Thompson and Alistair Perks. London: London, 2015.p70

into the wider stories into which the narrators inserted themselves, and the way their past experiences contributed to their current identity. This tallies in some ways with Abrams, who suggests that:

> A 'successful' interview – one that perhaps produces a nice coherent and fluent narrative containing a balance between information and reflection – is likely to be the product of shared values between the parties, a good rapport and the willingness of the interviewer to permit the respondent to shape the narrative, avoiding unnecessary interjections.[78]

Some conversations with friends were actually more difficult – Fearghal knows the researcher well, but was far less open and chatty than usual when under interview, making the process quite difficult, whereas Mary, who had been previously unknown to the interviewer, was far more expansive and self-expressive. This contrasts with Abrams' statement below:

> An 'unsuccessful' interview – one that fails to produce a coherent narrative, in which the respondent offers short or factual answers to questions without elaboration or reflection – may have its roots in a poor interview relationship, lack of empathy or rapport, and an absence of understanding or comprehension on both sides.[79]

Interviewee Tim was more relaxed around the researcher once he had established her family relationships, and the reliability and respectability of the family members in question.[80] Thus this appears to be a cultural phenomenon. Dwyer reflects on her own 'insider' position in her research, and how she makes this explicit in her work:

> In grant applications I state that I belong to the community in which I hope to conduct the study as it is important for qualitative researchers to situate themselves in the research. I leave it up to the reader to decide if my insider status would improve or impede my ability to carry out the study. I think it helps me although I do not explicitly discuss how.[81]

In the interviews for this thesis, the researcher is aware that having a position as an insider has made things easier in some ways: gaining access to interviewees; being able to communicate effectively with institutional gatekeepers; knowing the code. As an outsider there may have been more barriers at interview, or conversely it may have made interviewees less cautious to speak to someone actively outside their usual society. Outsiders may also have been more successful in prompting interviewees to reflect more fully on their home surroundings – as is noted later,

[78] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p11
[79] Ibid p11
[80] This relates to the later conversations with Grainne, whereby she discusses how important it is to 'know the code' to successfully work with the Irish community.
[81] Sonya Corbin Dwyer, and Jennifer L. Buckle. "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (March 2009), 54–63.

fulsome descriptions of 'home' are missing in interviews for this thesis, in part because both interviewer and interviewee are known to be familiar with the homeplace. Ryan concurs:

> However, "insider" research has also been criticised since participants and researcher may simply assume shared understanding and knowledge without explaining and exploring particular experiences and beliefs.[82]

Indeed, she gives an example of a similar situation that arose in her own research, interviewing a woman named Fidelma for her Nurses Project:

> Throughout the interview Fidelma took for granted my knowledge of Irish society, she did not explain that until 1996 divorce was illegal in Ireland. Thus, it appears that she implicitly identified me as an "insider", an Irish woman with the necessary background knowledge to grasp the significance of what is being said.[83]

Ryan suggests that the current literature on being an 'insider' (as this researcher was in most settings) or an 'outsider' is too binary and assigns too high a tariff to the importance of shared ethnicity or cultural factors. She points instead to the importance of considering the positionalities of the interviewer and how they may choose to highlight one facet of their personhood at the exclusion of others in order to find common ground with narrators. She gives the example of gender and parental status as cross-cultural similarities, and notes her own experience of developing a positive working relationship in interview situations where she may have been seen as an outsider traditionally due to a different national background (she is Irish; her interviewee was Polish), they were able to bond over both being mothers, whereas with some younger Irish interviewees she found it harder to build bonds with them due to the lack of shared experience outside of ethnicity. She therefore advocates for more consideration of other positionalities than ethnicity in reflecting on the interview relationship.[84]

The use of snowballing as a methodology has benefits but also drawbacks. One of these was a lack of female narrators, something which was particularly acute in the sample of younger migrants, of whom only one was a woman from the Republic of Ireland. Therefore, quantitative data has been used to support some of the findings. The thesis has also made use of interview data collected for other projects: Brendan McGowan's analysis of Irish migration to Leeds up to 1981, *Taking the Boat*, and particularly Corinne Silva's *Roisin Ban*.[85] With McGowan's research, given that he analyses the interviews, it has only been used to support hypotheses already salient in this thesis. However, Silva's work contains no analysis, just the interviews verbatim: these have

[82] Louise Ryan. ""Inside" and "Outside" of What or Where? Researching Migration through Multi-Positionalities." *2015* 16, no. 2
[83] Ibid
[84] Ibid
[85] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*; Silva, *Róisín Bán*.

therefore been used far more fully, especially where there has been a notable gap in thesis interviews. Bornat *et al* refer to:

> Studies…which use both secondary and primary data analysis with data sets which are complementary and overlapping in key aspects, but separated in time. They have different research questions and are situated in different research contexts. Working in parallel offers opportunities for cross-referencing – both empirically and in relation to subjective meanings – on the part of researchers and researched. Working with two data sets, we were able to ask questions of an archived data set by linking it to a newer set of interviews. This allowed us to reconceptualise the original data and the issues which it raised and thus arrive at new understandings of it and of those interviewed. In return, analysis of the archived set generated questions for the newer data set not originally anticipated.[86]

This description fits the way in which this research uses McGowan's and Silva's datasets, both of which were collected over ten years ago and therefore would have been unable to predict or respond to current events and relationships between Ireland and Britain. This is also a way to conceptualise how this thesis uses Wall *et al*'s interviews with motorway workers: where their focus was unionisation and the experience of the job, this thesis investigated these interviews to discover ways in which Irishness was seen by Irish and non-Irish workers.[87] Bornat *et al* also recognise the ethical dimension of these choices, suggesting that:

> The archiving of those interviews opens up the original contributions to analyses which were not explicit at the time they were set up. Ethically this could be problematic, but only if archived qualitative data are treated differently to other historical sources as Erdos points out. The re-use of sources by biographers, literary critics and historians is regarded as normal when seeking out fresh interpretations and enriching understanding.[i88]

They also assess the researcher's own experiences in the re-use of the data, which is also significant:

> Coming late to these literary and historical practices, they bring their own particular research inhibitions with them: creating a 'silent space'. Any re-use is likely to introduce new questions, new concepts and new interpretations as secondary researchers introduce their own particular 'cultural habitus' their own 'informal and intuitive element…acquired over time in fieldwork. As such social scientists add to knowledge generally while inevitably extending the scope of consent given in relation to specific projects. Indeed as Bishop points out, consent can only ever be 'partial (as) No-one can actually provide full information about how research will be done, or no research could get done.[89]

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[86] Joanna Bornat, Parvati Raghuram, and Leroi Henry, "Revisiting the Archives: A Case Study from the History of Geriatric Medicine," *Sociological Research Online* 17, no. 2 (2012).
[87]Luke Donovan, in *Constructing Post-War Britain* ed. Linda Clarke Chris Wall, Charlie McGuire, Michaela Brockmann (London: University of Westminster).
[88] Bornat, Raghuram, and Henry, "Revisiting the Archives: A Case Study from the History of Geriatric Medicine."
[89] Ibid.

It appears from this that Bornat *et al* recognise the issues implicit in re-using others' interview material, but they argue that the interviews once archived or published should be used in the same way and subject to the same scrutiny and availability as other historical sources. The positionality of the researcher is salient and something which bears further scrutiny in relation to this thesis, particularly in regard to the interview as co-creation. Angrosino suggests that oral history is a co-creation: that 'the resulting narrative exists and takes shape because of particular interactions between the storyteller and his or her audience'.[90] That relationship is important in this thesis, and those performative narrative interactions are evident in some of the quotes in this thesis: the interviews themselves often exemplify salient topics that are developed in the text. This was particularly true in discussions with interviewees Tim, Grainne and Ronan, where some of the theoretical discussions already unearthed in early research for this thesis were discussed and reflected on in real time, for example in relation to Irish identity or internalised oppression.[91]

Grounded Theory

This research takes a data-driven, grounded theory approach. The research is entirely led by the data; theoretical explorations arise from analysis of the dataset alongside archival and other sources.[92] The choice to use grounded theory as an approach was beneficial as it allowed the researcher to approach the interviews without looking for specific information that would support the research question. Instead of attempting to prove or disprove a hypothesis using a proscribed theoretical approach, this methodology allowed for the data to come together to provide evidence for its own theoretical assumptions. Instead, the research question used here was all-encompassing and open-ended: what was life like for Irish migrants in England? This then allowed the interviewees to expand at length about their own experience, and the things they thought were interesting or important. Once a number of interviews had taken place, the transcripts were manually analysed and colour coded for salient themes: green became the social life strand, blue for work life and orange for home life. This coding is a key element of the grounded theory method.[93] Each interview in the earlier batch covered these themes in varying detail: later interviewees would have the three themes explained to them during the interview introduction. The same light-touch interviewing, encouraging respondents to develop their own stories with little guidance, then ensued. This thematic analysis is similar to those used by electronic data management tools such as NVivo; use of these in future research is highly likely.

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[90] Michael V. Angrosino, *Exploring Oral History* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2008).p7

[91] Biographies of each of the narrators can be found at the end of this thesis.

[92] See C. Urquhart, *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide* (SAGE Publications, 2012).

[93] Robert Thornberg and Kathy Charmaz. "Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, 153-169. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2014.

Once the themes were identified and confirmed, the research then continued along traditional lines, drawing on theories from cultural studies, sociology, geography and literature as well as more traditional historical sources: the interdisciplinary background of the researcher lent itself to this cross-discipline approach. As the period for historical study became more contemporaneous (having originally looked at ending in the 1980s) the work became less classically historical, and incorporated more sociological elements, particularly considering the work of scholars of masculinity such as Connell, and of migration sociologists such as Hickman, Walter and Ryan.[94] This lengthening of the time frame allowed for a comparison between earlier and more recent migration journeys.

Anonymity

It is important that narrators feel safe sharing their stories, and do not feel compromised by the prospect of other people finding out or disagreeing with their perspective. With this in mind, the decision was taken to anonymise the stories of all the narrators. In order to maintain some sort of cultural authenticity, names were chosen which reflected something of the narrator's original name – an Irish name such as Dermot would be replaced with a similar name, with a similar demographic background. Surnames were eschewed generally, but where surnames appeared in the narrative they were changed for other similar names. Where the surnames were Irish, and the narrators from Mayo, the surnames of Mayo GAA players in the 1960s were often used. As regards places, specific homeplaces in Ireland have been removed as far as possible, but counties and large towns have remained. The names of large companies have been retained, but smaller ones have been changed.

There have been some narratives where anonymity has been a challenge. One of these is with Tommy, the manager of Leeds Irish Centre. Tommy was perfectly happy to be quoted as himself, and in his role as the manager. This did not fit with the overall rules of the thesis, but given the singular nature of his occupation it would have been hard to do otherwise. This situation was also complicated by Tommy's appearance in *Róisín Bán*, where he appears next to his photograph. Given that *Róisín Bán*'s interviews are used in this thesis, this would have compromised Tommy's anonymity.[95] He has however only been quoted in this thesis in relation to his role at the Irish Centre, and to his family growing up in the pub trade.

[94] Connell, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept."Hickman "'Binary Opposites' or 'Unique Neighbours'? The Irish in Multi-Ethnic Britain."; Ryan, "Who Do You Think You Are? Irish Nurses Encountering Ethnicity and Constructing Identity in Britain."; Walter et al "Family Stories, Public Silence: Irish Identity Construction Amongst the Second-Generation Irish in England."

[95] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.

The other singularly difficult narrator to anonymise was Kevin. Given Kevin's unique political career achievements, it would be fairly straightforward for anyone with a working knowledge of the city's democratic functions to unveil his true identity. This was discussed with Kevin, who was comfortable with this: a pseudonym has been provided, but may prove to be ineffective.

Memory, reliability and oral history

> And where will it lead us? Not into history, but into myth.[96]

One of the key criticisms of oral history as a discipline is its overreliance on human memory as a source. The fallibility of memory – and the different ways in which memory can work to change perspective on past events – is a key issue in oral history and memoir. Thompson sought to defend oral history against its critics, and determined to prove the legitimacy and value of the approach. As a socialist, he was committed to a history that drew upon the words and experiences of working-class people. He thus argued that oral history was transforming the content of history:

> by shifting the focus and opening new areas of inquiry, by challenging some of the assumptions and accepted judgements of historians, by bringing recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored and the processes of writing history, breaking 'through the boundaries between the educational institution and the world, between the professional and the ordinary public.'[97]

Yet, historians of the positivist school 'who were mostly traditional documentary historians of a conservative political persuasion, (who) feared the politics of people's history' suggested that oral sources were not trustworthy on their own , due to the unreliability of memory. [98]

Ideological conflicts also abound, particularly among anthropologists such as Tonkin and Vansina, who suggest that the prizing of documentary evidence over oral testimony is an ethnocentric relic that gives more legitimacy to the history of literate cultures than those of countries in the global south. [99] Tonkin also takes issue with the way in which written evidence is sometimes wrongly seen as having more validity:

> Oral history is not intrinsically more or less likely to be accurate than a written document – though more than one historian has remarked that discovering the illusory truthfulness

[96] Patrick O'Farrell, "Oral History: Facts and Fiction," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 5 (1982-83).
[97] Paul Thompson *Voice of the Past* p29.
[98] A. Ritchie Donald and Alistair Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History," ('Oxford University Press', 2010).
[99] Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); D Newbury, "Contradictions at the Heart of the Canon: Jan Vansina and the Debate over Oral Historiography in Africa, 1960-1985," *History in Africa* 34 (2007).

> of a convincing teller makes one realise that conventional literary historians have taken documents over-literally; documents, after all, are orality recorded.[100]

Beiner placed this prioritisation of documentary history over folk history into an Irish context:

> Perhaps what is most amazing about the long hours I spent… in the folklore archive is this… I cannot recall meeting other historians. They were all too busy studying *History.*[101]

At first, the response to doubtful positivist historians was to provide evidence to support the oral history framework: to corroborate oral history sources with other types of evidence; to triangulate the experiences of different interviewees to provide substantive evidence of events, and to use techniques from fields such as anthropology and sociology to provide academic rigour in oral history practice.[102] Beiner corroborated this: 'I grappled and eventually came to terms with oral history and oral tradition. It was then that I fathomed the importance of memory and had to apply myself to the study of psychology, sociology, anthropology…the list grew longer and longer.'[103] Once oral history became more established, however, the need to legitimise oral sources diminished. Debates raged instead around the impact of memory, rather than the fallibility of memory. Here interpretative oral history consequently became more about what we learn from forgetting and remembering. The medium had become the message. Portelli recognises that we can look for different things from oral history to traditional history - that is that oral history considers the experiences and post-event memories as sources for discussion in and of themselves:

> Oral sources may not add much to what we know of, for instance, the material cost of a given strike to the workers involved; but they tell us a good deal about its psychological costs.[104]

Portelli thus argues that oral and written sources are not mutually exclusive, and in fact have many common elements. Furthermore, 'the undervaluing and the overvaluing of oral sources end up by cancelling out specific qualities, turning them either into mere supports for traditional written sources or into an illusory cure for all ills'.[105] Oral historians also rarely use the actual oral source for analysis, relying instead on the written transcription. Thirty five years after Portelli's work was published, and with substantial advances in technology, this is still the case for most oral historians. This use of transcripts neglects a great deal of the richness of the oral testimony:

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[100] Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*.p114.
[101] Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French. [Electronic Book] : Irish Folk History and Social Memory*, History of Ireland and the Irish Diaspora (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 2007., 2007).p xi
[102] Donald and Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History."Oxford University Press, 2010.
[103] Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French. [Electronic Book] : Irish Folk History and Social Memory*. pxi
[104] Alessandro Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," *History Workshop* 12, no. 1 (1981).p98
[105] Ibid. p97

it flattens the intricacies of speech into the 'dullness of writing.' This was particularly evident in folk interviewees, the subjects of history from below. Their expressiveness is not done justice in the written word: 'they may be poor in vocabulary but are generally richer in the range of tone, volume, and intonation, as compared to middleclass speakers'.[106] Too much power was arguably given to the transcribers, whose arbitrary punctuation choices can shape the records of the discussion in ways that the interviewee cannot control. Portelli suggests that this reliance on the transcripts is a concession too far to the positivist lobby who favour history based on documentary evidence. Irish interviewees speaking in English often use both an unusual syntax or grammar (such as 'meself and Daly was out on the job') and numerous interesting proverbs and maxims, some of which can be attributed in part to the influence of the Irish language on Irish English speakers. These factors, as well as the presence or absence of a discernible accent in the interviewee's testimony, are as key to understanding elements of the interviewee's identity as what they actually say in the interview. Therefore, where possible, interviews have been transcribed with linguistic flourishes such as unusual syntax left in.

Memory can be interpreted in different ways, and can reveal as much about how a person's life experiences and events have shaped their personal narrative as it can about events:

> The perception of an account as 'true' is relevant as much to legend as to personal experience and historical memory; and as there are no oral forms specifically destined to transmit historical information, historical, 'poetical' and legendary narrative often become inextricably mixed up. The result is narratives where the boundary between what takes place outside the narrator and what happens inside, between what concerns him or her and what concerns the group, becomes quite thin, and personal 'truth' may coincide with collective 'imagination'.[107]

This kind of lateral response to historical sources was quite radical, and could be seen as confirmation of the worst fears alluded to by positivist naysayer O'Farrell, whose quote headlines this section.

Tumblety assesses the genesis of oral history as a type of history from below – she suggests it is a way to discover more about the lives of those neglected by history through the collection of oral testimony:

> human memory is filtered as much as constructed. It is selective: it leaves things out, whether as a result of the kind of trauma that makes it harder for men and women to reconcile their past experience with a continuous sense of self, or because what is

[106] Ibid.p98
[107] Ibid.p99

> remembered is framed – perhaps in unconscious ways – by social and political needs in the present.[108]

This idea – that oral history tells us what we need to know about people's understanding of their current selves as much as their past selves – is considered by Abrams at length. Her idea of a 'prestige-enhancing shift' in retelling events, where a person 'may exaggerate something in the past that presents them in a good or self-important light' has influenced this study.[109] If someone's views have changed over time then they may unconsciously misremember something to make it more in keeping with their current stance: for example, someone who spoke vehemently against gay marriage in their youth but over time became a supporter may play down the staunchness of their feelings in their younger days in order to create a harmony between the past and present versions of themselves. There could be many reasons for this; the most obvious being that as our opinions change due to intrinsic and extrinsic factors, we may need to modify older versions of our concepts of our identity and our politics in order to maintain an authenticity in our current selves. This self-censoring aspect of memory is therefore important to bear in mind during the analysis of interviews.

Autobiographical memory

Oral historians rely on different types of memory in order to be able to trust, analyse and decode the testimonies from their interviewees. These include semantic memory – remembering names and places; procedural memory - remembering things that are done habitually; and episodic memory – remembering events and 'one's place within it'.[110] The most pertinent of these, in relation to this study, is an offshoot of episodic memory, the autobiographical memory. This is much discussed in relation to reliability and how our autobiographical memory works. Thompson *et al,* for example, discuss the confusion between different types of memory referred to by Nelson, who contends that although all autobiographical memory originates in episodic memory, not all episodic memory is autobiographical.[111] That is, a regular event (she gives the example of having lunch) will create episodic memories that last for a while, but, as it does not have a great deal of significance to the holder of the memory, assuming nothing extraordinary happens at lunch, this memory will fade. She then gives the example of speaking at her first conference which, because of the importance to her at the time and to her future career, she

[108] Joan Tumblety, Memory and History : Understanding Memory as Source and Subject, (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013), http://liverpool.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1170329.p4
[109] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010).p85
[110] Ibid.p83
[111] Charles P. Thompson, John J. Skowronski, and Steen F. Larsen, *Autobiographical Memory : Remembering What and Remembering When*, (Florence : Taylor and Francis, 2013),.p3: discussing Katherine Nelson, "The Psychological and Social Origins of Autobiographical Memory," *Psychological Science* 4, no. 1 (1993).

remembers many of the details of it, many years after the event. Therefore we can deduce that, according to Nelson, for things to stay in our autobiographical memory they need to be striking or to have relevance to us personally. Thompson *et al*, however, prefer to keep the distinction between the two types of memory more fluid for the purposes of research; although they do not restrict autobiographical memory to events that are personally significant, they do refer to the fact that their data (mainly diaries) shows that 'self-relevant events are much more memorable than other events or news events.'[112]

A distinction is also made between reconstructive and reproductive memory. Reproductive memory is often more short term, and therefore autobiographical memory changes over time from being reproductive to reconstructive. This becomes relevant when looking at how interviewees place events temporally in retrospect. The evidence for the use of schemata in reconstructing memory can be overwhelming, and 'memory for the temporal location of the event is entirely reconstructive (with some exceptions) almost immediately after the event.'[113] Furthermore, there are differences in the ability to date events which are 'strongly related to the degree to which individuals use temporal schema in reconstructing the dates of events.[114]'

Thompson *et al* thus suggest five ways in which events are reconstructively placed in time using schemata. The first is relying on aspects of the event that can be placed temporally such as snow on the ground indicating it was winter. The second is using temporal information about the class of events to date it – for example if it happened after Mass it would be on a Sunday; if it was during a long school holiday it would be in summer. The third is placing the events within temporal boundaries: for example, if an event happened on a gap year or during the final year of university, that will place it in time. The fourth is placing the event in its right place in a chain of events – so one must have learned to drive before having memories of driving alone, or in turn of teaching someone else to drive. The final method is in relation to 'landmark events' such as the shooting of JFK or the death of Princess Diana which can be used to pinpoint temporal locations, as interviewee Vincent shows in his arrival story; 'I remember the 23rd November 1963 when John F Kennedy was shot; I suppose it's just a day that sticks in your mind. Because literally the day I was coming here, this was going dead quick.'

[112] Thompson, Skowronski, and Larsen, *Autobiographical Memory. [Electronic Book] : Remembering What and Remembering When*.p4
[113] Ibid.p5
[114] Ibid.

In relation to this research, it is clear that some of these schemata are used together to reconstruct certain memories. An example comes from a group interview, where two of the male subjects worked in Leeds during a period in the 1960s:

> INTERVIEWER: were you two in Leeds together then?
>
> SIMON: No, I don't think so. What year did you come to Rotherham?
>
> EAMONN: 63. Just after the bad winter.
>
> SIMON: I was in Leeds for the bad winter.
>
> EAMONN: We were in Watford for the bad winter
>
> INTERVIEWER: What happened in the bad winter in Leeds? What was that?
>
> SIMON: Everything stopped, and everybody was starving
>
> EAMONN: It was Christmas 62/63: It was frozen up til after Easter
>
> INTERVIEWER: The whole winter?
>
> SIMON: Months and months wasn't it?

Eamonn and Simon, the interviewees, try to locate themselves temporally as to when they lived in Leeds. The interviews took place over 50 years later, in 2015, so according to Thompson's theory their autobiographical memory of the events will have long passed over from reproductive to reconstructive memory. They do this through a variety of methods. Firstly, through the temporal placing of the events of winter 1962-63, when it was so cold that a good deal of the country was at a standstill. This would have been all the more relevant to these interviewees as they worked on infrastructure projects as plant and crane drivers, so many of the projects would have been unable to continue. The weather did affect the greater population – there was snow on the ground for months – but would have had a fundamental impact on men working on outdoor jobs. Each man can place themselves temporally during this time as it would have been memorable not just for being unique, but for being a difficult period due to the lack of available work. Later, Eamonn tried to relate the events that prompted his move to Leeds:

> EAMONN: …and then when the frost went and we started working we were sent up here *(to Rotherham, where the interview took place)*: we had a year here and we fell out again and then we came up to Leeds with Jessops somewhere and back to Leeds, I don't know: I've lost track of all the moves
>
> INTERVIEWER: What was it you were working on? Was it the job that sent you to the different places?
>
> EAMONN: It sent me up here right enough, yeah, I was working at Hoover reservoir at Greasbrough, and then I jacked it in over a bonus or something one day, and that was about nine months, ten months, and I met someone that was going to Leeds, and that was it, I was going to Leeds. That would have been 64.

Here, he shows more of the fourth schemata of putting events into order to show when they happened: that he went to one place, then to another, and eventually ended up in Leeds in 1964. He also uses the fifth schemata, that of landmark events that everyone remembers: in this case, the winter of 1962 and its aftermath. This shows that different schemata can be used together, effectively, to aid cognition and memory in older respondents.

Certain things can trigger memory – smells, songs or photographs can have this effect. Photographic elicitation is an approach whose genesis is considered by Harper, who highlights its historical basis, looking at the ways in which Collier pioneered photo elicitation, running a study where it was used as a method alongside one that lacked photographic elicitation to compare results.[115] When photographs were used in Collier's interviews, the answers were much more precise and structured, as opposed to those which did not use photographs, which were unstructured and rambling. Of course, the problem with a photograph is that it highlights and elevates certain events above others, and can sway an interview towards the events in a photograph at the expense of other, potentially more interesting, events that are not captured on camera. Interviewees in Leeds who have worked on collating photo archives from 1960s migrants recognised this: at most of the social events of the period, hardly anyone had cameras. This meant that many events that were legendary in the memory of these migrants were not documented by photo evidence. One reveller was well-known for taking a camera to social events: they managed to obtain her photo archive, which was a valuable resource, but only told the story of the community from her perspective. It would be difficult to use these photos with a wider audience, and in fact many of the photos in the *Untold Stories* archive have been supplemented with ones from the city council's official photo archive.[116] Harper suggests that Collier's study, and its positive results, should have paved the way for much more use of photographic elicitation in oral history interviews as a way to stimulate memory, but infers that this approach may have been incorporated into fieldwork without acknowledging or even knowing that this approach was being used.

The impact of photographic elicitation on interviewing and on the stimulation of memory seems overall to be positive. Photographic elicitation was therefore used as part of this study in group interviews as a stimulus. This was particularly pertinent as part of a discussion group with a women's group, who ultimately chose not to be interviewed for the thesis. Photographs of a pastoral print from the researcher's grandmother's home were used to spark a discussion around

[115] Harper, "Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation."discussing John Jr Collier, "Photography in Anthropology: A Report on Two Experiments," *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957.).
[116] Irish Arts Foundation, "Untold Stories," http://www.untoldstories.co.uk/about.do.

home objects, where one respondent suggested that non-religious artefacts in the home were disrespectful.[117] The interviews also afforded an opportunity to create a further photographic archive when interviewees are willing to contribute their own photographic memories.[118]

The importance of reliability continues to resonate in oral histories, and, it is salient to consider why some accounts are more trusted than others. Aside from aspects of status and power that dominate prevailing discourses, there are physiological reasons that reside in the way that the memory system processes traumatic experiences. There are no hard and fast rules around remembering traumatic experiences: some memories are completely repressed whilst others recur again and again in grim and exact detail. Abrams notes, however, that the memories are not complete – that is, that the events of the past have not yet been dealt with by the respondent, leading to fragmented, 'emotional and disturbing' accounts, as 'survivors have not achieved closure.'[119] This can therefore make the experience unsettling for the interviewer and the interviewee, and possibly be problematic ethically and psychologically.

An understanding of this theoretical framework is helpful for these interviews, particularly with those from within the cohort whose traumatic experiences have had negative impacts on their lives.[120] The memories – individual and collective – of Irish migrants to Leeds have already begun to show a multifaceted experience borne out in a mixture of life outcomes; an exploration of how these memories are processed will continue to be uppermost in the considerations of this research.

This research has produced new evidence of the Irish experience in Leeds into the twenty first century; the data it generates has created a corpus which can be analysed linguistically and thematically to explore the feelings migrants have about their new home. It builds on oral history and qualitative theory, and uses visual sources such as original and archival photography, and public and home objects to complement the oral sources. The flexible theoretical approach inherent in grounded theory allows the data to be interrogated through varying critical prisms, which has made the process more flexible and permitted the research to travel in different directions, into theoretical domains of sociology, geography, folklore or cultural studies; this variety is beneficial in a multidisciplinary field such as migration.

[117] Field notes February 2016.
[118] This can be seen in the photographs from the work chapter, as well as photographs of objects in interviewees Simon and Eamonn's homes.
[119] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*. p93
[120] This trauma is covered in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

Androsino takes issue with the arrogance of the idea that oral historians 'give voice' to their subjects, suggesting that it 'seems to endow us with divine powers'. He suggests instead that oral historians 'lend voice' – that we 'make our communications outlets available to those who might not otherwise have a convenient way of telling their stories'.[121] It is hoped that the voices of the narrators in this study are clearly audible, and that this thesis gives its storytellers a context and access to a wider audience: that it lends voice to a group who evidently have a great deal to say, and who do so eloquently and entertainingly.

[121] Androsino *Exploring Oral History: A Window on the Past* (Long Grove, Waveland 2004) p8

Chapter One: The Irish at Leisure.

> Now boys, pull together in all kinds of weather: don't show the white feather, wherever you go. Act each as a brother and help one another; like true-hearted men from the County Mayo.[1]

Previous generations of Irish migrants to Leeds set up rudimentary community societies and organisations: there were several Irish clubs in the city in the 1880s, among them the Irish National Club, the Irish National League Club, the United Irish Club, the United Irish League Club and the United Irish National Club - a Pythonesque list where the names seem to have more in common than divides them.[2] Irish migrants to the Bank during the nineteenth century eventually raised enough money to build the imposing Mount St Mary's church; its gothic grandeur still dominates the landscape and stands as a reminder of the Famine Irish in the city. Today, however, the church stands derelict and the slums in the Bank have long since been cleared. This is indicative of a broader trend; the legacy of the nineteenth-century Irish on the city is not immediately apparent in the twenty-first century Leeds landscape.

This chapter details the society and culture of a later generation of migrants to the city. It investigates the patterns of social interaction and networking between Irish migrants and the rest of the Leeds population. Key to this study are the city's Irish pubs and dancehalls, the St Patrick's Day parade, music collectives such as Comhaltas, GAA teams like Hugh O'Neills, and the Leeds Irish Centre. It explores ideas of authenticity, imagined community and identity formation through parading and cultural consumption. It also reflects on the links between Leeds' Irish community organisations and County Mayo. The use of visual and material culture in public displays of identity is also analysed. The Catholic Church also looms large over the community: however, the focus is on how the church has influenced other areas of the community, such as pub culture, rather than the structures and ideologies of the church.[3] Consideration will also be given to the ways in which identity plays a part in social and cultural pursuits, and how this manifests through cultural and physical acts of consumption. This chapter therefore draws upon geographical, anthropological and political theorists on displays of identity, such as Nagle and Putnam, to examine the lived experiences of post-war Irish migrants to Leeds.[4]

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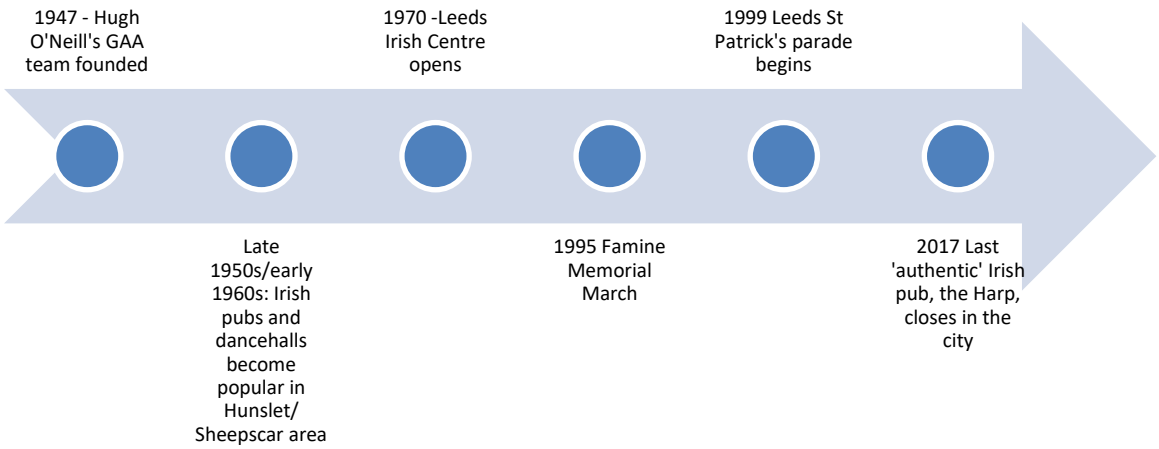
[1] Trad.

[2] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.p35

[3] The church had indirect influence on Irish Catholic migrants not just through church attendance, but also through involvement in schools and social ventures.

[4] John Nagle "'Everybody is Irish on St Paddy's": Ambivalence and Alterity at London's St Patrick's Day 2002." *Identities* 12, no. 4 (2005); Robert D Putnam Bowling Alone (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000)

Putnam, for example, indicates that there are two types of social capital, bridging and bonding: bridging capital's aim is to make links with the wider community, seeking to form positive and mutually-beneficial relationships with markedly different social groups. With bonding capital, the aim is to safeguard social and economic capital by keeping the social groups tightly bonded together, and by keeping capital-increasing ventures such as employment opportunities and investments within the social group. Both of these types of capital are evident within Irish organisations in Leeds.[5]



Timeline of key events in the associational culture of Irish Leeds

Public displays of identity

A noteworthy public display of identity and commemoration in Leeds was the 1995 commemorative march on the 150th anniversary of the Famine. This march took a route from the old Irish settlement in the Bank through to the edge of the city near the main bus terminus, where a commemorative famine stone was unveiled and blessed by a priest. Marchers included Irish dancers and other lay members of the city's Irish community, as well as religious figures from the Catholic Church. The timing of the march was interesting: in 1995 the Northern Ireland Troubles were ongoing, and though there was a Provisional IRA ceasefire,

The Famine Stone, photographed in February 2018.

[5] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).p22

public hostility around events such as the 1993 Warrington bombing was still prevalent. It is therefore salient to consider accounts of the events in this political climate. A community member who was involved in the march remembers:

> SEAN: We assembled at the Leeds Irish Centre in the car park, and then we were led by, I can't remember the (Catholic) priest at the time… the priest led us, the priest and the manager of the Irish Centre, they led us. We walked, right… down the back of the Irish Centre – you go down through – no direct route. The side streets, back streets. Because if you had to go down the main road, you had to have police permission, they had to put up a barrier and everything…they wanted to show some respect to the graves that was down there. They did a lot of work previous to the march to clear the graves.

It is clear from this testimony that there was a conscious effort by the Irish in mid-1990s Leeds to acknowledge the suffering of their forebears in the city. The march and the commemoration were important to the organising committee, but also to many in the Irish community; it led to an emotional day:

> SEAN: It was a statement just to show the people. That we still respected the people, even though it wasn't a proper cemetery. We respected them. And we went there and prayed over their graves, which was… when there's no proper tombstones, or proper graves, there's not much more you can do. We just circled the whole area where we thought the graves were, and then the priest started praying. It was just simply people putting their heads together in the Irish community to say 'we're doing this.' See there was no... nobody could go and visit their graves. Because nobody knew where they were buried. So it had to be like a communal thing, to show respect to the people that had died. It brought a lot of tears on the day. To think that your own people could be just buried in a heap, basically. And no record of who they were or anything. [interviewer: was it a group thing?] A group thing, yeah. Practically all members of the Irish community… well I'd say 95% of them I suppose.[6]

This march was a tribute to unfortunate compatriots come before, but it was also the first time in a generation when a group of Irish people in the city had the confidence and intention to make a statement of communal identity and respect; the laying of the stone also gave the opportunity to establish Irish migrants' credentials as a historically important, and heretofore ignored, ethnic group in the city. As an act of commemoration, and as a marker of identity, it was an important forerunner to the city's St Patrick's Parade, which would come soon after.

St Patrick's Day gives Irish migrants to Britain, and elsewhere, an opportunity to celebrate their heritage. Over the years, however, the day has become a byword for excessive drinking and gaudy, inauthentic costumes and celebrations. Taking inspiration from the famous festivities in New York and elsewhere, Irish organisations in UK cities such as Manchester and London have taken the celebrations out of the pub and onto the streets with extravagant parades.

[6] Paying respect to the dead is an important cornerstone of Irish culture, and is revisited in more detail in the final chapter.

The Leeds St Patrick's Day Parade began in 1999, taking a route through the ceremonial centre of the city, and past the sites of long-gone Irish social haunts like the Shamrock dancehall on Kirkgate.[7] The timing of the first parade, after the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement the year before, seems apposite: other cities such as Birmingham also re-invigorated public expressions of their Irish cultural heritage around this time. This was not without disagreement; Birmingham's relationship with its Irish population became far more fractious after the city's pub bombings in 1974.[8] In this climate of suspicion, Birmingham's Irish parades were halted from 1975 onwards, only resuming in 1996. Unlike Birmingham, Leeds' St Patrick's Day parades had no real provenance, although organisations such as the Irish Centre had a significant presence at events such as the Lord Mayor's Parade from as early as 1980.[9] The involvement of Irish organisations at communal events such as this was an important factor in bringing the Irish into mainstream civic society, and representatives from the city's Irish organisations have been at pains to point out that the divisions and suspicion of Irish people experienced elsewhere in the UK was not a problem in this part of Yorkshire.[10] The lack of historical precedent for the parade led to two outcomes. The first was positive: the parade committee was free to design a parade that reflected a contemporary perception of Irishness without the need to continue any long-running traditions. The second outcome was logistical: because the parade lacked history, the committee would have to choose and plan a route, and clear it with the council.

> Festivals and parades also help to define cultural identity in spatial terms by staking out routes in the urban cultural landscape. Although their presence is temporary, they can be highly effective in claiming the symbolic importance of places.[11]

[7] The parade does not feature extensively in the narratives; despite Sean, Saoirse and Ronan all mentioning that they would attend the parade annually, none of them reflected in detail on their experience of the parade. Each of the institutions involved in the thesis would arrange a float every year, and would have representatives walk in the parade.

[8] James Moran, "Conclusion, St Patrick's Day," in *Irish Birmingham*, *A History* (Liverpool University Press, 2010). Moran recognises that there were tensions in Birmingham, due in part to the 1974 pub bombings, which made public displays of Irish identity contentious.

[9] Caroline Murphy, *Untold Stories* (Leeds: Irish Arts Foundation, 1980).

[10] Moran, "Conclusion, St Patrick's Day."

[11] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1995).

Initial parade route

The first parade went through the east side of the city centre and ended in a local Catholic school's playing fields before a reception at the Irish Centre, about a mile outside the city centre. In 2005, organisers successfully applied to the council for road closures for the event at a cost of £1000 to the public; this was agreed to with the reasoning that 'the event is supported by Local Councillors and reflects the varied make-up of Leeds' cultural community'.[12] In 2008, the parade took the bold decision to change the route to include key public thoroughfares, and to take a circular route beginning and ending at Millennium Square. This would allow for events to be held throughout the day in the square, following a comment from a council official that it was a waste to only use the square at the end of the parade. The parade website states its reasoning for the changes thus:

> [The changes were made in 2008 with]… the ambition of utilizing the talents of the organisations in the Irish community to reach out to the citizens of Leeds and make the Parade one of the city's calendar events. The slogan 'Leeds Going' Irish' was adopted as the Parade theme and the societies and GAA clubs that made up the Parade were invited to enter floats depicting Irish scenes accompanied by Irish music and dancing to embellish the pipe and brass bands that have always been the backbone of the spectacle.[13]

This was the first specific mention from the organisers of a move towards creating an inclusive parade for all of the people of Leeds, despite the fact that as early as 2005, this was part of the rationale for council funding and involvement in the parade. It is clear in the organisers' literature that this re-branded parade aimed to be inclusive: 'Leeds Going Irish' was about bringing the whole community together, not just people of an Irish background.

[12] Leeds City Council, "Delegated Decision Form," ed. City Services Department (Leeds: Leeds City Council, 2005).

[13] Members of the Leeds St Patrick's Day Committee, "Our History," http://leedsgoingirish.co.uk/history.html.

Second and current route, from 2008

The 2008 parade route changes might appear symbolic – as the parade had grown, perhaps organisers sought to move towards the centre of the city, rather than existing on the outskirts? However, council planning documents for the 2008 event suggest a more prosaic reason for the route change; the parade would now contain moving vehicles. Briggate, the city's main shopping street and a pedestrianized area, had up to now formed part of the route; the suggestion was to change the route to remove potentially dangerous encounters between the vehicles and pedestrians.[14]

Although it may not have been a deliberate statement, this new route took the parade around some of the city's key civic sites. Walking along Great George Street took the parade past the war memorial, and close to Victoria Square, a popular space for civic protests. The Catholic cathedral is also on the route, as is the Merrion Centre, a shopping centre developed in the 1960s with a significant amount of Irish labour. Although the floats are the main focus through which the different Leeds Irish organisations can channel their versions of celebratory Irishness, the peripheral and mechanical elements of the parade – the plant machinery that hosts the floats and even some of the roads and buildings the parade traverses and passes - are as much a part of the legacy of the Irish in Leeds as the floats themselves. It is easy for Irish groups to access trucks and plant because of the heavily Irish nature of the companies that supply these. Indeed, many such companies, such as Plantforce and Moortown, are named sponsors of the event. Given their sponsorship of the parade, these companies also lend a financial and logistical legitimacy to the projections of Irish identity that the parade provides. The parade's route and means of transport become an assertion of pride in the achievements of Irish firms and their role in building the new city.

The ambitions shown in the Leeds parade had earlier been seen in London. London had long had local parades to celebrate St Patrick's Day, but 2002 marked the first time that the events encroached on the city's civic centre. Nagle's ethnographic account of the events of that day interrogate what he considers to be widely-held beliefs in London Irish organisations that:

> routing a parade and concert through central London would provide a focus for the London–Irish community to gain visibility, inclusivity, and recognition within London cultural life. Such prominent visibility of the Irish in London represented for many

[14] Leeds City Council, "Design and Cost Report," (Leeds Leeds City Council, 2008).

> within the Irish community a formal acceptance of the contribution the Irish endow "multicultural" London, when for many years the Irish have been rendered invisible by being represented as a suspect community.[15]

These migrant celebrations differ greatly from the newly instated parade in Belfast. Belfast is famous for divisive parades like the 12th July celebrations, when Loyalists and Orange Order marching bands traverse the city to assert their right to a place in Northern Irish tradition. Yet the St Patrick's Carnival, which recognises the role of St Patrick in both Catholic and Protestant traditions, is cast as an event meant to unite the people of Belfast in a non-denominational celebration. Bryan's analysis of the Belfast St Patrick's Carnival shows what can happen when this time and space is contested and fought over by different, conflicting ethnic identity groups: examples of conflict include complaints from Unionists over the display of the Irish tricolour, debates over the role of the shamrock in the parade, and attempts from organisers to avoid sectarianism by handing out parade t-shirts that they hoped revellers might use to cover the more contentious Celtic shirts they would be likely to have been wearing.[16]

More recent Leeds St Patrick's parades continue in the spirit of 2008. The 18th annual Leeds St Patrick's Day parade, for example, pulled away from Millennium Square at 11am on Sunday 12th March 2017, just after Mass finished in the Catholic cathedral next door. Former Leeds player and Irish international Noel Whelan led the procession; floats showcasing a variety of displays of national and local identity followed him on a loop through some of the city's busiest and most important thoroughfares. There were parade floats from the city's Irish welfare organisations as well as affiliated GAA organisations and Catholic schools.[17] Aboard a vintage bus, laid on for less mobile would-be paraders, a bichon frise in a green hat drew cheers from the crowd, especially when it was made to wave through the window by its owner. Irish dancers in luminous garb festooned with rhinestones danced, in merry defiance of the instability of their moving platform. On the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann float, local Irish musicians held an on-board seisiún: fiddles, tin whistles, squeezeboxes and a mandolin provided a soundtrack still audible over the moving floats. Two donkeys in bright jackets walked the route, promenading local children up and down past the Mandela memorial outside the civic hall. In a bizarre postmodern twist, loud cheers were reserved for an unadorned tractor aboard a plant vehicle: this spectacle sums up how difficult it was to tell which elements of the parade were there for function, and which for mere decoration. Certainly, the brightly coloured plant machinery that provided a platform for many

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[15] John Nagle, ""Everybody Is Irish on St Paddy's": Ambivalence and Alterity at London's St Patrick's Day 2002.," *Identities* 12, no. 4 (2005).

[16] Dominic Bryan, "The Competitive Carnival: Competition, Negotiation and Reconciliation in the St Patrick's Day Parade in Belfast," in *Consuming St Patrick's Day*, ed. Jonathan; Bryan Skinner, Dominic (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2015).

[17] All of the organisations involved in this thesis had floats in the parade.

of the floats was as much as part of the event as the floats themselves. The various organisations competed for the coveted 'best float' prize. The winning float, the inaugural attempt by a local primary school, contained a large replica traditional thatched cottage, mocked up with the help of local civil engineers and somebody's granddad. The inclusion of solely Catholic schools, Irish dancers and symbols such as the tricolour suggested that the parade's ethos is based in vaguely nationalist and culturally conservative tropes, which lacked the inclusiveness that the council insist on and the parade's name embraces: unlike the Belfast parades, there were no protests about the lack of plurality in the parade's version of Irishness.

Tropes of Irish migrant kitsch were also intertwined with the city's civic symbols. County flags were strung across the civic hall, where a flag of St George was joined on the opposite flagpole by an Irish tricolour. An animated Ronnie the Rhino, Leeds Rhinos' rugby league mascot, bent down to hand mini Rhinos flags to children who were either enchanted or perturbed by his anthropomorphic exuberance. Crowds filled the square with a band with Leeds accents on the stage playing Galway Girl; memorabilia stalls; and a large bar. Food vans plied their trade near the entrance, selling Sunday dinner burrito wraps, complete with Yorkshire pudding. The parade's motto, 'Leeds Going Irish', appeared a possibility, for an hour at least.

Nagle suggests that the 'everybody can be Irish' elements of the motto can actually be profitable. When analysing the London parade in 2002, the Guinness advertising campaign which portrayed singers from various national and ethnic identities performing impassioned versions of Danny Boy – led the company to appear to claim that 'drinking Guinness, the unofficial drink of the Irish, automatically bestows Irishness on those who imbibe – in other words, anyone can be Irish.'[18] Negra corroborates this link to devouring the essence of Irishness, considering the ways in which leprechauns are used in advertising – for example in a commercial for Lucky Charms breakfast cereal. To Negra, the message is clear – consumers are invited to buy Lucky Charms as a way to buy into and literally consume Irishness.[19] Cronin takes this consumption element further in considering how corned beef and cabbage, despite contentious discussions of its inauthenticity, became the ubiquitous foodstuff for Irish-Americans celebrating St Patrick's Day:

> It follows, therefore, that Irish-American culture depends a great deal on St Patrick's Day and the customs associated with it to sustain identities and a common narrative of Irishness. It matters not that there is a disjuncture between Irish and Irish American culture. What matters is the perception that Irish Americans, by dining on corned beef and cabbage, are embracing what they see as a common Irish and Irish-American culture. This is for them at once authentic and real, tying them, as the consumers of the food, to the Irish that have come before them to America, and also to their contemporary local

[18] Nagle, ""Everybody Is Irish on St Paddy's": Ambivalence and Alterity at London's St Patrick's Day 2002.."p577

[19] Diane Negra, "Consuming Ireland: Lucky Charms Cereal, Irish Spring Soap and 1-800 Shamrock.," *Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2001).

> settings of associational family or friend-based gatherings. They are literally consuming their past.[20]

The incorporation of a celebration of Irish ancestry, heritage and tradition with local traditions, food and landscapes is common to many testimonies of Irish migrants and their children; of how their history is synthesised with their present to create new or hybrid traditions, such as the aforementioned Yorkshire pudding wraps or the prominent role of the local rugby mascot in the parades.[21]

Cronin and Adair claim there has been a secularisation of St Patrick's Day celebrations in contemporary society, and certainly when one looks for symbols in the Leeds parade, very few have a religious theme.[22] Instead symbolic elements include thatched cottages, Irish dancers, harps, tricolours and shamrocks. There are leprechauns everywhere. Paddywhackery abounds; everything is green. Originally, it might have been expected that Irish organisations in Leeds would clearly show their different understandings of the concept of Irishness through the displays on their floats, and that these marked differences would allow for an analysis of their self-perceived identities. However, the key institutions actually all shared similar themes on their floats. This led to a different type of analysis: searching the common themes, and considering the relationship between these symbols and views of Irish identity.

The winning float in Leeds St Patrick's Parade, 2017.

As noted, at the 18th Leeds parade, the winning float had an impressive large thatched cottage as its centrepiece.[23] The thatched cottage has become a mainstay of the images produced in souvenir shops and by the Irish tourist board; Kennedy Andrews suggests this is because:

> In Irish literary history, 'the West is an idealised locale, the place of authentic, primordial "Irishness." The rural cottage in the West signified historic continuity, roots in the soil, the ancestral home. It formed the iconic basis of the idealisation of family life, which was regarded as the cornerstone of the nation.[24]

[20] Mike Cronin, "Fake Food? Celebrating St Patrick's Day with Corned Beef and Cabbage," in *Consuming St. Patrick's Day*, ed. Jonathan Skinner and Dominic Bryan (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars 2015).p21

[21] The relationship between food and Irish identity is explored further in the final chapter of this thesis.

[22] Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002).

[23] Whilst interviewing Kevin, he played video footage of his appearance at a St Patrick's Day parade where, as mayor, he gave a prize to the winning float.

[24] Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland, 1968-2008* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2008).p139 The cottage as a symbol is returned to in the final chapter of this thesis.

Rains investigated the appearance at a 1908 Franco-British exhibition of an idealised Irish village, replete with thatched cottages, called Ballymaclinton. The village was staffed by women in traditional dress, who welcomed visitors to the cottage and displayed the traditional industries contained within to interested visitors. This invented village even had a post office, from which visitors could send home postcards. The key sponsor of the village was a soap company called McLinton, based in Donaghmore, Co.Tyrone. They harnessed the idea of spacious, pastoral environments, and paid particular attention (for obvious marketing reasons) to cleanliness. However, Rains argues that this contradicted the prevailing trend for the symbolic use of Irish cottages as part of a return to simpler times and an escape from modernisation, arguing that the village having advanced telecommunications such as the post office, and a house dedicated to Irish modern art from the Hugh Lane Gallery, meant the organisers were showing these environments in a positive light (particularly compared to the African villages at the same exhibition, which were given a much more primitive slant.). It appeared to be a place harking back to an era before modernisation, but the key element was that of spacious and natural living. This was an early example of pastoral, 'authentic' Irishness being used to sell a kind of exotic nostalgia to foreign markets. The anecdote also problematizes the trope of the country cottage as naïve and pastoral – even in 1908, its role as a nostalgic icon able to drive tourism and confound stereotypes was clearly viable.

The idealised Irishness of the West, encapsulated by films like *The Quiet Man*, and by artists such as Paul Henry in his iconic painting "A Connemara Village", is always replete with thatched cottages.[25] The simple, pastoral existence of the inhabitants of these areas became shorthand for an authentic version of Irishness, cultivated through the development of the Gaelic revival and the renewed focus on folklore. Anglo-Irish writers and dramatists such as Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory emphasised the purity and nobility of peasant life: often in drama and poetry, but also in folklore collections such as Lady Gregory's *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*.[26]

Another country cottage enthusiast who dealt in packaging touristic nostalgia was John Hinde, whose photographs of rural Ireland adorned many a postcard from the late 1950s. Gibbons considers the reasons for Hinde's popularity, suggesting that *The Quiet Man*, and the associated gentle nostalgia in the film, paved the way for the likes of Hinde, for whom, he argued, the country cottage was an ideal subject.[27] Indeed, his photo archive contains many pictures of Irish country cottages in glorious technicolor, resonant of the films of the era. These project a hyper-

[25] Paul Henry "A Connemara Village" 1930-33, National Gallery of Ireland

[26] Lady Gregory, *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (Colin Smythe Books, 1976 (second edition)).

[27] *The Quiet Man*. Directed by John Huston, Argosy, 1959

cheerful picture at odds with the Ireland of the time.[28] Gibbons suggests that in Hinde's postcards 'we are getting a last glimpse of what is lost'. To emigrants specifically, it might be assumed that the Ireland of John Hinde's postcards, sent from home, evoked a nostalgia for something not only disappearing, but something that never really existed. Certainly, this was at odds with the lived reality of the inner-city existence of many Irish migrants:

> The attempt to recover the innocence of a receding past is crystallised in the archetypal description of the archetypal image of the thatched cottage from which a mother emerges to welcome her two children approaching with donkeys and creels. This could be the homecoming of the two tousled children loading turf on a donkey in what is perhaps the most emblematic of all John Hinde images. Unlike the prodigal son, however, the prodigal colour and total artifice of these narratives suggest that there is no real prospect of returning home.[29]

This narrative is familiar to researchers of the diaspora when confronted with arguments about the authenticity, or otherwise, of the emblems of identity and remembrance used by Irish migrant communities. Realism is rejected in favour of a post-modern reimagining of Ireland, based in some part on rose-tinted remembrances, and reinforced by mass-produced kitsch. The cottage on the winning float in the Leeds parade is often reproduced in some way in pictures and models in Irish migrant homes: a symbolic representation of home that over time becomes more real than the reality.[30] As Gibbons notes, 'the difficulty with nostalgia in these circumstances is not that it turns its back on the modern, but that it is part of it, if by that we mean a particular view of social change which embalms rather than actively renegotiates the past'.[31]

Another common icon at St. Patrick's Day parades, in Leeds and elsewhere, is the Irish leprechaun. The leprechaun is often seen as the apotheosis of ephemeral paddywhackery, a distillation of the Irish character into a small, bothersome and mischievous package whose real value is only in entertainment. The historical interpretations of the leprechaun's value, however, are varied and have changed a great deal over time. Winberry's analysis, *The Elusive Elf: Some Thoughts on the Nature and Origin of the Irish Leprechaun*, considers the folkloric origins of the leprechaun, and the extent to which it is actually a composite of a number of different fairies and regional variations across the country. For example, the leprechaun is known as a 'cluricaun' in southern counties, but in the rest of Ireland a cluricaun is a different beast: where the leprechaun is hard-working, the cluricaun is red-nosed, slovenly and prone to drinking and smoking. Winberry also recognises that the leprechaun has a long history, dating back to the 'lupracans' of ancient tradition, who guarded against evil spirits.

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[28] In the 1950s, Ireland was struggling economically, and emigration due to poverty was a thorny political issue.
[29] Luke Gibbons, "Popular Culture: Back Projection," *Circa*, no. 65 (1993).p19
[30] This is explored in more detail in the third chapter of this thesis.
[31] Gibbons, "Popular Culture: Back Projection."p20

The modern perception of the leprechaun is certainly a composite of different creatures and traditions, but it is less clear as to what extent it represents any element of contemporary Irishness.

> The leprechaun is depicted in the folk accounts collected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries usually as a solitary elf perennially engaged in repairing or making a single shoe. He is withered and wizened, sometimes with a beard, standing between an inch and a half and about two feet tall. His fashion dates to the eighteenth century. His cut-away coat with flap pockets may be red or green and is adorned with big, shiny buttons; beneath it is a long waistcoat. He wears knee breeches and white stockings, and his tiny shoes boast large, bright silver buckles. A three-cornered hat, on which he may spin like a top, usually completes his attire, but he may instead wear a red or green night-cap. Finally, a long, leather apron, like a cobbler's, covers his front. Stuffed into a big pocket of his coat is the leprechaun's magic purse, the spre na skillenagh (shilling fortune).[32]

This description of the leprechaun is familiar from fancy dress on St Patrick's Day. Even Guinness hats, very much a self-aware symbol of conspicuous consumption, are fashioned in the style of the leprechaun's hat, in a nod to Guinness's clever absorption of symbols of Irish identity for marketing purposes.[33] A look at fancy dress shop windows sees the leprechaun as another cultural trope which can be manipulated – here we can see a fairly traditional leprechaun alongside an emoji leprechaun, a scantily-clad leprechaun, and an Easter bunny leprechaun. In the same way as Halloween costumes are commodified to reach the widest audience, so are the symbols of St Patrick's Day. This allows for the performative elements of the parade to come to the fore once again – buying or renting a costume and partaking in rituals is a way in which anyone can display 'Irishness.'

Fancy dress shop window in Leeds, just before St Patrick's Day, 2017

That the leprechaun is often summarily dismissed as symbolical 'paddywhackery' is partly due to the role it has played in being a vehicle to perpetuate Irish stereotypes. Miller considers the late-twentieth century as a time when Ireland was defining itself on its own terms, rather than, as it had been for most of its history, in relation to an 'other'; most likely Britain or America.[34] This was in opposition to some of the negative external perceptions of Irishness – British colonial

[32] John J. Winberry "The Elusive Elf: Some Thoughts on the Nature and Origin of the Irish Leprechaun."
[33] Nagle, ""Everybody Is Irish on St Paddy's": Ambivalence and Alterity at London's St Patrick's Day 2002.." The Guinness hat is a large, comical hat in the shape of a branded pint of Guinness. These are given out in pubs in England on St Patrick's Day.
[34] Nicholas Andrew Miller, *Modernism, Ireland and the Erotics of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

legends such as Hartley's 'white chimpanzees', the *Punch* cartoons of the uncivilised Irishman or the more benign, but equally constraining, American depiction of *The Quiet Man,* Connemara shawls and *Darby O'Gill*.[35] The leprechaun features heavily in American – and particularly Disney – representations of Irishness.[36] The creation of the Disney film *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* is a fascinating story in itself, centred around two strong factions – the Irish Folklore Commission and Disney. The Folklore Commission, and particularly its head, Seamus Delargy, were delighted by Disney's interest in Irish folk tales. Delargy sent several books of interesting folklore legends to Disney's representatives, who at first seemed keen to explore other elements of Irish legend. Indeed, Delargy's choices were 'broadly nationalistic and romantic in orientation', and based mainly in concepts reawakened by revivalist texts, which dovetailed perfectly with the contemporary American visual representations of Ireland. However, Delargy's communications with Disney appear to have been thwarted: despite his setting up meetings with key folklorists in rural Ireland, the project stalled. It seems that Delargy was wary of the use of the leprechaun, knowing its potential to convey a reductive version of Irishness. With this in mind, he tried to present many different and lesser known folk tales to Disney's people. Delargy notes 'desultorily' that Disney's people 'came to Ireland apparently with the object of informing themselves preparatory to making a picture. I went with them to Kerry. Nothing came of all this.'[37] Disney unsurprisingly went with the lore of the mythic 'little people', and chose to adapt a book written by an Irish-American to create *Darby O'Gill*. The film's legacy is contested: for some, it is well acted and produced and uses 'ground-breaking visual effects'; for others, it reinforces the stereotypes of performative screen Irishness that Delargy was trying to counter with his careful handling of the Disney team.[38] The leprechaun also features heavily in more recent American representations of Irishness. A particular film, 2001's '*The Luck of the Irish*', drew approbation for its attempt to explore Irish ethnicity through the protagonist's mother gradually morphing into a leprechaun.[39] The crudely-drawn stereotypes abound, from the villainous Seamus McTiernan, 'a dark haired version of Michael Flatley in black leather pants and green satin pirate shirt accompanied by an entourage of IRA-like henchmen in black knit caps, jeans and army jackets' to the grandfather who owns the Emerald Chip Factory; the film ends

[35] *The Quiet Man*, directed by John Huston (Argosy, 1952); *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, directed by Robert Stevenson (Disney, 1959)
[36] Nicholas Andrew Miller, *Modernism, Ireland and the Erotics of Memory* (2002).
[37] Tony Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy: "Darby O'gill" and the Irish Folklore Commission," *Bealoideas* 78 (2010).
[38] Ibid.
[39] *The Luck of the Irish*, directed by Paul Hoen (Disney, 2001)

with a nod to the Irish folk tale the *Children of Lir*, as the villain is banished to Lake Erie for all eternity. [40]

What makes the use of these symbols relevant here is the ways in which they are used to define or to affirm an Irish identity among Irish migrants, like their presence in the Leeds parade. Cronin and Adair argue that Irish migrant parades trade on tropes and stereotypes because they have lost the true authentic essence of what it means to be Irish; they posit that true representations of Irishness are best found at source, in Ireland.[41] Caomhan Keane thus suggests that the portrayal of leprechauns in the Leprechaun Museum in Dublin draws an allegory with Irish life post-financial crisis:

> the Leprechaun museum is also the perfect metaphor for what has happened to our little country in the last 20 years, a monument to illusory wealth that eventually disappears right before our very eyes, having hopefully taught us all a very valuable lesson about ourselves.[42]

However, Rains disagrees with this position, stating that diasporic communities – in her case Irish-Americans (but the same can be said for the Irish in Britain) - are far more aware that the 'paddywhackery' involved in their celebrations is inauthentic than academics may realise.[43] It is clear from the example of Leeds and of other migrant parades that participants and organisers have cherry-picked traditions from Ireland, from America, from the city itself, from other migrant groups and from popular and consumer culture to construct a unique Leeds-Irish identity. These shamrocks and leprechauns thus 'act as concentrated identity markers, necessary for the performance of attenuated ethnicity within a circuit of capitalist exchange.'[44] The perceived inauthenticity of migrant Irish celebrations in and of itself is not problematic; however, the way the parade presents itself as the only way to be Irish in Leeds is difficult for Irish people who wish to celebrate St Patrick's Day, but for whom the parade's key symbols fail to chime with their own perception of their Irish identity. Although the parade is mainly absent from the narratives, interviewees such as Tim problematize the idea that the parade appeals to all migrants, stating that 'equally I would know people…who almost – they would come to the city and they wouldn't go to the Irish Centre, they wouldn't go to any of the Irish…: they wouldn't socialise with Irish people, they wouldn't work in any sort of Irish environment.'

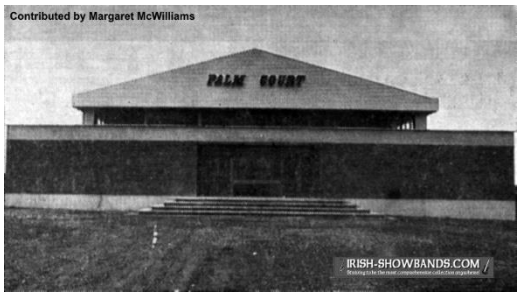
Anderson suggests that 'imagined communities' are constructed and reimagined through texts and narratives, but in the case of the Irish diaspora, what binds them, from New York to Dubai,

[40] Diane Negra, "The New Primitives: Irishness in Recent Us Television," *Irish Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2001).
[41] Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*.
[42] Caomhàn Keane, "Leprechauns: Little People with a Big Identity Crisis," *Irish Examiner*, March 17 2014.
[43] Rains, "Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture."
[44] Ibid.

from Sydney to Leeds, has been transposed into symbols.[45] Although understandably some Irish organisations, such as the Irish Arts Foundation, see these symbols as reductive and a regression into stereotypes, in public displays of identity like parades they are common denominators across Irish communities worldwide. The mass production of, for example, leprechaun costumes or shamrock deelyboppers, the easy access to celebrations of Irishness across the globe, and the simplification of complex signifiers of identity into easily digestible visual tropes creates a festival of identity where uniformity takes precedence over subtlety. Nuances are put on hold, such is the heightened nature of parades. Regardless of how troubling this can be to certain groups, the St Patrick's parade – anywhere - is where Irishness takes its most obvious and easily accessible form. The thatched cottage and leprechaun therefore exemplify how many migrants have used and renegotiated symbols to construct a unique identity that straddles both their point of origin and their new home.[46]

Dancehalls, pubs and social spaces.

Dancehalls were very popular in rural Ireland in the 1950s (there were, for example, over 80 known dancehalls in Donegal, and more than 60 in Mayo.)[47] When interviewed, Declan mentioned the local dancehall in his town in rural Mayo, where migrants to England from nearby towns would congregate on trips home in their smart new suits; other interviewees mention travelling significant distances to attend dances, as a rite of passage.



The Palm Court Dancehall in Belmullet

In Leeds the familiar ritual of drinking a mineral and watching a showband was something which could be indulged in both St Francis's and the Shamrock dancehall from the 1960s onwards. The dancehalls, because of their generally dry nature, were a more seemly venue for young women to visit than the local pubs, and groups of Irish migrants, second-generation Irish, and Catholic young women would travel for many miles for such a night out. The rise in car ownership, the building of new roads and the lax drink drive laws all played a part in making this travel possible.

[45] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).p53
[46] The challenges around dual identity are also discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.
[47] "Irish Showbands," http://www.irish-showbands.com/ballrooms.htm.

Jackson suggests that the dancehalls were a more secular enterprise than some of the more wholesome entertainment options provided by the Catholic Church, but the influence of religion on both the dancehall environment and the moral climate of respectability in which they existed is marked.[48] Generally, St Francis's was the Leeds dancehall with the most upstanding reputation, and women would congregate there, dancing with each other and nursing a 'mineral', until the Irish men began to roll in after last orders. Jackson's rules of dancehall geography also apply to the situation in Leeds:

> Irish dancehalls are usually run on a proprietary basis by groups such as Muldoon's Enterprises which may manage as many as twenty or thirty dancehalls. These are to be found in most of the large centres of immigration bearing names such as 'The Shamrock' or 'The Garryowen.' Few of them are licensed but as a rule there is a public house nearby. This pattern of unlicensed dancehall and nearby bar is similar to that found in Ireland. These dancehalls appear to be successful commercial enterprises which attract large numbers of the immigrants, particularly at weekends.[49]

Interviewee Liam was insistent that he had seen a fight at St Francis's, but later confessed that he had confused it with a similar venue in Leicester:

> LIAM: There wasn't a chair in St Francis's at the finish that wasn't broke; that wasn't broke over someone's head… Oh yeah. The priest went up on the stage and asked anyone that wanted a fight outside: he was only a young priest… wait a minute, I'll be getting a slight image now. I think it was Leicester now when I rethink my steps.

Through this discussion, the two interviewees – brothers – reminisced about how the threat of violence was managed in these venues, and agreed that a firm hand and strict no-fighting policy helped to keep revellers in check:

> SIMON: I thought it was the Shamrock that was the rough?...
> LIAM: no, no no. That Carey had the Shamrock and if there was any two fighting the lass would put a hand round each of them and out the door with the two of them.
> SIMON: I remember, I know both of them I went to. I mean, I was at St Francis' as well, but I never saw any trouble there. There was a feller there, a chucker out, and he was able to sort them out. [50]

Other interviewees who frequented the dancehall scene had mixed feelings about the reputation of each of the two venues. Two women from Achill had nothing but praise and fond memories of their days in the Shamrock, and indeed photos from the time suggest a warm and wholesome environment, with clubgoers more redolent of American teenagers than adults with their fashionable clothes and bottles of non-alcoholic drinks.[51] McGowan's interviewees recollect how coach trips from local towns such as Huddersfield and Brighouse would be arranged to the

[48] Jackson, *The Irish in Britain,*p131
[49] Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*.p130
[50] This relates to some of the issues around autobiographical memory discussed in the methodology section: here, we see that group interviews help to clarify or guide the memories.
[51] Field notes, Irish Centre Tuesday Club, September 2015.

Shamrock as 'all those places had no dancehalls of their own.' The same interviewee, Martin, explains how he met his wife in the Shamrock:

> MARTIN: you know, when you're chatting somebody you say the usual craic was them days "would you come for a mineral?" there was no bar, there was all a mineral bar or a tea bar you know like. Do you want to go for a mineral you know like you thought that was the halfway house [laughs] you knew if you could get them for a mineral, like you could start working on them more like you know.[52]

Other migrants, as evidenced in the last exchange, had doubts about the Shamrock:

> SIMON: Yeah, it was a different group of people that went to the dances than went to the pubs, they were a different class of people
> INTERVIEWER: In what way?
> SIMON: Well, half of them was non-drinkers
> EAMONN: More civilised
> INTERVIEWER: So there was some pioneers, were there?
> EAMONN: No, a lot of them was…
> SIMON: They went to St Francis's, and the alkies went to the Shamrock.
> EAMONN: The Shamrock used to be, bloody hell, that was
> INTERVIEWER: So the Shamrock was a dancehall where you could have a drink?
> EAMONN: No, you went in pissed up, didn't you
> SIMON: In St Francis's they were…. Better trained or something. More civilised…[53]

In *Róisín Bán*, an interviewee suggests that it was hard-line policing based on ethnic stereotyping that fuelled the association of the dancehall with disorder:

> The police were very hard on us when we came over first. You know, outside the Irish dancehalls. There'd always be two or three, we used to call them black mariahs outside the dancehall waiting for us to come out, to see if we'd start staggering or start falling. Anyway, you were grabbed and put in the van and locked up, which you wouldn't have seen outside any other nationality dancehall.[54]

Joe, the interviewee, recognised that the revellers themselves were not entirely blameless in these situations, but suggested that this is both a natural and a social failing:

> A lot of it was brought on by themselves. The way they carried on, fighting and getting drunk, wanting a fight. If an Irishman heard that there was a bloke in London that was a hard man, another fighting man, he'd go to London and want to have a go at him to prove that he was better than him. It was a lack of education, that's what it was. It still happens today. Young fit men, they have to get rid of it somewhere you know.[55]

This link between Irish migrants and violence had become a stereotype in earlier generations, and allowed for the cartoonification of Irish migrants in satirical magazines such as *Punch* as uncivilised and barbarous.

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[52] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.P53

[53] The use of civilisation and respectability as motifs in these narratives is striking, as is shown later in the chapter.

[54] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p120

[55] Ibid.

Links to coarse behaviour hung over some of the pubs in the city as well. Some interviewees were antagonists in these situations, in high spirits often brought on by alcohol – and in this instance, by a pub game: the venue was a local pub, now closed:

> EAMONN: Then we got banned again for fighting one night, among ourselves: we started off arm wrestling, and then something happened and the next thing one of them Nallys , one of them was John Nally and two of them was cousins, and then there was other ones, Colm was one, he died there a few years back, they were all cousins…anyway, he was getting beat every time, we were all steaming, and you know big Dan that died not very long ago, he was that height, that much above Nally, and they set off, and next thing Dan pawed a hand across the table and split him all down the corner of his face, he hit him down that way, split open, and we were pouring whiskey into it and everything to cure him, and from then, we decided to get rowdy, and she put the lot of us out, and then they were scuffling outside, and someone's head come through the window, and she barred us all from the pub and everything.

There was also an undertone of violence, which some of the Mayo migrants were keen to blame on a different set of compatriots:

> EAMONN: There used to be some battles in that Pointer's
> INTERVIEWER: Was there? Was it a bit rough?
> EAMONN: Oh god, yeah, the Connemara men
> INTERVIEWER: Were they renowned for being fighty?
> EAMONN: There must be one of them that kept it, but they'd be battling in there very fast, and sure the knife'd be out

This is an allusion to Watt's 'geography of roughness,' whereby the narrators would heavily emphasise the difference between themselves and the Connemara men whose violence they eschewed.[56] This also shows an element of cognitive dissonance given that the same narrator was heavily involved the first bar fight mentioned. This roughness was corroborated by Sadie, an Irish woman who lived in Leeds in the early 1960s, and spoke of her trepidation at visiting some of the more insalubrious hostelries:

> SADIE: We used to go to the Regent, and the Victoria, and the - what's the name of the other one… there was a fella in there once and he pulled out a knife… I don't know why… I think he was drunk. There was no separation, the women would go where the men went, but I'd met my husband by then; it might have been different if I was on my own.

It was clear that in the 1960s the Irish pub and dancehall were still very masculine spaces. As Sadie said, 'in the dancehall, the men would come in drunk, and they'd buy you a mineral to get around you.' Kathleen and Rose illuminate their different experiences as women who avoided the pubs for the dancehalls further, specifying that:

> KATHLEEN: But they didn't have a bar in the early days, there was no alcohol in the dancehalls. People went to the pubs first. And one of the big problems was the drinking

[56] Paul Watt, "Respectability, Roughness and 'Race': Neighbourhood Place Images and the Making of Working-Class Social Distinctions in London," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006).p788

hours, that they finished serving at half ten, and everybody lined em all up, and then, between half ten and eleven…
ROSE: so what time did the dancehalls shut then, if you went after the pub
ALL: 12 o clock
KATHLEEN: So really, you only had an hour, cos we'd spend all evening getting ready, they'd land in for an hour after all this, and that was, that was it.
ROSE: we used to dance together.
KATHLEEN: All the women used to dance with each other, cos these lot weren't even there.

Historians such as John Archer Jackson emphasised the contribution of the dancehalls to the social world of Irish migrants in the twentieth century.[57] Enda Delaney also recognised the importance of pub networks to the community, referring to the Irish pubs as 'informal labour exchanges'.[58] The changing popularity of the dancehall and role of the Irish pub in Leeds – and ultimately their demise – has wider repercussions for the Irish population of the city. The award of 'Le Grand Depart,' which made Leeds the starting point of the Tour De France 2014, and the associated investment that came with it, kick-started an extensive regeneration of central Leeds. The Tour, and the council's push forward with the building of a new arena on Claypit Lane, led to a new flurry of development in Leeds. The Trinity shopping centre was finally completed in 2013, and extensive redevelopment took place around the markets and the former site of Millgarth police station. This culminated in another high end shopping arcade, this time the Victoria Gate development. The redevelopment was a very positive step forward for the city. Particularly, it was designed to help Leeds to regain its crown as a shopping capital, with Manchester, Liverpool and other Northern cities having gained ground in this area recently as Leeds continued to tread water. The arena, too, pumped life into the 'Northern Quarter' of the city, leading to the opening of several new bars and restaurants, and spreading gentrification out of the city towards North Street. This was what Leeds Council had in mind when they built the arena, which is made clear in their 2010 urban planning strategy.[59]

These buildings were not built on green belt land: they replaced buildings or venues which were there already, and which had either ceased to be successful, or no longer served their original function. A particular victim of this sort of regeneration, as in other cities across the country, is the public house. Many pubs had not been able to keep up with high rents, loss of trade due to the smoking ban, and the move towards drinking at home. In Leeds in particular, pubs in certain areas felt the force of change caused by regeneration.

[57] Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*.p131
[58] Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain.* .p174
[59] Leeds City Council, "Draft Regeneration Framework," ed. Planning (Leeds: Leeds City Council, 2010).

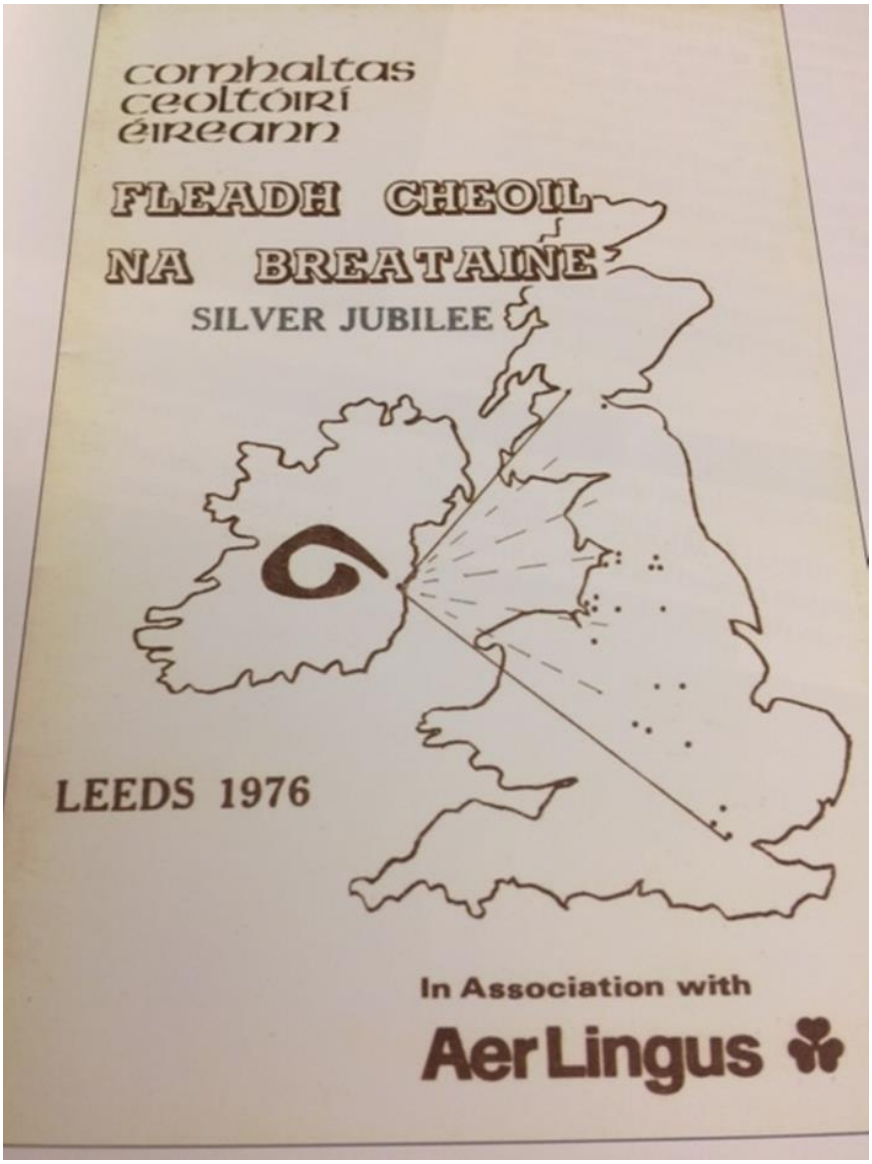
There is an area to the north of Leeds City Centre known as the Sheepscar Triangle. In the 1960s this was close to several areas where large numbers of the Irish community lived. This was reflected in the number of pubs in the area that were, or became, Irish pubs. The regeneration plans of the City Council considered how best to redevelop the city rim area, where many of these pubs are, and tacitly acknowledged the role of the Inner Ring Road (built in the 1960s and 1970s, with much of the labour coming from the Irish community) in dividing the city from the neighbouring communities. This map shows the City Rim region; areas with historically large Irish populations, such as Burmantofts, Harehills and Potternewton, neighbour this area.

Map of Leeds. The city rim area is highlighted in red.

In the Sheepscar triangle, an old pub on the way out of town northwards was the White Stag. This was a pub frequented in its heyday – around the late 1970s/early 1980s - by the Irish community. The White Stag was demolished and replaced by industrial buildings in the early 2010s. In the same part of town, the key venue for GAA and Celtic matches (and the home of Leeds' Celtic supporters club, Wim the Tim) was the oddly situated Maguire's at the Regent,

The Regent in the 1970s

seen here in its heyday with its owners Maureen and John Ferguson, who ran it as the Regent from 1968 to 1978. In 1969, The Regent was the venue where the Leeds branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann (CCE)was established. The organisation was established as a non-political, non-religious organisation to promote and support Irish music and musicians in the city. Leeds CCE grew in strength and influence, to the extent that the city was chosen to hold the national Fleadh Ceol competition in 1972; another example of a formal attempt at bonding capital between Irish migrants from different parts of the UK. In 1973 and 1974 Leeds' traditional musicians went on tour with impressive results: the Junior Ceilidh Band won the All Ireland title in 1973, and retained it in 1974. The Fleadh returned in 1976, and the programme cover makes for interesting analysis, with its map of the British Isles showing British cities with Comhaltas venues, with the trademark letter 'C' for Comhaltas radiating outward from Ireland across the water. The programme refers to the Silver Jubilee – of Comhaltas' inauguration as an organisation, rather than the more famous royal jubilee of the following year. This serves as a meme to connect to the growing public consciousness around the royal jubilee celebrations, and to associate the Fleadh with this event. One of the junior musicians who won the All Ireland title, spoke about his traditional music experiences:



Programme for the Fleadh in Leeds, 1976.

> TIM: I started on the fiddle, gave it a go, and I suppose sort of to move things forward along probably, two or three years down the line, there was a group of us that were learning, and we were enthusiastic… And we actually had the audacity to form the junior ceilidh band, and we actually went to the All-Ireland Fleadh, in I think it was 73, 74, and we won the All-Ireland, which was the equivalent of the World Championships, two years in a row. I was actually the youngest in the ceilidh band. There's actually a picture in the Irish Centre, in the games room, in one of the rooms, on one of the pillars, of the Leeds Junior Ceilidh Band, which is taken in the Shamrock…And then at the same time as we were learning, places that have sort of gone down in local Irish folklore now, places like the Regent, the Roscoe, all those pubs round Sheepscar, there were all these Irish music sessions going on, it was great for us as young lads, we were able to: when your mates couldn't go to the pub, we could go in just to play tunes. And there was always, I suppose probably what we perceived as these old Irish fellas were in there playing tunes, and you know, we were in there learning stuff off them, and I suppose in reality they were probably only all about 35, 40: some of them even younger. But when you're only 13 or 14, they're ancient, and that was very much how we: as I say, a very potted history as to how we got into playing Irish music.

Comhaltas, and Irish music in the city, continued to thrive, and resulted in offshoots such as the Harehills Irish Music Project. This went on to become the Irish Arts Foundation, which draws on Irish tourist board initiatives such as The Gathering and Irish History Month to arrange Irish themed music and cultural events across the city.[60]

A music venue well-liked by young and old alike, and home to Comhaltas, The Regent was later taken over twice: both landlords continued the pub's association with live music and sport. Then the area became ripe for redevelopment. Eventually sold up to developers with rumours that it was making way for a car park, Maguire's at the Regent (so called for its landlord, Benny Maguire) closed in 2011 to much fanfare.[61] By 2016, development was not progressing at speed. The pub was demolished, and in its place was a boarded up wasteland, full of gravel and weeds. Close to Maguire's was the Harp. This was the last traditional Irish pub in the city. The Celtic supporters club moved there when Maguire's closed, and the comfortable atmosphere created by two brothers from Donegal saw that fans of football, Irish music and GAA would continue to trek to the Lincoln Green estate for a friendly welcome. When the Harp closed down in 2016, it brought an end to the Irish pubs' association with Sheepscar.

Some of the reasons for the decline are as a result of the movement of people or communities from certain areas. For example, the Pointer and the Victoria in Sheepscar fell into decline as although Sheepscar and neighbouring Chapeltown and Burmantofts were very much Irish areas of the inner-city in the mid-twentieth century, by the early 2000s most 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Irish migrants had moved to other areas further out of the city, and a trip to the Pointer would

[60] The Irish Arts Foundation also created an archive of Irish migration to Leeds, Untold Stories, including a photo archive, which has been very useful to this thesis.

[61] By 2016, development was not progressing at speed. The pub was totally demolished, and in its place was a boarded up wasteland, full of gravel and weeds.

involve a drive or a taxi. These venues became, respectively, a Punjabi restaurant and a Sikh community centre; as is common across migration history, community and commercial venues change when the demographic in an area shifts, and now that there is no longer a significant Irish population in these areas, the need for one specifically Irish drinking establishment – let alone the several that there were – diminished.

This idea of the pub as the hub of the community is of course not without problems: the pubs exist to sell alcohol, and for some their proliferation added to the problems of alcohol addiction. A former bar worker in one of the Leeds pubs remembers:

> I watched relationships be drunk away…men staying later and later in the evenings after work…asking me to lie to wives and girlfriends when they rang the pub looking for them (I never did)
> And then these same men would be devastated when these same girlfriends and wives were not there one night when they finally got home. "I don't know what happened" was the oft repeated refrain. Funny that because I knew exactly what had happened.[62]

Across the city, there was another side to this story. There were other pubs at this time that were popular with the Irish community. These included The Grove, The Garden Gate and the Fenton. All three of these pubs are still going, and still keep much of their traditional decoration. The Grove and Fenton, in particular, have retained their associations with live music. The Grove is an interesting case study in part because of its location. On the southern side of the city rim, The Grove was a star in the crown of the 1960s Irish dancehall scene. A night out to St Francis's or The Shamrock dancehalls would often start out here, and there were frequent sessions of live music.

The Grove has continued to function as a pub, and still has regular lunchtime and evening visitors in its long-established multi-room interior, as well as continuing the tradition of regular music sessions. The surrounding area, Holbeck urban village, began its regeneration earlier than the Arena Quarter close to Sheepscar, and now visitors to the Cross Keys and the Midnight Bell further down the road, as well as the many people who work and live in Bridgewater Place, have increased passing trade. It seems that neighbouring Bridgewater Place, Leeds' tallest building, has not engulfed the Grove; instead, it has protected it from the fate of some of the other, less handily-placed establishments.

The Garden Gate, in Hunslet, is a Victorian pub in a built-up, economically deprived area of inner-city south Leeds. In the 1950s, the brewery gave the pub to an Irish family, the McLoughlins, whose son Tommy now manages Leeds Irish Centre. Tommy gives the rationale for this thus:

[62] Email correspondence, April 2016.

> TOMMY: We came to the Garden Gate which was a public house down in Hunslet: an iconic - we've found out since- it's an iconic building, at that time it was this big big pub, and I suppose the brewery thought, give it to an Irish man, and he'll fill it. Now, the pub had ten bedrooms, now come on, you know, when we moved in they said right, the business wasn't that great at that time, so what we'll do, is that we'll take in lads, you know, so, anyway, we moved into the Garden Gate, and the next thing, two lads came, well, you never, well, I'm an only child, but you never saw the atmosphere that was in that place was unbelievable because the lads that lived with us, and there was a few girls as well… they wanted to be there because of the homely atmosphere; because they were away from home, and they had a home away from home, if I can put it that way. You know, plenty to eat, plenty to whatever, and of course yes, they used to be in our place but they'd go to the dances as well, they didn't stay in our place all the time because obviously they'd go and meet their friends elsewhere.

It is clear from Tommy's testimony that the brewery saw the economic argument for bringing in an Irish landlord at a time (the 1950s) when the Irish community in Leeds was beginning to expand, and, crucially, had money to spend. Delaney speaks of the Irish pub at this time as not just a place to get a drink, but to make connections: to get a job, to find somewhere to stay, and to make friends.[63] The pub was all of these things to the Irish community in Leeds at that time, and this meant that bringing in a friendly landlord could give the brewery a cut of this community's burgeoning income.

The other exception is the Fenton on Woodhouse Lane, which has been fortunate in its location and ability to regenerate and change identity. In the 1960s, the Fenton was another pub frequented by young Irish migrants, drawn by the live music and the proximity to work – on the nearby Merrion Centre for example. There were also a lot of run-down bedsits in the area which large numbers of single Irish men rented. When these houses were knocked down, many became involved in building the new sections of the university and the university accommodation that replaced them. This gave the Fenton a new demographic to appeal to – students – and it has continued to successfully do that since, as the £2 a pint signs outside indicate.

Interviews with more recent first-generation Irish migrants show that there is clearly still a fondness for some Irish venues for certain events, such as football internationals, GAA matches, Celtic games and St Patrick's day, but none of the respondents chose Irish venues as their favourite places to socialise. The responses also raised the question of generational socialising patterns, and of how social networks are formed. More recent migrants still celebrate their Irish identity, but their social group is much less dominated by their Irishness than the previous generation, as Fermanagh native Fearghal, one of the interviewees for this thesis, suggests: 'I am not the sort of person: I do know a lot of Irish people that gravitate towards other Irish people; I have as many if not more English friends than I have Irish friends.' Work also plays a part here,

[63] Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain.* .p173

as the more recent migrants all moved to Leeds on their own, and did not work, in the main, in environments with other Irish people. Also, in contrast to previous generations, they did not seek to replicate their social patterns from home when they arrived.[64]

Overall, then, it is clear that there is a marked decline in the number of 'traditional' Irish pubs in the Leeds area. The reasons have been demographic as well as economic, and the generational difference in patterns of socialising has definitely played a part. New Irish migrants and the children of the 1950s and 1960s migrants like to socialise in the Irish Centre for special occasions, but they have many other more enticing social options most weekends. The decline has been particularly marked in the Sheepscar area, but this may be more to do with geography than Irish pubs *per se*. The Irish pubs have suffered just as much from the general issues of the pub trade: rising rents, fewer customers and the smoking ban. It seems that there is a will to regenerate the Sheepscar area, which has made the pubs' existence there even less viable, but it is very possible these pubs would have failed anyway. The pubs that have continued to exist are those which have exploited their customer bases, and enthusiastically sought new ones. The pubs that have staunchly maintained their original identity and business model and not looked for new revenue streams, as well as those in less fashionable areas, have borne the brunt of recessions and changing tastes. The question might well be not just how the Irish pubs have died, but how many were only Irish pubs during the period of time when this was economically or socially convenient.

The decline of the Irish pub as it was known - run by and for Irish migrants - coincides with the rise of the Irish Pub Concept, the multinational corporation established by Diageo in the 1990s in order to stealthily increase worldwide sales of Guinness. Both the remaining 'Irish pubs' in Leeds are part of national chains: one is an O'Neill's, started by Bass but currently run by Mitchell and Butler's, a UK pub chain, opened its first O'Neill's Irish branded pub in 1994: the number across the mainland UK rose to a high of 91 in 2003, and currently stands at 49.[65] The other Irish pub servicing the city is a Shenanigans, a newer Irish branded pub run by Milton Pubs and Taverns, which also has Shenanigans branches in Glasgow and Preston, as well as other, more traditional pubs across England, Scotland and Wales.

Diageo introduced the Irish Pub Concept in the 1990s, working alongside the Irish Pub Company (established in 1991) to preach the gospel of craic across the globe. Through the Irish

[64] This is borne out in 2016 email correspondence with three first-generation migrants, whose responses indicated a reluctance to socialise in traditionally 'Irish' places, instead preferring to spend time with friends or colleagues in non-Irish social environments.

[65] Mitchells & Butlers, "Our Brands," https://www.mbplc.com/ourbrands/oneills/. The company also runs Toby Carveries, Miller and Butler steakhouses and All Bar One. Since the writing of this chapter, the O'Neills pub has been rebranded as another Shenanigans Irish pub.

Pub Concept website, Diageo offer consultations to prospective pub landlords to ascertain whether their business proposal would be an effective outlet for an Irish pub. They offer advice on 'maintaining authenticity', a section which covers naming, menus and atmosphere:

> A full pub can be planned and built in 26 – 31 weeks. A design company will visit your site, make a proposal 'comprised of detailed authentic renderings of how the pub will appear', provide project management, 'manufacture all elements' including woodwork, furniture, lights, glasswork, metalwork, bric-a-brac and the like, then transport it to you (clearing customs for you on the way) and 'install' the pub. The 'bric-a-brac' is considered particularly important since, as Diageo points out: 'Framed posters, signs, jugs and old bicycles ... could help create a comfortable Irish Pub environment' and 'make your pub look authentic'. However, acknowledging that this stuff may take 'many years to collect', Diageo instead recommends using a 'Guinness Approved Supplier' that allows 'any pub [to] order authentic Irish bric-a-brac', each 'based on an original piece of classic advertising'. Once ordered, the craic arrives from Ireland in a box, ready to become 'authentic' in its new home. No wonder that, as one writer puts it, 'Ireland, as much of the world knows it, was invented in 1991', the year the Irish Pub Company was formed. [66]

The Day-Glo gaudiness of the symbols of international St Patrick's Day festivals is frowned on in Diageo's style guide:

> A great Irish Pub is created as a timeless piece of design and it generally looks better with age. What can spoil the effect sometimes is the addition of pieces that jar with the overall look and feel…If it's cheap looking or garish or neon, it's going to look awful and your guests will notice immediately. Adding pieces that are of real interest over time really helps. Framed pictures with a local or Irish theme, artefacts such as old bottles or brewing-related tools, old advertising posters, pennants from local sports teams, currency from guests' home countries, photo galleries of sports events or teams sponsored by your pub etc. are all part of the character-building and local community-focused memorabilia that will enhance your authenticity.[67]

Diageo also provide advice on the naming of the pubs, suggesting that, as a rule, 'the name is distinctly and memorably Irish without use of words such as 'green', 'shamrock', 'leprechaun', 'pot o' gold' etc.' They also give five sub-categories to help with naming, suggesting the publican choose from Irish language names, Irish place names, humorous names (although these should be used with caution), family names and literary names. They acquiesce that the literary names may go over the heads of some customers:

> Names such as O'Casey's Kavanagh's, Yeats', Keane's, Callaghan's, Behan's, Joyce's, Oliver St.John Gogarty, Russell's, Synge's, Shaw's, Donovan's. Often names of famous writers and poets, these names are particularly appropriate in Victorian/Library themes.

[66] Austin Kelley, "Ireland's "Crack" Habit - Explaining the Faux Irish Pub Revolution.," *Slate*, March 16 2006 2006; Bill Grantham, "Craic in a Box: Commodifying and Exporting the Irish Pub," *Continuum* 23, no. 2 (2009).p261

[67] Irish Pub Concept, "Elements of Authenticity," http://irishpubconcept.com/resources-tools/pub-management/maintaining-authenticity/elements-of-authenticity/.

> However, North American consumers may not always appreciate or understand the high quality message in this type of name, or indeed may not associate it with Ireland[68]

This statement echoes the issues mentioned earlier around avoiding nuance in St Patrick's Day celebrations in order to maintain the largest global audience.

Diageo's principles surrounding the Irish Pub Concept dovetail neatly with Anderson's suggestion that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity or genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'.[69] Irish pubs in Dubai, Singapore or Colorado are not being judged on whether they match up to the authentic experience of visiting an Irish pub in Ireland, but instead whether they chime with the visitor's expectation of what an Irish pub should be. In this case, influenced by film and visual adaptations, dark rooms filled with old-fashioned furniture, as described by Grantham, are the order of the day.[70]

Like the McDonalds and Apple stores which are modified for different cultures in Tommaso Durante's visual archive project about the global imaginary, the Irish pub concept is only loosely based on Irish pubs in Ireland: it is a collage of many influences. [71] It projects a homogenised, streamlined, sanitised and portable version of Irishness; its very adaptability and inoffensiveness gives it accessibility in many international locations. Diageo are very dismissive of the obvious and vulgar tropes of Irish identity of St Patrick's Parades, but Irish Pub Concept pubs are similarly reductive in their portrayal of Irishness. Guinness toucans, Victorian mirrors and wall-mounted bicycles merely replace leprechauns and shamrocks as encoded representations of Irishness. The branding has clearly been successful as a marketing ploy for Guinness, as Irish Pub Company pubs have become the international standard for what an Irish pub looks like. The pubs themselves go beyond authenticity to become hyper real: the go-to model for the Irish pub. The image is more real than the reality.[72]

Leeds Irish Centre and County Associations

The 1970 opening of Leeds Irish Centre saw limited coverage in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. It warranted little more than a paragraph, dwarfed by an article entitled 'Bus Stop Stays 'At Present'. All the Irish Centre opening article says by comparison is that 'The first phase of what

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[68] The Irish Pub Concept, "Maintaining Authenticity," http://irishpubconcept.com/resources-tools/pub-management/maintaining-authenticity/.
[69] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.p6
[70] Grantham, "Craic in a Box: Commodifying and Exporting the Irish Pub."
[71] Tommaso Durante, "The Visual Archive Project of the Global Imaginary," http://www.the-visual-archive-project-of-the-global-imaginary.com/visual-global-imaginary/.
[72] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press 1994).

is claimed to be the most elaborate Irish Centre in Britain was being opened in Leeds today.' It explains that the opening will take in a Catholic mass, a lunch and a 'traditional' Irish showband, and the manager of the Centre noted: 'There are between 15 and 20,000 native-born Irish people resident in Leeds at present… (and) about 40,000 second or third generation Irish in the city, so there will always be a need for such a Centre'.[73] McGowan rightly notes that these figures, widely bandied about, were a serious over-projection; 1971 census figures reveal that there were just 7,000 residents of the city claiming to be born in the Irish Republic, with a further 3,000 born in Northern Ireland.[74] Given the lack of media attention given to the Centre's opening (which Centre stalwarts suggested was due to financial interests from the paper's proprietors in competing establishments), it is left to the Centre itself, with its commemorative photo album of the day, to project its chosen image to current and future interested parties. Indeed, the inscription in the front of the album states that:

> The present Committee and Members of the Irish Centre dedicate this album to all who will become Members in future years. When this milestone in the history of the Irish community in Leeds slides into the distant past, we hope that this visual account will keep our People informed about this important event.[75]

The pictures themselves present a very modern looking set of rooms, with abstract decoration and modernist furnishings. The Centre's interior suggests an interest in appearing modern and fashionable so as to appeal to the city's younger Irish migrants and their friends. However, the album has a strong focus on the religious elements of the opening ceremony: the majority of the photographs in the album concern the opening Mass, or clerics either opening the Centre, at the lunch or performing as celebrants. Just one of the photographs is of the entertainment for the evening, a young Brendan Shine, a famous showband artist. Even the interior, with its Mondrianesque abstract designs, looks like the 'Populuxe' design of many Catholic churches built in the same era, but with shamrocks where the religious imagery would normally be. The makeshift altar on the stage

The soft drinks bar in the new Irish Centre. From commemorative album in the Irish Centre's archive.

The stage. Modernist furnishings mix with the 'traditional' Irish symbol of the shamrock.

[73] "It's All Irish at the Centre," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 June 1970.
[74] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.P44
[75] Leeds Irish Centre, *Official Opening of the Irish Centre, Leeds, 8th June 1970* (Leeds1970).

strengthens this link.[76] This close relationship with the church and local clergy could not help but exclude some non-religious members of the Irish community.

Brendan Shine takes to the stage at the official opening

A religious ceremony involving the Bishop takes place at the opening.

Although it is claimed that Leeds' Irish Centre was the first 'purpose built' centre in England, there were many other centres with perhaps more organic roots. In 1955 Camden's Irish Centre opened, providing a space for networking and social support which was backed by the Church: similar centres were also open in Manchester and Birmingham.[77] Jackson views these centres as a convenient way for the Church to maintain a role in the lives of emigrants, whose abstention from mass-going in their new homes the Archbishop of Birmingham described as 'alarming.'[78] Coventry, Leicester and Huddersfield were among the other large towns and cities with Irish Centres, and Leeds already had a social club for its Irish population, the slightly run-down Irish National Centre. It boasted a central location in the City Centre, but had a reputation which preceded it, variously described by interviewees for this thesis as 'a sort of drinking dive' and 'a small place… a lot of people wouldn't go… they would go to nicer places, if I can put it that way.' The increasing Irish presence on Leeds City Council did not think this ageing centre sufficient however, and pressure increased to build a new, modern Centre that met the needs of the city's burgeoning Irish population. Local councillor Michael Rooney acquired some land in the East End Park area of the city, and a centre was begun in 1968, with the support of local brewers Joshua Tetley. It was close to the

[76] Paula Kane, "Is That a Beer Vat under the Baldochino? From Antimodernism to Postmodernism in Catholic Church Architecture," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 15, no. 1 (1997).p6
[77] Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*.p147
[78] Ibid.

site of the Bank, which had been home to a wave of Irish migrants from the time of the Famine; this Famine-Irish population had dissipated, been moved on through slum clearance, or become integrated into the population at large by the post-war period. McGowan notes a number of active Irish institutions in the city at the end of the 1800s, such as the Irish National Club, the Irish National League Club, The Henry Grattan National Club and the Irish National Club (West Leeds Division) but by the post-war era all besides the Irish National Club had ceased to exist.[79] Rex and Moore's study of community relations in Sparkbrook, Birmingham pays specific attention to the city's Irish population, and the city's Irish Centres of the time are recognised as a commercial interest of one of the patrons of the city's County Clare Association The association would organise dances and social functions that would act as bonding events for all Irish people in Birmingham; the Centres would offer a physical space for this bonding and networking to take place.[80] A model was being established that gave credence to Rex and Moore's statement that: 'there were large numbers of Irish Catholics who simply attended Mass, but lived morally in the world of the pubs and cafes'.[81] Archbishop Eamonn Casey, providing advice in 1967 to Irish migrants who sought employment in England, recommended that they seek out the Irish Centres of large cities for support, and made reference to the addresses of said centres being available in 'the little book published by Father Jack Casey of the Columban Fathers'.[82]

Indeed, although the new Irish Centre in Leeds was nominally secular, the influence of the Catholic Church ran through all of its establishment. A priest sat on the founding committee, and indeed one local religious leader, Canon O'Meara, was so instrumental in the Centre's success as its 'Spiritual Director' that one of the function rooms bears his name.[83] Of course, these direct links with the Church, as well as the Centre's involvement with Gaelic games, suggests that even in its inception the Centre had a 'type' of migrant in mind for its clientele: Catholic, Irish-identifying, and in later years, respectable – to such an extent that this Irishness and respectability could lead to a climate of cultural conservatism, making many Irish who did not fit into this narrow paradigm feel excluded.[84] Rex and Moore argue that the Catholic church did not see itself as an integrative force, and indeed that 'Generally, the clergy were concerned to get on with their own work amongst their own people, and had little to do with members of

[79] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.p35
[80] John Rex & Robert Moore, *Race Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).p153
[81] Ibid.P152
[82] Eamonn Casey, "The Pastoral on Emigration," *The Furrow* 18, no. 5 (1967).
[83] Leeds Irish Centre, "About Us," http://www.theleedsirishcentre.co.uk/about-us.html.
[84] This is expanded on later in the chapter.

other communities."[85] Rex and Moore also note the divide between the rural migrants whose networks were county-based, and city migrants who did not recognise themselves in the parochial customs of these Irish associations. They further recognise the role of the Centres in Birmingham in attempting to smooth out these differences, and bring together migrants from all over Ireland in a social setting.

The Centre in Leeds originally aimed to provide a space for the self-proclaimed Irish community in the city to meet, network and socialise and the layout reflected that, with two large adjacent function rooms and a stage for entertainment. There was also a games room and, latterly, another function room.. The fields outside were also bought by the centre, and could be used by local GAA teams. Over the years, the Irish Centre hosted many events and gatherings that span the traditional and the novel. An example of this is the Centre's embrace of the Indoor League, a showcase programme for English pub games:

> Mark Sinclair Scott is straight off the pages of the colour supplements. Bedecked in blue denim lean-cut suits, shirts that fit like skin or simply the toothpaste ring of confidence, all you've got to do is wrap it round this kid and it will work. In fact he went into male modelling for a spell after winning the Courage London Open Arm Wrestling title in April 1973.
> He did not let us down with his entry to the Leeds Irish Centre. As his valet ordered a pint of Liffey Water for the young master his challenge rang out:
> 'I can down this in 1.8 seconds' - pause for effect and toss of flaxen locks – 'any takers?'
> Such is the spirit of public school and public house.[86]

Ousted from its first home at the Queens Hotel in Leeds' City Square, the Indoor League brought its cameras and pubby bonhomie to the Irish Centre in the early 1970s. The brainchild of Sid Waddell, the voice of darts with a double-first from Cambridge, the series focussed on the most talented pub games players in Yorkshire and the North East. Hosted by brusque Yorkshire cricketer, Maltby's Fred Trueman, the programme brought pub entertainment into the living rooms of the Yorkshire TV region and beyond, becoming something of a cult hit. Trueman's dimpled pint pot and pipe and stylised sign off of 'I'll sithee' (which was entirely fabricated – Dan Waddell mentions that when Trueman protested that he did not speak like this, one of the producers said 'you do now') shows the extent to which the programme exaggerated its Northern roots to the point of parody.[87] Certainly the show displayed a Northern, industrial working-class masculinity redolent of the time; it showed what appeared to be a thriving community, but with the benefit of retrospect we can recognise the extent to which this type of socialising was in its decline. Sid Waddell actually refers to the Irish Centre's role in making the

[85] Moore, *Race Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook*.
[86] Sid; John Meade Waddell, *The Indoor League* (London: Pan, 1975). p13
[87] Dan Waddell, *We Had Some Laughs* (London: Random House, 2016).p89

show a success, because of its status as a members club, and a type of working men's club: 'The thing is with a working men's club is, you can have a few beers, you can have a game of dominoes, but there are rules. It's not like a pub. It's a members' club, and most of the people that came were working men's club people'.[88]

In his book *We Had Some Laughs*, Dan Waddell, son of producer Sid, recollects stories of terrible bawdiness in the Centre, claiming 'its atmosphere made the Queens Hotel look like a parlour party'.The Indoor League made links between the Irish Centre and its local working-class constituency: even if locals were not competing in the games, they could see that the Centre was embracing English pub culture. This was an attempt to increase the Irish Centre's bridging capital, using the Centre to reach out to the local community through common leisure activities.[89] Unfortunately, Waddell notes that the show:

> grew increasingly rowdy, to the extent that filming for the third series was curtailed by a riot. It kicked off at the table football when one player celebrated a goal by punching the air but connected with his opponent. Tanked up on free ale, others piled in, and the saloon brawl soon grew into a cartoon mass punch-up, with balls of people and arms and legs flying, and pots of beer and tables and chairs soaring through the air.[90]

This depiction of the Irish Centre was exactly what it had hoped to move away from, according to two members, who recollected its early difficulties and how they had tried to distance themselves from this:

> VINCENT: There'd be glasses flying and that… if you went to the Centre on a Saturday night, there'd be at least two or three wars
> DECLAN: In them days as well, when the centre opened first, and they had a licence… see pubs in them days, they closed at two o'clock, in the day, and during the week as well. And you'd go up to the Irish Centre on a Monday at four o'clock, the big concert hall, well, the whole place was open. And it would be full. Full of, they'd be from the town, they wouldn't be all Irish. You'd go up to the Irish Centre and a fucking crowd would be there, you know.
> VINCENT: and in various states of inebriation. Some of them'd be steamed up, half of them'd be sober and if you didn't get into a ruck with one of them, you'd be lucky. You'd get trampled on, yeah
> DECLAN: things have changed for the better and the system of putting people to work is different… In them days, the lads that were left, they weren't picked up or something, they would be there. It's a better system now, like.
> VINCENT: It's a lot more efficient now. It's a lot more respectable, is the word.

The bawdiness of the early days of the Centre, of its predecessors the Irish National Club and Irish pubs, was an element of the Irish stereotype that places like the Irish Centre were all too aware of proliferating among the local host population. It was an easy link to make – Dan Waddell mentions a story his father told about heavy drinking punters asking for 64 pints 'but

[88] Bullseyes and Beer – When Darts Hit Britain – TImeshift BBC4 documentary, first aired 15 December 2014.
[89] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.
[90] Waddell, *We Had Some Laughs*.p90

it's alright… there's eight of us' – which happened at a different sports venue, but was attributed in the fullness of time to the Irish Centre crowd.[91] This links back to the perception of violence that the Irish Centre sought to eradicate with its membership rules and implicit codes of conduct, which some centregoers suggest include a conservative view on social morality. For example, an interviewee in *Roisín Bán* suggests that their divorce led to their no longer being welcome at Leeds Irish Centre:

> I used to go with my ex-husband and three other couples and we all sat together. But then when you get divorced the other couples go together in a taxi, so you don't fit in any more. And then, they're very, very cliquish because they're going there for years.[92]

This social exclusion, though very real to the people who experienced it, is never made explicit: it is always implicit, in a sort of code, where people who do not follow the codes feel ostracized from the institutions. Accordingly, they develop a narrative whereby due to some transgression of moral codes or social norms, they are frozen out of migrant society, or else were never really accepted in the first place.

Later, the Irish Centre continued to try new events. It's a Knockout was a fashionable challenge TV show. Led by Irish Centres across Britain, in 1980 Leeds joined other cities such as Leicester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Slough to engage their second-generation Irish young people and pit them against similar teams from other Irish Centres. This was an example of an organised attempt at bonding capital. It was a reminder to young people strongly assimilated into English culture, in a climate of hostility during the Troubles, that Irish-heritage young people were just as able to engage with popular cultural activities as their English peers. It also gave them a chance to meet and socialise with other young people from Irish backgrounds around the UK, creating new networks and reinforcing the importance of their cultural heritage.

McGowan's interviewees in Leeds, however, felt that the Irish Centre's opening created a more entrenched divide between Mayo migrants and those from other places. Thomas, a Dubliner, noted:

> they built the new Irish Centre and… I kinda got the impression that if you weren't from Mayo or the West of Ireland anyway you weren't quite as welcome in the Irish Centre. Nothing was ever said directly like that, but you did get a few kind of sneers, or, you know, kind of implied that you weren't so welcome.[93]

It is surprising, then, in the face of this kind of testimony, to consider the make-up of the Irish Centre's founding committee. The committee was made up entirely of white men, most of middle age; but what is noticeable is the wide geographical area of their noted homeplaces. There are more Mayo men than ones from anywhere else, but there are also members from Galway,

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[91] Ibid.
[92] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p126
[93] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.p82

Roscommon, West Meath, Kerry, Offaly and County Down. There is, however, a strong and continuing link between the Irish Centre and the city's Mayo Association.[94]

Potter ascribes county identity as something enforced on Ireland in some ways as an organisational system, to make governing the country easier. However, he recognises 'strong, popular, visceral' county loyalty as a by-product of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)'s competitive inter-county organisation, a type of 'local nationalism' involving the invented county flags in GAA colours, and regional songs; this in turn, he argued, impacted on the 'growth of county organisations in the Irish diaspora.'[95] Murphy agrees that the county system grew from the conveniences of British administration, and was popularised through the GAA:

> 'county distinctions would also appear to have been cultivated by Irish emigrants', and that 'the distribution of preferences and patronages on building sites in England is mostly along county lines': an aside particularly pertinent to this study.[96]

Indeed, a study of the creation, agenda and effects of county associations tells a great deal about how Irish migrants have challenged perceptions and stereotypes, and how in doing so they have created a rigid template of Irishness that excludes migrants for a number of reasons.

Leeds' only county association is the Mayo Association, which is based at Leeds Irish Centre. The Centre's manager is also the current president of the Association. In Nugent-Duffy's examination of county associations in the USA, she notes that county associations 'emphasize the Good Paddy model'; organising costly dinners and emphasising a patriarchal operations model, whereby men take up key positions and roles such as giving speeches and where women 'occupy supporting and often domestic roles by selling raffle tickets and baking soda bread'.[97] This is not only accentuated within the Leeds Mayo Association, where comic Jimmy Cricket was 2014's guest of honour at the annual dinner, but within the structures of the Irish Centre itself, and particularly its over-55s Tuesday Club, where women organise the bingo, day trips, lunches and finances, while men draw the raffle.

Nyhan's account of identity in county associations in America and the UK claims:

> One of the most dominant themes that emerged is the way in which the Irish immigrant community in New York often acted in the collective sense to adapt to their new destination. This communal outlook saw immigrants come together to bury their dead; provide welfare to those in need; to facilitate networking on jobs and accommodation; to socialise; play sports and to pray. But this non-individualistic perspective was not simply

[94] The committee is shown on a photograph displayed in the entrance of Leeds Irish Centre.

[95] Matthew Potter, "'Geographical Loyalty'? Counties, Palatinates, Boroughs and Ridings," *History Ireland* 20, no. 5 (2012).p27

[96] John A. Murphy, "Identity Change in the Republic of Ireland," *Études irlandaises* (1976).p150

[97] Jennifer Nugent-Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?: Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).p155

> a reaction to diasporic status. Irish immigrants, through county societies, were replicating a worldview and practices they were accustomed to in the homeland.[98]

Nyhan uses oral history testimonies from migrants from across Ireland to provide evidence that mutual assistance and neighbourliness in the predominantly rural homeplaces of these migrants had been one of the ways migrants survived. She also recognises that the school system – where compulsory schooling ended at 14 for most rural children – led to a need for these children to earn money. As remittances from abroad would be so much higher than a wage from home, emigration was a logical next step for many. Nyhan recognises that 'snowballing' emigration often made the social networks formed in Ireland more portable: joining county associations was one way to formalise these networks, and to attempt to recreate the community cohesion of home in the new migrant destinations. Rex and Moore investigate the role of the County Clare association in Birmingham's Sparkbrook district, and how it attempts to build bridges between 'culchies' from the countryside and Dubliners, who they suggest 'generally look down on 'culchies,' and 'a respectable County Association does something to redress the balance.'[99] Nyhan also considers the role and function of the county societies, suggesting important elements such as benevolence, welfare and patriotism. She highlights the role the associations play in charitable affairs, a role also assumed by Leeds' Irish Centre, whose annual charity Christmas lunch raises a great deal of money for causes in the city, such as injuries suffered by migrants working in the building trade.[100] She also recognises the importance of the associations in providing networks for jobs; this type of networking took place far less formally in Leeds through the network of pubs and dancehalls frequented by the Irish, long before the county associations were established. Similar informal exchanges took place through county networks in New York. Nyhan also notes the centrality of benevolence in the outlook of county organisations, and this is echoed by the Mayo Association's secretary: not only that the organisation engages closely with the Irish Emigrant Liaison Committee, but also that two of the founders 'took a party of senior citizens on a visit to their homeland in millennium year.'[101] Another focus of the Mayo Association is maintaining their profile and local issues with distinguished guests; Maureen Page mentions the visits of Mary Robinson and Dr Michael Davitt, grandson of the Land League founder, to the Association. Awards given to its members are also highlighted. This feeds into the 'Good Paddy model' mentioned by Nugent-Duffy,

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[98] Miriam Nyhan, "Associational Behavior in Context: Irish Immigrant Origins of Identity in the Diaspora," *American Journal of Irish Studies* 8 (2011).p138

[99] Moore, *Race Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook*.p153

[100] "Doing Their Bit in the City," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 03 June 2010.

[101] Leeds Irish Centre, *Leeds Irish Centre: Celebrating 40 Years at the Heart of the Irish Community* (Leeds: Leeds Irish Centre, 2010).

whereby the organisation, and by association the Irish Centre, emphasises the importance of respectability and hard work: of being a good Irish citizen whilst also respecting the rules and social norms of the host community. This 'respectability' is manifested through 'proper' behaviour, a celebration of Ireland only in its least threatening form – jovial, musical, sporty and successful.

To Nugent-Duffy one of the most important elements of this performance of respectability is the morally upright and traditional roles played by the women in this society.[102] Indeed, she mentions publications that codify this role, such as the *Irish Advocate*, which warns women to allow their husbands room to socialise: 'if he's the breadwinner by day, do not twist life out of him by making him a servant at night.' The description of men at the bar, drinking, while the women sit chatting at the tables, she suggests, conforms to the gender roles of the Ireland they left behind: gender roles that no longer dictate the behaviour of the next generation of migrants. The social experience of women centres around the concept of respectability, but this is also true for men – they may continue to drink excessively, but would not be expected to show any signs of it. This differentiated the settled, socially conservative and integrated Irish success stories from their less fortunate counterparts. Interviewed in *Róisín Bán*, Tom, a returning migrant to Ireland, says:

> I feel sorry for the Irish fellas in Leeds and them places, the cities, that didn't get married. Living in flats. It's lonely you know what I mean. Actually I think it shortens their lives. Sort of been thrown on the scrap heap and living alone, and that sort of thing. I've seen them in cities in England and it's sad like, you know. I suppose you turn to the drink then for company.[103]

Indeed these migrants on the fringes of society – particularly men – are often isolated from the wider Irish community, and as a result struggle with loneliness and other social isolation issues.[104] The more senior a man was in this society, the more inhibited his behaviour might be. This is evidenced in a discussion between interviewees Declan and Vincent around the Irish Centre in Manchester:

> DECLAN: We'd go up to the Chorlton club, and all the boys there, all the big boys and everything, and back to work the next day. We used to go to the Chorlton Irish Club on a weekend, yeah
> VINCENT: but it was everyone, and if when you'd go up to the bar for a drink there was a fella playing then, there was some band playing on the stage, and there were too posh to dance, and it was 'yes, Tom' and 'yes Mick' and 'Yes Dermot,' and your man goes 'any chance we might have lads with one fucking wagon getting a drink here'

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[102] Nugent-Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?: Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity*.p72
[103] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p129
[104] Leeds Irish Health and Homes, a local charity, runs a volunteer befriending service to address this very issue. Interviews with its staff will follow in the work chapter.

(laughs) and they come out on the stage and your man is playing his heart out: grabbed the mic and goes 'get up off yer arse and dance, I've a JCB as well!'[105]
DECLAN: That was: all the contractors were there! The whole lot of them, oh yeah.

The 'big boys' showed their superiority by behaving in a respectable fashion which dovetailed perfectly with the expectations of respectability in English working-class circles. Watt explains how this respectability is manifested: it is both in the behaviours of the migrants themselves and in how they judge the behaviour of others.[106]

As indicated earlier in the chapter, the problem of violence had still not been eradicated from the Irish migrant social scene, and this fed the stereotype around fecklessness. Thus religious and community organisations pushed even more for their members to behave respectably, and to inhibit their passions so as to give the impression of being controlled and dispassionate: to performatively imitate the stiff-upper-lip repression that the British middle and upper classes were so famous for.

The Irish centre, just like the dancehalls and pubs of the 1960s and 1970s, was built by this generation in their own image, to resemble their own social experiences. Although some of the outward facing events, such as GAA games or music concerts, would bring in a different crowd, the reliance on the type of entertainment and behaviour that would interest this cohort has led to an increasing abandonment of the centre by the next generation, and by more recent Irish migrants. The problem is twofold: the allegations of Mayo exceptionalism have become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as those from outside of the county stay away from becoming involved in shaping the centre: meanwhile, attendances are diminishing generationally, as the centre's difficult location and socially conservative outlook create a distance in spatial and cultural terms between the community elders and the younger cohort. This is reflected in both the dwindling regular attendance at the Centre and the demise of the city's Irish pub culture.[107]

GAA Teams

The dancehalls have gone, pubs have changed exponentially since the 1960s, and the Irish Centre has declined in popularity, but one of the elements of Irish culture and identity in the city that has stayed more or less the same since its inception is the field of Gaelic games. This is an area where recruitment and success are still ongoing with local teams and this is not limited to Leeds:

[105] JCB is the name of a company founded by Joseph Cyril Bamford, which cornered the market in heavy plant machinery. It refers specifically to a type of one-armed bulldozer, popularly used on building and infrastructure projects.

[106] Watt, "Respectability, Roughness and 'Race': Neighbourhood Place Images and the Making of Working-Class Social Distinctions in London."p794

[107] We see examples of this earlier in the chapter, in relation to bawdy behaviour in pubs and attempts to create distance from this stereotype by methods of enhancing respectability.

> Irish emigrants have continuously established GAA clubs around the world. In doing so, these migrants both reinforce the success and popularity of the Gaelic games.[108]

Leeds boasts a number of GAA teams, including Hugh O'Neill's, Kennedys, Leeds University Gaelic Football Club and St Benedict's Harps. These teams' median age is significantly lower than those of most of Leeds' Irish migrant population, which is ageing and failing to be replenished in numbers.[109] While institutions such as the Irish Centre are seeing their clientele getting older and decreasing in the main, which Putnam suggests is inevitable given the direction of society and the lack of engagement in community organisations from younger generations, the GAA teams seem to have reversed this trend.[110] The teams' history and social function, and how they engage more recent migrants and non-migrant young players into the game, reveals much about the functions of contemporary Irish cultural institutions in migrant host societies..

Hugh O'Neill's GAA team was established in 1947, and a reminiscence in an anniversary commemorative book by the then chairman, Pat Hanrahan, unfolds a tale of friendship, serendipity and industry in the team's formation, which was first and foremost as a hurling club, although football is its sole focus in its current incarnation:

> It was nearing Christmas 1947 when I met a lovely chap called Tommy Gallagher. We went to a few dances where we met up with a Cork man, Andy Craigh, who was hurling-mad and trying to get a team going. At Easter he went home and came back with a bag full of hurleys. Afterwards we took them up to Woodhouse Moor where we met a Limerick man, Jim Hallinan, a beautiful hurler. The ground was very rough but after a few Sundays lads started coming in dribs and drabs. They all bought sticks from Andy for 10/ a piece. Soon there was so many that we had to look for new pastures.[111]

The description of the team coming together makes it sound effortless, but it relied on word of mouth and established social networks to thrive. Hugh O'Neills was a success story partly because it could use the already-established economic and social networks that Irish migrants had forged to create and develop an effective sports team.

One of O'Neill's key players began with Kennedy's, their rivals, in the 1970s. His description of the recruitment process is resonant of an informal and serendipitous process, but again, careful consideration shows that networks are already at play to make sure that players knew where to go (training would still take place in Halton Moor at this point) and how to catch the attention of the scouts:

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[108] Sara Brady, "Home and Away: The Gaelic Games, Gender, and Migration," *New Hibernia Review / Eireannach Nua* 11, no. 3 (2007).p36

[109] Ryan et al., "Analysis of 2011 Census Data: Irish Community Statistics, England and Selected Urban Areas."

[110] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.p7

[111] Pat Hanrahan, "A Chairman Reflects," in *50 Golden Years of Hugh O'Neill's GAA Club* (Leeds: 1998).

> DECLAN: I went up to Halton Moor, on the Sunday, and I knew a young fella, if you kicked a bit of football, you stood round the goals. And of course, if you go to catch a few balls, and there's a few fellas there watching 'jayzus, he can play a bit.' Straight away, a Mayo man, he was over in a flash. 'Have you just arrived? You came yesterday? Oh yeah. And you're not playing for anyone? Sign this.' Straight away. Signed the form. Playing for them the next week. Sunday or something.

GAA teams were a good place to meet other Irish people, and where social spaces such as the Irish Centre might be alleged to have a Mayo or Donegal bias, or at the Pointer a bias toward Connemara, the GAA teams would recruit players from across Ireland. Of course, it would be likely that players who had trained in GAA, or wished to continue playing it, would have a certain type of Irish identity: Irish-speaking and Catholic. According to Tierney:

> This mixing of sport and cultural nationalism can be damaging for one or other side of the G.A.A.'s self-image. It can lead to an over-emphasis on the National aspect of games, to the detriment of the sporting values they are meant to inculcate[112]

The separatist rules of the GAA in Ireland, not repealed until 1971, barred association players from playing other, more Anglicised sports such as cricket, rugby and association football. This meant that many migrants up until the 1970s would have struggled to show skills in these popular English sports in the same way. The result of this was twofold: firstly, it would be harder for Irish people trained in GAA sports to integrate with their English counterparts through playing sports; secondly, Irish migrants from GAA areas would have to join the clubs in order to play team sports, to keep fit as well as to network:

> The specialised nature of the sports promoted by the GAA, particularly Gaelic football and hurling, meant that GAA clubs outside Ireland initially attracted people who had been born or grew up in Ireland, and who had learned to play the games there. The clubs were less likely to attract other migrants, for whom the games – particularly hurling – were unfamiliar. In contrast to other types of sports, therefore, GAA clubs were often more ethnically exclusive. This might therefore preclude Irish people who did not subscribe to this type of Irish identity from joining the teams.[113]

As Declan and Tim noted, in the 1970s GAA was a good way to make friends, and particularly of use to those who might not have such a good command of English – this provided access for them that the Irish language could not give them. Because of GAA's limited reach outside Ireland, it would fail to thrive without a large number of incoming migrants unless an effective youth system was put in place. Until then, the GAA football teams remained almost exclusively Irish-born networks, and by and large have remained so. Brady argues that despite GAA games

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[112] Mark Tierney, "The Public and Private Image of the Gaa: A Centenary Appraisal," *The Crane Bag* 8, no. 2 (1984).p1.

[113] Mary Gilmartin, *Ireland and Migration in the Twenty-First Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).p108

being profoundly 'Irish' in nature, their development owed a lot to British athletic team development, referencing Taussig's mimesis:

> Mimesis, therefore, becomes a key element to the early GAA, both in its imitation of British codification as well as the re-creation of the supposed ancient sports of Ireland. "The wonder of mimesis," explains Michael Taussig, "lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power."[114] This "sympathetic magic," as Taussig calls it, allowed the copies of what were perceived as purely Irish sports to master the British "contagions" of soccer, rugby, and cricket, and gain enough momentum to rid the country of what some believed ailed it, Taussig writes: "The ability to mime, and mime well, in other words, is the capacity to Other."[115] The Gaelic Athletic Association replicated the British Amateur Athletic Association and, in the process overpowered, through dissemination on the parish level, British authority over Irish sport[116]

Declan relates a story about a friend he met through playing for the team who had found himself in a difficult marital situation, resulting in his wife leaving him with the children. Declan explained that he and other team members rallied around to support the friend, providing an emotional support framework to someone who had little social capital outside of the group. This support was reciprocal - Declan remembers the team's support when he lost his father:

> DECLAN: And I always enjoyed it, like, you know. Great trips to Ireland and everything, you know, like. I'll tell you a story about, the team went to Ireland. They went to Ireland in 1977. And we had all set up… we had booked a coach to go, and it was booked through the coach company: they had to pay, and we had paid half the amount, and then the Friday night we paid then the balance of it. And the following Saturday, at about five past five on the Saturday, we had a phonecall from London: my brother Michael was in London. My father had died. And he was only 60. He died cutting the bog, cutting turf: dropped dead….our lads were leaving the Irish Centre about 7 o'clock the Friday evening, heading for the boat. And they had a coach, but twasn't the big coach now, it was a 29 seater coach. And there would be about 25 of them on the coach. So I went up anyways, to see them off. And they were all out, jumped out, cos I hadn't seen them: they all jumped out, sympathising with me, like, and I wished them well, like anyways. And when they got on the bus, it was an ould bit of a dilapidated: but on the back of it, there was a rubber thing, right across the back. The full width. And it was dragging on the ground. And the boys said when they came back that they swept every road in Ireland with it![117]

[114] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses (London and New York: Routledge, 1993),* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).pxii

[115] Ibid.p19

[116] Brady, "Home and Away: The Gaelic Games, Gender, and Migration."p31

[117] This is another example of a traumatic event described in plain language, such as the one referenced in the methodology section earlier. This relationship between memory and trauma is further explored in the final chapter.

Declan goes on to detail the high jinks that had taken place on the trips: the bus was the scene of much drink-related teambuilding: the games were almost secondary to the craic and the stories that went with the visits.

The Leeds Irish Centre's playing fields, opened in 1987 by Father McGillicuddy and named for Mayo Land League hero Michael Davitt, were specifically meant for the development of Gaelic games, and many of the GAA teams are based out of the centre. Indeed there has been something of a resurgence of late: Hugh O'Neill's have a presence at a national level, and although McGowan notes that hurling fell from favour in the city in the 1970s, a new team, Yorkshire Emeralds, has recently formed, suggesting a renewed interest in Gaelic games in the city. The John F. Kennedy team in particular has worked to develop a youth team, and though Declan and Vincent note that their own children stopped playing when other youthful pursuits got in the way, the next generation benefit– many of the current youth players are the grandchildren of the original migrants. Kennedy's name and badge – an Irish flag intertwined with an American one – pay homage to the emigrant nature of the team's origins. However, for the older children of the 1960s and 1970s migrants such as Tim there was no youth infrastructure for this:

> TIM: there was no junior ranks: the GAA side, from my recollection of it, would be that, the teams that played, they were just lads that came over, and they played: none of the sort of Leeds born Irish lads were really playing: I think when you look back on some of the old photographs that we've looked at before, it would be, first-born. So
>
> INTERVIEWER: no-one would teach you the rules then, you'd already know them:
>
> TIM: nobody'd teach you the rules. And I suppose the other side as well, is that as well, giving our age away here, we had a very successful football team at the time, so, a football team and rugby team as well, so that was whereas, sort of, Leeds born, you would sort of focus your, that would be where your sporting ideology was.

The success of Leeds' football and rugby teams and the children of immigrants making the conscious choice of how to identify indeed impacted: the same interviewee points out, given the political climate of the 1970s, there was an unwritten rule that attendance at Irish-identifying social events should not be publicised to English friends.

The website for Hugh O'Neill's, currently the most successful of the Leeds teams, however has a section specifically for the recruitment of new players. It states that [sic] 'the clubs survival depends alot on players moving to the area from Ireland to either work or attend University. Hugh O'Neill's players are based all over the North from York to Sheffield and as far as Hull.

Hugh O'Neill's have players from the 4 provinces of Ireland and are a very sociable bunch.'[118]

The website also alludes to how it can help emigrants as a modern day social network:

> Transport to and from Training/Matches can be arranged
>
> If looking for work in the area we will try our best to help you[119]

This suggests that the team's success relies on active, word of mouth recruitment, and the supply of social networking opportunities to make being part of the team easier and more convenient for new players. Indeed, sometimes the recruitment process can prove eerily serendipitous – Fearghal, a more recent migrant from Fermanagh, recalls how he came to play for a GAA team in the city:

> FEARGHAL: Yeah. I joined a Gaelic football team; it was one of the first things I did. I was at a bus stop
>
> INTERVIEWER: how did you know?
>
> FEARGHAL: It was just somebody approached me
>
> INTERVIEWER: how did they know that you would play it?
>
> FEARGHAL: I was just talking to somebody, and they hear your accent; somebody overheard my accent, and asked me did I wanna play Gaelic football, because I was a young fella, who was of football playing age.
>
> INTERVIEWER: And did you play football at home?
>
> FEARGHAL: yeah, I played Gaelic; I always played Gaelic football at home, so I slotted right in, enjoyed it; it was a good social thing.
>
> INTERVIEWER: And did you meet friends through that?
>
> FEARGHAL: Yeah, it was great. I met some good friends. All my friends are from either GAA teams, or football teams, or pubs I've worked in. So that's what I found, when you're like, 19 years old, that's how you make friends. I played in the same Gaelic football team for a number of years, then I stopped playing for a long time: then I went back to it a number of years later.

Fearghal attests that Gaelic games in the city are still in good health, in contrast to other Irish cultural institutions. He rejects suggestions that this is a statement about his identity however, stating that:

> FEARGHAL: I know a lot of people; I've known people who would only hang around, either consciously or subconsciously: they only seemed to hang around with other Irish people. Well, you know; that's not for me. And the reason why I played in the Gaelic football team was because I played it already; I didn't actively go seeking out other Irish

[118] "Hugh O'neill's Gaa Club Leeds," In The Team, http://hughoneills.intheteam.com/modules/page/Page.aspx?pc=101&mid=34736&pmid=0.
[119] Ibid.

> people. I was seeking out friends, and it happened to be, you know, because I played Gaelic football, I played in a Gaelic football team. And lots of them were Irish.

To Fearghal, his Irishness relates to his involvement in Gaelic games only because it means he already had the skills to understand the rules of Gaelic football and to play the game. He notes that the team brings together newly arrived Irish migrants, and confirms what the website suggests – that being part of a sports team also gives access, if needed, to a wider social network.

Temporal change in associational culture

Technological shifts such as access to global sports, music television and the internet means migrants are likely to have almost as much in common with British people as their Irish compatriots. Irish people also have more access to global locations which may be more appealing, such as Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.[120] As new migrants have less need for the ethnic networks cultivated by their forebears, so those networks decline and die out, for they have served their purpose. Socialising in culturally 'Irish' environments is a choice that anyone can make, but now there are more global options, fewer people are doing so. For migrants in the 1960s and 1970s, social and associational networks were a fundamental concern. These networks provided routes for employment, community and enjoyment, and led to the establishment of societies such as Hugh O'Neill's and Leeds Comhaltas that flourished, and others that floundered. Putnam suggests that baby-boomers are the last generation to invest time and effort into establishing formal community-based organisations, and interview evidence as well as age profiling of said organisations supports this theory:

> SEAN: Our biggest problem today in every organisation is there's no young people prepared to give their time. Uh.. I don't know where it's going to end, because obviously those organisations cannot function: now there's people dying off, of every committee: every few months you hear someone else has died – there's no-one replacing them. So in the end, the organisations will fold.

This appears to be a sea change in the ways in which societies form and organise, and the ways in which networks support communities. A community organiser provided anecdotal evidence of how things have changed as regards the use of social networks for jobs and housing, when she gave the story of a young Irish person who arrived in the city with no familial links who was looking to connect with the Irish community locally for casual work and accommodation: there was no-one to put the jobseeker in touch with as this avenue was no longer so well-travelled.[121] Migration from Ireland by unskilled or semi-skilled workers dried up by the 1980s: even in UK migration, more recent Irish migration appears to skew towards the South East of England. The

[120] Mary Gilmartin, "The Changing Landscape of Irish Migration, 2000-2012," *National Institute for Regional and Spatial Affairs Working Papers Series*, no. 69 (2012).p12

[121] Field notes, November 2015.

older migrants, former attenders of the pubs and Irish Centre, have moved to suburbia and beyond, and the inconvenience of travel or health issues means they no longer make the regular trip into the city. This is compounded by the plethora of other social options for younger Irish people, and second- and third-generation migrants, as the Irish Centre's manager suggested:

> TOMMY: I came to the Centre in 1975 just 40 years ago, and at that time there was still you know, that sort of togetherness type thing, and then very quickly, it just disappeared. It was like: I tell you what it's like, it's like second generation just came in, now the second generation were coming here in 1980/81, they were fine because there was none of these places open in town, there was none of these nightclubs, bars, café bars, they weren't there at that time, so this was the place to be. And then we noticed that a few years down the line, one or two places did open in town, and so the youngsters went on a Saturday and they came to me on a Sunday, and that was good, and it was no problem, so they were still there, and I remember many a band used to say to me, oh I can't understand this place, they'd say, you've got older ones, you've got younger ones, it's marvellous. But that (clicks) went like that. And, I'd say, that towards the end of the 90s, because the city then came alive with that sort of type of entertainment for the kids, and you know, rightly so, you know they got…. They come to me, you know, for special events. What's amazing now is that, especially for christenings and stuff and there's people stood at the door, and you see people coming that were kids here, and they bring their own kids, and ah, it's amazing you know. To be honest, I know three or four generations, it's amazing.

He notes the way the Centre's demographic has changed, and the extent to which second-generation migrants, the children of the original Centre members, have a different, and more distant relationship with the institution. He presents this change as inevitable, and rather than bemoan the loss of a younger clientele he instead celebrates the status of the Centre as somewhere people still gather for big occasions. His reflection suggests that the Centre has maintained its identity and aims. He also emphasised the changes in profile of modern migrants compared to the 1960s and 1970s generation:

> TOMMY: I got this, you know, camaraderie among the guys, you know, I don't think it's there today. You felt then, in the 60s, because there were still those, they were building, …they were building the high rise flats, I was on the high rise flats…and we had a great gang, and we just, even though you were working with each other all day long, at the weekend you'd meet up with the same people and you still had the fun, the craic, know what I mean? Because you were all of a sameness. And there was a great sort of respect, and I don't think that's there today. And maybe it's no harm, but I think that's because Ireland has changed… I think, and rightly so, education has a lot to do with it, because when people went on and had a further education, but what I think is happening is that people who are coming over now are not coming to do… the menial work, and rightly so: they're coming to do professional jobs, and that's why the pubs are no longer there. Because they're not interested in that, you know what I mean, they're more interested in the café bars and that type of thing.

This links the breaking down of certain social networks to more widespread access to education in Ireland, and indeed the comprehensive secondary education reforms led by Donogh O'Malley

that were introduced in 1967 led to a significant increase in the numbers of children completing second-level education, which ergo led to emigrants then having more options and the likelihood of a skilled job or third-level education in their chosen destination.[122] Leeds' main Irish community social organisations do not reflect this new migrant demographic, which suggests that the city became a less appealing prospect for more educated migrants later in the twentieth century and beyond, or that migrants of this ilk socialise elsewhere, and are harder to identify now that there is an easier pace of assimilation. It also links to the wider shifts to which the Irish Centre's manager alludes – the explosion of the leisure industry, and the diversification of cultural opportunities in the city. The desire to socialise in an exclusively Irish environment does not seem to have the same appeal to younger generations of Irish or Irish-extraction people, especially with so many other social options in more convenient locations in the city centre and beyond.

However, some organisations continue to thrive. Hugh O'Neill's GAA club recently celebrated its 70th anniversary, and continues to be Yorkshire's premier GAA club. The club has also diversified into women's football and youth teams, and one interviewee suggests that the youth set-up in another team, Kennedys, has promoted harmonious working relationships between the second-generation sons of local business owners, who value teamwork and co-operation beyond competition. Use of social media and more informal types of communication than traditional meetings and formal set-ups are favoured: Mary, for example, used social media neighbourhood groups when she first moved to the city to meet new people. Although the groups she joined were not explicitly for Irish people, she did meet some Irish people through the group, and they remained friends due to common interests. The same goes for the city's Irish music scene. Although many of the traditional venues for Irish music are now closed, Irish traditional music is fortuitously portable, and less 'Irish' venues such as the Primrose or Bay Horse in Meanwood, or Seven Arts café in Chapel Allerton, can play host to impromptu music sessions, as well as more structured events in larger venues which the Irish Arts Foundation organise during their Irish history and culture month in the city.

There are, of course, other Irish people in the city who have no interest in being involved in Irish-identifying cultural organisations. This seems to echo George Bernard Shaw's assertion that:

> I can imagine nothing less desirable than an Irish club. Irish people in England should join English clubs, and avoid each other like the plague. If they flock together like geese they might as well have never left Ireland. They don't admire, nor even like one another.

[122] This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

> In English clubs they are always welcome. More fools the English perhaps; but the two are so foreign that they have much to learn from their association and co-operation.[123]

There are undoubtedly Irish people in Leeds who do not identify with the lingering presence of the church in the Irish Centre, the musical and sporting cultural nationalism of the Irish Arts Foundation or the GAA, and some of them make their feelings known in McGowan and Silva's interviews. Certainly, there is little of the Unionist tradition, of the Protestant religion, and of the North of Ireland represented in these institutions. White men are overwhelmingly overrepresented in all the city's Irish organisations. However, no alternative venues have been set up or even proposed to reflect these different values of Irishness. Instead, those who feel alienated choose other outlets to socialise, ones which may reflect different facets of identity, such as social class or interests, or forego ethnic and identity-based social models altogether, as the younger generation is appearing to do.

Conclusion

Associational culture in Irish migrant society in Leeds is not dissimilar to models seen elsewhere. The generational changes to places and methods of social interaction in Leeds are mirrored in other cities with ageing Irish populations. The legacy of the post-war generation of Irish migrants will not necessarily continue through the Catholic Church or the local Irish pub, but Irish music and sports remain healthy in the city. It is to these models of recruitment and continuation that other institutions may look to continue a successful existence. The Irish Centre caters mainly to the ageing demographic it was originally built to support; with the venue's 50th anniversary approaching, it will be interesting to see the ways in the institution reflects on its past and develops strategies to sustain its membership into the future.

One of the most salient features of this Leeds' case study is the extent to which authenticity is a critical factor in migrant culture. Surveying the evidence, including the St Patrick's Parade, Irish sports, social and drinking culture, it seems this is far more of an issue for the organisations planning events than it is for the people attending them. Irishness is impossible to authenticate, and migrant Irishness by its nature is a balancing act of synthesis. Too much, and migrants assimilate entirely into the host community, which leads to ethnic fade. Too little, and relationships are fractious with the host community, with home remaining a distant and longed-for concept. Cultural displays of Irishness reinforce both cultural and civic pride through marches and parades; the demise of pubs speaks not so much to a loss of identity as to market forces, a panoply of social choice, and a generational shift towards more globalised cultural

[123] Cited in Kevin O'Connor *The Irish in Britain* (London; Sidgwick Jackson, 1972) p74

choices. As migration is no longer the preserve of poorer, rural Irish people with low levels of education, the need for social networks which prioritise jobs and ethnic bonding is eradicated.[124]

Authenticity is a highly prized concept in the leisure industry, and the perceived lack of it in some elements of migrant culture causes debate. The loss of the city's 'authentic' Irish pubs was mourned; Scully's interviews with Irish migrants in London shows that they (particularly the younger demographic) chose to distance themselves from the gaudy spectacle of English St Patrick's parades. One such interviewee railed against the 'imposed homogenous version of Irishness that is the same "in New York, or in Tokyo or in Russia or wherever". For Scully:

> This sense of an imposition of Irishness, may perhaps be linked back to the sense of 'official' Irishness that I noted was an aspect of the London festivals I attended. As such, the imagined audience for the parade is not permitted to develop a recognition of the subtler, more authentic aspects of Irish culture.[125]

Indeed, Scully links authenticity to a deeper understanding of Gaelic games, traditional music and the role of counties:

> local references act as a kind of shibboleth through which authentic Irishness can be verified. …if the St. Patrick's Day parades are criticised for promoting an inauthentic Irishness in allowing 'anyone to be Irish', simply by drinking Guinness, donning a green frizzy wig and singing 'Danny Boy', the ability to wear a Tipperary GAA jersey and sing 'Slievenamon' may be recognised as a greater level of affinity with Irishness demonstrated through local knowledge.[126]

Michael Walker counsels Americans against stereotyping the Irish and celebrating a culture they do not understand, suggesting: 'all we ask is that when you contemplate Irishness, you respect the views of the people who actually live here - because, we kind of know what we're talking about.'[127] This idea that Irishness is best performed and decided on by Irish people can also be seen in the way in which it is assumed that Dublin's St Patrick's parade is the original and a guiding light to all others, when in fact it is a relatively recent institution which draws heavily on diasporic incarnations of the parade for inspiration. Establishing a geographical hierarchy of acceptable Irishness is unhelpful in the Leeds context as in any other multicultural city: the city's Irish population is obviously influenced by the city around them, and this is reflected in the iconography of the parade. Migrant culture does not have to be assimilative to acknowledge the

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[124] Irish migrants to the UK now are far more likely to have third-level education, which gives them equal access to jobs. Clara Kenny, "Percentage Who Attain Third-Level Qualification Doubles in 20 Years," *Irish Times*, 23 November 2012.

[125] Marc Scully, "Discourses of Authenticity and National Identity among the Irish Diaspora in England. " (Open University, 2010).

[126] Ibid.

[127] Michael Hugh Walker, "Americans - Especially Macklemore - Take Note: Real Irish People Aren't Impressed by Your St Patrick's Day Craic," *The Independent* 17 March 2016.

impact of the new home city on migrant traditions and cultures. To focus on authenticity in Irish and migrant traditions as being the essence of Irishness fails to allow for the fact that even at source, cultural traditions are constantly changing and evolving: most of what we consider authentic has actually been reconstructed or reimagined.

Chapter Two: The Irish at Work and Study.

> The crucial influence on the scale of net migration is the economic situation in Ireland and in the major immigrant countries…. The overwhelming factor, however, was probably the persistent scarcity of jobs at home, since most emigrants simply did not have the option of a job in Ireland at the going wage rate, or anything like it. Rather, the prospect they faced if they remained was unemployment or dependence on their relatives in agriculture.[1]

Economic migration is driven by a dearth of opportunity in one place, and a surplus in another. At the centre of this is employment. This chapter thus considers a number of narratives of rural and urban Irish migrants, from the Republic of Ireland and from Northern Ireland, who have lived in Leeds at some point in their migrant journey. It sets these in the context of their time and analyses the way Irish migrants talk about work, and how that is reflected in their perceptions of themselves and their careers. It interrogates the way work narratives differ by gender, with men's stories displaying far more commonalities than those of women; men's stories also place work at the forefront of their narrative. It also compares the migrant experiences of different generations of migrants: those that are characterised as the 1950s generation of post-war migrants, and later post-'Celtic Tiger' recession and 'Ryanair' migrants, who travelled from the 1980s onwards.[2] It therefore evaluates the influence of different external factors on two generations of migrants. As this thesis uses snowballing as its recruitment strategy, this has created some issues with the sample – the more recent migrants are more likely to have a post-16 education and as a result to have access to more highly-skilled jobs on arrival than their predecessors.[3] There are also more migrants from the north of Ireland – all Irish-identifying – in the more recent cohort of interviewees. The majority of the interviewees in the earlier cohort were from rural Mayo so this may provide a representation of a very specific rural-urban migrant experience, rather than a more generic Irish one. Both these anomalies result from the snowballing technique used in this research: for example, the likelihood being that one Mayo migrant in turn suggests another to be interviewed, such are the county networks at play.[4] Byrne however suggests that the visibility of a highly-educated Irish migrant group in more recent migration glosses over the still high numbers of Irish migrants leaving Ireland without qualifications:

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[1] Kieran A Kennedy, Thomas Giblin, and Deirdre McHugh, eds., *The Economic Development of Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1988).p141

[2] Louise Ryan, "'It's Different Now': A Narrative Analysis of Recent Irish Migrants Making Sense of Migration and Comparing Themselves with Previous Waves of Migrants," *Irish Journal of Sociology* 23, no. 2 (2015).

[3] The methodological choices are discussed in more detail in the relevant chapter in this thesis.

[4] This is amplified by the prominence of Mayo migrants in the city's Irish institutions, as discussed in the previous chapter.

> The other side of the coin of change - and a very important one - is that there are still significant numbers of young people (fifteen- to twenty-four-year-olds) leaving from Ireland with very different backgrounds and motives…Even if the only reason for going is an economic one it is important to remember that nearly 3,500 students drop out of school each year before Leaving Cert - many of them disillusioned with education since primary days. That is a fast track to an ill-paid boring job with no prospects and the age-old adharc afada ar na buaibh thar lear [horns on the cows abroad] syndrome kicks in again… Cruel experience teaches, of course, that the problem you think you have left travels with you and is often compounded by loneliness and culture shock and a lack of family and friends support.[5]

Delaney certainly concurs that earlier migrants would have been less likely to have a post-16 education:

> The rural working classes were caught in an unenviable dilemma. Unable to obtain educational qualifications that would allow them to compete for much-sought-after central and local government posts, the immediate prospects were grim… Monotonous and extremely heavy work in Britain in building, coal-mining, and factories offered young Irish males a chance to escape from the endless insecurity of scratching out a living in rural and small-town Ireland.[6]

Delaney problematizes, however, the idea that 1950s and 1960s migrants from Ireland could merely be assimilated into the English working class:

> Unlike advanced industrial societies such as Britain where class distinctions were articulated openly and widely understood, in a predominantly agricultural and rural society the social hierarchy was less obvious to an outside observer. Even within broad groupings such as farmers, huge regional variations existed in terms of the size of holdings, the productive capacity of the land, the levels of income generated by agricultural production, and the numbers employed to assist in the day-to-day running of the farm. For instance, in parts of the west and north-west of Ireland, where small-scale subsistence farming was the norm, outside labour was rarely employed, and most holdings could barely support a family. Much of the literature on rural Ireland in the twentieth century comes from the west of Ireland, where class differentiation was less developed, and the focus on this region helps explain the historiographical silences surrounding social class in mid-twentieth-century Ireland.[7]

This is an important reflection on the challenges of accurately representing class in the shifting migrant demographic in Leeds that has migrated from Ireland: assimilation in England would not be into the same social-class categories as existed in the home society, and therefore it would be an over-simplification to suggest that migrants could become socially mobile or stagnant as a result of migration; involvement in unskilled jobs on first migration did not necessarily lead Irish migrants to join the British working class.[8] As noted, the significant shift in later migrant education patterns is also pertinent: considerable change in the Irish education system has led to

[5] Paul Byrne, "Emigration, Then and Now," *The Furrow* 53, no. 12 (2002).p659

[6] Delaney *The Irish in Post-War Britain* p31

[7] Delaney, "People and Places."p29-30

[8] As the previous chapter indicates, respectability seems to be a far more pertinent indicator of social status in Irish migrant society than does class.

a very different migrant experience for later migrants. This chapter therefore considers the ways in which evolving networks and systems in the Republic and Northern Ireland in relation to work and education changed in the migrant experience, and how these are mediated through migrant narratives.

Migrant masculinities

Men's experience of work in the developing post-war city is encapsulated in a number of the narratives. When the M1 motorway terminated at Leeds in 1968, infrastructure workers who had moved north with its construction could, if they so chose, gravitate to a number of new infrastructure or building projects within travelling distance. These included: the new power stations at Drax and Ferrybridge; Leeds University; Merrion House; the significant new housing estate at Seacroft; and the Leeds ring road, which would encase the city, foregoing the need to drive through the city centre for the increasing number of motorists passing through as a main thoroughfare on the Liverpool-Hull cross-country route. A number of the workers on these projects were Irish migrants: on the construction's completion, although some motorway workers carried on working around the country and the motorway network, others settled in the city. Their testimonies are illuminating, and clearly show some commonalities in experiences, and in the reflection of these. These patterns apply specifically to a certain tightly-defined group: male Irish migrants from rural backgrounds who had worked in construction, infrastructure, engineering or manufacturing industries. The focus is also on life narratives.

Jil Ker Conway suggests the following in relation to life narratives:

> Whether we are aware of it or not, our culture gives us an inner script by which we live our lives. The main acts for the play come from the way our world understands human development; the scenes and key characters come from our families and socialization, which provide the pattern for investing others with emotional significance; and the dynamics of the script come from what our world defines as success or achievement.[9]

What became apparent upon analysis of these interviews is how clearly each narrator fitted their life-events into a specific, preordained life story narrative, which Ker Conway suggests is a cultural phenomenon. The 'life story' element benefits from older interviewees' relative age, which allows some perspective and reflection on events throughout life from a standpoint of being closer to the end.[10] No doubt, interviewed at an earlier stage, other elements of life would be afforded more importance: for example, schooling and education plays a much bigger part in more recent migrants' stories. This is not just because in general these later migrants tended to spend more time in education, but also because their education experiences are relatively recent,

[9] Jil Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography.* (New York: Knopf, 1998).p6

[10] This also becomes relevant in the home chapter, whereby older migrants are far more likely to reflect on illness, ageing and death.

and they have less of a working life to reflect on. Indeed, Miller notes that 'when relating their life stories, people will literally fit their lives into a story format'. This is evident in these interviewees, where there are several stages of the 'life story' common to all the narrators.[11] This is not without issue: Green, for example, examines some of the problems of analysing life stories in this way:

> Cultural forms of analysis examine, for example, how individuals draw upon archetypal myths and follow particular genres of storytelling or narrative forms. The concepts central to this approach are derived primarily from anthropology and literary studies. There is now a rich body of literature convincingly demonstrating the pervasiveness of cultural myths and traditional narrative forms in oral expressions of historical consciousness. But it is one thing to unpack individual narratives using the tools of cultural analysis; it is another to establish public cultural scripts within which individual narratives must fit.[12]

In the first stage of these Irish migrant narratives, the narrator moves to England. In Propp's summation, in an analysis of Russian folktales, the protagonist moving somewhere unfamiliar is a common trope.[13] This 'exile' is the beginning of an exciting journey for the young protagonist.[14] For most the reason for leaving their country of birth is simply to find work, with more than one narrator suggesting that emigration was something they had been raised to expect: it was familiar in their family and community, and although it may have been, as Gray suggests, a traumatic experience to leave home, these narratives are also imbued with a great sense of adventure.[15] In this stage, each narrator meets with an almost mythical mentor figure, who helps them to settle in, to find work or jobs. This gives an example of how chain migration works in practice, paving the way for new migrants from the same place to follow the well-worn road, knowing there will be networks already formed for them to slot into. Examples include the case of Martin, who came first to Birmingham in 1962:

> MARTIN: We were supposed to come to this guy who'd lived in Birmingham quite a few years: so anyway, we forgot the address, I was with me brother, so we had to walk around and, cos he'd been to Birmingham before, and he was trying to picture where this guy had lived. Anyway, we finally found the place just by walking past places, and so anyway, we got in touch with the guy, and we stayed with him for a while, and I got a job, myself and my brother, with Laing, at the hospital, building…

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[11] Robert L Miller, *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*, ed. David Silverman, Introducing Qualitative Methods (London: Sage, 2000).

[12] Anna Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates," *Oral History* 32, no. 2 (2004).p38

[13] Vladimir Propp *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (University of Texas Press: Austin 1958)

[14] Kerby A. Miller, "Emigrants and Exiles: Irish Cultures and Irish Emigration to North America, 1790-1922," *Irish Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1980). Miller talks at length about the extent to which Irish migrants to America felt they were exiled, using diaries and personal correspondence. The results are mixed.

[15] Breda Gray, "Remembering a 'Multicultural' Future through a History of Emigration: Towards a Feminist Politics of Solidarity across Difference," *Women's Studies International Forum* 27, no. 4 (2004).

Martin's story imbues the city with a sense of memory – his brother had 'been to Birmingham before' and therefore this visit is permeated with the echo of another. The certainty of the brothers that they would find the house lends the tale a serendipitous quality, and continues the theme of the optimism of youth, and the lure of the new. Martin then comes to Leeds, as he has an uncle in the city, who serves as his first mentor figure. The informal kinship networks that appear in a number of the stories, as well as interviewees whose whole family settled in the same area, suggests that migration in the Irish case is not often an escape from kinship ties.

Vincent's migrant arrival in 1968 also shows these traits. He 'just came here cos I had two uncles in Leeds, and they were here just to have a look at the craic': he sets this in the context of a number of men from the Irish farming village where he grew up, who would use their skills in the more lucrative English market as seasonal migrants for part of the year, a survival of the tradition of seasonal migration which peaked in the 1860s. England was a familiar location, and in particular the farms across Yorkshire and Lancashire: the traffic between his Irish home and the English farms was such that 'I knew an old man in our village, and he used to come over here with his own scythe'. Although Leeds seems superficially to be a random choice, drilling into the narratives it is clear that there are networks at play which have grown and been sustained over a number of decades. Working in England, whether temporarily or permanently, had become a normalised part of life for many Irish people.[16] This kind of chain migration was not only a male phenomenon; Ryan found similar kinship patterns in migrant women.[17] Indeed, it is borne out in interviews in this study, where women came to a brother in the city (as with Sean), or to an aunt who was a teacher (as in the case of Bernadette). The remaining parts of this particular narrative, however, remain a stolidly masculine story.[18]

It is in stage two that the narrator finds work. The story is often introduced as though the job was stumbled on in an act of fate, but further research shows that social networks would have already been at work: from meeting someone in a pub who would provide employment, to knowing where to go to find different types of work (such as waiting outside a pub for the foremen of sizeable building jobs to pick up workers) or finding accommodation in a new place. This is borne out in several of the interviews: when Eamonn came to Leeds in 1962 he had

[16] Enda Delaney, "Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland," *Immigrants & Minorities* 23, no. 2-3 (2005).

[17] Ryan, "'I Had a Sister in England': Family-Led Migration, Social Networks and Irish Nurses."

[18] Women's narratives, as will be investigated later in this chapter, are more fractured, complex, and diverse, underscoring the gender variances of migrant experience. Sangster suggests that women's life narratives are more likely to be more bashful, underplaying achievements, and centring their experience around family life rather than work. Joan Sangster (1994) Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history, Women's History Review, 3:1, 5-28,

already found work with a large building company, and moved at their behest; he makes clear the relative ease of finding new work for casual labourers in building and infrastructure:

> EAMONN: It sent me up here right enough, yeah, I was working at Hoover reservoir at Greasbrough, and then I jacked it in over a bonus or something one day, and that was about nine months, ten months, and I met someone that was going to Leeds, and that was it, I was going to Leeds.

Contacts in the trade, and family links, made moving easier, but the availability of work on motorways and infrastructure made it a buyer's market for employees. Kinship is clearly an element for Martin, too, who moved to an uncle and started a job with his brother, and changed roles and sectors regularly. This adaptability and resilience was a key factor in 'getting by' for migrant workers in the 1960s, due to the variety and abundance of new projects. Resilience was key to finding accommodation alongside the work as a transient infrastructure worker. Indeed, one interviewee recounted cold calling at a large number of houses in Ferrybridge, renowned for having no lodgings for workers at the power plant, and eventually convincing one local woman to take him in as a lodger in her spare room.[19]

Although most of the narrators found jobs with seeming relative ease, there are examples of hard luck stories in the cases of other migrants, whose use of a migrant network had failed to pay off:

> DECLAN: There'd be the foreman there, he'd be walking round. And if he knew someone, the site: with Murphy's their top man or gangerman or foreman, and if they'd know a fella they might give you the start. And another fella that asked for a start. And there was room in Manchester: He says this young fella, he's from his own place at home, and he said to him 'any chance of a start like?' and he made himself known. And the bloke did know him like, you know. But he turned round and he said to him 'ah, fuck off,' he says, 'you're not getting the start.' Or something like that. The young fella then, the man said to him… he had a bit of a reputation, like, a fighting man. So anyway, the young fella waited his time, and a few years later he met him in the pub. And he says 'you don't know me.' So he says 'I don't, no.' So he says 'you did know me. I was trying to make myself known to you to get work. I did get work, but no thanks to you,' he said. 'If you fancy your chances now,' he said, 'make a statement.' And the young fella give him a good hiding. And the young fella, they reckon, wasn't the type of fella that would look for trouble, but he said all your man had to do was turn round to him and say 'I have no work for you'… It's coming from another Irishman: an Englishman wouldn't have said that to you.

The suggestion here is that the foreman in this instance used his power for ill, and humiliated his neighbour: the code has been broken, and ultimately he suffers the consequences. The young man, even in later life, is keen to stress that he still managed to make good and find work, but he emphasises it was 'no thanks to you.'

Vincent also had family connections in the city that helped him to settle in: 'And I started to work up on a site… at that time, it was a first cousin of mine…' Additionally, the happenstance

[19] Field notes, September 2015

presentation of work opportunities is presented by Declan: 'I lived … near St James's, and Tarmac took on a job next door, and I got a job just for a few weeks at Tarmac...' Declan further notes how old skills from the farming and rural context helped them, as it had their fathers and grandfathers, in terms of being flexible in the labour market:

> DECLAN: Then of course, where I come from at home, potato picking is the big thing, and then, the money probably wasn't that good like, and some of the boys said, a rake of the boys got out to the farmers now, a big block of money but you worked hard for it. We'll go potato picking. So four of us turned up, about the beginning of September, to the potato picking, I was on about 4-8 weeks, just outside the A1, there was four of us yeah, we probably got, what we got in them days was a lot, we got about £15 an acre, whereas ten years after, it was tripled. But it was going up pretty rapidly after that. £15 an acre, and they reckon with potato picking, you'd go and pick half an acre a day, so we were getting, you'd make £30 in two days…

Skills garnered back in Ireland were similarly key to Vincent's career trajectory:

> VINCENT: And I had done with Jimmy at home in Ireland, I'd done a bit of the same leavening over the field with him doing surveys for the various farms, and I said to your man what are you having I could make use for, and he said, well as an 18 year old Paddy, what do you know about it?' I said 'well I make a bit of this,' so he threw the book like, there, I took the logbook and I just cleaned it up and tidied it and did the abstraction, and a couple of days later the manager he says to me well, what do you know about engineering, I said nothing, but he says 'I saw what you did in that book, and it looked as though it was somebody who knew,' I said 'I did abstraction for the reduced levels and all that'.

From this chance rendezvous, the manager offered Vincent the opportunity to go to college and develop new skills in engineering, which would stand him in good stead for the future. This fortuitous encounter with a powerful new acquaintance – in this case with the manager – is common across the narratives.

The start of the migrant experience was characterised by a great deal of travelling, living with friends in lodgings, B&Bs and sometimes caravans, and heavy socialising. Particularly in this early period of their new lives in England, narrators seem more interested in enjoyment and taking risks than any long-term consequences. McIvor recorded detailed interviews with workers in Britain across heavy industries, and found interesting results regarding masculinity in the workplace, which are also salient in regard to this thesis. To begin with, he recognises (in concert with Connell, who suggests that 'Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting') that there is more than one way to perform masculinity through work, but he provides some useful working definitions.[20]

> Working-class masculinities were nurtured in….emulating the glamourized danger faced by cinema and comic books including Tarzan and John Wayne. Actual bodily harm was

[20] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005).

> risked for the sake of peer-group status. Competitive, adolescent bravado was also evident in the male-dominated environment of the masculine workplace… A cult of toughness characterized the heavy industries and young male workers adapted to this and absorbed it through peer pressure.[21]

One example of risk-taking was evident in Liam's testimony, where his colleagues arrive for the nightshift inebriated:

> LIAM: And then I got a phone call one night at twelve o'clock: the nightshift was all drunk, and this fella, they were all drunk going into work, and he had this dozer he drove over the site, and he rang the house for me to go out to pick them up. And the manager said 'you're not going out to pick them up.' And I said 'the man is drunk, and in case anything happens to him, I am going out,' so I went out to pick them up, and they all got sacked, and then I jacked it in.

Solidarity among workers was important, and health and safety was not legally a factor at this point. McIvor avers that 'ranks were closed when management or external forces were threatening the very basis of men's role as providers (wages) their prerogative to work and their control and independence at the point of production'.[22] The ready availability of work meant that kinship bonds could be prioritised: after Liam left this job on principle against the treatment of his colleagues, he soon found another. Both Declan and Eamonn had similar incidents where a disagreement with management would lead to an altercation and a resignation. For Eamonn, other jobs would arise just as quickly: 'I jacked it in over a bonus or something one day… the thing is there you could just leave it and just get another job straight away'. For Declan, the employee-boss relationship was fiery and argumentative, but was ultimately salvageable – the following extract was from a day when Declan felt his hard work had not been appreciated: it was the second time he had resigned this particular job:

> DECLAN: And I says 'we put five in: we put more than you need. No matter how: if we put ten in, you wouldn't be satisfied' I says, 'and F you and your job!' I says, half ahead of him. And walked away and left him there… got in the car and went away and left him there: by the time he had walked out where we were working, and came back, we were gone. And anyway, came into the house anyways, and had the dinner, and my wife was ready and I came, we had arranged to go out that night, we did socialise together as well you see, and I said 'he mightn't call this evening: we had a bust up' So the next thing about eight o'clock, I'm hearing this papping of the horn outside, and there he was outside! And by the time I had got out, he had slid over onto the passenger seat, and twas me to drive the car! And 'alright Declan!' I said 'alright Bill, yeah' so never a word to the work at all, like. One thing he didn't mix: work and pleasure. We'd not talk about the work when you'd be out, and he'd buy drink all night, you know.[23]

This also suggests a performance of masculinity:

> The process of learning how to signify a masculine self in situationally appropriate ways continues throughout life. Men in manual labour jobs may learn that signifying a

[21] Arthur McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).p82
[22] Ibid.p87
[23] The crossover between work, drink and socialising is apparent here, and particularly pertinent to the male narratives.

> masculine self requires displays of strength and endurance, as well as resistance to being bossed[24]

Delaney concurs that turnover in construction jobs was high, and notes that dramatic departures such as those recounted by Declan and Liam were a key part of the narrative:

> Of all the realms of British industry, construction work had the highest levels of labour turnover; on one site in Bedfordshire, where 600 of the 700 men employed were Irish, it was estimated that the turnover of labour was roughly 10 per cent each month, as workers decided to 'jack' or quit the job on a regular basis. 'Jacking' or leaving was 'a demonstration of freedom and independence of the employer' and …the desire to make choices without the constraints of the traditional employer–employee relationship.

He goes on to quote the study, where we see an echo of Liam and Eamonn: the confidence of workers in a society with an excess of work, and little concern for the niceties of protocol

> It is possible that some of the jacking observed in the camp was premeditated, but all departures were made with dramatic suddenness and at odd hours of the day as though completely spontaneous—for example, a man got up at the end of the morning tea break, said 'I'm off boys', and walked away.[25]

McIvor's findings in interviews with workers in heavy industry in the UK concur that 'workers could reach composure in accounts stressing stoic struggle against profit-maximising managers, employers and foremen and the toleration of tough, dirty, hazardous and dusty work environments'.[26] This casual attitude to work was facilitated by the portable nature of these often single young workers. The UK was developing infrastructure projects and motorways across the country, and their labour was needed. Some of the larger contractors developed sites in the 1960s which provided structure and care for the workers, and showed pride in their distinct identity through official publications such as the magazines pictured on the next page, which some of the workers interviewed felt did not truly represent their demographic:

> S: Two or three books there on French's, and every picture was 6X7, 2X9, and there'd always be the same man driving them, do you remember, we used to call him Georgie Best? I think his name was Paul, he was a driver, he had the long hair, he had three wives,
> E: You know old Ron that I used to drink with, and the big lad that had the lump out of his neck, anyway Ron lent me this book, he said, it was only, like a magazine thing, and he said I think you'd probably know some of these if you worked for French's, and, there he was, he had just come up to the, on the 657, standing at the bumper, and then he had come up to somewhere else,
> S: every picture in this magazine was, show you the picture on it, and it's him again, and you'd think we weren't there at all.

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[24] Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe, "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009).p283.
[25] Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* p113
[26] McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain since 1945*.p88

Example copies of French's magazine 1969-70:

There was great pride attached to mastery of certain machines, to the extent that on new sites some workers would take photographs of or in front of the machines that they worked on.

Examples of photographs of workers posing on their machines, 1960s

Many of the group interviews involved a substantial amount of technical jargon between the interviewees, showing significant knowledge of the specialized vocabulary of the trade. Mentions of specific occupational terminology would pepper the interviews, such as when Vincent says 'he used to go five or ten metres and put the frames in one day, and he'd bottom it up the next day and put the pipe in, and then pitch again, you know?'

Tommy Canavan (centre) working for SGB 1968

In order to boost camaraderie, there was a significant amount of badinage between workers on these often dangerous jobs. As Vincent and Declan averred:

> VINCENT: Do you remember Ronan that worked, well he was like that, he used to, and one of the lads at work, the wagon driver, they reckoned he looked like a busted mattress! And that's what he was called: he even called himself Busted! And they used to call the two young fellas the pillowcases.
> DECLAN: well they used to call him, this Niall Monaghan, they called him the Crow's Nest, so anyway, he was out driving a machine for us, and there was something wrong with the heater, so this fella come out to repair the heater, so he went to take the seat out, so he's got the seat out, and there's ould bits of rags and all sorts, and Monaghan was outside, he says 'Jesus Christ there's everything in here, he says, there's feathers and there's everything in here!' The feathers off the pillowcase! So Monaghan's off ahead of him, calling him all there was… with the hairstyle, he couldn't wear a helmet. And you have to have a helmet. So anyway, he had this ould helmet in the back of the seat, with no inside to it. And this bloke came along this day and he's taking photographs, to update everyone's cards, so you had to have a helmet on. So anyway, they came along and they said to him, Niall, I says, your man needs some photographs, stick that ould helmet on. So he put the helmet on him with no insides, so he puts on the ould helmet, barely covering his head!
> VINCENT: With no inside to it!
> DECLAN: he got the photograph anyway, and your man took all different photographs and went away. He came back two days later, your man. Just to get some forms signed and that. So Monaghan spotted your man. So he says, 'What's that tosser doing here today?' he says. I said 'them photographs didn't come out the other day!' so he said 'you're not getting mine!'

The affectionate 'mick-taking' signified a bond between the workers, but also enforced an implicit code, whereby making bold fashion choices (such as long hair) would effectively signify singling oneself out for ridicule from colleagues. This increased the value of conformity in the workplace, and provided a self-policing of conduct and behaviour. Ward's study echoes this, finding that men whose style choices mark them out as non-conformist 'alternative' groups, in his case so-called 'Emos' in south Wales, 'were subordinated by others for not adhering to the normative masculine practices of the region and in the spaces where these practices were played

out'.[27] Poulami suggests that 'hegemonic masculinity is an effective organisational tool *because* it creates a 'we' by excluding women and subordinate men' and we see this played out here, with the marginalisation of workers making alternative fashion choices.[28]

However on some construction projects such as those discussed in the University of Westminster's Constructing Post-War Britain study, Irish workers who were recent migrants courted disapproval and also admiration for their lack of conformity to the workplace ethic. English worker Vic Longhurst noted:

> There were a couple of Irish lads who… who, eh was on the other shift, and eh, they were a bit harum-scarum. They used to kind of get on the machine and spin it round like that, you know, and act about, you know, which was em, not very good, you know. But…they were just kind of young and a bit… nothing to lose – if they got the sack, they just went down the road laughing, you know…. But a lot of the lads who were Geordies and eh young Irish lads and that, they didn't give two bloody hoots, you know! If… something didn't suit them, they'd just say "Oh, piss to you!" and step off the machine and away and get a job with somebody else, you know….[29]

This behaviour, though it may seem at odds with becoming successful, has some basis in theory:

> Research on men in low-status jobs shows another form of compensation: Instead of trying to control others, these men try to show that they cannot be controlled. These manhood acts rely on joking, verbal jousting, sexist talk, and sometimes sabotage to assert autonomy *vis a vis* bosses.[30]

However, once migrants settled in, they recognised that conforming to social norms was a way to gain and maintain status.[31] This echoes Roy's findings from observations of a group of factory workers in the USA:

> Horseplay had its initiators and its victims, its amplifiers and its chorus; kidding had its attackers and attacked, its least attacked and its most attacked, its ready acceptors of attack and its strong resistors to attack. The fun went on with the participation of all, but within the controlling frame of status, a matter of who can say or do what to whom and get away with it.[32]

The jokes in these manual jobs could sometimes be arbitrary, specific and almost meta in execution. One would have to have a detailed understanding of elements of the job in order to 'get' the jokes, as Vincent recalls:[33]

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[27] Michael R. M. Ward, "'We're Different from Everyone Else': Contradictory Working-Class Masculinities in Contemporary Britain," in *Debating Modern Masculinities: Change, Continuity, Crisis?*, ed. Steven Roberts (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014).

[28] Roychowdhury Poulami, "Brothers and Others Organizing Masculinity, Disorganizing Workers," *Social Problems* 61, no. 1 (2014).

[29] Vic Longhurst, in *Constructing Post-War Britain*, ed. Linda Clarke Chris Wall, Charlie McGuire, Michaela Brockmann (London: University of Westminster).

[30] Schrock and Schwalbe, "*Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts*."p285.

[31] B. Douglas Bernheim, "A Theory of Conformity," *Journal of Political Economy* 102, no. 5 (1994).

[32] D. (1959) Roy, "'"Banana Time": Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction'," *Human Organisation Studies* 18 (1959).p308

[33] This also reaffirms the implicit code noted earlier.

> VINCENT: Well there was one that was a young fella and they reckoned he had one hand bigger than the other, they used to call him the kerbgripper. You know the machine, it looks like, I don't know what you'd call it, a tree frog. There was a sign up outside the door, they had to put a chain up like, a sign saying 'No frogs past this point.' And a picture of this fella. 'No frogs past this point.' If you didn't notice it you wouldn't know, and you'd say who was that, yer one. No frogs past this point!

The introduction of some of the health and safety legislation and strict regulations to this environment in the 1980s was not always welcome. Vincent suggests they 'killed the craic':

> VINCENT: All of that come with the introduction of Quality Assurance and it was three things: saying what you do, doing what you say and then recording that you actually done it. And QA was derived from the Army and from the oil wells up in the North Sea in Norway, long long long before it ever come here to the UK. And it was OK for them because to keep track of the menfolk if they were out at sea because there was no other way of tracking them, and they had to fill out all these forms and keep a record of their production and this was a disciplinary thing ISO9000353 now, and there was B5O were the two British standards. But it was all brought in, as I say, for that reason. And all that killed off the craic. I'm a great believer that that's what killed the craic, like. Because it was all so disciplined and there was all these corrective active procedures and all the various terminology that goes with it, and it was all sort of 'Oh you can't do that:' well I remember going for a couple of pints every day in the middle of the day. And everyone did.

His reference to drinking as a bonding activity is echoed in other narratives, where alcohol is a social lubricant in work-related situations. As Eamonn remembers:

> EAMONN: they used to keep us on on the power bender bending steel until there was no more to do and then they had to close, well, they didn't close, they kept it going with heaters and everything, concrete and everything, and they had to dig it out again, we were doing nothing at all, we'd just go in and fiddle about and light the fire and stand around, and fiddle about and go back up, and there was a pub up the road and we could go into that pub, it was a woman from Castlebar I think had it, Carpenters Park near the Spark station, in London we'd go through it several times near Harrow and we'd have maybe a pint or two and pork pie and that was our dinner and breakfast.

Drinking alcohol is congruent with the performance of masculinity in a number of societies.[34] It is important to note here that there is an implicit expectation of changes in drinking behaviour with age in 'respectable' Irish society – the risky drinking behaviour of early manhood is expected to become more socially acceptable and responsible once the narrator matures.[35] Drinking was an implicit lubricant in workplace relationships on infrastructure projects; bonding on the site would continue into the pub after hours. Clarke *et al*'s interviewees refer regularly to

[34] David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity.* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).p58-59. Gilmore acknowledges the harmful effect of alcohol in Truk society, where heavy drinking in adolescence is seen as a masculine rite of passage: the society has significant problems with chronic alcohol abuse, particularly among men. He also recognises how drinking alcohol is a significant marker of masculinity in the Balkans, quoting Simic: 'a real man is one who drinks heavily, spends money freely, fights bravely and raises a large family. See also Andre Simic, "Management of the Male Image in Yugoslavia," *Anthropological Quarterly*, no. 42 (1969).

[35] The role of alcohol in Irish social structures is explored more widely in the first chapter of this thesis.

alcohol and its role in the workplace, particularly in relation to Irish workers: Dave Culpin, for example, an English motorway worker, suggested that there were 'A lot of Irish drivers, yeah. Mind you, the majority of them were good operators – but they also liked their grog (laughing)'.[36] Luke Donovan, himself an Irish migrant, indicated that:

> I mean, the Irish, when they first came here, what did they do? Drink. Pub, work, work, pub – that's all they had. And that was their environment. I mean, I was the same when I first came here. I was drink, drink, drink you know, but then I got… married and it all changed, you know, had a home, didn't have to go to the pub.[37]

Pronger's suggestion that injury is a part of forming a masculine identity is also in evidence: 'Boys and men who are willing to put themselves through such violence do so out of an attachment to the meaning of orthodox masculinity. The pain is worth it because masculinity is worth it'.[38] The masculine notion that pain could be ignored or endured nearly had disastrous consequences for some. Kahn's work shows taking health-related risks is an issue for men internationally; men take more risks than women, are unaware of the consequences of the risks they take in comparison to their female peers, and believe they are 'immune to health risks even though they disproportionately engage in risky behaviours that lead to health problems'.[39] The impact of this is clear. As Connell suggests, 'the bodily effects of the current gender order on men include higher levels of injury (including industrial accidents)', and certainly men working on these sites in and around Leeds showed little regard for the limits of the body or the danger they placed themselves in before health and safety legislation began to have an impact. Simon and his wife recounted one of his serious workplace injuries:

> ROSE: I remember that time was awful. But YOU (To Simon) You've been home from work twice injured. You'd got something that fell on your head and cut you right near your eye, do you remember, and then another time, I looked out of the window when the kids were babies, in the other house, we'd got great big windows, and an ambulance pulled up, and I thought, God, cos in those days you'd no mobile or anything, and the next thing they're loading him out the back in a wheelchair with a big pot on his leg, do you remember that? And then what did he do? He said he wasn't having a pot on, and he took his own pot off, and his leg was never right again.
> EAMONN: That was up at Bramley, wasn't it?
> SIMON: No, at, the M62. There was no…everybody used to rush to get in the front of the van, because it would take you to the canteen, and then the 657 and you're up here aren't you? And I jumped onto the top of the roller, and I jumped onto the Tarmac, which I thought was Tarmac, but it was slurry, and it was just on the edge, and BANG! I knew it had gone then. But it swelled up that quick, I took my shoe off, and they took me to Wakefield hospital or was it Huddersfield hospital, and they put a bandage on it, well it was too tight, and it was Eileen (a nurse) who said that's got to come off, it's too

[36] Jim Moher, in *Constructing Post-War Britain*, ed. Linda Clarke Chris Wall, Charlie McGuire, Michaela Brockmann (London: University of Westminster).
[37] Donovan.Ibid.
[38] Brian Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity* (London: GMP, 1990).p23.
[39] Jack S Kahn, *An Introduction to Masculinities* (Wiley Blackwell, 2009).p185.

tight, and I went into Rotherham hospital then and they said 'you should have put a pot on straight away. You've done damage on this and I didn't walk on it, I couldn't walk on it. I didn't walk on it for two year after!
ROSE: Yeah but they put the pot on and the next thing you got in the car and started driving. He never gave it a chance.

When questioned, Simon and Eamonn contradicted Vincent's earlier suggestion, agreeing that health and safety legislation did little to change a culture of risk. Eamonn responded to questions about wearing safety helmets thus:

> EAMONN: I don't know, I don't think it was. Well I never wore one anyway. In the cabin, I used to get told off about three times a week for not wearing one. They wanted one on the car park, to walk from here to the end of the garden, and to go to the canteen you were supposed to wear a helmet. Ah Jesus. You'd get a lecture. 'Put your helmet on' 'What for, what for?'

Eamonn then related an anecdote about another leg injury, this time to a colleague, and the ingenious ways they managed to get the injured man back to work as soon as possible:

> EAMONN: He went down to the 631 and he broke his ankle, they put a pot on, and he was on 361 and the M18, and him and Eamon O'Dwyer and Taffy, and he come in to work, two days after, the following day or something, leg like that, pot and, anyway, they had no cabs, so they take the cabs off, so that he could drive it with the leg: they took the windscreen off, and he had the leg stuck out over the bonnet like that.

Declan also had a very distressing health episode during his early working years in England which encapsulated the dangers of ignoring health warnings:

> DECLAN: When I went back on the Monday I had an awful pain in my side. Oh Jeez I could hardly walk, Monday morning I was… so, the lads picked me up in a van. Went out to Crewe, working away, and there was a field of hay, cut, beside where we were working. So they were working away. And I went out and I lay in the field of hay, I was in that much pain…Oh the pain I was in was something cruel. So anyway, they went to get me a bottle of Lucozade…So they brought this bottle back, and I drank it. So as soon as I drank it: drank about half of it, spewed it up straight away. I thought, is it bad beer I had in Leeds or something? … And just when I went to bend down to put the potatoes in the oven, I went on my two knees with pain, and I couldn't hardly get up…I held on to the door: there was a low wall, and I walked along, and there was a pub at the end of the road…

The amount of detail here in Declan's recollection of his collapse links it with the descriptions of trauma: he still has full recall of the sensory minutiae of the moment. Declan knew that the kinship bonds he had with his housemates meant they would help him: clearly he could tell at this point that his situation was increasingly dire.

> DECLAN: So the boys were sat inside the door, so they could see me coming along. And gee they ran out anyways, and up the road, and grabbed ahold of me, and said 'Christ Almighty there's something wrong with you badly'. Fired me into the van anyroad, and took me down to the Manchester Royal Infirmary. And anyway, in the Royal Infirmary, I must have conked out in the queue, cos I don't remember a thing. I remember them taking me in, and sat there, and I must be screaming in pain, and I woke up at one o'clock in the morning, didn't know where I was, what had happened or nothing. I'm laying there on the bed and I felt this bandage on my side, you know what I mean? So I thought what the hell?…The doctor came along next morning: the surgeon

> had operated on me, and he said 'you're still with us anyway,' he says, 'only just.' The thing had busted. It had busted on the Monday. It had gone septic. And there was two tubes coming out of my side for a fortnight. For an appendix operation now you're in now, and out the next day. Three weeks I was in Manchester Royal Infirmary. Three bloody weeks. Couldn't get out the bed for two weeks. In the three weeks I was there as a young fella of 21: in three weeks, I lost three stone.

Declan's experience gives an example of a dangerous performance of masculinity, whereby ignoring the pain and attempting to work through it could have had disastrous consequences. It also highlights the importance of camaraderie from friends to provide support in lieu of family connections.

Sometimes, the interviewees had to use initiative or come up with ingenious solutions when faced with difficult and dangerous tasks on site, as Simon suggests:

> SIMON: Well, I was on for Kenneallys, and there was a big base for their fitting shop, and there was no way I could shift it, so I dug a big hole, and I buried it, so then there was all this surplus stuff, so I thought, 'we'll have to lose this' so I pushed in, there was a hedge, so I thought if I just tighten it, and this, you remember Jock, used to work with Liam for a bit, he looked across and the whole thing was coming, the hill was all coming, and it all just, it moved on its own, and the hedge never fell over, and the farmer comes up and he goes, and I can see him looking at me, and just… if you could move it from there to there, but, it was the whole hill moved!

However, when faced with situations where danger may befall others, there is evidence that narrators made a conscious decision, at their own cost, to ensure the safety of the local community. As Declan recounts:

> DECLAN: there was this big hole of water, this big hole of ould slurry, on the site, and it was about mebbe ten foot deep, twasn't fenced off or nothing, and there was houses there and there was kids. And this fella has no family. No family. So anyway, he says to me this day, he says: 'if you get a bit of muck, and throw it into that hole, and fill it up.' Well I said, 'I cannot just throw the mud into that hole and fill it up: you'll end up with a big pond of slurry. And some kids might get lost in it, get drowned. You'll have to dig first to get it drained off.' And he says 'Fuck the slurry, and the kids: none of mine will ever get drowned in it anyways.' Cos he's no kids, like. And I said 'that might be your style or your attitude, but it's not mine. I'll dig a grip.' I wouldn't have it on my conscience…Oh yeah, I done a grip anyways, and a lot of the slurry ran away, there was a bit left in the bottom, and by the time I had it filled to the top it was rock solid. Done the job.

This focus on social responsibility ties into the concept of respectability that is so important in Irish migrant culture. In order to be respectable in this society, one must hold oneself to high moral standards, even if this creates more work or inconvenience.

Stage three of the life story is where we see the narrator make an attempt to settle down. At this point, the narrator has often been working for some time: at least five to ten years. A key element, reinforced regularly in the interviews, is that they worked hard. Even in the periods where their social lives have far more importance than work, they still emphasise the importance of hard work, and the extent to which hard work has paid dividends. This extends to

professional reputations, and the ways in which this hard work makes them more attractive to do business with: 'they all had good time for me, cos I'd do a job for them and I'd do it quick and do it right'.[40] It is also quantifiable in the narratives by how much work is completed, and in what timeframe, as Vincent and Declan comment – 'And we had put in, when we started the job, we'd get in three pipes a day, and well covered, that'll do. And we're getting in four and five, a day. And that day we had five pipes in and all tidied up'. The narrators were able to measure their work, and exceed expectations. This is clear from the number of times they mentioned how larger companies were pleased with the jobs they had done because of their hardworking, professional approach. This suggests an awareness of and reliance on an underlying cultural script, in this case one that concentrates on the benefits of applying oneself committedly to all projects, and ties back to the respectability trope. We see the importance of hard work in these Irish migrant narratives reflected back in fiction, such as in John B Keane's *The Contractors*:

> The Murray outfit had built a good reputation during the short while they were established. If a job which normally took nine days had to be done in three, then Dan and his gang were the people to hire. They never dawdled, never took days off. Holy days or holidays never impeded them.[41]

This cultural script is common across farming communities: Paul B. Thompson argues that this became encoded into farming narratives in Victorian times, as it became apparent that working many hours on the land, in contrast to those doing the same in another man's factory, would bring rewards in both the short and long term to the tenant farmer.[42] Thus hard work as an important value in life and a 'social script' became part of farm life. This was certainly true in the findings of Vanclay and Endicott, who studied farming communities in the UK and Australia.[43] This may explain why hard work remains an important concept for Irish migrants to Leeds, the majority of whom grew up in rural (and often agricultural) communities, even though the lack of reward (despite the hard work) of farm life was often what would have led them to emigrate. The concept of hard work had become so engrained that it was part of a portable value system, transplanted into new climates and environments as a cultural rule for living. The idea of Irish migrants as hard-working was not just a positive trope that was self-perpetuated: Irish workers on the motorways were seen by each other and by their English co-workers as hard-working as well. This is evidenced by a selection of quotes from the Constructing Post-War Britain Project:

> LD: A lot of the Irish were pipe-layers

[40] See chapter one for analysis of the importance of respectability and its operation.
[41] John B. Keane, *The Contractors* (Dublin: Mercier, 1993).p124.
[42] Paul B Thompson, *Spirit of the Soil: Agriculture and Environmental Ethics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2017).
[43] Frank Vanclay and Gareth Enticott, "The Role and Functioning of Cultural Scripts in Farming and Agriculture," *Sociologia Ruralis* 51, no. 3 (2011).

I: Is that hard work?
LD: It is hard work, yeah. It's eh… it's got to be done right, because if you've got a leak in a pipe, you know, after you've filled it all in, you've got to dig it all out again.[44]

I: What jobs did they (Irish) do?
T: Eh, mainly groundwork. I mean, eh, you probably wouldn't know, but all the foundations of Stevenage were hand-dug.
I: were they?
T: SO you had a gang of four would go round, and the profiles were set, lined, and the labourers would dig, hand-dig, the trenches for this block of five.
I: Wow, God almighty, that's hard work.
T: And believe you me, it wouldn't take them long to dig it.[45]

J: And they were good workers
I: Hard workers?
J: They were the hard – they were always recognised as among the best, and they were friendly. You know, they would… they weren't sort of difficult, they were… they were… they got on with the job.[46]

This exemplifies the importance of hard work in Irish manual work culture, not just as a belief but also as a performance. Migrants work hard not just to fulfil their underlying cultural scripts, but to prove their value in the workplace.

Hard work also remains an important part of more recent male migrants' narratives. Kevin, a local politician who moved to Leeds as a child from Belfast in the 1970s, and Ronan, a university lecturer who arrived in the city fairly recently, both touch on the importance of physically demanding work and doing a good job as a way of reinforcing a masculine self-identity.[47]

Kevin's school experiences in England had a profound effect on the course of his life; leaving education badly qualified having been unable to concentrate or thrive in a school environment due to severe bullying, he drifted through several jobs before settling into a job as a surveyor:[48]

KEVIN: But I left school at 16: I didn't have a job. And, the first job was in Leeds market. I worked as a butcher, a trainee butcher. Didn't like it. Went to another shop, a nut shop, you called it: they sell every kind of nut you can think of. Worked on there. Went to work for another butcher. Didn't like that. And the day, the last day that I worked there, Kirkgate Market burnt down. I was there working, and I came out, walked up to the Merrion Centre, came out, and as I came down, walked back down half an

[44] Donovan. LD is Luke Donovan: I is interviewer, in *Constructing Post-War Britain*
[45] Ted Oswick, in *Constructing Post-War Britain*, ed. Linda Clarke Chris Wall, Charlie McGuire, Michaela Brockmann (London: University of Westminster). T is Oswick: I is interviewer.
[46] Moher. Moher is J; I is interviewer in *Constructing Post-War Britain*
[47] Kevin worked for local politicians before becoming a councillor himself.
[48] Copeland *et al* suggest that one of the long-term consequences of bullying is that those who were bullied subsequently ended up with 'lower educational qualifications and trouble keeping a job' Wolke D et al., " Impact of Bullying in Childhood on Adult Health, Wealth, Crime, and Social Outcomes.," *Psychological Science* 24 (2013).

> hour later the place was on fire. So I lost me job then. And ended up…Oh yeah, I went to work at Burton's. It was a massive employer. But a lot of the Irish community worked in tailoring, stuff like that? … I worked in the office staff, credit department. So I worked there. And… stayed there for a couple of years. I ended up being a forklift driver: did that for about 18 months and it was awful, cos you had to work in… you had to work eight o'clock in the morning til eight o'clock at night. Four days a week. Friday 8-5, and sometimes Saturday morning. For about £30. And it was freezing cold weather, and we had to get up at six to get there for eight. And you finish at half five, eight o'clock get home: 9.30 bed, up: it was horrible. So I was there for a while, and then I got a job at the gas board. That was the best move I ever made. Cos I went and applied for this job, 35 hours, 9-5, working in an office, me and 50 women, I was the only man in the whole building, youth, I should say, and I was getting twice the money I was earning as a forklift driver. And working normal hours. It was amazing.

Kevin also suggested that his involvement and investment in the Leeds community was something which was already manifest in the values of community that were implicit in his Irish upbringing and in the Irish migrant groups in the city:

> KEVIN: And then communities, getting involved in communities, cos I remember as a kid, we all went to local, the Irish Centre and stuff like that, and you met all these different community groups, who did this that and the other, helping people blah blah blah. And so I thought I wanna do that as well. So I did that: got involved in all the local – quite Irish in the community that I represent. So you would see quite a lot of people that used to be in the Irish Centre. And through the church, St Ann's, which is down in Leeds. So I got involved in community politics, and helping people. People who are homeless, people who are in dire need, living in poverty, kids.

Kevin's eventual elevation to the position of Leeds' Lord Mayor was an opportunity to celebrate how he had overcome obstacles in his career, as well as to give support and exposure to charities close to his heart, such as anti-bullying and epilepsy charities. Taking the role of Lord Mayor of the city was the apotheosis of Kevin's career, but he was keen to point out, in common with previous interviewees, that he worked hard:

> KEVIN: So, then I came back and I were doing various jobs: chief whip, and I were still working for the local MP at the same time. So I were doing these two jobs. And I was really burning myself out, cos I was doing 50 odd hours, sometimes 70 hours: travelling to London and back, coming here, get off the train here, meetings, 9 o'clock, go home, get up, meeting 9 o clock in the morning, go to the MP's office, come here, meetings in here, der der der, community meetings der der der. It's like this all the time.

Interestingly, as with the motorway workers counting the pipes they laid, Kevin enthusiastically quantifies his hard work: in this case through the number of hours worked. He was also eager to assert the 'hard work' element of the mayoral role, referring again to the number of engagements:

> KEVIN: But all through the year, as I went through, I did 450 events in that year. And I used to tell people the story, about where I came from and what I did. It's hard work. People think being Lord Mayor you sit around drinking teas and eating dinners, and driving round in the car: it's not, it's difficult. You get four or five events a day sometimes.

This measurement of work is common across men's narratives, as well as the focus on both seeing oneself and being seen as hardworking. There are also elements of Kevin's work as a government official that Berdahl *et al* suggest are key components of masculinity, such as his ability to find work and allocate resources for the community, as in his recalled conversation with a constituent who was living in unfit housing: 'Anyway I got her rehoused on the Monday. I went berserk, I said there's people living in this. I said 'there's kids here who are bloody ill, living in this crap'. Berdahl *et al* posit that:

> Masculinity contests thus often manifest as contests for resources, and emerge in "men's work" domains where resources are up for grabs. Contests occur in various venues: sports provide opportunities to demonstrate physical strength and stamina; in politics, elite institutions, and clubs, men vie for and exercise social influence to gain resources. However, the workplace represents the venue in which money—the ultimate resource in modern economies—is to be made, making it a central context for resource acquisition and establishing dominance. Dominance in the workplace comes with the ability to control others' attempts to acquire resources through work, but also with the ability to control one's own and others' lives outside of work, including financial independence, societal standing, and family breadwinner status.[49]

Thus Kevin's ability to insist on rehousing for his constituents allows him to perform acts of masculinity and power for the good of his constituents. This echoes the performance of masculinity we see earlier in the chapter, underlining the possibility that this may be a cultural trope in the migrant group. Another example of this is when he helps a local, disengaged man into work:

> KEVIN: And we got loads of people jobs. And one kid, he wouldn't go: he were sat at home, and I knocked on this woman's door: she'd said 'Labour won't do owt for us: my son's unemployed!' I says 'where is he?' she says 'he's in bed!' I says 'what's he doing in bed?' (this is bloody one o'clock in t'afternoon) 'oh, he's playing on his games. But he can't get a job round here.' I says 'has he been down?' 'oh no, I can't get him out…' I says 'right OK, well we're having a jobs fair next Friday, the community centre 200 yards away, bring him there next Friday: I'll get him a job.' And I got him a job. I got him a job. He couldn't believe it. He wouldn't come at first. And I went up to t'house. I says 'where is he?' she says 'he's in bed.' I say 'get him down here now!' so she says 'der der der, the councillor's down here!' I says 'come on, down here, there's five employers, it's the arena and everything.' And I got him a job. It wasn't a brilliant job, but I got him a job. He started in one, and then I went to see her last year, and I was out campaigning again, and I said 'how is he doing?' and she says 'he's a manager now.' But it's getting someone to give you that bit of a push. And someone to give you an opportunity.

Kevin was clearly very proud of his rise through the council ranks to become Lord Mayor. He reflected on the contrast of his office with his early life:

> KEVIN: Two of us were nominated. And everyone had a secret ballot. So you just sit there. You can vote for yourself. So we just sat in here and then they did the count and came back, and I got 39, and the other got 21. So I sat there with my mouth open.

[49] Jennifer L. Berdahl *et al.*, "Work as a Masculinity Contest," *Journal of Social Issues* 74, no. 3 (2018).p429

> Couldn't believe it! So I thought, from being a five year old kid, coming over here with nothing, and a little suitcase, and now I'm the Lord Mayor of Leeds!

It is clear that the position of Lord Mayor was also an opportunity for Kevin to share his story as a means to inspire young people in the community:

> KEVIN: I tell it to kids in schools. And when I go to schools: I went to my local school recently. And she was saying 'how did you become Lord Mayor?' And I told her the story and she said 'that's amazing: what we do is, we have speakers in to sort of try and inspire the kids: would you come along and tell 'em your story?' I says 'course I will!' So I'm gonna go in September and talk to the kids about it.

Ronan also recognises the extent to which physically demanding and productive work is a way to prove one's worth – his own work experience also shows the importance of networks in finding work in this industry, in this case during a gap year in Australia:

> RONAN: And so I ended up going for a year to Australia. I think my dad just said 'I'll get you a ticket' cos he wanted to get me off, like off the treadmill I was on, which was work and beer. So he sent me to Australia, to go off onto a building site and continue my drinking. So I was in Sydney for a year working on a huge construction project, which was the largest cable pull in the world at the time, from the outback, 27 kilometres, and we used to, it was incredibly physical work: I used to crawl two or three kilometres a day on my hands and knees, cos I was leading off the cable as it was being pulled through these trenches.

Ronan's references to hard work show that its importance in men's narratives has not dimmed generationally: working men are still driven to show their ability to work hard physically and to complete demanding work, regardless of education. Ronan's explanation of the recruitment processes harks back to earlier employment networking situations that were in operation in Leeds, and shows once again the portability of networking models – as though they are built for emigration:

> RONAN: The site (in Australia) was entirely Irish. The building firm was totally dominated by the Irish… and it was all Irish, about 300 Irish backpackers, because we worked extremely hard, and we took lesser wages than the Australians; obviously we worked harder than the Australians, and we were just a readily available migrant community, you know?
>
> INTERVIEWER: Did that propagate itself, because then you would only employ Irish people?
>
> RONAN: Absolutely: there was a famous story where a fella who was English, or of English extraction, but saw themselves as Irish, rang him and said, you know, 'I'm not Irish but my gran was, and I wondered if you had a job?' and he says 'Oh perfect, tell your gran be down at seven in the morning, I'll pick her up outside.' And that was the end of the phonecall. So, it was only Irish. All Irish. A lot of Northern Irish, but I think I worked with two Australians. And one guy was there because he was the engineer's son, so he got a job. The other guy was a driver, you know quite a low level driver. The rest were Irish.

This highlights that, where they are needed, informal networks can be assembled and used in any circumstance: this lends weight to the argument that these networks are no longer as necessary for Irish migrants to England, as migrants are likely to already have access to jobs through their

level of education. Ronan also recognises the added value that the highly-educated young Irish workforce can now offer:

> RONAN: And you got a very high standard, because they were all highly educated. So, paramount to that job obviously was safety, because it was a huge cable pull, big government money, everything had to be done right. Safety, and an ability to articulate yourself, and stuff like that.

This contrasts with the previous generation, who would have been learning on the job for many similar projects in England. Ronan expounds a visual metaphor which sums up the duality of many of these migrant workers' experience:

> RONAN: I remember one morning going to, queueing on the underground in Sydney, and the crowds had cleared, and I was kneeling, I was on my haunches. And I looked down along the platform: I was in my hi-vis vest. There was another Irish guy, way way down the other end of the platform, in his hi-vis vest. And I was reading *Ulysses* and he was reading *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. I just thought to myself, what are the chances that two Irish readers are going to be reading *Ulysses* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*? The kind of: a lot of them were teachers; a lot of lads had degrees.

He suggests that intellectualism would not be worn lightly by workers on this job, however well-educated they were, due to adherence to social norms around drinking culture:

> RONAN: a lot of people on the site were very well qualified, in Australia, and you know; also there's a lot of pooh-poohing of intellectual culture, so you don't talk about it. So everyone was hiding the fact that they were, as the Irish still do a lot you know,
> INTERVIEWER: Really interested in critical discourse theory?
> RONAN: Exactly! Secretly, you know: hiding away, furtively away, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. But that sort of stuff goes on, you know, and of course a huge drinking culture. So we were all in the pub together, that's how we spend our time.

This harks back to the self-policing joking that Vincent referred to earlier, except the feminised behaviour here was not long hair, but an aptitude to study that would not fit easily in this hyper-masculine environment. Conformity once again was key to a successful working life.

Later career stages

The third period of the life story could also result in an increase in work-based travelling. One interviewee, Declan, built his Leeds business by travelling long distances, and staying in a caravan for work. Vincent remembered a defining moment, as a long-term, long-distance commuter:

> VINCENT: Tarmac had just done a new motorway up there the M90, no the A90, over the Forth Road Bridge and up to Arbroath and all that, they had cordoned one carriageway off, the dual carriageway, but there was only them plastic bollards, and I bet them were 300 yards apart. I was coming down, the evening, it was a lovely, afternoon should I say, wagons and all that, not very busy now, the car in front, and a woman pulled out, and wasn't there a car wagon coming the other way, killed the woman and her two kids. Oh stone dead man. The wagon was on top of the car, the car is squeezed, there's steam rising up, right beside me, the Lord save us, I've blocked it out now. But I thought to myself, doing this mileage, there has to be a better way. And I decided then, it's not for me. Because, if you're doing 100,000 miles a year, you're ten times more likely

> to have one of them accidents than someone doing average mileage. And I handed in my notice end of the month, and left the following Christmas then, you know.[50]

The shock of witnessing the accident brought into perspective the dangers of so much car travel. Some risks, he reasoned, were not worth taking.

It was also a 'settling down' phase for many. The constant travel, and the separation from family that this entailed, occasionally emerged in the narratives, as interviewees recount the sacrifices they made, such as Declan:

> DECLAN: So I brought the machine, and went down to Leicestershire with Budge's, and spent four years there, living in a caravan again. And it started us on the road, made good money on it like. It was hard work, you know: you were living away from home, and it wasn't: it wasn't easy. When you'd go down home – I'd go back on a Sunday evening, and you'd go to the caravan, and the couple of them stuck to the window with forks. It was hardship.

If, as tended to happen with most older interviewees, they met a partner in the second stage and settled down, the third stage would be marked by marriage and family. However, family, though important, does not dominate the male narrative. One interviewee worked seven days a week for two years in this phase whilst he had four small children at home. His success would have been impossible had it not been for the unrecognised work of his wife in the domestic sphere. This tallies with Nugent Duffy's findings about women's roles in these emigrant families being more peripheral and domestic, with men portraying themselves as traditional hardworking bread winners.[51] Sheridan's study of the cultural narratives of navvies in Northampton found in MacAmhlaigh's memoir that he was confused by the liberal behaviour of English women, and preferred the more conservative attitudes of women in de Valera's Ireland.[52] He was baffled to see women in English pubs, for example, and saw it as an encroachment on the navvy's performance of masculinity. What differentiates Sheridan's findings from the interviews conducted for this thesis is the attitudes of the narrators. Sheridan notes that her narrators – in common with MacAmhlaigh – struggled to make sense of life in England, operated an entirely separate social life, and did not assimilate to a great degree. However, the older narrators here were at pains to speak highly of the English, and to point out that they have always been well-treated by their host country, moving as they did during a period when Irishness was often viewed with suspicion in some parts of the UK. Despite this, all the older male narrators remained proud of their Irish heritage, and encouraged their children to follow this too, through a mixture of Catholic schooling, and immersion in the GAA and Irish music, as well as regular

[50] Vincent's reference to 'blocking it out' suggests a conscious understanding of the workings of trauma on the brain, and an acceptance that he has not felt ready to analyse his near-death experience in detail.
[51] Nugent-Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?: Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity*.p155
[52] Louise Sheridan, "More Than One Story to Tell: Exploring Twentieth-Century Migration to Northampton, England, in Memoir and Oral Narratives," *The Irish Review (1986-)*, no. 44 (2012).p92

trips back to the homeplace. Many of them also gave their children Irish names. Towards the end of this phase, the 'hard work' began to pay off for many of the narrators, enabling them to buy larger houses, more expensive cars, and holidays. This returns us to consider how these displays of consumption contribute to the performance of respectability

The final stage in this particular life narrative is that of older age, which all the interviewees are now in or approaching. Some of the narrators are still transitioning into this stage. Many have set up businesses which have been passed on to sons: they still retain an involvement in the work, and often stay involved in jobs and decisions, at least in an advisory capacity. Others have taken up roles in community organisations, such as the Irish Centre or local GAA clubs. Sean has taken up an entirely new hobby, horseshoe throwing. He has travelled extensively as part of a horse-shoe throwing team. This encapsulates elements of the cultural landscape, referenced earlier in relation to the nostalgic celebration of the Irish country cottage: a man playing horseshoes as part of a competition meant to evoke nostalgia in horse-shoe throwing veterans – except he never played it as a child. Just like John Hinde's postcards and the showband tunes at the Tuesday Club, it is conjuring up a past that not only no longer exists but possibly never did. Such are the vagaries of memory.

Migrant women and work

Hickman and Walter state that 'the masculine imagery of 'Paddy' hides the existence of Irish women in Britain, although they have outnumbered men since the 1920s'.[53] Women who migrated in the same time period as the men discussed above certainly have a less structured narrative: Sheridan suggests that 'the diasporic experiences of Irish women, who often do not perceive themselves as involuntary emigrants, are occluded from this [men's] meta-narrative by their limited representation'.[54] Women's migrant experience differs from men's especially as regards work, but as Hickman points out, 'women… are often more exposed (to racism) since their productive and reproductive roles connect more firmly to British society'.[55] All the women interviewed worked at certain points in their migrant journey, in varying jobs, but all of which involved working with the public or in the wider service industry. One of the women interviewed worked as a bus conductor; three were nurses; one worked in a shop, another cleaning in a hotel. One of the key differences was the ways in which these women's jobs meant they had far more

[53] Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain," *Feminist Review*, no. 50 (1995).p5

[54] Sheridan, "More Than One Story to Tell: Exploring Twentieth-Century Migration to Northampton, England, in Memoir and Oral Narratives."p92

[55] Hickman and Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain."p5

interaction with the host society than their male counterparts working in infrastructure, which had a significantly Irish base.

One topic many women engaged with was their Irish accent. This was not something that occurred with nearly the same frequency in discussions with men. Róisín, in a discussion at a women's group, suggested that as a migrant with an English partner, working on a telephone exchange, she quickly lost her Irish accent, the primary marker of her difference.[56] Another interviewee, Bernadette, a nurse, suggests that her accent created barriers with colleagues:

> BERNADETTE: They (work colleagues) didn't understand what I said, and I didn't understand what they said, to begin with, and I remember the very first report, you had a report after every year I think, the very first report said 'doesn't seem to understand our language' as if we didn't speak English, so you had to, that's why maybe I don't sound that Irish, because I tried to change for them to understand me you see…

Bernadette felt her accent – and associated identity – was the reason she was singled out for criticism; subsequently, she changed the way she spoke so as to conform to what she considered to be the expected standards. As Hickman suggests, her 'productive role' as a public-facing nurse put her more at risk of racism than her compatriots on Irish sites.[57] A number of years later, this modification has become a permanent feature of her speech. Ellen, however, who has not worked outside the home for a number of years, had a different perspective:

> ELLEN: I go out, I went to the shops, I'm talking to the people, and I remember one time, I think I was doing the milk round, and there were some English people, they loved, I'm not just saying it, they loved me accent. And quite a lot of people 'oh' she said 'I could talk to you all day' she says 'because of your accent.' And no I thought, well, I'm just, I didn't say but I said 'thank you,' but no, I didn't do it deliberate, I just, it just stayed, I didn't try to change it or anything else, I'm just, as I am.

Accents, as a form of Bourdieu's symbolic capital, are a sensitive topic for Irish migrants. Moreover, accent is one of the main ways in which Irish migrants would be marked as different by English colleagues and, in the case of the teachers that Ryan interviewed, students and parents. Particularly in relation to accents, she suggested that:

> even when there is no explicit criticism, some participants were almost anticipating blame and modifying their pronunciation accordingly. Linguistic evaluations (of accent, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, syntax) have been described as 'symbolic power'

[56] Field notes Feb 2016.

[57] Hickman and Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain."p5

> and in certain contexts, speakers may feel under pressure to modify their linguistic register to avoid sanction.[58]

Again referring to Bourdieu's supposition that language is an instrument of power, Ryan posits:

> Accent or pronunciation thus become an index of authority. Those who speak with a particular class or regional dialect will be judged against the dominant language in that society and may be denied authority or legitimacy. Those who are continually judged by their linguistic 'failings' particularly within an educational setting are likely to become self-conscious (Snell, 2011). Through the 'pressure toward correctness', to speak 'properly'… may result in a form of self-censorship, modifying pronunciation and changing 'linguistic register'[59]

Accent is one of the only marked ways in which difference is displayed in Irish migrants. Hickman also recognises its importance, and how in certain climates, people like Róisín and Bernadette in the interview sample may adapt it:

> Exposure at a personal level has highlighted Irish women's 'accents' - dialects and ways of speaking- the main source of identification of Irish people by the British. Many describe strategies for reducing their audibility, especially at times of heightened anti-Irish expression'.[60]

For Róisín and Bernadette, their accent was a barrier to assimilation, and something that could single them out and make them targets for criticism. Meanwhile Walter considers the politics of Irish accents in England, stating:

> [accents] have specific consequences for those settling in England. Here the powerful layering of "badge" of difference and "evidence" of inferiority draws tight boundaries around the Irish-born. Those inside the enclave are trapped in mainstream English constructions of their racialised ethnic identities, whilst those outside are cut off from their parents' origins. Thus English-born children are excluded from family ethnic identities in ways which are not extended, or allowed, to the second generations of "visible" minorities. The "lack" of an Irish accent is a key feature of the identities of second-generation Irish people in England.[61]

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[58] L. Ryan and E. Kurdi, "'Always up for the Craic': Young Irish Professional Migrants Narrating Ambiguous Positioning in Contemporary Britain," *Social Identities* 21, no. 3 (2015).p267

[59] Ibid.

[60] Hickman and Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain."p14

[61] Bronwen Walter, "Voices in Other Ears: "Accents" and Identities of the First- and Second-Generation Irish in England " in *Neo-Colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? : Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities* ed. Guido Rings; Anne Ife (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).p174-175

Second-generation migrant Saoirse reflects that her Leeds accent makes people question her Irishness, but ruminates that there is an Irish element to her speech; 'I think even though I speak with a Leeds accent there's a certain twang, certain words you say, and the way you pronounce things sometimes'. Hickman also describes the double-edged sword of Irishness – the expectation that assimilation is the key goal for Irish people, but that white privilege hides a number of cultural differences:

> The Irish are largely invisible as an ethnic group in Britain but continue to be racialized as inferior and alien Others. Invisibility has been reinforced by academic treatment. Most historians have assumed that a framework of assimilation is appropriate and this outcome is uncritically accepted as o desirable. Sociologists on the other hand have excluded the Irish from consideration, providing tacit support for the 'myth of homogeneity' of white people in Britain against the supposedly new phenomenon of threatening (Black) immigrants.[62]

Irish migrant women, therefore, have to engage at the individual and family level with actors of the state: this therefore exposes women to more conflict, and possible racism. It is worth noting that Hickman's work was published in 1995, when the Northern Ireland conflict was still ongoing, and IRA mainland bombing campaigns were still in recent memory, which likely raised sensitivities for both migrants and the host community.

> Nurses do not establish relationships with patients, nor have special feelings for one more than another. Well that's fair. Trainee nurses are called probationers. Why are we on probation? For being young, for being healthy, for daring the harrowing world of sickness to touch us. For having the arrogance to take other people's burdens on our backs, and hope to beat them. For the crime of foolishness, naiveté, innocence.[63]

Although women interviewed mentioned their jobs, there was very little detail in the interviews about the day to day experience of doing the job. It does not seem to hold the same cachet as an identity marker as work does for men. Zajdow and Poole had similar findings whereby Australian women of the same generation as those interviewed here (in their case born before 1946) were very dismissive of their experiences of paid work, and pay little attention to it in their life-story narrative. However, Zajdow and Poole pressed the women they interviewed to speak further about their work lives, and in so doing found a rich seam of experience that explores work for women in Australia at that time.[64] It is salient that they too note the reticence of the female narrators to explore and to place value on their experience of work. In these interviews, women in the older cohort in particular spoke little about their working lives. This could partly

[62] Hickman and Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain."p14
[63] Maeve Kelly, *Orange Horses* (Dublin: Tramp Press, 2016).p33
[64] Grazyna Zajdow and Marilyn Poole, ""Of Course I Didn't Work. Only When I Had To": Narratives of Women's Working Lives and What Really Counted," (2015).p179

be to do with the fact that many of this cohort were retired, so the minutiae of their working lives was less easy to recall. It could also be around the setting of the interview – Lauren and Grainne, the most loquacious of the later interviewees, were both interviewed in the workplace, whereas the older migrant women were mainly interviewed in the home or in Leeds Irish Centre. It could be that the setting influenced their confidence in talking at length about work. The interviewer worked as a volunteer with the organisation where Lauren and Grainne now work, which could also have made them more confident in being able to discuss the detail of their job: Louise Ryan's work on positionalities suggests that the interviewer's commonalities can lead to a better and more productive conversation or relationship with narrators.[65] Silva's narrators were more forthcoming of their experiences of nursing.[66] Bridget in particular opened up about her experience, and revealingly echoed the mention of hard work that is so prevalent in the men's narratives:

> People used to say "It must be hard being on the wards all day long", and I never thought it was hard you know, I thought it was a life of luxury and we had our own bedroom, we had clean linen every week… we were treated like royalty as student nurses really.[67]

In Bridget's case it is interesting to note that instead of stressing how difficult her job was, she focussed on how easy it was, and how well the staff were treated. It is as though her youth on a farm had her used to such hard work that everything after seemed easy and luxurious: 'because I was healthy, you know, work wasn't a problem for me.' Nursing as a challenging vocation is reflected on far more by Silva interviewee Sarah, who had emigrated at 18. She recalled a conversation about her nursing training:

> One of the other girls that was Irish said that she was hoping to go back to Ireland. And the Sister was very scathing, and said, "Oh, yes! You come over here to get our good training and then scarper off." As if we were making use of the facility of working in St James'. And I said "Hang on! We've worked for our training. We worked damned hard, forty hours a week. You used us as hands-on." We weren't just sitting on our bottoms being educated. We worked and worked hard. We got a pittance of a wage, we didn't have enough to survive on, we certainly didn't. I mean, your mind-set when you left Ireland was that you had left and you weren't going back. And you were expected to do well. So, if you were homesick, tough! If you were broke, tough![68]

This is pertinent both in its recognition of the importance of hard work, and in its admission that emigration was supposed to be a success, and should be portrayed in that way to family and

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[65] Louise Ryan, ""Inside" and "Outside" of What or Where? Researching Migration through Multi-Positionalities," *2015* 16, no. 2 (2015).p5

[66] Ryan's work further investigates the experience of Irish migrant nurses, a well-worn path in the post WWII period. Ryan*, I Had A Sister in England* See also the Age Exchange project 'Across the Irish Sea', a 1989 research project rich with testimonies of home life in Ireland for migrants to the UK, some of whom went into nursing.

[67] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p106.

[68] Ibid.

friends back in Ireland. This is implicit in a number of life history narratives, as narrators are keen to point out their successes, but it is rarely explicitly stated.

Bridget also mentions remittances, which are less prevalent in other women's stories: she was able to send home five pounds a month once qualified, and she claimed 'most of the nurses sent money home.' This is echoed by Delia, one of McGowan's interviewees:

> But I always, you know, because I was the second eldest I used to send money home as well, I used to send two pounds home every month… nobody asked me to but I think then it was accepted that people sent money home to their families when the eldest left.[69]

This is certainly a long-established practice: Fitzpatrick notes its prevalence in nineteenth-century society, with money flowing home to Ireland from Britain, the US and Australia. [70]

McGowan notes that:

> Delia's recollections highlight that it was widespread practice for the older siblings to send money home to support the younger members of the family. However, they also indicated that they still had enough money to live comfortably in England and didn't leave themselves short, mentioning buying clothes as a main expense.[71]

Another of Silva's interviewees, Joan, also trained as a nurse, and 'worked fourteen years on night duty': her only reflection on work is the challenging journey she used to take to maintain her caregiving responsibilities:

> We left Harehills you know, up to the Carr Manors, and then I was still at St James' working night duty. You got two buses then ran all the way up the hill to get the kids from school… when I look back at that hill, and I think now, people in cars must have thought there's a mad woman here racing up. But you love your family, you didn't suffer at the time.[72]

A different pattern begins to emerge here: women's work as a means of caring for the family; women's extraordinary efforts are focussed on providing a safe and loving environment for their children rather than on financial success and stability. Therefore, gendered measures of success are different, and this is particularly marked in relation to women migrants in the earlier generation. This recurs in narratives of women outside of nursing as well, whose testimony of their work stories are short and underdeveloped. Of course this brings up the thorny issue of how work is defined: many of these women would spend a number of hours every week working within the home regardless of their employment status, particularly if they had a family. For the purposes of this thesis, work is defined as paid work outside the home, but the additional burden of unpaid work, child rearing and care giving clearly falls disproportionately on women.[73]

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[69] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.p113

[70] David Fitzpatrick, "Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Irish Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1980).p129

[71] McGowan, p113.

[72] Silva, p135.

[73] This is discussed in more detail in the home chapter which follows.

More recent women migrants to Leeds had more diverse jobs, in charities, community organisations and the civil service: these jobs were still mainly public-facing and working to improve communities or to help people. Mary spoke only briefly and generically about her work. She mentioned that she moved because of her husband's job, but this appeared more because of the specialist nature of his role than the prioritisation of his career as a librarian:

> MARY: there's very few librarian jobs in Ireland, cos people just stay in those jobs for life, right: and I had been in my job for seven years, and I was ready for a change, so we decided we'd come to the UK. And Leeds was accidental in some ways: we said that wherever he got a job, we would move to, because I was more flexible in terms of the type of work I do.

Lauren moved to Leeds after university in Hull because it was her husband's home; as with Mary, this suggests a willingness to make sacrifices about home and work for a relationship:

> LAUREN: So long story short, I ended up here in Leeds, and the first job I got was at a homeless hostel, in Leeds, so I worked at two homeless hostels, one with the English churches and one at a Catholic church, and then I got a job at a local Leeds Irish organisation when I was about 25, so I've been here ever since then, I'm 46 now, so yeah, I've been here ever since.
> INTERVIEWER: so that's pretty much since the start of it, yeah. So you started working for this organisation when it started?
> LAUREN: basically when it started, yeah. There was only the CEO and one other staff member. And then I came in. And yeah, it's just kind of grew since then really, this is our third office. So I've progressed from being a support worker and now I'm in management. So yeah. It's been really really good.

Lauren had originally considered nursing training, and her expectations of work were interesting:

> INTERVIEWER: What made you want to do nursing, or think you wanted to do nursing?
> LAUREN: I think because when I was growing up, women didn't have careers as such. You either went into teaching or you went into nursing, and a few, I think I knew one other lady who worked in a bank, but most of my aunts were either housewives, I think one of my aunts had a hair salon, and that seemed really glamorous, I mean she had her own business, one of my aunts had a business actually in Canada. And she was, I remember we used to talk about her being very smart, clever, you know, she had set up her own insurance company, she had migrated to Canada with my other aunt, but most of my aunts were housewives with children. So, I wanted to be a nurse because I wanted a proper job, and it seemed a natural progression I suppose; it seemed to be the door was open to me… my aunt was a nurse, she was the only one, but I knew quite a few neighbours, there was a neighbour over the road, she was a nurse as well, so yeah, I knew a few nurses through the family.

Nursing seemed an obvious choice to Lauren because it was one of the only examples of paid work outside the home she saw in the women she knew growing up. She had spent a number of years working with the housing organisation, and it was clear that it was important for her to develop a relationship with clients and to support them as much as possible. She spoke at length about her role as a housing officer, and particularly her work alongside other support-based organisations:

> LAUREN: And I absolutely loved the work. It wasn't really working with the Irish; it was working with five other mental health organisations in Leeds, and for the last five years I've been working with asylum seekers, I've been working with all communities in Leeds, and I absolutely loved it. And I kind of got away from the Irish side of things here, because that was what I was doing… For me it was fascinating, because I loved learning about different cultures and different people, and even people from Iran, hearing about them being tortured, the problems they had, the struggles they were having when they come over here. And I suppose what it was: people who were really in need, you know, really really… and I know that we've got our community here, but it's quite, you know, we're set up to help the Irish community. And some of the other communities actually had nothing, had very little and were really struggling, and I really enjoyed that. I got a lot out of that actually.

Although more recent migrants like Lauren have moved away from the traditional path of nursing, a number of them still work in roles in community or civil service organisations where they are actively involved in helping people in need: some, but not all, from the Irish community. Lauren's colleague Grainne was explicit about the different stages, the steps and the ideologies that led her to each phase in her career. Having begun her work life as a social worker, she became very successful in the charity sector, and then in the civil service, a move she found unexpectedly complicating for her sense of self:

> GRAINNE: And so that's when I crossed over from the voluntary sector to the civil service, which I never ever ever ever thought I would do. And I actually felt, you know, cos I'm a wee girl from the Falls, very conflicted about this. On the one hand, here was this opportunity to really, genuinely – I know this is a cliché, but to genuinely improve the quality of life for children: and if you can do it in the first five years, the effect on the trajectory of the rest of your lives… but to work for the British government! You know, inside the civil service. Um, and I had a real, that was a real challenge for me to get my head round, and it took me a while. It took me a long time actually, to kind of feel like I wasn't there under false pretences. Um, and then gradually it dawned on me how little they actually knew inside the civil service!
> INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's like impostor syndrome? A lot of academics say they have that.
> GRAINNE: Yeah, yeah. And then you realise how full of shit all of it is?
> INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah. And how nobody knows what they're doing.
> GRAINNE: really they have no idea what they're doing, but they're very good at covering up, they're very good at making it all very opaque.

Grainne had a successful career in the civil service, but it took her away from her home and community, and ultimately when the opportunity came to leave what had become a Conservative-led civil service, she took the chance to do so. Grainne moved back to Leeds first to volunteer and then to work for an Irish organisation in the city:

> GRAINNE: So when I walked away from the high-pressure, high-status stuff, I thought, right I'm going to pay attention to where I live now. And I did. So I started volunteering with a local Irish organisation, in the lunch club, and then the women's group, and then I set up a bereavement group with them, and then they advertised a job, and I thought to myself, it's part time, I'll have a go. And that's why I'm here. And you couldn't get a better antidote to the arrogant rarified pompous atmosphere of the civil service, than

working for the Irish community in Leeds, you know. Talk about coming back and finding your own again. It's just been so good for me.
INTERVIEWER: In terms of your identity as an Irish person, has working in this environment changed the way you see yourself in the city, or…
GRAINNE: It's been so affirming. It's only just to talk to you now that I realise so much of my professional career I suppose if you think about it that way: my Irishness had no place in it. Um, and I, to a certain extent,
INTERVIEWER: so you had a different identity in the workplace
GRAINNE: Yeah, obviously didn't hide who I was. But it was almost irrelevant. I have to say I never experienced any discrimination. I have to say that. At least not overtly. And if it was covert, it didn't bother me. But, of course, being Irish and working for this organisation, it just makes all the difference because you know the code. You know the code. You know the codes plural that operate, because of course it's not one community is it, not one homogenous community. There's northerners, there's southerners, there's rural people, there's city people, there's, you know, there's Catholics, there's Protestants, there's people who have political awareness and people who don't. There's people who have made good and people who haven't. There's all sorts: and each of them use their own code. But I think I have a sufficient breadth of understanding to be able to interpret all the codes.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think in the jobs you did in the civil service, it helped you to recognise that there were these different codes of, the way that people are. Or do you think it was coming back to the community level then…
GRAINNE: No, um, I learnt loads and loads in all my jobs, I learnt loads. But understanding the cultural nuances, that comes from my own I think, that comes from my upbringing. My mother was from Cork, my father was from Kerry. You know, so I did have the rural understanding.[74]

Grainne reflects here on the complex nature of working in Irish environments, and the amount of emotional labour that goes into so much effective interpersonal work. Overall, women's later work narratives have become more detailed, focussing productive and quantifiable hard work, on building and maintaining relationships, and on understanding and supporting others. This is perhaps a more nuanced and holistic approach to work as part of a broader life, rather than as a means to itself, which is how it appears in some men's narratives.

Later migrant experience

Education plays very little part in the narratives of earlier migrants, particularly for men. Only Vincent spoke about education in any real sense; he reflected on being given the opportunity to study engineering at college in the UK; he did this alongside his work, enabling him to successfully develop his skills in civil engineering whilst earning a wage at the same time. Generally, men educated in Ireland prior to the 1960s had little to say about the experience. Their working-class contemporaries in Britain benefitted from Butler's Education Act allowing for free secondary education since 1944: it would be two decades until the Irish education system

[74] This long extract has been included because Grainne and the interviewer analyse the social codes within the confines of the interview, giving an effective overview of how Grainne believes the job and institution function within the community.

brought in its own, equivalent legislation. There were far-reaching changes in education policy in the Republic of Ireland in the late 1960s, when Donogh O'Malley as Minister for Education created legislation for free comprehensive education and school transport up to the age of 16 for all Irish children. This was transformative:

> Donogh O'Malley introduced free secondary education in 1967, and that was the third landmark in modern Ireland. He forced this measure through against fierce opposition. They were saying we couldn't afford it. He was hated by members of his own party. The civil servants would have had him assassinated, such was the hatred and opposition, not to mention the wrath of the Catholic Church. I would say Archbishop McQuaid despised Donogh, and sure why wouldn't he? Donogh was a threat to the status quo, the lucrative hegemony of the Church in education, and he wasn't a bit timid about calling them out… He got the bill through; to me that Bill was the making of modern Ireland. By this I mean that thousands of boys and girls in the mountains were now able to go to school because of the buses. Many of these went on to tertiary education. Their contribution to our present wealth, such as it is, was considerable.[75]

This legislation impacted on the narratives of later migrants from the Republic of Ireland in particular, for whom further and higher education, as Houlihan suggests, became far more of a way of life.

The first detailed account of education was part of Kevin's story. Kevin moved to England as a child from Belfast in the early 1970s. The phenomenon of 'accent modification' is evident in an interview with Kevin, who talks about moving to Leeds as a child with a Belfast accent at the start of the Troubles:

> KEVIN: And so we lived on East End Park. I couldn't get a school place in a Catholic school, so I ended up going to a Protestant Church of England school, to a Church of England school
> INTERVIEWER: What would have been the Catholic school?
> KEVIN: It would have been St Bernard's but it was full. So I had to wait there until I got a place. So eventually I did get a place. But while I was there, I got a really full sense of what was gonna happen, cos I got bullied, because I had a real Irish accent. A Belfast accent. Which I can still put on now if I want to.
> INTERVIEWER: But… was it a choice, at that time. I mean obviously when you're a child you don't really…I don't think it's conscious.
> KEVIN: I was just talking normally, but I was getting picked on at school because I was Irish.
> INTERVIEWER: So did you change the way you spoke?
> KEVIN: I did yes. I didn't do it on purpose: it just came after a while, and my Leeds accent sort of developed. Although when I'm with my family, apparently it comes back. When I'm back with family, cos I've got family in Belfast: they come over here, I go over there. When we get together my Irish accent comes out.

[75] PJ Browne, *Unfulfilled Promise: Memories of Donogh O'Malley* (Dublin: Currach, 2008).p159

This switching between two variations of English is a type of monolingual code-switch; the narrator is aware that his choice is not deliberate, but he recognises that the bullying he received made him shed his Belfast accent, at least in certain situations.[76]

Kevin describes his experiences of bullying thus:

> KEVIN: There was a bunch of kids: about 3 or 4 or 5 of them; and every single day, one of them hit me. They'd walk up behind me and punch me in the head. Slap me in the face. Every single day. And I told the teachers, and I told me mother, and they said we'll keep an eye on it, it won't happen. And they didn't, it just carried on. And I'd never hit anyone in my life, but this one lad in particular was doing it all the time, and he walked up behind and slapped me in the face, and I turned round, and I punched him so hard, and I watched him falling and bust his nose. And he lay there looking at me, and I says if you ever hit me again, I'm going to do it. That was the only time I ever hit anybody in my life. I was just at the end of my tether. I was getting slapped…
> INTERVIEWER: Did it stop?
> KEVIN: Yeah. He didn't touch me again after that
> INTERVIEWER: That's the thing, they say not to do that don't they, but… if it works!
> KEVIN: Well I'm not a violent person, but I were just… I just got so sick of it, every single day: I never knew when, as I was walking through the playground or through the cloakroom, whether someone was gonna slap me on t'head. And this one day he tried it on his own. Cos usually they'd do it together in a group, so it were safe. But he did it on his own then. And I turned round and saw him so I just punched him. Knocked him flipping *makes noise* Lip were like that. And he just lay there. 'What did you do that for?' I said 'If you're gonna touch me again, you'll get another one.' And none of em ever touched me again. But that went on for years. But that affected my education, because I couldn't concentrate at school, because I was scared of going to school. Sometimes, when I went to the primary school, when I were being picked on there, not as bad, but I used to run out of school, and I'd be home before me mother got home. Cos she took me to school, and she walked back home, and I'd run out the other way, and I'd be at home waiting when she got home. So all through my school life I was bullied.

This had a profound effect on Kevin, and shaped his later working life. He found a vocation in politics, keen to protect children like him who were suffering from bullying, 'So I left school, 16, with very little qualifications. About 3 CSEs, at the time. And one of 'em was in Civics. Which we studied local government. That was the only time.' Kevin had the chance to support bullied children when he joined the local council and was appointed to a sub-committee:

> KEVIN: And the first thing I did, I was on the education committee; they put me on that. And the first thing I said – 'I want an anti-bullying policy in this city, and I want it to cover every single school.' 'oh we don't have' and I says you say you don't have problems: I was told we don't have problems when I went to secondary school. And I got beaten to a bloody pulp. And they said they had an anti-bullying policy. But anyway, so we actually moved on that and we pushed it. And there's an anti-bullying policy in all schools, and I always say to people: 'If you are on a governing body, the first thing you say is I want to see the policy. I want to see how it works.' Cos I don't want another kid to go through what I went to school with in Leeds, cos 1 it affects your education, and

[76] This is a more extreme echo of the accent modification undertaken by women migrants in public-facing jobs, which we see earlier in the chapter.

> your chances in later life, and 2 it's so – getting hit all the time, and beaten all the time: it's not fun. So that was one thing I was determined to do. And I did it.

Interviewees from this younger cohort include a significantly higher number of Irish-identifying narrators from Northern Ireland, which was and remains part of the UK; however, this remains a 'migration' as defined by Ravenstein and allows for a comparative reflection on the role events of the 1960s and 1970s had in changing the Irish migrant experience, both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Those interviewees who grew up with the education system in Northern Ireland were part of the same qualifications structure as the English system, and this gave opportunities to young people keen to seek out new experiences in England. Grainne moved to England in the early 1980s from Belfast. The first in her family to go to university, she studied in Belfast before moving to England to pursue a post-graduate qualification in social work. As a volunteer for a peacebuilding organisation, Grainne had a firm vision of the way she wanted to do social work:

> GRAINNE: I found myself in Leeds by accident. I didn't follow, you know, a well-worn path here or anything. Um, I came over in the early 80s to England, which was a really big step for me actually, I didn't really want to come; but I'd finished my degree at Queens, and wanted to go on to do a postgraduate in social work…And I had been doing a lot of work with an organisation which does reconciliation work between Protestant and Catholic communities. And if truth be told, the main reason why I stayed on and did my degree for as long as I did: I was the first one in our family to every stay on at school let alone go to university, you know…but it gave me loads and loads of free time to do the youth and community work that I wanted to do. But as a result of that I got burned out; four years of doing intensive work across the sectarian divide with young people, and prisoners wives and all of that, during the height of the Troubles, as they were called, it was actually: I was burnt out. So I decided I would come over and do a social work qualification, and go back…And I didn't even come to Leeds actually, I came to Hull, to do social work, because they ran a postgraduate social work course with no exams, and I thought, I'll have that, with continuous assessment. So it wasn't long after I was at Hull before I realised that it wasn't really the place for me…what I was interested in was, I suppose you would call it community-based social work. And of course, there was none of that at Hull. I was interested in group work. And so I got my placements: I had to sort my own placements, and my placements were in Leeds: and that was how I came to Leeds.

Moving to England had never been a permanent plan for Grainne, and nor was Leeds a well-known destination. She actually began her migrant journey in England in Hull, the same place as her colleague Lauren, whose arrival was equally unplanned:

> LAUREN: So anyway, I remember just going down to the job centre with my sister, of course I didn't get anything, and they were doing the clearing, to see where I could go, and said, actually, there's plenty of courses available in England, and I hadn't really thought about going, and I thought, oh right, it's a bit of an adventure, I'll go there!... And I remember going, my sister's going 'go for it, go for it, go to live in England' and I've never even set foot in England, and I thought you know what, I'll give it a go. So I was going through all the ones in alphabetical order, and then I see something like sociology, something like that, and then I came across Humberside University, Hull,

where's Hull? And I put it on the map. Oh, right. And I ended up just thinking, yeah I like the sound of that course, that's how I came.

Lauren's 'map' analogy is echoed by Fearghal, who moved to Leeds at a similar time from Fermanagh:

> FEARGHAL: In 1995, I went to university at Trinity and All Saints, and I went there for a couple of years, dropped out, but because I quite like Leeds, I thought I'd stay here for a few years, and I ended up still here after 23 years.
> INTERVIEWER: what made you want to come here to go to university? Why here?
> FEARGHAL: No particular reason; because one of my mates wanted to go to Leeds; I could have just put a finger, swirled it around, and stuck it anywhere on a map; I had no prior knowledge except for the Leeds United football team.

Lauren had previously harboured ambitions to become a nurse:

> LAUREN: I came here: I'm from Northern Ireland, and I came here because, I think in a nutshell, I came here because I didn't get the qualifications I needed to go to university in Northern Ireland. There was two main universities, in Jordanstown and Queens, and I remember, and I think, I didn't really have a real academic background in Ireland anyway, and I wasn't really encouraged that much, and I kind of drifted through: didn't get my GCSEs, kind of went to the sixth form, kind of went to the college then in Newry: I thought I was going to be a nurse, that was what I was planning to be. So I went and did a pre-nursing course… And that's what I went to go in to get my extra GCSEs to do nursing in Belfast, that's where I thought I'd be, at Belfast hospital. And then I went for an interview, and they were saying, oh you're doing A-Levels, and I said yeah, I was kind of doing A-Levels just to fill a day, I hadn't really thought about it, they said well, actually we think you should finish that off, cos we've started a degree in Nursing, go back and finish them. And I was only doing, so anyway I ended up doing two years of my A-Levels, and decided actually I don't think nursing's for me really, I'm squeamish at blood.[77]

All three of the more recent migrants from the Republic of Ireland in this study moved to England originally for university. It is therefore important to look at not just the work but the education journeys of the migrants, as education began to be a more reliable indicator of success. Ronan moved to Leeds relatively recently, and consolidated his European family unit there, when he moved to the city to join his French partner; they were later joined by a son, born in 2017. His migrant story, though, begins in rural Cork, where he grew up surrounded by migration; the idea he might join the centuries of local tradition was never far away:

> RONAN: I grew up in a small town in Cork; it's about a thousand (years old) and it's traditionally a very Anglo-centric town: it was a garrison town, and it always had a port and exported a lot to the UK. Fish and things like that. So it was a town that had been fortified by the English, and English inhabitants. And so, my town was an unusual one in that it always had colonial links. You know, rather than some of the farming towns in Ireland. But my father was at sea in the British merchant navy, and my grandfather had been in the Royal Navy. And my great-grandfather had been in the Fusiliers at Gallipoli. My dad was very outward looking: he was always very interested in Liverpool, you know,

[77] Lauren's expectations of herself as a nurse can be echoed not just in the women in her direct circle, but more widely in the significant numbers of Irish women who came to Britain to become nurses. As well as those interviewed in this study and in Silva's, there are a number of studies by Walter, Ryan and others, as well as literary representations of Irish women nurses, such as those in Maeve Kelly or John B Keane.

> in contrast to the more romantic nationalism of my mother, my father was always you know, well England's great, it's great craic, and good fun, a whole other range of things.

At school in the 1980s, Ronan attended the only school in the town which was run by the Christian Brothers:

> RONAN: the secondary school that I had went to, the Christian Brothers School which was a kind of working class secondary school, with a high proportion of people from the country on what were considered free school meals. You had like the whole range: the CBS, it had the doctors' sons, and then it had the roughest kids in town, cos it was the only secondary school in the town.

Mary and David also attended their local school in Ireland: David's educational journey involved travel at an early age, when his family uprooted to Canada before returning to rural eastern Ireland. This gave him the opportunity to compare the education systems, mostly unfavourably; he suggested that his Irish education experience was far more agricultural, focussing on the skills his classmates would need to be successful farmers. He did however mention a particular teacher who noticed his own maths and science skillsets, and set him challenges to keep him engaged in learning. Having attempted to study closer to home in Dublin, life crises conspired to see him drop out, and end up enrolling to study in England, in Middlesbrough. Mary's educational journey was similar to Ronan's, in that she moved around to further her education:

> MARY: Okay, so I grew up in a, by English standards a very small town in the West of Ireland, in County Mayo. I went to an all-girls, Catholic school, which was very typical of the education system in Ireland, they were separated out! And then I left my home town when I was 18 to go to university, I went to Dublin City University where I studied applied languages, then came to Leeds for a year, to do an MA in phonetics; worked for a year, and then decided to do a PhD, so I did a PhD in Trinity College, Dublin.

Ronan completed his Leaving Cert the year before university tuition fees were introduced in England. Having convinced his teacher to predict higher than likely grades on his application, Ronan got an unconditional offer to study at the University of Hertfordshire. He suggests that as an outsider he was not privy to the workings of English university hierarchies, and thought that, similarly to Ireland's National University of Ireland, most universities in England were the same:

> RONAN: interestingly at that point, I wasn't aware that there was a distinction in universities, I thought all universities were the same: I wasn't aware about the Russell Group, or… (Irish universities have different academic hierarchies) exactly… I'm from a working class family, so there wasn't just any knowledge around universities, there wasn't any discourse about selectivity, there was nothing really about ideas – I would be the first generation of my family to go, so, like, my brother was at uni, and I was going. So there wasn't enough information about university to allow us to make a very critical judgment, or a very selective judgment, based on perception or anything like that.

After graduating, Ronan, similarly to Mary, went back to Ireland, this time to study for a Masters at the 'prestige' local university, University College Cork. For all of the migrants in this generation, education was critical in securing and progressing in employment, unlike their

predecessors. It has also played a part in shaping their life course and their identity, both in the workplace and socially.

Lives outside the dominant narrative

There is clearly a dominant life narrative that Irish men of a certain background and generation feel pressurised to conform to. Those who conform can suffer problems with certain elements of the narrative – drink and risk taking in the second phase, or overwork in the third. By and large though, these men are seen as successful. Measures of success, as in much of Irish migrant society, are implicit, but they exist: wealth; a successful business; a happy family; a German car; maybe a newly built or renovated house at the homeplace in Ireland. There are a number of points in this narrative where men who struggle to fit can fall behind or away from their peers. A lack of a career, and the respectability this affords, is certainly part of this. Those who fail to adjust from heavy drinking, or who are alcohol dependent, may fail to graduate to the third phase. Irish migrant men who do not settle into work or life with a partner are far more likely to suffer from physical and mental ill-health than those who do.[78] Single men are vastly overrepresented as clients of organisations such as Leeds Irish Health and Homes, and indeed some of them are acutely aware of how and why they do not fit the dominant paradigm. Gerald, a controlled street drinker, speaks about being single, and his solitude:

> GERALD: I met a woman in Leeds, at a Christmas party. She told me she was lonely. I imagined a lonely woman sat in a house knitting socks, tears in her eyes, looking out the window. She invited me over for Christmas once, and she didn't seem lonely. Her sisters were there, and they liked to sit round smoking and watching the TV. The problem was we'd nothing in common. CS Lewis says that to be in love, you've to be on the same lonely road. You've to have something in common, even if it's only collecting matchsticks.

Gerald was very articulate about the rootlessness of his situation, and attributed his alcoholism and subsequent loneliness to fate. He claims to prefer his position on the peripheries of society; rejecting AA for its 'too many egos' and suggesting he has no interest in returning home:

> GERALD: I wouldn't go back to Ireland now, I couldn't settle. There's that small town mentality. You'd speak to someone and they'd say to you "now did you see Eddie's new white shirt?" Why would you want to go back to that?

A Silva interviewee, John struggled with drinking and details his problems around recovery. His itinerant lifestyle lacked structure, so drinking was a constant for him. At the time he was interviewed John had been sober for around three years:

> I travelled years ago, coming and going here and boozing there. Maybe drank out on a bench different days, trying to meet company because I had no-one to talk to and this and that, and sometimes you wouldn't meet good ones out there neither. I go to Delaney's 'What are you having John, a pint of Stones?' when I'm off the drink, but when I was drinking they wouldn't ask me for a drink. Some of them don't want to see

[78] John O'Dwyer, "Diggin' Deeper," (Leeds Irish Health and Homes, 2000).p6

> me going well. They don't want to see me off the drink. They want to get me going, and get a laugh out of me, and have a bit of a joke and the craic.[79]

This also affects younger generations, and can be seen in Irish migration populations elsewhere. Ronan also highlights the darker side of the Irish migrant experience, in this case in other parts of the world, but mirroring the Leeds' examples:

> RONAN: The building firm was totally dominated by the Irish. Lots of very sad alcoholics there as well actually, sad cases, lads my age who had gone out on Visas and were never coming back. And in so many ways it was actually kind of reflective of the exile community that would be in the building sites in Leeds in the 50s. Because it was further distance away, it was less: it had been less kind of professionalised?... I mean I worked with two guys who were raging alcoholics, and their lives: lovely guys, very very bright. And it was quite clear that they were not going home because of the shame. The shame that they hadn't made something of themselves, that they hadn't done something differently: you could tell that they often spoke to people at home, but then they told them their lives were great, and they were living you know in the sunshine and everything was going well. And in fact there was a deep sadness: the entire company was owned by a guy who had worked for this other man, and that other man was now driving the tractor: he had had a multi-million pound business in Australia in the 70s, but he drank it all, and the business went to the wall. And he was working as a labourer for one of his former employees when he was out there. So it was a really sad place to work.

The migrants who had failed to live up to the successful migrant story, much of which for men revolves around work, were therefore stuck: and this was compounded by the cultural and physical distance from home of these workers.

These narrators still see themselves as part of the wider narrative, but paint themselves as figures of fun, or as a warning signs to other more successful migrants. They perceive a symbiotic relationships with their more socially-prosperous compatriots; they recognise their own inability to live up to the narrative of success. The 'hard work' cultural script leaves little room for compassion: if hard work is the key to success, then failure must be in some ways the fault of the individual – as Richard extrapolates, 'you'd have to be awful lazy to be out of work.'[80] Perhaps this is easier than looking for faults in the system, but it also illustrates the social and cultural conservatism in the views of older Irish migrants that were evidenced in the first chapter of this thesis.

Another way migrants perceive themselves as outsiders is in relation to the Troubles. The intensification of the Troubles in Northern Ireland affected the relationship between Irish migrants and the British host population. For some migrants, experience of coming from the North of Ireland had isolated them twice: from the host community and also from the 'respectable' established members of the city's Irish community, who wished to distance themselves from the Troubles. Kevin's work, for example, was very heavily influenced by having

[79] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p140.
[80] Silva, p140

grown up in Belfast. Kevin felt his experience of the Troubles was of benefit to him in local politics, as he had experience of life in both places and could explain things more clearly to his colleagues. He felt very strongly that the issues in Northern Ireland were either ignored or misunderstood by the people he knew in Yorkshire. He spoke about how he had introduced himself at the selection meeting where he first stood as a councillor:

> KEVIN: I just told them what had happened: about myself and my history; and why I thought it was important to help and why I wanted to get involved in local politics because I could see from: because I'd studied a lot; I learnt a lot about Ireland, and what happened and stuff during the Troubles. And I knew: I still went back there, I'd been there a few times. And I'd been: I told them about once, when I went back, with my mum and my two brothers, and we were stood at the bus stop, and all of a sudden, this Land Rover, with British soldiers in it, came flying round the corner: two guys jumped out, jumped underneath it, and bullets started firing all over the place. And they said 'get down, get down!' so we were like: and underneath a land rover in front of us, two soldiers shooting at snipers. And that's my first contact…
> INTERVIEWER: that's quite hard-core, isn't it?
> KEVIN: I was scared to death
> INTERVIEWER: Do you think people in Leeds really knew what was going on in Northern Ireland?
> KEVIN: I don't think they realised to the extent of how – the Catholic community were – I can say this, because I'm Catholic – but the way the Catholic community were treated over there, the nationalists and the loyalists, uh, cos my uncle, I mean: most of the people on the estate where I lived, in Belfast, were unemployed: they couldn't get a job.
> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that politicised you: what was going on in Northern Ireland?
> KEVIN: oh aye, I think it did: because I could see what was going on, and what was happening. And I knew what was happening, to family over there, who were still living there. And I knew what happened when we went there. And, because we spent a lot of the time, when I was a kid, at the Irish Centre, and you could overhear conversations about what was going on and how many people had been murdered that week, and Bloody Sunday and what happened, and everything else. And the Irish community in Leeds were very angry. But the place: the Irish Centre was being attacked, like mosques are being attacked: they were throwing bricks through windows, pulling the tricolour down, the flag off the: at the time, there was all sorts of stuff.[81] The Irish community were being picked on. If you were Irish, and that's why your language started to change. People were changing their accents. Not purposefully, just doing it.

Grainne had been an activist in Belfast, and when she came to Leeds the city was in disarray due to the trail of destruction wreaked by Peter Sutcliffe, known colloquially as the Yorkshire Ripper:

> GRAINNE: I came here at the time of the Yorkshire Ripper, and this place was humming, so I'd come out of the fire, in Belfast, straight into a city that was on high alert.
> INTERVIEWER: What was that like, if it's not too difficult a question?
> GRAINNE: Um, uh, you must bear in mind, I was still in a mind-set where I would walk into Marks and Spencer's, and open my bag, and wait for somebody to come and check it?

[81] These attacks on the Irish Centre were not mentioned in any of the other interviews for this thesis, although Sean did note some hostility whilst parading with an Irish flag around the streets near the Irish Centre.

INTERVIEWER: So you'd already been in an environment where there was a lot of…
GRAINNE: Heightened tension. I was used to heightened tension. That didn't bother me at all. I found it, you know, that it was a bit upsetting that nobody came to check my bags. I thought, you know, that anybody could plant a bomb around here. And nobody would stop em! And you know, you had to kind of work through that stuff. I had to work through that stuff. So it did a lot, I suppose, for my feminist education, being in Leeds at that time, and seeing the women mobilise. Now of course, in Belfast I'd seen women mobilise all the time, but around a different issue.
INTERVIEWER: I've been reading in some of the journals about some of the organisations… there was the time they set fire to the sex shop in Chapeltown
GRAINNE: I was here. I was there. I wasn't there at the event! But I was, the burning down the sex shops, the very early Reclaim the Night marches, the Women Against Violence Against Women…

Grainne also makes links between where she has come from and her new home through political and societal experiences:

GRAINNE: so here's this wee girl from the Falls Road, so of course I had grown up in a culture where violence towards women was quite, the norm: almost the norm. And this was my political education, and I had a big political education as a child of a different nature, being brought up on the Falls Road. But this was a different political education for me. So anyway, this is what completely fascinated me about Leeds, and it was an exhilarating time to be here actually. So, my first job in Leeds, so finishing the social work course, applied for jobs back home, and of course there was none to be had.
INTERVIEWER: so did you want to go home?
GRAINNE: actually at that stage I did, I wanted to go back. Um I was sort of, I was only passing through here. Wanted to get my qualification and go back, but at that time in the 80s there was no employment to be had, and even if a job was advertised in the paper, everybody knew whose job it was, you know, one of those things? And so I, because I had a little network of friends here, I thought I'll apply for jobs here and see what happens, and in the end got a job about a stone's throw away from here, working in: they got money for working with young offenders, and that was the first job that I got here, and I absolutely loved it. And that was with an organisation whose main focus was working with children. I loved working for them. And then my next job was working for a probation charity. Because this movement started at this time. It was the big short sharp shock days for young offenders, and magistrates were locking football hooligans up in institutions, and of course they were coming out as drug addicts and burglars and all sorts, so there was a big, big movement to try and change the system, to support young offenders in the community, rather than…
INTERVIEWER: like the probation services? Sort of..
GRAINNE: Partly through the probation services, yeah, but they got quite a lot of voluntary organisations to run this, so that's what I did in Leeds: innovative, ground-breaking practice.

Grainne's work experiences show an affinity with those in society who have less power, or have been marginalised, such as children and the incarcerated. This lends itself to her current work. The way in which the Irish are seen – and also see themselves – as 'other' in Britain is explored in Grainne's narrative. In relation to her work with Irish migrants, she suggests that her staff become familiar with the concept of 'internalised oppression', as she believes it explains a lot about the position of the Irish in British society:

> GRAINNE: One of the things I talk to staff here about, carefully, is internalised oppression. Because I think the Irish do it a lot. I think the Irish in Britain do it a lot. And I think internalised oppression contributes to the not being explicit about the code. It's a kind of a closing in, keeping others out, and a defensiveness, which actually holds you back.

Theories around internalised oppression identify it as a by-product of colonialism:

> Fanon's anger is directed not towards the "black man" but the proposition that he is required not only to be black but he must be black in relation to the white man. It is the internalization, or rather as Fanon calls it epidermalization, of this inferiority that concerns him. When the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man. It is the dynamic of inferiority that concerns Fanon; and which ultimately he wishes to eliminate.[82]

This internalization, first theorised by Fanon, has been extended from its initial, racialized incarnation, to include other marginalised groups, such as women and people with disabilities. Grainne's supposition is that Irish migrants feel this internalized oppression –that is, that in order to be successful they should make every effort to assimilate: this in turn puts them under pressure to ignore overt cultural differences. Sometimes this has negative psychological and physical outcomes, as we saw earlier with the men who failed to fit into the prevailing cultural paradigm of success. Moane considers how Ireland can learn from postcolonial theory by transcending the unhelpful binary of post-colonialism. She cites Anthony Clare, who:

> commented on the high rates of mood disorders in Ireland: 'The most compelling cultural explanation has been that which points to the impact of centuries of foreign political and psychological domination on the Irish mind, a mind enveloped and to an extent suffocated in an English mental embrace'.[83]

She further investigates how internalized oppression can function psychologically, using the example of attitudes to drinking and alcohol: she suggests that levels of problem drinking are similar in Ireland and the UK, but that the Irish are stereotyped as heavy drinkers, and they absorb and reflect that stereotype, whether consciously or unconsciously:

> A detailed comparison of alcohol consumption figures across cultures provides clear evidence that Irish consumption is almost always at or near the top of the list in terms of, for example, numbers of binge drinkers; amount consumed by regular heavy drinkers; amount consumed by regular moderate drinkers. The country next most likely to be at or near the top of the list is Britain. Both countries share similar patterns of alcohol consumption. Yet the Irish are far more likely to be labelled as 'heavy' drinkers. Further qualitative research on this topic revealed the extent to which the discourse about the Irish as drinkers has been internalised, in this instance by a student sample. In interviews with twelve students who were moderate to heavy drinkers, Sinéad Ní Chaoláin found a consistent theme of feeling the need to drink in order to perform socially, epitomised in the following: 'I felt . . . I couldn't go out if I wasn't tanked up, like we were supposed to

[82] Ziauddin Sardar, "Foreword," in *Black Skin, White Masks*, ed. Frantz Fanon (Grove Press, 2008).pxiii
[83] Geraldine Moane, "Postcolonial Legacies and the Irish Psyche," in *Are the Irish Different?*, ed. Tom Inglis (Manchester University Press, 2014).p126.

> have the craic'. Phrases linking Irishness to drink recurred – 'we're Irish, we drink'. Open-ended responses in a survey of 312 students provided an overall sense not only of permission but of pressure in Irish culture to drink. Thus 'the Irish as drinkers' operates as a perception by others, as an identity or internalised self-perception, and as behavioural and cultural patterns, creating a self- perpetrating cycle.[84]

Grainne recognises patterns of behaviour among clients of her organisation, when she suggests that:

> GRAINNE: There's a suite of behaviours which the Irish community have, which, you know, we can know the code and what have you, but it gets in the way. It stops them accessing the health service: it stops them actually calling for help when they need it, because they are too bloody proud, and they don't want anybody to know that they're weak at this particular time. You know because, they've been... Either they have been self-sufficient, or they have made a big play of being self-sufficient. And pride comes before a fall, so don't let on you've had a fall kind of thing. All of that stuff. You've got to have the sensitivity to know that those are the waves that you're riding.

Some elements of internalised oppression also apparent in the smoothing over of conflicts by many of the interviewees in Leeds. It is telling the number of people who suggest that they 'haven't had any problems' with English people. Ryan's interviews with migrants from the 1950s-1970s are similar: she found that:

> even nurses in a hospital setting were not always precluded from negative stereotyping and insults. Within many of the women's narratives there are accounts of blatant forms of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice. The fact that most of the women did not perceive this as anti-Irish racism suggests that as Irish migrants in Britain they had come to accept such behaviour as normal.[85]

There is a keen awareness that in order to succeed in England, it is easier just to get on with things, and not draw attention to cultural differences or discriminatory comments that might be dismissed as 'banter.' Fearghal agrees, when asked if he has suffered any discrimination from English people:

> FEARGHAL: uh, not really, not much: I've had a few comments: I remember when I first come over, just messing around acting about by a roadside, a policeman telling me to behave, what were his words, something along the lines of: when you come to this country, you behave like you're from this country.' … I told him I disagreed with him, but didn't want to get into any more trouble, so I wasn't going to swear at him or anything like that, but it was just a case of a dickhead policeman more than anything else, but. Yeah, I suppose with the soccer teams, you hear people shouting 'potatoes' at you and that, but I would never let it bother me.

Ronan shows an acute awareness of this friction, and of ways in which Irish ambition and seriousness is limited by stereotypes and perceptions of fecklessness; he works through his experiences and the way they relate to internalised oppression during the interview:

> INTERVIEWER: Have you experienced any anti-Irish sentiment?

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[84] Ibid.p127.

[85] Louise Ryan, "Who Do You Think You Are? Irish Nurses Encountering Ethnicity and Constructing Identity in Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 3 (2007).p426

> RONAN: ah yeah, for sure: I mean we all have, have we not? Your accent's picked up, I've had things shouted at me, you know: I remember being at a rugby match and people shouting things like leprechauns and things like that. But on the whole I have to say, it's been very supportive and very interested in my Irishness. But yes, I have had isolated incidents of it. And cultural assumptions. Like you can get away with swearing, for example. You know, you can get away with your boozy behaviour: because everyone sort of assumes you're feckless. You know, so they don't want to take you seriously.
> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that's like an internalized oppression in a sense: in terms of you take in the stereotype, and believe you can behave in a certain way; and that Irish people believe it about themselves?
> RONAN: For sure, yeah. You do behave in certain ways. Sometimes you know that you're making people uncomfortable with the things you're saying: and sometimes you're aware that no matter what you say to people: when you're being deadly serious, they will perceive you as some kind of joke. And you'll always be that. You know, because you're feckless, and it's quaint. You know, it's never serious.

He recognises that there are issues around perceptions of Irishness: he is aware that there are ways in which he can use these assumptions to excuse elements of his own behaviour, but he is also frustrated by the way that this means limits are placed on his ability to progress and to be taken seriously. Again, any discrimination is minimised, and the most important priority is that the protagonists were 'unbothered' by these incidents of discrimination, suggesting that in order to get on in a new place, one must accept the occasional othering and conflict as part of the deal.

Conclusion

An exploration of Irish migrants and work reveals that there are significant differences, both generationally and in gendered terms. Men working in construction, infrastructure or other associated fields have a significant lexicon around work, and their work narratives have commonalities. The way they place their working selves into the narrative reinforces the idea of hard work as a cornerstone of masculinity, and the importance of being seen to be hardworking for both personal validation and social status. This continues through generations: Ronan, for example, also refers to the way Irish workers are favoured due to their perception as hard-working and capable. Older migrant men have also maintained their accent more than women migrants of the same generation, suggesting that an Irish accent in a mainly Irish work environment would hold prestige. By comparison, women who have modified their voices suggest that criticism and the inability of British colleagues and patients to understand their accents made them have to modify their speech in order to succeed, or at least to conform. This relates to the internalised oppression which Grainne mentions: though a number of the interviewees are at pains to insist that they never experienced any anti-Irish sentiment, anecdotal recall of conversations or incidents where colleagues or clients have made assumptions based on stereotypes, or made ignorant or offensive comments, suggests otherwise. Variations on the phrase 'if I did I never let it bother me' suggests that interviewees were ready for and accepted

that some form of conflict or hostility would be a likely part of settling into their new lives. Ronan further claims that these stereotypes of Irishness actually allow for certain antisocial behaviour to continue as an almost performative element – that as he is expected, as an Irish person, to be 'good craic' and to drink to excess, then he feels pressured to behave in the way that is expected of him. Ronan's reflection on Irish migrants who fail to live up to the respectability paradigm and fall prey to addictions shows that there are still expectations from Irish social networks which exclude those who fall below expectations of 'respectable' behaviour: just as older migrants such as Gerald and John felt shunned by their compatriots and their institutions, so this internalised oppression continues through the generations, making it challenging for the more marginalised migrants, and the institutions that support them.

Women speak less about work in general in the interviews conducted for this thesis. The only women that speak at length about work – Grainne and Lauren – do so whilst interviewed actually in their workplace, which could have subconsciously impacted on the importance they placed on work in the interview.[86] Older women in particular spoke very briefly about work, and mainly listed what they did rather than reflecting on whether they enjoyed it or how it informed how they saw themselves or how others perceived them. This while older men reflected on work at the expense of the family suggests that gender roles shape the role our occupation plays in the way we perceive our identity; women have internalised the idea that work is less central to their self-worth than it is to men's, while, as Ronan suggests, taking on unpaid roles in the home was something he found, despite recognising the irrationality of it, emotionally 'emasculating'.

The difference in work narratives generationally is similarly striking. The key variable appears to be the role played by education in their migrant journeys. All the younger migrants I spoke to came to England to study, before deciding to make Leeds their home. This was aided by the fact that students can be treated as 'home' students in each of the countries, so studying in England would not have been more expensive (and was indeed free in many cases before 1997). Migrants from Northern Ireland in particular would have been studying under the same A-level system, which would have made applying to an English university just the same procedure as applying to one in the north of Ireland. Those who studied in the Republic were also able to apply through the UCAS system, and there was far more choice in the UK: Ronan suggests that he found it easier to get in to university in England than to his local university, University College Cork: after a failed period of study in Ireland, David's mother suggested that he should go to study in

[86] Sin suggests that 'the space in which an interview takes place can yield important information regarding the way respondents construct their identities. Individuals may choose, whether consciously or otherwise, to present certain aspect(s) of their individual and social identities in particular spatial contexts.' Chih Hoong Sin, "Interviewing in 'Place': The Socio-Spatial Construction of Interview Data," *Area* 35, no. 3 (2003).

Middlesbrough, where he subsequently met his wife. Even Mary, who read for her first degree in Ireland, spent a year studying in Leeds long before she decided to move there.

It is difficult to ascertain whether more recent Irish migrants have a different class background to the interviewees from the older generation: certainly, the former have all had more access to education, and as a result have a more diverse and professionalised breadth of employment experience. Indeed, Irish census data from 2016 suggests that the Irish population as a whole is more educated than it was:

> Census 2016 shows that younger people who had finished full time education were significantly better educated than older people. In total 56.2 per cent of people aged 15 to 39 possessed a third level qualification, in comparison to 18.9 per cent of those aged 65 and over. The proportion educated to primary level only for those aged 65 plus was 39.7 per cent.[87]

The sample then merely reflects a more educated migrant populace. The networks are still there for Irish people (men in particular) wishing to go into the construction industry – the difference is that third-level education allows for much more choice in the jobs market, as well as reducing the need for informal job networks, which in turn reduces the number of active social networks. This has the adverse effects that Mary found, where she had to establish her own online networking space to find likeminded friends. The increased levels of education in more recent migrants, particularly those from the Republic of Ireland, owe something to the changes in Irish education policy instigated by O'Malley in the 1960s, whereby free comprehensive education became law, and children in more rural areas were bussed to school to improve opportunity and levels of attendance. Ronan and Mary both mention this happening in their school; this policy was designed to increase levels of education in the rural poor, and therefore made it less likely that people like the earlier migrants in the construction industry would have had to migrate at such a young age.

Overall, Irish migrants' work and education narratives are increasingly varied and reflective of diverse experiences. Central to work identity – particularly among men – is that diligence, bravery and being seen as hard-working will be key to success in later life. The uniform migrant story has shapeshifted, but the tenets that remain signify important elements of continuity in Irish migrant identity.

[87] "Census of Population 2016 – Profile 10 Education, Skills and the Irish Language," (Central Statistics Office, 2016).

Chapter Three: The Irish at Home.

> To a great extent people of [north-western] European origin share a common cultural background with the local-born population and are assimilated and dispersed throughout the City. The exception to this is provided by the group originating in the Irish Republic, which demonstrates strong religious affiliations (Catholic) and a rather different life-style and lives gregariously in deprived areas.[1]
>
> The waves of post-war Irish migration… followed a classic model of settlement. On arrival, migrants obtained short-term accommodation in rented rooms and lodging houses in the least salubrious districts of the city… Subsequently, later migrants also travelled to these areas… Over time, as the newcomers became established, some at least were in a position to purchase a home in the suburbs. For others, the availability of council housing shaped the settlement patterns. In the late 1940s the Irish were heavily concentrated in the poorer parts… but by the 1960s the Irish migrant population was dispersed across the sprawling precincts of the ever-growing city.[2]

Delaney's analysis of Birmingham's twentieth-century Irish migrant settlement patterns echo that of Leeds migrants in the same period. Migrants would first live in rented accommodation, often in poor condition, in conurbations close to the city centre, such as Chapeltown, Harehills and Potternewton. Gipton and East End Park, close to the Irish Centre, also had a significant Irish presence.[3] Analysis of the 2001 census shows Gipton and Fearnville as still the most popular residences for those identifying as 'White Irish', but at just 3.12 and 3% respectively (these figures are low in comparison to a location quotient of 31.38% for Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi residents in Chapeltown, or 15% Asian or Asian British Pakistani residents in the Harehills Triangle). Like in Birmingham, Irish migrants, rather than staying in the same area and creating a geographically homogenous community, have actually spread across the city and assimilated into various areas. Just as there are no longer Irish pubs in the city, so there are few notably Irish residential enclaves. Silva and McGowan's interviewees both refer to Beeston as an Irish area, but they also recognise that other migrant groups are more prevalent now in the formerly Irish areas of post-war migration.[4] Irish migrants have dispersed to the suburbs.[5]

This chapter investigates the ways in which home is made manifest in the narratives of Irish migrants to Leeds. It studies material elements of home, including food, housing and home objects, and how identity is displayed and mediated through these material factors. It selects material objects of display such as Waterford crystal, miniature cottages and parish bulletins, and analyses their symbolic meaning in migrant homes. It also considers more abstract elements of

[1] Leeds City Council, "Social Area Analysis," (Leeds1971).
[2] Delaney, "People and Places."p102.
[3] McGowan, *Taking the Boat: The Irish in Leeds, 1931-81*.
[4] Ibid.; Silva, *Róisín Bán*.
[5] Unsworth, *Twenty-First Century Leeds: Geographies of a Regional City*.

home, such as where home is, what home means, and the ways in which second-generation migrants construct their identity through perceptions of home, and how this is informed by the exposition of wider theoretical discussions of identity in second-generation migrants: how home can transcend the physical to become part of what Walter suggests is a family narrative of Irish identity, forged in the homestead.[6] It also considers how the meaning of home is developed through experiences such as visits 'back home', and relationships with Ireland relating to music, literature and language. Finally, it reflects on the 'final homecoming' – the relationship Irish migrants have with death, and how notions of Irishness and home intertwine with propriety and respectability in the final stage of migrant life. It reflects on the narratives of ageing and death, and how these narratives are reflected in Irish literature and culture.

Conceptions of home

'Home' is a multi-faceted word which can refer to myriad places, concepts or environments. Going 'home' might refer to someone's current home or their ancestral one, and the way they perceive home in an abstract way is as important as the concrete elements of the same. This section therefore reflects on ways in which home is discussed, mediated and reimagined in art, poetry and narrative by the Irish migrant population of Leeds, both first and subsequent generations.

Considering a title for a poetry event, second-generation Irish Leeds poet Ian Duhig stated:

> One humorous suggestion which was considered seriously was The Irish Boomerang, after the old joke. The Irish Boomerang differed from its Australian counterpart in that when you threw it, it didn't come back – it just sang about coming back.[7]

Indeed Tim recognises that while older migrants speak wistfully of back home, England has become their home now; they have no intention of permanent return.

> McDaid analyses the poetry of Irish poets in England, and suggests that:
>
> Their poetry obsessively returns to the site of their childhood. The subject of their daily lives in England is subdued in favour of poetic re-enactments of appearing and disappearing that essentially form the migration experience. In reinventing the detail of their home places, O'Donoghue, Evans and Bryce attempt to suture past and present together, using memory as the binding (if flawed) methodology.[8]

There is some evidence of this kind of internal dialogue between shifting sites of home in poetry in the *Trojan Donkey* anthology, a 2019 collection sponsored by Leeds Irish Health and Homes,

[6] Bronwen Walter et al., "Family Stories, Public Silence: Irish Identity Construction Amongst the Second-Generation Irish in England," *Scottish Geographical Journal* 118, no. 3 (2002).p208
[7] Ian Duhig, "The Irish Boomerang," *The Poetry Ireland Review*, no. 78 (2004).p41.
[8] Ailbhe McDaid, *The Poetics of Migration in Contemporary Irish Poetry* (London: Palgrave, 2017).p89

which featured writing by some of their service users.[9] Some of the most salient poems in the collection come from the 'blank sheets' chapter, which are not ascribed to any particular individual, but have been collected at the organisation's group sessions. The relative anonymity of the 'blank sheets' gives rise to some thoughtful excoriations on the meaning of home, and on what Ireland means to these service users.[10] The first of the poems, *The Song of Seamus*, alludes to the county tribalism of Leeds' Mayo majority, 'all the kids took the piss out of my Kerry accent, made Kerryman jokes/ because they had mostly come over from Mayo'.[11] The poem reflects on being an outsider everywhere – in the Irish community, his background is different from the others; this is made clear in the minutiae of his accent, a key element of identity. Problems occurred also on his return to Ireland:

> When I got older and would go back to Ireland,
> they took the piss out of my Yorkshire accent
> and they called me names like 'Plastic Paddy'.
> So I said, 'Yes. Plastic, meaning indestructible'.

The sense of alienation is suppressed by the poet, who suggests that his trials and attempts to shore up his fragmented identity have made him more resilient – 'plastic'. To an extent, this poem is resonant of other tales of displacement, and of an internalisation of the barbs of others, leading to an identity crisis. However, it is clear in the final stanza that this unresolved duality of identity, of never quite being Irish enough, continues to plague the author:

> Wherever I go after I die, I know that the angels
> Or the devils will leave off jabbing me with forks
> Or playing me harp music just long enough to ask,
> 'You're (sic) accent – not from around here, are you?'[12]

It is clear that the author feels he has failed at trying to pass through the shibboleth of Irish authentication, but that he also does not feel integrated into England.[13] The way in which he depicts religious figures in the poem is also telling – the binaries of heaven and hell as cartoon universes with devils and angels, with judgment from God and his acolytes the biggest fear at the

[9] Teresa O'Driscoll and Ian Duhig, eds., *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology* (Leeds: Leeds Irish Health and Homes, 2019).p29

[10] Leeds Irish Health and Homes run a range of services, from lunch groups to housing advice and passport applications. These poems have been collected from attendees of the Montague Burton Sessions – women's groups and men's groups - whose backgrounds may vary: a number of the service users have struggled somewhat in their integration into British society, hence their engagement with the service.

[11] This 'Mayo exceptionalism' in the city is discussed in more detail in the first chapter in this thesis.

[12] O'Driscoll and Duhig, *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology*.p29

[13] This is also a common thread in second generation narratives on this topic, which will be discussed later in the chapter

end of life. This is redolent of women's group interviewees' reflections on the reinforcement of deeply binary notions of goodness from Catholic education in Ireland and in Britain.[14]

The next poem engages with a traditional Irish lament, where an unsuitable match enforced separation on a family, as the woman's family sent her to England. The song, *The Rose of Mooncoin*, is intentionally entangled in the title of the poem, *The White Rose of Mooncoin*. The white rose alludes to the county symbol of Yorkshire, particularly associated with the city of Leeds through the crest of its football team among other things. Whereas in the song the woman is mourned in exile by her erstwhile lover, the poet, whose homeplace is near to Mooncoin, adds 'now I'm in England too, folded in Yorkshire's rose as my love's arms.' The imagery here appears deliberately vague as to whether the poet's current love is from Yorkshire, or is the place itself.[15] Another place-based poem in the Blank Sheets set is *Magic*, whereby again traditional songs and rhymes are conjured up:

> When I told someone in Leeds at a bus stop where I came from, and they said this rhyme which I've never heard anywhere else:
>
> *If ever you go to Kilkenny,*
> *look out for the hole in the wall;*
> *it's there you'll get eggs for a penny*
> *and butter for nothing at all.*
> I never expected to hear a bit of magical poetry about my home on the streets of Leeds. Maybe if we'd found the hole in the wall, we wouldn't have needed to leave Kilkenny.[16]

This poem reflects on the ways in which songs and stories become parts of collective memory in other places; and most pertinently, the disconnect between the plentiful Ireland of emigrant songs and stories, with its abundant and cheap natural produce and close to the land and the reality, whereby the lack of food and money enforced emigration on many of its people. This explains the wry last line, almost breaking the fourth wall: 'Maybe if we'd found the hole in the wall, we wouldn't have needed to leave Kilkenny.' This alludes to the trope of migration as exile, which proliferates in cultural representations, although writers such as Delaney counsel this is far too much of a generalisation.[17]

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[14] Field notes, February 2016. Saoirse and Lauren both also expressed mistrust of the inculcation of values in the Catholic education system.

[15] O'Driscoll and Duhig, *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology*.p30.

[16] Ibid.p31.

[17] Delaney accepts that 'migration as exile' is a key part of the Irish migrant narrative in America, but suggests this narrative is too simplistic, and not as prevalent in other parts of the diaspora, such as Australia and the UK. His work suggests a number of other factors are at play in decisions around migration, including economic ones. See Enda Delaney, "The Irish Diaspora," *Irish Economic and Social History* 33, no. 1 (2006).

Another of these poems (this one untitled) uses traditional quatrains and an ABCB rhyme scheme to reflect on the migrant experience in Leeds, again referring to the familiar songs and stories, in this case 'The Mountains of Mourne':

> I know your streets
> aren't paved with gold
> because I laid them,
> Come rain or cold;[18]

This metaphor combines the stereotype of Irish migrants as gullible – thinking the streets are paved with gold – with the cultural trope of the Irish navvy, building Britain's post-war infrastructure. Given the anonymity of the poet, it is impossible to tell whether the poet is speaking from personal experience. However, it appears that the narrator is something of an everyman or woman, detailing a number of the prejudices and difficulties that come with migrant experience, and particularly Irish migrant experience. For example, the stanza:

> Your M1s
> and your M62s,
> reading your B&B cards:
> No Blacks, Irish or Jews

The M1 and M62 motorways referenced here are those parts of the infrastructure that brought a number of Irish migrant workers to the city.[19] The reiteration of 'your' is a reminder that the places built and maintained by these migrants are still seen as 'yours' rather than 'ours.' The mention of B&B cards is a rare reference to overt discrimination against Irish tenants in accommodation: most of the slights reported by narrators have been implicit rather than explicit.[20] The poem goes on to plaintively state:

> I am the slighted Irish
> minding your sick,
> teaching your children.
> You called me thick.

This overt display of anger is rare and surprising among migrant stories. Perhaps the anonymity of the 'blank sheets' approach allows for this, but it is clear that the poet is frustrated by the lack of appreciation their host society has for their lifetime of hard work. This digresses from the

[18] O'Driscoll and Duhig, *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology*.p34.
[19] The experience of these workers is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter.
[20] Delaney deconstructs the mythology around these signs: he recognises that John Archer Jackson acknowledges the signs as part of the migrant narrative, and suggests that although there is certainly no proof that the signs did not exist, they have become a part of a grander narrative of exile and conflict, suggesting 'caution is needed here as such foundational narratives can effortlessly enter oral testimonies as individuals interweave a well-known communal memory into a personal life story.' Delaney *The Irish in Post-War Britain* p123.

narrative of internalised oppression discussed in the last chapter: where others shrugged 'it didn't bother me'; it clearly bothers this narrator how they are perceived in the host society. Again, it returns to traditional depictions of Irishness, this time 'women's work' – care (possibly nursing) and teaching. The irony that the addressee of the poem would allow the narrator to teach their children despite thinking they are 'thick' is not lost on the poet. The final stanza is also palpably furious at the mistreatment the poet believes they have experienced:

> I worked like a donkey,
> A Trojan, a slave.
> I paid my way here
>
> I've earned my grave.[21]

Like the poet of *Song of Seamus*, the narrator here suggests that they will be judged in death; however, in this instance, they believe they have worked hard enough to be judged fit.[22]

The contrast between pastoral descriptions of Ireland and the urban realities of Leeds is reflected in another place-based poem, which takes the 'blank sheets' concept literally, and begins with the narrator hanging out sheets to dry. The neighbour 'warned me about smuts… I went inside to make a cup of tea, looked back and saw my /white sheets were all peppered with black spots./ Mucky Leeds they called it, I learned, with good reason.' This recollection shows the stark juxtaposition between the rural Ireland of home and the profoundly industrial city the narrator has moved to, 'Mucky Leeds' (where mucky is a north of England colloquialism meaning dirty). This contrast between the city and the country is evident elsewhere as well, as narrators in interviews for this thesis and in Silva's *Róisín Bán* negotiate the binary opposition of their city and country existences.[23]

Many of the narrators in this thesis also reflect on differences between the homes they have left and the city they have moved to. Vincent remembers returning to Leeds after a trip home with a reference to the industrial dirtiness of the city:

> VINCENT: I came here in July and I went home for Christmas, and I noticed more of a difference when I come back after Christmas. When I was coming into Leeds and seeing all the black rooves from the train, glug glug glug glug glug glug glug, second time in, and Jeez if I'd have had the price of going home then I would have.

Mary also recalls the dirt and pollution in the city, in Silva's interviews:

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[21] O'Driscoll and Duhig, *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology*.p34.
[22] The importance of hard work in Irish migrant narratives is discussed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis. There is also a discussion of the importance of respectability in death rituals later in this chapter.
[23] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.

> I had ventured to Leeds twice with a girl from Wakefield, and I thought it was very big and I thought Boar Lane was black and it looked very black, you see there was a lot of smoke and smog and probably I went on a smoggy day.[24]

Indeed Leeds was very much an industrial and dirty city in the 1950s and 1960s; the buildings were coated in grime and pollution from the city's factories, and the new inner ring road would bring more pollution and congestion to the area.

Leeds Town Hall, 1960s

In *Róisín Bán*, Paddy suggests that 'I remember coming back to Leeds and getting out of Leeds City Station and the fog and everything was… I could have cried, to be quite truthful', while Joe recalls being unhappy too on his return to Leeds from Ireland: 'Once you land in this country, you feel so down and depressed for weeks.'[25] The idea of sadness at leaving Ireland speaks to the trope of the migrant in exile, and the trauma of migration, a theme which splits historians.[26]

The industrial city could not have contrasted more with the rural origins of most interviewees, and it is clear in their narratives the warmth with which they remember and speak of the

[24] Ibid.p135.
[25] Ibid. p124
[26] As well as the previous footnote reflections, Sheridan discusses this, and suggests that exile in Britain is very much a masculine narrative, not reflected in the stories of women she has spoken to. This suggests a gender difference in responses to migration, with women finding the experience easier or less traumatic. Sheridan, "More Than One Story to Tell: Exploring Twentieth-Century Migration to Northampton, England, in Memoir and Oral Narratives."

topographies of home. For example, Silva interviewee Kathleen spoke at length of growing up connected to nature, and she found great comfort in the sight of the mountain, Nephin; on leaving for England, once she left sight of the mountainous terrains of her homeplace, she was entirely discombobulated:

> I was fine when I could see my own place, Nephin, you know, the highest mountain in Mayo, and whilst that was in sight I was fine. But naturally, as the train went on the landscape changed and I realised I was in an alien place with nobody.[27]

Some interviewees recalled the day-to-day life on the farm. For example, Ellen (interviewed in her ancestral homeplace) recollected:

> ELLEN: I'll tell you what it was like, it was like, very like it is now like a farm. I was doing everything that me brother would have done, like, helping me mum; we'd go out and do the tillage… I used to go up to that field up here and we used to plough it, I used to do the potatoes in it, and I used to cut down hedges and help me mum build barbed wire fences and everything and put the stakes down, everything like that. Do you know, I did enjoy it, like the day we did, big hedges like, that chopper and cutting up the wood, and I did, and how many times I would have loved to come here, you know, if me mum was alive, and I said to my daughter one day, I would go back if I could, and I would do the same thing over again if I got, milking the cows, cleaning out of the cows, feeding the cows, feed the pigs, everything…

Ellen was the last child to leave the homeplace, coming to England to join the rest of her family in her late twenties. Again, she was not impressed by the city, and longed for the comforts of home:

> ELLEN: I didn't want to stay. I wanted to go home. And then when my brother and sister-in-law were going home one time, I thought, I want to go. But I didn't. But sometimes after that, I did want to go home and I couldn't settle. I wasn't happy, and to be quite honest with you, I hated Leeds.

In spite of this, like many of the others, Ellen stayed.

> Some migrants also recall that their family members were constrained by city life:
>
> Dermot, no matter what you did you couldn't settle him in England. You could put him down at one end of Roundhay Park and Dermot would wander to the other end. He had to keep going. Streets or gardens were no good to him.[28]

Yet, descriptions of the rural idyll of home were hard to come by in these thesis interviews, with Ellen's testimony being the exception. This was a marked difference with the interviews that Silva conducted, which abounded with descriptions of home. One of the possible reasons for this is that, in the interviews for this thesis, it became clear in the pre-interview process that this

[27] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p137.
[28] Ibid.p136. Roundhay Park is a large municipal Victorian park in Roundhay, an affluent northern suburb of Leeds.

interviewer was familiar with the landscapes of County Mayo, having spent considerable amounts of time there as a child. Interviewees therefore may have seen less necessity in explaining the landscape in detail; instead they would hone in on specific places, expecting the interviewer's familiarity with county topography to allow them to keep up with the specifics of the narrative. In Silva's interviews, salient themes emerged in discussions and remembrances of home. One of these was a connection to the land in Ireland; quite literally, feeling more 'at home' on Irish soil. While Joe says 'I can understand when the Pope landed in Ireland, he went down and he kissed the ground. You feel like doing the same thing. Such a feeling comes over you.'[29] Joan concurs: 'when I go to Dublin, I don't look for it, but as soon as I put my foot on the soil I can feel all that draining away, and I come back to being the person I was and always have been.'[30] The sanctity status of the soil is not just agricultural, but spiritual.[31] This connection to the soil is referenced by Arensberg, who posits 'Irish familism is of the soil'.[32] O'Sullivan traces soil back further to an Ireland under British rule, and to the diaries of John Mitchel, who refers to how 'England has been left in possession… of the Soil of Ireland with all that grows and lives thereon' [33] Here Irish soil, as in many nationalist movements, gains political significance. Deane deconstructs nineteenth-century references to the land and the soil at a political level, highlighting that 'Soil is what land becomes when it is ideologically constructed as a natal source, that element out of which the Irish originate and to which their past generations have returned'.[34] Indeed, Deane quotes Mitchel's contemporary, Thomas Davis: 'the people will still cling to the soil, like the infant to the mother's breast, with the same instinct and the same feeling.'[35] In the Irish nationalist lexicon, soil is the collective: all Irish soil belongs to all Irish people, while land is a commodity which had been seized by the English, to be taken back and parcelled out individually to those who had worked the land. This was what Mayo native Davitt's Land League set out to do in the 1870s.[36] Eddie links this estrangement from the land to his migration from County Down, as one of the only Catholics in his area in the 1960s:

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[29] Ibid.p122.
[30] Ibid.p126.
[31] Quoted in Patrick O'Sullivan, "Developing Irish Diaspora Studies: A Personal View," *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 7, no. 1 (2003). p132.
[32] Conrad Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study* (London).p96
[33]John Mitchel, *Jail Journal* ([1854] (Dublin: M. H. Gill 1913) Mitchel's anger at the English for their colonial ways and ownership of Irish soil did not extend to support for non-white colonised peoples: he was an outspoken advocate of slavery.
[34] Seamus Deane, "The Production of Cultural Space in Irish Writing," *boundary 2* 21, no. 3 (1994).p126
[35] Thomas Davis, *Essays Literary and Historical* Dundalgan: Dublin, 1914.p72
[36] Deane, "The Production of Cultural Space in Irish Writing." p127 Davitt has a special place in Leeds institutions, with the 'Davitt window' being one of the only parts of the old Irish National Club on Briggate to make the journey to the new Irish Centre when it reopened in 1970.

> I do resent and I do regret the fact that I had to leave my native home in order to be independent. It does anger me that I was not allowed to be Irish in my own land. So there's an element of that in it that I find painful, if you like. And I have this life-long desire to go back there and live and spend out my days, even though the substitute for that is that I've put in my will that I want my ashes taken back there and scattered. So I rely on one of my children to do that. But that is a poor substitute for living in your own land.[37]

The idea of a collective connection to the soil is made manifest in Sarah's testimony in *Róisín Bán*:

> There is some part of me that only feels totally comfortable when I'm standing on Irish soil. It is not anything about the difference between Ireland and England. It is the place I grew up. It's not about Mayo, it doesn't have to be Mayo, it's something about the island of Ireland. When I am on the island of Ireland I feel more at peace within myself.[38]

It appears that this nationalist rhetoric gained a foothold in rural communities, and became part of an established linguistic trope around cultural memory.

Like Kathleen before, John referred to the mountains, this time in the context of getting water from the well. He recalled:

> There was lakes in the mountain. You'd get water there. It was cold, summer and winter it was all the same. It was running water. Spring water. It was good water. Made good tea. It was different than the water you get out of the taps now. You know what I mean? It was real cold. You didn't need to put it into the freezer to get cold. It was cold. If you drank some and had any holes in your teeth, you'd feel it. Because it would sting you. It was as good as an injection.[39]

John's memory shifts from the arduous task of collecting the water in order to praise the qualities of the water. It was 'cold' and as 'as good as an injection.' This was Mayo, the county which boasted the holy town of Knock, a place where pilgrims gathered from all over to take the waters. Water, he believed, could indeed hold medicinal qualities: just like the soil, it was pure, elemental and almost holy. Bernard also referred to getting water from the lake, but his recollections were more prosaic, 'if you wanted water, we'd go down to the lake with my uncle, he had an ass and a cart.' He also referred to the land, but in a more derogatory way: that 'everything tasted of peat.' Bernard's recollections, as second-generation Irish, were from childhood visits. The same was true for Rachel who again referred to the land:

> My father's homeplace is still very much a home. It's where my uncles live. It's an active farm, it's very much the way he grew up on it. And he identifies very, very strongly with the land. That's always been what we've considered our homeplace to be. My dad feels very strongly about his roots. Not so much his roots as where he belongs. And the first

[37] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p109
[38] Ibid.p160.
[39] Ibid.p139.

> thing he would always do when we got home was walk out and stride the land. And that's what me and my brothers do when we go, with or without my parents, we get out and we walk the land. Because that's what we were taught 'home' was.

Most of the migrants interviewed for this thesis maintain a relationship with home, which allows for regular visits back to the homeplace. A conversation between Declan and Vincent suggested an intimate knowledge of the changing topography of Mayo and South Sligo, with descriptions of the new housing and leisure developments:

> VINCENT: Do you know in Ballina, you know Fallons, what's it called?
>
> DECLAN: they call it the Grand National now, it wasn't before
>
> VINCENT: Because we were in it. When I go back over there - I have two sisters: one lives back home in my homeplace in Mayo. And rather than going visiting her: cos it's a day if you go, and I've loads of things, I've to drive it's a mission, we'll go for the, we'll meet the two of ye. And we went to that. And that was on a Friday, and it was under new management from that night. But he wouldn't tell us who it was. I was wondering who it was that took it…
>
> DECLAN: Well I don't know who is running it now. But it's owned by NAMA. It's owned by the bank.
>
> VINCENT: Well these people that have it now, they have bought it
>
> DECLAN: It's owned by NAMA. But that one in Ballina beside the Moy, the Ridge Pool, that is owned by some individuals: NAMA haven't got that.
>
> VINCENT: There's Hotel Ballina that was there, and what was the other one, the Downhill?
>
> DECLAN: It's closed I don't know why. Because there was a wedding there a week last Saturday – Mary's grandson got married there
>
> VINCENT: That's right. Someone we know went to that wedding. Someone that worked with us went to that wedding
>
> DECLAN: Oh yeah, possibly, yeah.[40]

Regular weddings and funerals provide for ample opportunities to return home, particularly for those migrants who have found the carefully defined respectability discussed in the first chapter. This can also involve taking children and grandchildren back to Ireland. One of the ways in which this is mediated is through the narratives of second-generation migrants. Interviews for this thesis took place with two such Leeds Irish migrants, who reflected on their experiences of summers in Ireland, and the way in which growing up in an Irish household affected their identity.

[40] NAMA (the National Asset Management Agency) is an Irish government agency set up in 2009 to rescue/ purchase sites in the wake of the financial crisis – it functions as a 'bad bank' offering credit on less stringent terms than banks in order to shore up the economy.

Second-generation identity

> TIM: They, the generation now: the kids are here, the grandkids are here, this is where their home is. But their ancestral home or their homeplace will always be in Ireland. 'I'm going home…I'm going home for a couple of weeks.' And by home they mean going back to the West.

Leeds-born to Irish parents, Tim recognises the way in which home means different things for his parents' generation. The location of home can mean different things even to first-generation migrants, once home has been established elsewhere. Some migrants suggest that home is where family is, and increasingly that is in England: for others going home always means returning to Ireland. It is interesting to consider how 'home' is manifested in identity then – how Ireland as home and being Irish are the same or different things – and how a sense of Irish identity is transmitted to the second-generation through culture, stories and visits home.

Saoirse and Tim are both second-generation Irish migrants to Leeds. Their parents were born in Ireland and moved to England as young people, where they settled and had families. Saoirse and Tim both grew up in Leeds. Both of them work in Irish organisations in the city, and agree that their sense of Irishness not only led them to the jobs they do, but that it is strengthened by their experiences in work, and their abilities to use Irishness as a code for connection. In Saoirse's case, her work deals with housing, so it is through visiting and helping to establish the homes of other Irish people that she is able to manifest elements of her own identity. Tim does this in his performance of Irishness through traditional music.

In Hickman's survey of the identities of second-generation pupils in Catholic schools in London, 81 percent named either 'Irish' or 'of Irish descent' as their primary identity. They all had two Irish-born parents, most regularly visited Ireland and were likely to be involved in Irish social and cultural practices. Hickman argued that whereas education has been a prime way in which the public mask of Catholicism has rendered Irishness invisible in Britain, the family provided a counterpoint to the school and its incorporating strategies[41]Hickman raises the issue of Irish identity at school: even in Catholic schools, second-generation Irish school pupils in England fail to learn enough about their Irish heritage.[42] However. Saoirse and Tim both credit the Catholic school system in Leeds with reinforcing their Irish identity. Saoirse recalls:

> SAOIRSE: When I went to school it was like, primary middle and high. And they were all Catholic schools. And they all had a lot of Irish heritage within those schools. So I went to school with a lot of girls who were Irish descent. And our families knew each other. So I remember at parents evening, that my parents would be speaking to other

[41] Hickman et al., "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness: Second-Generation Irish Identifications and Positionings in Multiethnic Britain."p4.
[42] Ibid.

> people's parents. And they'd already know each other through the Irish community: from going to the Shamrock many many years ago. And when a lot of them first came over, they all used to sort of go out together and they had their own sort of friendship group.

Saoirse and her siblings became part of her parents' extended social network through the formal attachments of church, school and community: she was able to identify similarities with classmates through the shared cultural experiences of their parents.

Tim also acknowledges that there were a number of Irish names on his class register. However, Tim felt the need to hide the extent of his Irish cultural identity:

> TIM: the whole register would have had a list of predominantly Irish names, but nobody actually admitted to being Irish because obviously with what was going on it, the inverted commas the "Troubles" was starting on, we had sort of, on the TV had all these very low-grade comedians telling these Irish jokes, and again it was not a good climate to be Irish, on a number of levels, and I suppose there's that side of school you never had to identify: I never, none of my friends at school knew that I played Irish traditional music, it was a horrible thing to have to keep, you might be on a high, you might have just won the regional heats of the All-Britain Fleadh, and you couldn't go in to say 'hey lads, I won the 12-15 All Ireland fiddle yesterday,' or 'I'm going to the Fleadh in Ireland', and it was, in some ways you had to almost have this underground identity.

Ullah reflects on the psychological impact of this dual identity for second-generation Irish young people at school in London and, although he recognises the difficulties, he also suggests that:

> The very flexibility of their identities means they can actually respond to competing situational demands when such a response is required. They are not doomed to remain on the boundaries of two cultures but are able to take an active part in both.[43]

Tim's experience shows how he has navigated this, but his narrative also reflects the loneliness of having to hide his accomplishments for fear of being associated with an Irishness he has so far been able to avoid. The irony of a class full of Irish named young people all doing the same is not lost, and is reflective of the internalised oppression previously discussed in order to avoid association with the Troubles and the Irishness of these 'low-grade comedians', one should devote oneself to concealing all signs of otherness, even if what is hidden are useful skills or exciting experiences. Just as is the case with conforming to the respectability paradigm, Tim recognised that his Irish cultural experiences were to be kept secret, although this was never made explicit to him:

> TIM: you just know not to talk about it. You'd be, um, you would be almost ridiculed. It was just such a… it was just something that wasn't done: it was just something that wasn't done in mainstream society, and I suppose, we all, I suppose in some ways I was too young to really take in the gravity of it, but I suppose the more when I look back: the

[43] Ullah, "Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity."p310

> Irish community, they stuck together, they still carried on, and they would: I remember once being at the Irish Centre and, I was in a ceilidh band, and the Irish Centre had to be evacuated because there was a bomb scare. And that was fairly commonplace back then. But people just carried on, and obviously plodded on and just got on with things, and obviously things have gone full circle now. But, growing up: I think culturally it was very different. But equally, you still did normal things that: you still did normal things like you'd go and watch Leeds United on a Saturday: you'd go, you'd go to St John's Ambulance, you'd do all those normal things. But the other thing that you'd do, you'd: you had this cultural barrier almost, that was there that you had to wear, you almost had to: it was almost like going in speaking a different language.[44]

Saoirse and Tim both recognised the ways in which their view of their identity could conflict with how others see them:

> SAOIRSE: Oh I consider myself Irish, I do. And I think it's because of the census: we did a report not so long ago, and I think a lot of Irish people don't identify as being Irish: first generation do, but I think the second generation they think, 'well, I've been born in England, or I've been born in London, or I've been born in Leeds: I'm English.' They don't understand that they're actually: they've got Irish heritage. And it's the same with the Irish passport. All that kind of stuff. I know when all that came out with Brexit, we were inundated with people requesting Irish passport forms…I think it's what do you feel closest to. If Yorkshire is what you feel closest to. Somebody might say 'how are you Irish when you speak with a Leeds accent?' but I think even though I speak with a Leeds accent there's a certain twang, certain words you say, and the way you pronounce things sometimes.

Tim however identifies more with his Yorkshire roots:

> TIM: I suppose people expect because with working for an Irish organisation, that I would be almost sort of draped in green white and gold, and I think, somebody asked me before and I think from my point of view, my identity: I speak with a Leeds accent, born and bred here, proud to be from the city, love Yorkshire, everything that goes with it: dales, moors, the whole thing. But I suppose when you've got something like Irish traditional music or something like that: that identity comes through in itself, and I don't need to: that is suffice for my identity. I love going to Ireland: I went over a few weeks ago to the All-Ireland Fleadh in Ennis, and it was great to see it. It was great to see the changes: two brothers that live over there: went over there for work opportunities, which is quite strange in itself, the fact their parents came over here and they've gone back. Again, usual thing: they'll give it a couple of years, 25 and 15 years later, they're both married there with families
>
> INTERVIEWER: I think the question that comes from what you're saying there is what is: where is home to you? Is Leeds home?

[44] Tim's mention of language is redolent of the conversations in the previous chapter around accent and language: as second-generation children, they had different accents to their parents, and were cognisant that fluency in Irish cultural practices was something different to their friends' experience: almost as though they were communicating in a different language. It is also interesting to consider Tim's reference to 'normal things' such as attending St John's Ambulance or watching Leeds United – these were things that his peers would also have enjoyed , and therefore he classes them as 'normal'. This centralisation of host society identity suggests that he expected his Irish music exploits would be seen as 'abnormal', leading him to cultivate what he refers to as an 'underground identity'.

> TIM: from my point of view, Leeds is home. I think it's lovely when I hear Irish born people say 'I'm going home' and they don't mean Moortown or Roundhay: Ireland will always be home for them. Whether or not they could actually go back and live there…

Tim recognises the competing affections migrants have for shifting sites of home. He himself is happy to dip in and out of Ireland and its culture; his musical ability makes this easier for him.

Silva also interviewed second-generation Irish people such as Bernard. He worked on projects with the Irish community in the city, but was from a slightly older demographic than the second-generation narrators in this study. His interest in Irish identity led him not only to consider his own experience, but to investigate the under-representation of Irish workers in Leeds City Council's official worker statistics, and pressured for changes to the monitoring of Irish migrants in the city:

> They had this stupid category of what did they call it? 'UK Irish' or 'British Irish' or some nonsensical thing. So they agreed that they would actually have 'Irish' as a category for ethnic monitoring purposes in Leeds…[45]

The point Bernard makes about hybridised identities is an important one. Walter *et al* suggest that 'in the case of the Irish in Britain, of course, the assumption of assimilation is reinforced by a lack of a hyphenated name to give public recognition to this hybridity.'[46] Irish-British is too oppositional a term: to be one excludes the opportunity to be the other. So, as Walter *et al* confirm, there are a number of possibilities that cover how second-generation Irish people in Britain refer to themselves:

> A variety of identifications were voiced by the participants and broadly these are represented by five different positionings: 'being English'; 'not being English/British'; 'being Irish'; 'being half-Irish and half-English/British'; and 'being local'. These are identifications that individuals can hold at any one time, but it is also clear that individuals can move in and out of them over time or juggle simultaneously a number of different positionings. Each positioning is in turn a hybridized identification.[47]

This lack of a suitable hybridised appellation for second-generation Irish people in Britain was recognised by Hickman *et al*, where a number of suggestions were raised but none found suitable. This was partly in response to a rejection of Britishness, or a conflation of civic and cultural identity: English or Britishness was recognised as integral to civic identity, but the Irishness, for the second generation, of home and cultural identity was something that, certainly prior to the instigation of 'Irish' as a cultural marker on the census, remained hidden for the

[45] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p148
[46] Walter et al., "Family Stories, Public Silence: Irish Identity Construction Amongst the Second-Generation Irish in England."p4
[47] Hickman et al., "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness: Second-Generation Irish Identifications and Positionings in Multiethnic Britain."p166

most part,. Yet this was something people wanted to acknowledge as part of their identity.[48] One of the ways this oxymoronic duality was managed by respondents was by mediating identity through a local lens: using prefixes such as Manchester or Coventry as footnotes to Irishness.[49] This was also evident in Silva's interviews, where second-generation Rachel reflected on her identity:

> I would say I'm from Leeds very, very strongly, but culturally I would say I'm Irish. And If you would really like to know, I'd say I'm Leeds Irish, or Beeston Irish, that's who I am.[50]

This localisation, from the city to the suburb, makes the Irish experience more specific and more identifiable: 'Leeds Irish' or 'Beeston Irish' is sufficiently hybridised to be a comfortable label to be assumed by individuals. Walter suggests that this engagement with Irish identity becomes more prevalent in later life:

> The initiation in adulthood of a search for knowledge about their Irish heritage illustrates the fluidity of hybrid identities. The widely accepted theory of rapid Irish assimilation in Britain, suggesting a linear trajectory over time, is called into question by evidence of an increasingly confident assertion of difference. Interviewees felt able to belong to several 'pasts' simultaneously as they lived the experience of dwelling-in-displacement.[51]

Walter *et al* also suggest that the home is the place where Irishness is easiest to transmit generationally:

> Family homes are the places where Irish issues can be most safely discussed… [but] the knowledge that second-generation Irish people had acquired about Irish history within the family was in most cases fragmentary. There was very little evidence that parents had consciously passed on to their British-born children any of the strongly nationalist formal history curriculum to which they were undoubtedly exposed themselves in the 1930s and 1940s. But even where there was little factual knowledge of wider historical events imparted, children grew up with a strong sense of an alternative story in their family's past.[52]

Tim and Saoirse are not scholars of Irish history, but the Irish nature of their cultural experiences – particularly at home – made them keenly aware of differences from their British peers. This recognition of their Irishness has had some lasting impact at least in the jobs they have chosen to do, a debt which both Saoirse and Tim acknowledge.

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[48] Ibid.p168
[49] Ibid.
[50] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p150.
[51] Walter et al., "Family Stories, Public Silence: Irish Identity Construction Amongst the Second-Generation Irish in England."p15
[52] Ibid.

Second-generation migrants find also ways to communicate their identity through music, or naming (Saoirse gave Irish names to both of her children: Tim still plays traditional music). They continue to negotiate the contrasts of living what Tim describes as an 'underground identity': one thing at home, and another to non-Irish friends and colleagues. They reaffirm this through holidays in Ireland. Moreover, Saoirse recounts an experience with her child, whose father is also second-generation Irish, being aware of his parents' differing county loyalties in Ireland:

> SAOIRSE: funnily enough, on this holiday my little boy, we were at Monaghan first because my husband's family are from Monaghan. And they got through to the semi-finals of the All-Ireland, so they bought my son a Monaghan shirt. And he didn't want to put the Monaghan shirt on because he wanted a new Mayo shirt, and he was afraid to go to Mayo with this Monaghan shirt on. So what we ended up doing: obviously we encouraged him to wear the Monaghan shirt, but we got him the Mayo kit when we got into Mayo as well. And then I also said he'd have to get a Derry kit as well, in support of his grandad.

Saoirse's experiences of holidays in Ireland are mixed, with more recent visits failing to live up to the nostalgia of childhood trips:

> SAOIRSE: there's a big change I think in Ireland now, and it's a different Ireland to what I had growing up, cos when we were younger we'd go back maybe three or four times a year, and in the summer holidays we'd be there for the six-week holidays, and we loved it. And we have such happy memories. And I think they were very innocent times really, you know, whereas now when I go back to Ireland it feels more like Hollywood: it doesn't feel like the old Ireland. Everybody seems to have a lot of money: I don't know, I see some of the people a bit different to what they used to be. And the village that I would go to, some of the characters, and they were characters are passing away now, and it's kind of moving into the next generation. Which is really sad.

This nostalgia for the 'old Ireland' is commensurate with other interviewees' rose-tinted reflections of the Ireland left behind, and the changes that have taken place. Saoirse surmises that an increase in profound affluence has negatively affected the people in her mother's seaside town. Silva interviewee, John, suggests that Ireland has changed for the worse; 'it galls me now what's happening to that country with planning corruption and lack of planning. They're destroying it.'[53]

Certainly, some narrators feel suffocated by the idea of returning to Ireland, and the ways in which they will be judged for failing to live up to the respectability paradigm:

> GERALD: I wouldn't go back to Ireland now, I couldn't settle. There's that small-town mentality. You'd speak to someone and they'd say to you "now did you see Eddie's new white shirt?" Why would you want to go back to that? All my friends now will be getting ready for the boneyard.

[53] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p132.

Clearly, the opinions of those at home continue to matter: this could relate to the guilt migrants felt about leaving, and especially to the pressure to succeed in host societies. Indeed, local Irish organisations' work has recognised the extent to which returning home is increasingly difficult for those migrants whose lives in England failed to live up to the high standards of achievement expected in this migrant community. As part of this, they have historically organised trips to Ireland with support workers, so that alienated migrants in the city may return home and experience Ireland again.

> SAOIRSE: When I was a support worker, we brought a female client who was alcohol dependent to Ireland on a client holiday. And she was very difficult now on the holiday: she loved it, but she was very difficult in terms of her issues. And she decided, on that holiday, which was amazing, that she would stop drinking. And when she came home, she did just that. And – where are we now – maybe ten years ago? She's never gone back to it… So it really made her look at her life and review things, and you know, it's time for a change.… there was me and the volunteer co-ordinator then who would be the members of staff: and we took ten clients away with us to Sligo which was absolutely gorgeous and we had a fabulous time. Well the weather wasn't bad: there was the odd shower, but to be quite honest with you we got sunshine most of the week, it was lovely. And we also had a really good itinerary: we had something on every day to do with them, so we'd take them out. And it was a really really good time. But it was really important to us that we got people back who had not been back for whatever reason, and like I say there was that particular story that I told you about. And she really enjoyed that holiday, and I think it made a huge difference to her life it really did.

Saoirse recognises her, and the institution's, role in changing the future for this client. Making peace with home made it easier for her to make changes in her daily life in England. It was not the same for all the holidaymakers, however:

> SAOIRSE: And we also brought one male client back, and he'd not seen his family. His brother had died and he'd not seen his family for quite some time. And they travelled to Sligo to see him, and it was lovely. They were desperate to get him down to stay with them for a couple of nights and he wouldn't go, which was a shame. And we had said, you know, go and we will pick you up. We won't go back without you! But I just think he was a bit unsure. But they were desperate to get him down and he wouldn't go. So there was that. There's been a good few if I'm honest, where I thought, we've done really good work there, and there's nothing nicer to see: um, I could go on, there's quite a lot of success

Saoirse is proud of the extent to which the holiday has positively affected the clients, but notes that some problems are not so easily solved; some clients have been deeply affected by childhood experiences of institutions such as industrial schools for example, and because these oppressive institutions were their lasting memory of childhood, no longer see Ireland as home:

> SAOIRSE: I think he had had a really horrific childhood in Ireland: and he had been through the institutions. And he would never go back. I think a lot of people see Leeds as their home then, because they've lost that link with Ireland: I suppose the way they see

> it, they've been badly let down by Ireland and the government, everything. They were badly let down.

This uneasy relationship with Ireland goes some way to explain why some clients have become entirely alienated from their homes in Ireland; many of them also feel alienated from the Irish community in Leeds.[54] This contrasts with the more successful migrants who enjoy visits back to Ireland, and remain familiar with their old homeplaces and the politics and developments there, whilst continuing to engage with migrant communities and associations in England. This goes to show that there is a diversity of experience of homes in the narratives, reflected in the wide range of ways it is described and discussed.

Food

One of the subjects narrators continually returned to during interviews was food. There is a significant amount to be said about the role that food plays in the narratives of Irish migrants in Leeds: the way in which food, consumption and different permutations of home were part of the early migrant experience and the way in which Irish institutions in Britain harness the emotional power of food to engage and reassure customers, clients and service users. Bourdieu suggests that working-class men are brought up to have an 'abundance mind-set' when it comes to food, suggesting that: 'It is part of men's status to eat and to eat well (and also to drink well); it is particularly insisted that they should eat, on the grounds that 'it won't keep', and there is something suspect about a refusal'.[55] This is exemplified in the uniform disgust at some of the paltry sandwiches provided for migrant men in packed lunches by their landlady; Eamonn's Marmite sandwiches ended up in the hedge, while Simon's fish paste sandwiches were handed over to the homeless in St George's Crypt. Eamonn suggested that 'they wouldn't keep a cat going, never mind a man.' The longest and most egregious sandwich-disposal tale came from Liam, whose landlady was disappointed by his subterfuge over Spam:

> LIAM: she used to make us sandwiches going to work at the time, and there'd be spam in the sandwiches, and I hated the Spam. And just when you'd come out of the house in the morning, we used to have to come down to get the bus or something, and, but there was a bin, and jeez I can still see it, a little green bin onto a pole, where you'd put your rubbish and stuff like that, and when I'd get to that hedge I'd lob my sandwiches in of a morning. But she had everyone's name for the sandwiches, and my name was one of the sandwiches, and there was two old bucks staying in the house and they had nothing else to do only snooping about, and doesn't one go along and looked in the bin and seen my sandwiches, and go in and told her. Jesus she was mad. There was no more sandwiches after that. She said 'if you didn't like what I was giving you, why didn't you tell me?'

[54] This is covered in more detail in the previous two chapters: a combination of an expectation of respectability and internalised oppression can sometimes leave migrants feeling very far from home.

[55] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984).p193

Maye-Banbury 'makes the case for a new continuum of memory which foregrounds the corporeal and spiritual dimensions of acute food deprivation and its significance over space, place and time.' She contests that Irish migrants in the 1950s and 1960s, faced by food shortages in post-war England, evoked the cultural collective memory of famine hunger in their narratives.[56] She concurs that boarding-houses would often be renowned for the paucity of meat, suggesting 'meat supplies were always tightly controlled by the landlords/ladies. Polite petitions for meat proved invariably to be ineffectual'.[57]Although the sandwiches provided for a long, tough working day were disappointing compared to the substantial feasts available at canteens on larger sites (Merriman's canteen got particular praise), or from entrepreneurial tea vans which would serve up hot meat snacks (the one on French's site had a reputation for overcooking its wares), many of the narrators had positive tales to tell about the way they were looked after in their lodgings, which were their homes in the early years of migrant life, and much of this further emphasised the importance of food . For example, Liam suggested that one Irish landlady:

> LIAM: was very generous. She was always on her own. There was a chicken for the Sunday dinner, and if it wasn't all eaten when we came in the Sunday night, we'd go to the fridge, and the leftovers would be there for us.

Declan also had positive tales from this period of his working life, remembering the cooking his English landlady would do for her tenants:

> DECLAN: A big casserole dish of meat cooked for us. There'd be enough for two days. There was only me and another lad, just the two of us. The other two were up, way up at the farm, and I don't know what she done for them like. But we had this casserole, and there'd be enough for two evenings, beef it was, you know. And they were a lovely couple, like, gentry like. He'd be going round the field when we were picking, he'd ride round to see how we were doing. He'd ride round on a horse, yeah, fancy sports jacket on. But still, they didn't look down on us.

Here class and national identity are salient companions to the migrant narratives. Declan is keen to point out that his English landlady was just as generous as her Irish compatriots, and that despite his subordinate position as a temporary farm worker, she showed respect to their position as hard-working men, and communicated this with the provision of hearty, and meaty, fare for their evening meal. Maye-Banbury reflects in particular on the role of meat in Irish migrant narratives, suggesting that:

> Meat consumption carries multiple hermeneutic connotations of virility and masculinity at the universal level. It is noteworthy that in medieval Ireland and indeed up until the

[56] Angela Maye-Banbury, "The Famished Soul: Resonance and Relevance of the Irish Famine to Irish Men's Accounts of Hunger Following Immigration to England During the 1950s and 1960s," *Irish Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (2019).p195.
[57] Ibid.p208

> mid-eighteenth century, beef consumption was normally preserved for feasting. Conversely, when in short supply, attempts to participate in social displays such as meat eating to validate masculinity associated with heavy manual labour become undermined. In respect of Irish sociocultural identity, a lack of meat denotes low levels of financial, social and cultural capital.[58]

An abundant serving of meat therefore has connotations in some of the stories told by the narrators in this thesis. For example, Declan tells a story about attending a wedding in Mayo where he was vaguely acquainted with the manager:

> DECLAN: We were there for my niece's wedding, in 96: it was 20 years ago last October. And it was beef, sirloin of beef. So anyway, that was very nice. And there was a lad there used to be in Leeds years ago: I don't know would you have known him? He was away for something. He was from Knockmore. He went back there, and he was sort of the restaurant manager or something, you know? And wasn't he serving the top table? And me and Pat: Pat and John are big fellas, like: pair of bruisers. So anyway, he put two sirloin steaks on it. And there were like two sirloin steaks. And he put two on Pat's there. And he says: 'I'll be round again.' And Pat says 'I should think so!' He only said it just for the laugh, you see. And your man never said a word like. And I watched him he was watching our table like a hawk. And he never passed to me that he knew me or anything, so anyway, Jesus, Pat hadn't hardly one of them finished when he was over again, and he says 'do you need two more?' And Pat says 'ah, no, no.' And I says 'no, I'm fine.' I probably would have, but I'm fine. But he should have known Pat, and he probably did. He thought, I'll shut this fella up! And do you know, I didn't see him since.

This shows that Declan is given favourable status by his erstwhile acquaintance, but it is also a tacit acknowledgement of his ability to 'put away' significant amounts of food. This is corroborated in another story of his: whilst engaging in farm work, Declan lived for a time in a hotel in Cumbria. It was during the winter, so they got a special deal:

> DECLAN: I remember the first or second morning we were there, and the woman came down, you know I'd had my breakfast, so Mick liked a smoke, you know, and me and Mick were sharing a room like, so Mick says 'I don't want an egg, I don't want..' he wouldn't eat much in a morning. So he was more or less, so anyway, I says to Mick, you know I was a young fella, 19 years of age, I'd eat a horse. I says to Mick, tomorrow morning, don't turn anything away, anything that you don't want slide onto my plate before you start. So I was having half Mick's breakfast along with my own in the morning!

This supports Bourdieu's supposition that 'there is something suspect about a refusal' of food – Declan warns his colleague against this, and takes advantage of his lack of appetite to have his own second breakfast.

For many of these men, this period was also an opportunity to be responsible for cooking and cleaning their own homes. This had varying consequences, depending on the company. In one

[58] Ibid.p208. Maye-Banbury's interviews were principally with Irish migrants to Sheffield and Leicester in the 1950s and 1960s.

tenancy, Eamonn and his housemates are stymied by the landlady's son, who is described as a 'right little crab of a thing':

> EAMONN: We were all cooking for ourselves, there was a cooker, we were all sharing the one kitchen, and we'd all land in together of an evening, five or six of us, and go straight for the pan, pound of steak onto it, this young fella (the son of the house) would always be around at the same time, and he'd start frying, this evening he was frying the two eggs just put into the pan, and I don't know who it was looking for the pan, I think twas, I'm not sure if twas, that Philbin, they used to call him the Dancer, he was always, he never sat down when there was the dances, with a black suit on him, there was him and Mulroney, anyway, there was one of them came in and the young fella was just putting his two eggs in the pan and he took his pan off him and just to cook his piece of steak, he took the pan and just slammed it down on the ground, the two eggs on the kitchen floor, and the other fella just went away and cried to his mother or something.

Declan had a slightly more harmonious domestic arrangement, but again things did not always go to plan:

> DECLAN: In the house there was six of us, and three of us went together, and then the other three went together. And I remember one evening – you'd wash in your turns, you'd wash up, and we hadn't a dishwasher, so we had to wash on our turns. So this evening anyways, it was my turn to wash. So I washed the dishes and everything. And these other three lads, who were going together, had eaten before us. And they had their own big saucepan for boiling & that in. And one fella, these two lads were from Mayo: they had put in the piece of ham, or bacon, to boil. But when I: I'm sure you're the same. If you're boiling a piece of ham, you'd put that in for an hour, an hour and a half. Before you put the cabbage in. And the cabbage only needs about 20, 25 minutes, but they put the cabbage in at the same time. So Moran had put in the ham, or bacon. And he'd put the cabbage on top of it and put the lid on it, and kept it on the cooker. So I was doing the washing up, and I washed up the dishes anyways, and we all went in the front room, and next thing we're in the front room about an hour, hour and a half anyways, someone says 'I'll make a pot of tea, like.' So I had turned the thing on: I turned it on fairly low. So as soon as they opened the door, they could smell something. He had put no water in it.

This led to a recrimination, and a fairly acrid smelling house; but highlights that these domestic arrangements were relatively easily arranged, and by and large that they worked. Most of these men went on not long after this period to marry, and the domestic situation would then shift again, this time with their wives taking on the majority of the responsibility for cooking and the home, particularly during the men's working life. Even if their wife also worked, the responsibility for the home sphere would remain with them so it was a highly gendered space. Some wives became frustrated at the lack of respect her husband paid to the domestic arrangements. Liam tells the story of one such character, who had stayed for one pint too long in the pub, where the wife was seen:

> LIAM: Bringing in his dinner, down to the pub. It was at the club, beside the house. And putting it down on the table. And he didn't blink an eye, only started eating away. He

> asked the landlord for salt and pepper. And then he pushed the plate away and carried on drinking!

The domestic division remains defined in retirement – some of these interviews were punctuated by substantial sandwiches and cups of tea provided by the wives of the narrators. In retirement, however a number of the men continue to contribute to the household through growing their own vegetables, either at home or on allotments.

How unusual is the centrality of food in Irish migrant narratives? Coakley investigates the relationships that Polish migrants to Cork have with food, and there are some similarities with my own migrant interviews. For example, her interviewees take advantage of the opportunity to experiment with more multicultural foods that may have been harder to source in Poland, such as lemongrass and sushi. She also discusses the ways in which seeing familiar Polish food in the shops has a direct and positive impact on her respondents' emotions, giving the example of Stella, who says:

> when I saw on the shelf cheese which is made in my town I was almost crying… And when I see something which is really close to me, to my country, I didn't care about the price, even if I'm going to eat that, I said I'm going to support them, I want to buy that.[59]

Asda, Ellesmere Port, May 2019

This familiarity is echoed in the Irish sections of supermarkets. Tesco abandoned theirs in 2016, but Asda and Budgens continue to stock Irish consumables in their ethnic food section, giving expatriates the opportunity to indulge in Cidona, Kimberley biscuits, Tayto crisps and Barry's Tea. Skinner suggests that these foods link Irish migrants to home: that the food 'links them to Ireland through the act of consumption.'[60] Indeed, McDaid claims that advertisements for Irish tea play on this ability to consume 'home' through Irish products, in this case in the American context: 'approximation of Ireland via familiar foodstuffs, teabags and pints of beer was as close to home as they might hope to come without jeopardising their American lives and livelihood'.[61] She posits that: 'an act of transubstantiation takes place by

[59] Linda Coakley, "Polish Encounters with the Irish Foodscape: An Examination of the Losses and Gains of Migrant Foodways," *Food and Foodways* 20, no. 3-4 (2012).p315.
[60] Cronin, "Fake Food? Celebrating St Patrick's Day with Corned Beef and Cabbage."p21
[61] Ailbhe McDaid, "'Sure We Export All Our Best Stuff': Changing Representations of Emigration in Irish Television Advertising," *Nordic Irish Studies* 13, no. 1 (2014).p48

imbibing Irish food or drink (such as Barry's Tea) and through this postmodern communion, the emigrant's homesickness is assuaged, his identity restored.[62] Certainly Coakley finds that 'food provides a sense of connectedness to people and places left behind as a result of migration'.[63] She uses the example of Pawel, who gives an explanation for overindulging in some Polish bigos he bought in a shop in Ireland:

> When you go somewhere abroad and you are for a long time yourself there without your friends, family, and stuff like that so it's sometimes very very simple things like you eat one of those dishes. It's something that you feel very very happy, it's strange . . ."[64]

Coakley adds that:

> The jar of *bigos* provided a sense of comfort; it filled him with happiness such that he could not prevent himself from devouring the whole jar. These foods had a direct emotional and physical impact. There was the physical satiety achieved through eating the *bigos* which translated into happy feelings of home and connectedness to Poland.[65]

This can be seen in the Irish migrant context both in the ways that supermarket Irish sections market well-known Irish brands to migrants looking for a taste of home, and also in the way in which both commercial enterprises and local institutions recognise the emotional value of food.

Indeed, Barthes proposes that food and drink are endowed with meanings that are embedded in social contexts that are regulated by social norms and expectations. These meanings can also shift over time, and when the social context changes.[66] When Barthes discusses the advertisement of coffee, he notes how advertisers move away from the stimulant properties of the liquid in order to highlight the act of drinking coffee as 'taking a break' or as relaxation: coffee is 'not so much a substance as a circumstance.' [67] We also see this in how the importance of tea is reflected in Irish migrant culture: the way in which Barry's and Lyon's tea take their place in 'Irish' food aisles in British supermarkets. In Irish community groups in Leeds, tea serves a central function to welcome, relax and comfort clients and service users, particularly older ones. The over 55s club has at its heart a large tea urn for as many refills as are needed: at Leeds Irish Health and Homes, it is an institutional policy that any visitor to the headquarters, or to any of the institution's groups, is first of all offered a cup of tea. As Barthes suggests,

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Coakley, "Polish Encounters with the Irish Foodscape: An Examination of the Losses and Gains of Migrant Foodways."p315.
[64] Ibid.p316.
[65] Ibid.p316
[66] Roland Barthes, "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption
" in *Food and Culture. A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (Routledge).p29
[67] Ibid.p29

assuming one can transpose tea in place of coffee, culturally tea is 'the recognised occasion for interrupting work and using this respite in a precise protocol of taking substance'.[68]

Food plays a further role in both the Leeds Irish Centre and Leeds Irish Health and Homes: both institutions which work with the city's Irish population under various social and community auspices. The Irish Centre's keynote annual event is the Mayo Association dinner, and in speaking to the organisation's chairman, it was clear that the feedback after the event related to ideas about food:

> One of the things that's obvious now: it's very hard to have a meat that suits everybody. So you end up either having lamb or beef. Now next year, that's not going to be the case. We're going to have a hot buffet. Where everybody: we're going to have maybe six types of meat. Everybody chooses their own vegetables, and everybody choose their own meat. The soup is served by the catering company, so there's no danger of anybody getting burnt.

This is a marker of the respectability so important in this community, in providing amply for guests and responding positively to feedback. It also links back to some of Bourdieu's ideas, where:

> 'Elastic' and 'abundant' dishes are brought to the table—soups or sauces, pasta or potatoes (almost always included among the vegetables)—and served with a ladle or spoon, to avoid too much measuring and counting, in contrast to everything that has to be cut and divided, such as roasts[69]

Indeed it is important at these dinners, where tickets are not inexpensive, that there is an abundance of everything, including meat, hence the plan for the different types being available at next year's event. The Centre also runs the aforementioned over 55s event, the Tuesday Club, where a number of over 55s can gather for showband songs, bingo, and a ham salad in summer or a soup in winter. Another organisation, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, as well as having tea dances and events, and the cup of tea policy, also has lunch clubs. The community team leader explained it thus:

[68] Ibid.p29.
[69] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.p36

A member of Leeds Irish Health and Homes' gardening group displaying his wares.

> Our lunch clubs meet at a venue where the kitchen is next to the entrance, so service users see the food being cooked and smell it as soon as they walk in the door.
>
> The potatoes and cabbage are grown locally by the LIHH men's group at our allotment. The service users from a rural background love to see the men's delivering the spuds with the soil still on them.
>
> Our service users comment on how welcoming is the smell of boiling potatoes, roasting meat and steaming veg.
>
> During the winter months, we provide a home delivery service from the two lunch clubs to our more vulnerable and frail service users who cannot get out due to the bad weather. 40 people benefitted from this last winter.[70]

She suggests that providing clients with a sense of belonging is important in this context, as:

> Our service users' sense of isolation and displacement exacerbate as they get older, their partner dies and their children grow up and move away. There are no longer any Irish pubs in the city to go to for a " bit of craic" and to see people you recognise and indeed, many may not attend church regularly any more due to health or conscience issues. So LIHH provides a space where Irish people and those of Irish Heritage will immediately sense identity affirming signals.[71]

It is clear, then, that food culture is at the forefront of migrant narratives, and that from the beginning to the end of the migrant journey, home and comfort are an important part of this experience, and one of the simplest short-hands used to communicate this is through food and drink. Food genders these particular migrant spaces, whereby, in food preparation, the paid position of landlady contrasts with the unpaid position of wife. This research therefore develops the duality of the understanding of home and the importance of food made in the domestic space, even when consumed outside it. It is clear that food helps make rented accommodation home; it provides a link back to home in Ireland, and is a way to make people find a 'home from home' in Irish centres and institutions. If food is the signifier, home is what is signified.

Housing

The physical embodiment of home, in the form of housing, takes significant form in these narratives.

Delaney suggests that:

[70] Email correspondence, May 2019.
[71] Ibid.

> The sharp distinction between home and work that was such a defining characteristic of middle-class values of domesticity and privacy simply did not apply to working-class unskilled Irish building workers who were engaged in heavy construction work in the post-war era. Constant movement was a prerequisite for earning a livelihood. Thousands of Irish men worked on the construction sites of wartime Britain building airfields and factories. By the mid-twentieth century it was power stations, motorways, and airports as well as housing schemes, tunnels, and hydro-electric dams that were the main sources of employment. One well-informed contemporary estimated in 1957 that over 150,000 Irishmen were employed in such work. Often the workers were housed in camps adjacent to the building sites or in lodgings or hostels located nearby.[72]

Indeed, for those workers, living in temporary accommodation during the early phase of their working life is one of the only times during the narrative when home is talked about in detail. Declan had a challenging time on his first arrival, working on the farms:

> DECLAN: You'd stay out there, and the place where you're living mightn't be very good, you know, it'd be dog rough, it was just an existence, that was all, yeah. The first year we picked in fact we had better accommodation, because it was a house that came vacant on the site, they had about four houses, two blocks of civvies was workers, and one of them was vacant, so when that, lovely house, it had all the facilities in. So second time, we were picking with a different farmer, and the facilities wasn't as good. There was two other lads were in a caravan beside the farm, and we were in another, sort of an old gatehouse. There was an entrance into a big house. An old gatehouse and it was rough.

Liam had fonder memories, and tells of one of his experiences:

> LIAM: We were all Irish Catholics apart from two old boys, one Scotch and the other I think was English… but they were real old men. And one'd go in the bathroom they'd be farting and fecking about…
>
> SIMON: They'd all day long to do it and they'd wait til you got home
>
> LIAM: Cos Packie Flame was in the room with one and he was from Northern Ireland, and he'd pick up a shoe and he'd let it fly during the night cos he couldn't sleep with your man snoring and blowing off and everything
>
> INTERVIEWER: Crikey. So how many of you to a room, if there were 12 in the house?
>
> LIAM: they were four at least, to a room. There was 8 or 12 of us in it altogether.
>
> INTERVIEWER: Yeah? Were you all in single beds then?
>
> LIAM: we were I think, in that house.

Eamonn revelled in the short-term nature of his accommodations, as it enabled him to act out and behave recklessly, knowing another lodging or job was easy to find:

> EAMONN: I stayed at a pub on Hunslet Road, the Vic, we were there for a while and we got evicted, it was on the way in to the city centre, it's been pulled down now, it was near the Red Lion, the Vic was only a couple of hundred yards from the Red Lion, the

[72] Delaney, "People and Places."p112.

> Vic has been gone for years, there was another pub after the fork in the road we used to go to as well, I can't remember the name of it
>
> ROSE: Why did you get evicted?
>
> SIMON: Non-payment of rent!
>
> EAMONN: For wrestling upstairs; the landlady was in the kitchen cooking and a big lump of the ceiling fell down on her: that was it – gone!

Martin concurred on the short-term nature of his housing at first in Leeds, suggesting:

> MARTIN: We went into digs on Chapeltown Road, on Grange View, with Mickey in the boarding house; stayed there for a while, got a job with Wimpey, worked there for a while, got laid off, then moved to some more digs; you moved around til you got the best one.

Eamonn was put out of another pub lodging for fighting.[73] He also recollects an occasion where the child of the landlady attributed his thefts from his parents to the lodgers, whilst also stealing from them:

> EAMONN: I don't know what happened, let's just say it didn't last very long, we got chucked out and, there was someone coming in, there was about four or five and you wouldn't know it, they were all pinching and fiddling, there was someone pinching all the time and they was blaming one and then one was blaming the other one, and twas causing hassle, and it wasn't none of the ones that was livin' in it, it was, they had a son, about thirteen, twelve or thirteen or something, and he was, him and his mate, they knew every house would be empty, and there was like a bit of an outhouse at the back, like a coal bunker or something, so they used to come in the window that way, and she didn't know that, he'd raid all the pockets and anything that was left in them, and some of them would take money and go to work. He got caught in the end. I didn't lose anything, well, I lost a watch, it was a good little watch, the pin had broke in it and I was taking it to work the next day, and that's gone, I thought 'that's funny' anyway, how he got caught was, one of the lads was bad one morning, he had flu or cold or something, and he was sleeping in the bed and the window opens and (laughter) so, he got him, and rung the police, but she, she still wouldn't have it that it was the son, no, no he wasn't up to something, anyway, he admitted it then, he was at it for months and months. But it wasn't just us that he was doing, he was doing his mother and father, and they were blaming us.

Delaney notes the negative connotations attached to Irish workers, that 'this image of the 'rough' drunken Irish navvy was pervasive in post-war Britain' which enabled the likes of Eamonn's landlady's son to exploit these fears by blaming his deviant behaviour on the lodgers.[74]

Other migrants in this period gave accounts of overcoming suspicion from prospective proprietors through proving oneself to be responsible. Liam recalled:

[73] This story is told in more detail in the first chapter of this thesis.
[74] Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, p115.

LIAM: Chorley. Yeah. We moved to Chorley, and I, we had no digs, and I stayed in a hotel, we couldn't get digs. And one morning, I had the boot of the car open, putting on my boots and this old woman come along, and I said to her, 'do you know anywhere I'll get digs?' and she said 'no, but I'll ask'. The following morning she come along again, cos she was going to work by then, she said 'did you get digs?' I said 'no.' But she said 'would you come along to my place?' I'd said 'you might take me in yourself?' She'd said 'call up to my place this evening sometime'. So I went up and I said to the husband, he was saying how they'd had a Scotch fella in and he'd destroyed the place and all this, but they'd said to me cos of the Scotch man, but I got in then and you know me as well as sure he had great time for me as anyone he brought there. And she was a lovely person.

Declan lived in a range of accommodation: having assumed that the people of mainland Britain spent a good deal of time in caravans on his first arrival (travelling through North Wales, he mistook the holiday caravan parks on the coast for homes), he ended up in one himself – this is the story of how that came to pass, after his time living cheaply in a hotel out of season:

DECLAN: But then, come spring then, say Easter, approaching Easter, we'd have to evacuate the hotel, and find somewhere else. Cos all the B and Bs and all the hotels were booked up. So what we would do, we thought well Jayzus we'll have to get a caravan. Cos the others were all married: there was Martin up there with the accordion, and Mick, and Tommy, so I says, I'll get a caravan, so I went into Morecambe, one Friday evening, said we'll do a detour we'll go into Morecambe and we'll get a caravan, so I think it was about £40, four berth caravan. But you could sleep five or six in it. A white caravan. Forty quid. And I told him where were like, and he said well you'll have to transport it to the job like, so I said, well, sound, and that was £11, like to transport the caravan. It was a long way from Morecambe to Grasmere. So we had that caravan then for all that summer, but the job was coming to an end then come the next back end, so a young fella on the site, went up and bought the caravan off me for near enough the same money, and we stayed in a guest house then, it was Mrs Wayne, we stayed in her house, cos she was anxious to get us in cos she lived on doing B &B and rather than doing that so we went to her then, until Christmas.

Simon and Eamonn also had tales of caravan living, with the caravans provided by the contractor:

SIMON: French's supplied you with a caravan if you went away, and if you were married you got a proper caravan, and them caravans, they'd have them, after two months, three months, they were worse than pigsties, absolutely,

INTERVIEWER: Would that be for you to live in while you were working?

SIMON: Yeah, plus they'd give you lodging, living allowance as well

INTERVIEWER: And that was to keep your family with you while you were working?

EAMONN: Yeah but, they gave you a good decent one, a good residential one, but if you were living on your own you might get one and there'd be maybe two more, three of you in it, and they'd tow it round wherever you wanted, and all pots, pans, bedding, everything was.. they had campsites in some places, they were usually near a village or something – there were no places to socialise there

> SIMON: I think I still have a chest of drawers from French's in the garage… There was one there at Rastrick as well on the M62, can you remember the day Trimmer went in and he left the gas on? And he opened the door with the cigarette in and all the walls went BANG! out, and there's Trimmer, lying on his back, steam coming out of his ears, he says 'I'm dead!'

Gerald's experience of home when he came to the UK was also transient, but as someone with an alcohol dependency he found himself regularly in less than salubrious accommodation:

> GERALD: One of the nights I returned I must have got a bad bed, and I ended up having to take myself down to the hospital for Tropical Diseases to get deloused. The staff were used to this type of thing: 'Is it the crabs again?'
>
> I worked in the city of London for six pounds a day as a kitchen porter. On my first day, I went to Camden Town, booked into a hostel, and went out to celebrate. Seven or eight pints later, I returned, took my bed number and slept it off.
>
> The next morning, a list of bed numbers was read out. An old timer told me "'they're the dampers." My number was duly called. I was fined £3 and told 'next time you're out.' On my way back, one of the lads asked me 'Did you get your Academy Award?'
>
> I went back to the hostel drunk again, and ended up having to leave. I went to the Salvation Army first, and then set off on the road. I went to Brighton, Newbury, Bristol and Derby, taking in the hostels and the rehab centres.

Although Gerald was the only interviewee for this study who lived itinerantly in hostels and rehabilitation centres, others who live in similar sheltered accommodation now in Leeds have comparable stories. James, interviewed by Silva, has a similar recollection of infestations:

> I went to a place, they called it the School, a doss house. I went in there and it was rough, rough. You had to hold your own… And they used to give you a bowl of soup at night-time, but you had to keep all your clothes on you, because if you left them beside the bed, they'd have been took. I was in the doss house where fleas were a hundred percent.[75]

A study conducted in the mid-2000s suggested that Irish people were significantly overrepresented in the statistics of street homelessness – Irish migrants making up 1.2% of the city's population made up 37% of its street homeless.[76] Gerald was referred to Leeds Irish Health and Homes because of his alcoholism, which is the most common reason for referral, though Mulligan notes that often clients have a mixture of issues relating to addiction and mental health which leads to their getting into contact with the housing services. Leeds Irish Health and Homes offers housing to people living precariously, much of it to older Irish people in the city. A support worker will work with the clients, and 'when a tenant moves into their flat it is fully

[75] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p118.
[76] Eddie Mulligan, "Gan Didean Homeless Irish People: A Report by Leeds Irish Health and Homes," (Leeds: Leeds Irish Health and Homes, 2006).p32

furnished and equipped with all the necessities to get someone started, including crockery and pots and pans.' The charity manages some housing association properties, as well as running its own Davitt House, a sheltered housing complex named after one of Mayo's most famous sons.[77] Gerald lives in a property maintained by the charity, and has managed to control his drinking since moving there. It is implied in the Leeds Irish Health and Homes homelessness report that the charity's clients have been failed by the existing support services and often ignored by the Irish community at large:

> Many have no contact with the Irish community and cultural activities such as music, sport and social activities; some of them are also living in inadequate accommodation. There is a direct correlation between their socioeconomic situation and declining health.[78]

The report features case studies of homeless Irish people in Leeds who have successfully interacted with the service: the first of these, Seamus, was alcohol-dependent and struggling to negotiate the health and social care system in the city, leaving him vulnerable:

> Frequently the outreach workers were told by social service staff that if Seamus chose to live in squalor, there was nothing that could be done. As with many Irish people who find themselves in difficult circumstances, there was a tendency to attribute much of his distress to alcohol dependency. Therefore he must accept responsibility for it. This often means that a person's needs are not dealt with whilst services argue about whether it was the chicken or the egg which came first.[79]

This infers that the existing services in the city were not adequately equipped to deal with Seamus's complex needs: the report consistently draws attention to the cultural sensitivities displayed by Leeds Irish Health and Homes workers which are lacking in mainstream care. The frustration at the lack of cohesive thinking on the part of the statutory services is evident at the end of this case study:

> This is another example of poor communication and cooperation between statutory authorities as well as an almost indifference to the plight of people like Seamus. This is not intended as a criticism of any particular group it is merely a factual account of how the care of the vulnerable is uncoordinated in the present system.[80]

Later in this case-study, cultural sensitivities again become an issue:

> Fortunately for all concerned, it turned out that the manager of the home was an Irish woman who spoke fluent Irish and was able to talk to Seamus in his native tongue which helped to get him to co-operate. Seamus was from an Irish-speaking area and had always associated with Irish-speakers. This led to him sometimes misunderstanding English speakers and vice-versa. This can sometimes cause problems for some older Irish people;

[77] Ibid.p32.
[78] Ibid.p38.
[79] Ibid.p46.
[80] Ibid.p45

> often people will revert to their native languages in times of stress and anxiety as they feel more comfortable.[81]

Here, the lack of specific provision for older, vulnerable Irish people, as well as a lack of understanding of the proclivities of native-Irish speakers is seen to have led to unnecessary conflicts and agitation. Once Seamus was able to express himself in Irish he was more comfortable. The English language thus proved a barrier in an already delicate situation in this instance.

The report also considered the case of James, who had been bullied in previous tenancies and had come to Davitt House as a result:

> James had four or five periods in hostels where he experienced violence and exploitation. He thinks that Davitt House is the answer to his problems and that it is a model for treating all homeless people. He says that he had never been looked after better and is convinced that any organisation that was not Irish would not be able to provide for his needs as well. He is very happy there and grateful for the opportunity it has given him to sort his life out. He works in the garden and around the house and takes a pride in his efforts in helping to maintain it. He does not know exactly why he came to be homeless. He puts it down to a combination of things, bad luck and 'happenstance'.[82]

This allocation of one's own space, and particularly some outdoor space, has been a great tonic to James, who has struggled to maintain relationships with his children and his family.[83] The organisation does, however, concede that its support model does not work for all clients citing the case of Mary, an alcohol-dependent client with long-term homelessness issues who was placed in a housing tenancy but:

> Unfortunately, she started to feel 'hemmed in' by her accommodation and the restrictions she placed on herself during her sobriety and so she started to drink again and resurrect friendships with past members of her social group.[84]

Mary was in and out of supported housing and hostels, and ultimately her relationship with the organisation broke down; 'Upon reflection we understand that our support did not cater appropriately for Mary's needs and our support planning structures have been altered to ensure this type of situation does not re-occur'.[85]

Leeds Irish Health and Homes also commissioned a report into the experiences of older Irish people who leave their homes for health and social care settings: people spending a long time

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[81] Ibid p47
[82] Ibid p49
[83] This chimes with the narratives discussed earlier in this chapter at the difficulties interviewees faced in adapting to a more urban environment with less space to roam.
[84] Mulligan, "Gan Didean Homeless Irish People: A Report by Leeds Irish Health and Homes."p51.
[85] Ibid.p50

staying in hospital, or moving into care homes. Again, their findings reflected the importance to Irish people of culturally sensitive services:

> A woman whose husband had dementia was concerned about the future and what sort of care he will receive, as he has been an Irish musician since he was a child. She said, "I am afraid that he will not get access to Irish music and other cultural aspects of his life if he has to go into a home".[86]

The report also highlighted the extent to which a cultural expectation of family support for older people created psychological barriers for Irish migrant service users offered home care, who felt that this was a task that should fall to family and not to strangers:

> One woman's belief system was that it was shameful to even think about asking social services for support. She explained that when she was a full time carer for her husband during his period of illness, "I helped him do everything; he refused to let me ask for social services' help and said he really didn't want it. As my duty to him as his wife I am entitled to look after him, not social services".[87]

This widely-held belief placed another barrier in the way of more isolated migrants, who have been estranged from family and live alone – a lack of trust in services can be even more of an acute issue for these people. The response above also suggested a generational difference between first and second-generation migrants:

> Another woman went on to explain that she felt torn because she was ill herself she could not provide the best care for her husband. She explained how her children who were born in Leeds had a different outlook on social services, "My children encouraged me to apply for carers allowance £35 per week. I eventually filled in the forms and got that but my husband wasn't happy and said we didn't need it"

It is implied that this cultural belief in keeping care within the family can lead to a rejection of social care services:

> Several of those interviewed mentioned they were offered homecare and follow up care but refused on the grounds that the family would look after them. One man said that he was planning his own rehabilitation after major surgery. He had told social services he did not need their support as he had his wife for help. However, he did mention that his wife is not in good health so he wonders what would happen if he needed care in the long term.[88]

[86] Eddie Mulligan and Bronagh Daly, "A Study of Older Irish People's Experiences of Health & Social Care Services in Leeds," (Leeds: Leeds Irish Health and Homes, 2009).p16
[87] Ibid.p18.
[88] Ibid. p18

The report also recognised the gendered nature of family care, suggesting that 'there is a strong gender element in that, even if there is family around, the burden of care invariably falls on a daughter.'[89] This reinforces the gendered patterns of care, evident in relation to food preparation.

It is clear that Leeds' Irish organisations recognise that Irish people have certain needs which are not always met by generic social care providers. Of course, the organisations themselves provide culturally sensitive support and therefore are likely to recommend more of this; however, the evidence is convincing and salient. The social care report concluded that:

> The study found that individual professionals were aware of Irish people's needs. In addition, it was recognised that Irish members of staff used their own ethnicity to facilitate therapeutic relationships. However, too much of this good work depended upon the good will of staff.[90]

Irish migrants to Britain live, as the host population do, in a range of accommodation and environments which constitute 'home'. Unlike other ethnic groups, there is no 'Irish' area in the city, as Irish migrants have spread out or assimilated; as Silva's interviewee Richard suggests, there is a distinct culture of:

> 'improve and move. I've moved about four or five times since the first house, and I've always got the highest price in the street every time I sold. Improve yourself. When the Irish come over in the '40s and '50s, there's polarization, they all come to each other, and you're in like a ghetto. But then you've got to move out from that, expand from that.[91]

Culturally sensitive organisations which provide homes and care for Irish people, such as Leeds Irish Centre and Leeds Irish Health and Homes, fund their activities through a variety of sources. Leeds Irish Health and Homes is a charity, and receives funding from the city council, the Irish government's Emigrant Support Fund, and charitable giving. One of its biggest fundraising events is the black tie dinner dance, which takes place at Leeds Irish Centre.[92] This black-tie event would be attended by local business people, often with Irish connections. This formalisation would be a roundabout way for Irish people to support their own people who have fallen on hard times, but also to be able to do so in a publicly performative way that glamourises the act of charity, and makes the benefactor appear benevolent. The act of giving is mediated through the service providers. The need for the cultivation or provision of a home, or culturally

[89] Ibid.p19.
[90] Ibid. p20.
[91] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.
[92] This would be similar in nature to the Mayo Association event discussed earlier in this chapter.

Flyer for charity dinner dance at Leeds Irish Centre, 2018

sensitive home care, is therefore something that is tacitly accepted as of significant importance within the Irish community.

Home objects

Miller suggests that 'It is the material culture within our home that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and also the representation of that world within our private domain.'[93] This thesis has already investigated the public displays of Irishness that can be seen in the Irish Centre and the St Patrick's Day Parade but more private displays of identity are provided by home ornamentation.

Sophie Chevalier interrogates claims that 'mass-produced objects in industrial society, unlike man-made objects in traditional society, are not integrated into people's lives: they are proclaimed to be "alienated".[94] Chevalier explores the French ethnologist perspective on the binary opposition of traditional and rural production on the one hand, and modern, urban and industrial production on the other. According to this view, modern living leaves people isolated, being forced to live unnaturally, and, powerless as consumers, to consume mass-produced goods.[95] However, Chevalier's own work has different findings. She notes that:

> Every household displays its décor elements that testify to everyday events, to individual or familial history, materializing social relations near or far, living or dead. It is important to realise that most family-related objects, souvenirs and even heirlooms are created out of mass-produced objects. Gifts and purchases are converted into family property.[96]

Certainly, Chevalier's more nuanced perspective on mass-produced objects is pertinent to this study: the mass-produced objects that migrants display in their homes are anything but 'alienated' rather they provide a window into not just the migrant's identity, but how they wish that identity

[93] Daniel Miller, ed. *Home Possessions* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).p1.
[94] Sophie Chevalier, "The French Two-Home Project: Materialisation of Family Identity," in *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, ed. Irene Cieraad (New York: Syracuse, 2006).p83.
[95] Ibid.p84.
[96] Ibid. p86.

to be perceived by visitors. Objects with status can confer that esteem onto their owners: they provide dwellers with a type of material respectability.

Although a number of identity-related household objects were viewed and discussed in these interviews, including religious items such as crosses, fonts and statues, branded items such as mirrors, teatowels and a myriad of Diageo Guinness-branded paraphernalia, three objects have been chosen for analysis: Waterford Crystal, decorative cottages and parish bulletins. These objects are widely enough represented yet also oblique enough to warrant further scrutiny as to their ubiquity in Irish migrant homes.

Waterford Crystal

Waterford Crystal is a well-known brand, creating artisan, highly-embellished objects and souvenirs which can be seen in a number of migrant homes in Leeds as elsewhere. Flegg makes the link between Waterford Crystal and the export market, suggesting that, 'Irish cut crystal is much better understood in America than polished glass in Ireland, partly because there is a wider and more educated interest in glass, and partly because the Americans are less sensitized to Irish kitsch.'[97]

Knock Airport Gift Shop, August 2019

This introduces a curious situation whereby, as Rains has alluded, Irish-American consumers (and by extension, migrants everywhere) shopping online can immerse themselves in items of Irish kitsch and not only not have to visit Ireland to do so, but with those items perhaps not being Irish-made, and only having a cursory link to Ireland – even items such as Waterford Crystal, with its more recently globalised manufacturing base as part of Waterford/Wedgwood.[98] Rains also draws attention to the online platform's ability to place 'an even stronger emphasis on the visual excess of many of the goods', and indeed this is clearly the case. For example, the Carroll's Irish Gifts website opening on an advertisement for Aran jumpers, modelled by a redheaded, freckled woman standing on a deserted beach.[99] This excessively kitsch marketing environment also abounds in physical spaces – not just in Carroll's and other gift shops, but in supermarkets and in airport shopping lounges. At Knock airport's shop in summer 2019, gift choices included miniature Irish road signs, Celtic crosses, Claddagh rings and confectionery including 'Paddy Bear- Luck of the Irish' snacks and chocolate

[97] Eleanor Flegg 'Tradition in Transition' *Irish Arts Review* 1, (2014).p98
[98] Rains, "Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture."p57.
[99] "Carroll's Irish Gifts," https://www.carrollsirishgifts.com/.

leprechauns, as well as the ubiquitous Mayo shirts and other county accoutrements, including crystal. When Waterford Crystal's factory closed in 2009, Flegg argues, 'there seemed little public awareness that Ireland was losing more than just another factory, and that Waterford Crystal represented a repository of skill in glassmaking unparalled in Western Europe.' Declan and Vincent began an evaluation of the value of Waterford Crystal with a discussion of the sensory experience of a trip to the Waterford Crystal factory, and the national pride engendered in seeing such skilled craftspeople at work there.

The weight of the crystal that they refer to is an important part of weighing up its value and authenticity – Whitty quotes a Waterford artist who suggests that:

> we decided to imbue our work with the qualities that made Waterford Crystal famous; weight, traditional cutting, and absolute transparent clarity.... We discovered from experiment that subtle forms can get lost in transparent material and that a more incisive approach working with the natural weight of the medium was much more success[100]

Vincent and Declan discussion of the Waterford Crystal factory gave rise to a wider evaluation of the dying art of crystal making, and its importance as a cultural totem:

> VINCENT: I remember years ago when you… one year we went down to the championship, down in Kilkenny, myself and my wife, and while we were down there we were just at the bar for a water, and we said we'll go to the Waterford Crystal factory. And we did the tour. And there were two coaches going round the whole thing. And we were going round on this tour: and when we'd finished the tour, they showed the various processes. And the thing with it is. There must be 60 people: so two coaches, 35, 40 people, of which we were two.
>
> DECLAN: We did the tour… it was the next morning, and there was a group going round, and we just went in with that group. And went round, like. And to see them making, and cutting the glass, you know, it's unbelievable. And like when they are making a commissioned piece, it might be piece now for a bit race meeting, it'll cost you ten or fifteen thousand pounds, a big cut crystal vase. So there's a bloke making the glass: as you seen yourself. There's another bloke near him making the same vase. The exact same. Because when he has that vase finished: one slip, and that's it all done. They have to make another one as reserve. That one can be used again
>
> VINCENT: and like you say, it might be fifteen thousand, but it's good value, considering the amount of work that goes into it. And you see that glass there, there's one. You see that: the amount of work went into that
>
> DECLAN: Look at the weight of that, but there's some work went into that: it's all hand cut.

[100] Audrey Whitty, "Art of Glass," *Irish Arts Review (2002-)* 25, no. 3 (2008).p131.

It is salient here to consider the way in which the materiality of the crystal as object is made manifest in the reverence shown to handling the object: its weightiness and elaborate detail designed to be studied and held by admirers. As Declan recounts:

> DECLAN: Well, the Waterford Crystal is nice stuff: I'll tell you a good one, from the football as well, at Hugh O'Neill's. There was a fella around Leeds there some years ago, we called him Kilmore, a little fella. And he was always a Hugh O'Neill's man, like. And this couple came to Leeds: he was from Waterford, and she was from Kilkenny, wasn't far apart like. Came to Leeds, and knew no-one, nothing, and anyway, they were in Leeds only a very short time anyways… And the next thing they're getting married. So anyway, they invited me: he wanted me to be best man, like. And they didn't have much, the poor devils, you know… So anyway, the day before the wedding we were all in the house, anyway: and this Kilmore was round and about: he would always be round and about. So anyway: someone come over, don't know was it her sister or, brought a piece of Waterford Crystal. A vase, a nice sized vase. And the vase was taken out: it was left on the mantelpiece. And Kilmore was stood up, on the hearth, and his hands in his pockets: he's shuffling about. And the next thing, the back of the jacket caught the piece of crystal and it falls into a thousand pieces on the floor. Probably the only decent stuff they had in the house. 'Ah no!' he says 'I'll get you one tomorrow! I'll get you one tomorrow!' he says. Well you can buy it in town, but you'll pay bloody dear for it in Leeds, you know. He never bought it, he wouldn't have been able to afford it anyway. But the piece of crystal that was brought over from Ireland, in bloody bits, on the floor.

This shows the cultural status of the crystal: in a family that struggles financially, the vase garners significance as a fancy household object. It is precisely its position as an object of decoration rather than of usefulness that gives it status. This is something Kilmore has failed to grasp. O'Brien explores this in her analysis of the protracted story of the family silver in her memoir: indeed, as her forebears were famine migrants to the USA, she suggests that the memory of this poverty is what drove her grandfather to crave the decadence of a cutlery set that included a pickle fork and a cake cutter:

> What was missing for me, as I began to write my family's story, were the connections among the family silver, the Irish immigrants' drive for upward mobility, and the Famine. When I finally saw the connection between the Repoussé and the Famine, I couldn't believe I'd missed it for so long. It seemed obvious: what better way to erase the memory of the Famine and to signify middle-class refinement than to buy an elaborate table setting? Handsome Dan insisted on using the Repoussé every night when he was in residence. He wasn't thinking about his triumph over the potato-gobbling Paddy stereotype, or, further back, about the image of the starved dead in Ireland, but he was enacting it nonetheless. When he picked up the correct ladle for the consommé, when he turned over a fork and saw his initial, when he reached for the carving knife and the platter of roast beef, he was not only forgetting the Famine: he was becoming upwardly mobile.[101]

[101] Sharon O'Brien, "'Remember Skibbereen': Discovering an Irish-American Story," *Radharc* 5/7 (2004).p229

This allusion to an inherited cultural memory is a significant part of the Irish-American identity: in relation to these more recent migrants to the UK, it seems rather a leap. However, the suggestion that memory of recent poverty is what gives these luxury items their lustre is quite understandable, given that many Irish migrants to the UK were driven to leave Ireland through economic necessity. The reverence and care given to the objects by Vincent and Declan shows the respect afforded to these luxury items in situ. This reverence is also shown by Rose, who shared a story about her own small Waterford collection, along with some photographs of the objects:

> The salt pot is Waterford crystal as is the little bud vase. They were very popular in the sixties and seventies and figured in numerous gift shop outlets in Ireland. Each piece has a "hidden" Waterford mark as a sign of authenticity. The unmarried aunts were always trying to get me into shops to admire pieces so they could later buy them for me. The salt pot arrived in the post![102]

Rose hints again at the fading prestige of the objects, 'popular in the sixties and seventies', and the extent to which giving them as gifts was a symbol of hospitality, which bestowed respectability on the giver as well as the recipient. She also references the secretive nature of establishing the authenticity of the object, whereby only those who are 'in the know' can distinguish their provenance: in common with the crystal, the process for establishing authentic Irishness is convoluted and rarely written down – as the crystal is imbued with symbols such as harps, only visible when held up to the light, so the credentials of migrant and second-generation Irish people are interrogated and authenticated using codes only familiar to other Irish people.[103]

[102] Email correspondence, April 2019.

[103] Grainne references these codes, and the ways in which she uses them in her work, in the second chapter of this thesis.

Photos of Waterford vase and salt pot, summer 2019.

Part of the allure of Waterford Crystal, it appears from the narratives, is the ability to enjoy the artistry, but also the familiarity of the process, and the transparency and craftsmanship of the production. The appreciation is heightened by a visit to the factory to watch the artisans at work as referenced by Vincent and Declan: the shift in production to 'Romania' takes something away from this. Flegg suggests that glassmaking is further endangered in Ireland because of the 'negative image of Waterford Crystal in Ireland', and quotes artist Róisín de Buitléar:

> People do not respect it and I have yet to meet someone who went out and bought a piece for themselves. It's something that you give as a present. People see it as an emblem of Ireland, but they can't see beyond that cut crystal vase presented by dignitaries on St Patrick's Day. They don't understand or respect the skill involved in actually producing it.[104]

Waterford Crystal is, as Flegg suggests, a marker of status only in certain groups: crystal has lost its cache and fallen out of fashion: decanters and vases are as likely to be found on the shelves of charity shops as department stores, or in the homes of older migrants.

[104] Eleanor Flegg, "Tradition in Transition," *Irish Arts Review (2002-)* 31, no. 1 (2014). p98.

Irish Country Cottage

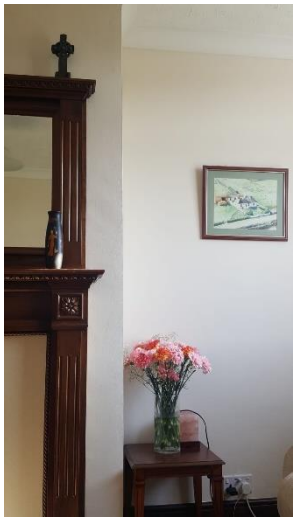
Knock Airport Gift Shop: August 2019

Another of the common visual tropes in the airport shop is the Irish thatched cottage, a symbol familiar from the St Patrick's Parade.[105] Where the parade is a public display of Irish identity, and the objects used in it represent this, the objects in people's homes are a symbol pf private identity. As such, the Irish cottage, as it is displayed within Irish migrant homes, bears analysis.

> I harbour a particular affection for the Irish cottage figurine… Typically it's about as tall as a shot glass and no wider or longer than the palm of a hand. Painted the colours of thatch, whitewash and timber, it has a hipped roof, four low walls, two small, front-facing windows and a half-door. There might be flower-boxes on the windowsills, a stack of turf against the wall, a bumpy garden of rocks and grass, a winding path trailing off the edge: there might even be a tiny lever protruding from a gable that, when gently cranked, plays a plinky-plonky version of Danny Boy.[106]

Like the lure of Waterford crystal, as Baume and McGarry both recognise, the vernacular cottages of gift shops and emigrant imaginations are a disappearing phenomenon.[107] Simmons and Harkin suggest that this is because of the demise of the structural traditions that built them, and the lack of readily available local source materials. The authors warn that without proactive action, these cottages will disappear from the landscape altogether. Ironically, their case-study of the disappearing Irish cottage in Donegal has itself been discontinued: evidence that their warning to planners had fallen on deaf ears.[108] What appears to have happened is that the cottages, still symbols of Irishness, have moved from places to live to sites of memory: they have transmogrified from concrete, living objects to exist primarily as tribute, art or keepsake objects like those referenced by Baume.

[105] The Leeds St Patrick's Parade is discussed in more detail in the first chapter of this thesis.
[106] Sara Baume, "Talismans and Tombstones," *Elementum* 5 (2019).
[107] Ibid.; Marion McGarry, *The Irish Cottage: History, Culture and Design* (2017).
[108] Clive Symmons and Seamus Harkin, *The Disappearing Irish Cottage : A Case-Study of North Donegal* (Bray, Co Wicklow: Wordwell, 2004).



Painting of Eamonn's Irish homeplace depicted in his home in England

As well as several instances of cottages appearing in Silva's photo essays in *Róisín Bán*, migrants interviewed for this thesis had a number of representations of cottages in their homes.[109] Vincent has a painting of his homeplace in his hallway: Eamonn's homeplace is memorialised above the television and beside the fireplace (Eamonn's painting is more modern, showing a newly built bungalow in front of the old cottage). Simon has a model of a cottage: less miniature than those Baume refers to, around the size of a shoebox. Simon bought this from a street stall in Swinford in Mayo: his brother has a similar, larger model. Both brothers live in England now.[110] Simon's model cottage has seen many temporary homes within the home, and currently lives in the garage, amongst lightbulbs and shredders: the polar opposite of the prestigious place Eamonn's picture takes in his living room. Simon's miniature house is no longer an object of display, and thus provides an example of how cultural signifiers shift over time.[111] Cusack refers to representations of the Irish cottage thus:

Miniature Irish cottage in Simon's garage in England

> The cottage was thus initially located in an ideal 'manmade' and picturesque landscape. The theory of the artistic sublime held that natural wildness should be modified by signs of a civilising human presence such as 'a carefully located cottage'. From being an element of the 'sublime-picturesque' in English and Irish painting, associated with the 'gentleman connoisseur', the cottage became a national and touristic icon used by the new Irish government. In paintings and in tourist posters the cottage was depicted in romantic harmony with the natural setting. In fact, it was frequently cramped and insanitary. Cottage life was therefore misrepresented first to suit the ideologies of the colonisers, then of the new state. Each had a vested interest in the notion of the 'happy peasant'. For the emigrant Irish, or the returning emigre´, the cottage landscape represented something rooted, familial and familiar. The cottage carried sentimental meaning for Irish-Americans, such as the Mellon family, who had their ancestral Irish

[109] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.

[110] When asked, Simon was very clear that the house he grew up in (a land league house) was not at all like this cottage: their home had four bedrooms and a shop, and was (and is) constantly being redesigned to meet the needs of the family. A neighbour who did live in a cottage like the ones discussed was met with bafflement and seen as old-fashioned. Personal correspondence, December 2019.

[111] McGarry notes that Irish country homes had begun, by the middle of the twentieth century, to modernise: she suggests that the bungalow is 'increasingly seen as the natural descendant of the cottage. As a type of vernacular architecture, it is representative of the countryside of Ireland, and although it does not blend as well into the countryside, it is similar to the cottage in its linearity and proportion.' McGarry, *The Irish Cottage: History, Culture and Design*.p92.

> cottage from the early nineteenth century erected in replica in their garden in Pittsburgh. Paintings of the cottage landscape found an enthusiastic audience among the Irish abroad. The cottage image thus developed out of an eighteenth-century picturesque tradition and became popular especially in the modern period because it was useful government propaganda and because it met a need for a familiar national image for Irish people at home and abroad.[112]

Indeed, she suggests that the prevalence of the Irish cottage in art and imagery, through paintings and photographs, is a form of what Billig refers to as 'banal nationalism':[113]

> Firstly:' ... manipulated depictions of landscape offer an ordered, simplified vision of the world[an d secondly] ...the sacred symbols of a landscape, rich in signs of identity and social codes, act as a system of signification supporting the authority of an ideology and emphasising its holistic character.' The cottage landscape fulfils both these functions, offering a simplified and sanitised view of Irish life, which is recognised as an expression of the nation. As a repeated and familiar symbol, the cottage landscape collapses the nation, its complexities and its history into a digestible almost single image of a domestic and rural idyll, thus giving the ideology of national belonging an accessible and finished form, an apparent wholeness. It is the very familiarity and predictability of the cottage landscape that makes it so effective as a transmitter of banal nationalism.

The concept of the cottage as nationalist symbol is certainly never overtly recognised in the narratives, but the portable nature of gift-shop cottages and pictures of the same accelerates the digestibility of the trope.

McGarry agrees:

> The Irish cottage was depicted in harmony with the natural landscape, mostly in a romantic manner, yet the reality of life within the dwellings was unhygienic and cramped. The cottage was misrepresented to suit the ideas of the colonisers, then later the ideology of the new Irish state. Both sets of rulers had an interest in the notion of the 'happy peasant.' For the native Irish, emigrant Irish, or tourist, the cottage landscape had sentimental meaning, representing roots and fraternity with Irish identity. Cottage views offered a simplified vision of Ireland, yet this was not reality.[114]

Sara Baume's work as an artist builds on the keepsake tradition, but where the keepsakes in tourist shops and airports are models of the disappearing thatched cottage, Baume makes models of a far more modern phenomenon: the large, gothic houses of the post-bungalow era of modern rural Ireland. McGarry suggests that the Irish cottage is symbolic as it represents a kind of collective humility and a desire to avoid standing out from the crowd yet Baume posits that 'the mind-set of utmost humility has completely transformed over the decades', and suggests that this is manifest in the new houses that began to appear in the Irish countryside:

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[112] Tricia Cusack, "A 'Countryside Bright with Cosy Homesteads': Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape," *National Identities* 3, no. 3 (2001). p228.
[113] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Sage, 1995).
[114] McGarry, *The Irish Cottage: History, Culture and Design*.p95.

> Everything about them was incongruous. They were huge: sometimes more than a dozen windows pockmarked the façade, and they were spangled with unnecessary appendages – turrets, mock-fanlights, asymmetrical dormers and expansive conservatories. In addition, the homeowners, wherever possible, had chosen to situate their new country houses at the ends of protracted driveways and behind tall metal gates that opened electronically, majestically as their SUVs approached.[115]

Both writers are correct in different ways: McGarry recognises the social value of identical cottages and their ability to make people feel more equal in society; Baume recognises that the cottage symbolises Ireland's past. Her work makes statements on the realities of the modern Irish countryside, and of the new architecture and ways of living which fail to be sufficiently romantic to suffuse tourist experiences, or to take root in migrant homes.

The cottage is therefore a powerful symbol of an idealised Ireland, the utilisation of which may not entirely be based in lived experience. Whether as a large-scale public symbol in a parade, or a small, private symbol in the home, it is clearly part of the Irish migrant experience, and a site of memory in itself. However, its import to migrants as a prestige object is at times marginal, as the relegation of Simon's cottage to the garage indicates.

Parish bulletin

Anderson suggests that the distribution of the printed word binds communities together despite geographical barriers; this is evident with the Irish in Britain.[116] Publications such as the *Irish Post*, which started its print run in 1970, as well as the *Irish World* and *Ireland's Own*, are seen in a number of Irish households in Britain.[117] The publications return the favour: Leeds' Irish population is discussed in the *Irish Post*, where Leeds' Comhaltas group get particular attention.[118] In Silva's photographs for *Róisín Bán*, a stack of copies of *Ireland's Own* can be seen on a side table alongside a television remote control and some glasses, suggesting the relative age or poor eyesight of the reader.[119]

The parish magazine is examined in the English, Anglican capacity by Jane Platt. Her research suggests the burgeoning popularity of the format was a nineteenth-century phenomenon, and that the magazine became a way to:

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[115] Baume, "Talismans and Tombstones."p26.
[116] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
[117] Hannafin's thesis on the Irish in Britain also remarks on the prevalence of Irish newspapers in Irish migrant family houses in England. Sara Hannafin, "Coming 'Home': Place, Belonging and Second Generation Return Migration from England to Ireland" (National University of Ireland Galway, 2018).
[118] "Leeds Help for Mayo," *Irish Post*, August 13 1988; "Leeds Looks Back with Pride," *Irish Post*, 3 February 1990.
[119] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p53.

> help educate the newly literate; to form a closer bond between Church and people; to publish church accounts and notices; and to gain a place for the pulpit in every home, since many parishioners were disappointingly absent from Sunday worship.[120]

Platt notes that the parish magazine was also popular in Ireland, but limits her study to the English model. A derivation of the parish magazine format was referenced in the interviews by Vincent and Declan, and it highlighted the ways that these magazines present a picture of a new Ireland to its diaspora - one that is at once nostalgic and forward looking:

> VINCENT: My sister will send me these two magazines. The local magazine. This is in a town in Mayo. And you know what's in the marriages this year? A gay marriage! Jesus Christ!
>
> The conversation diverges, as Vincent goes to find the offending magazine. When he returns, the conversation goes back to it:
>
> VINCENT: Here's your boys so
>
> DECLAN: Oh Jesus aye, is that in your town?
>
> VINCENT: Jesus, yes
>
> DECLAN: Ah sure this is the life. Move with the times. Move with the times. As Joe says, don't knock it til you've tried it.

This conversation clearly shows differing attitudes to a changing Ireland; where Vincent is shocked by the acceptance of a more liberal culture in Ireland, Declan is more sanguine about social change in Irish society.

Bohola Post, 2014.

One such parish bulletin is the *Bohola Post* (Bohola is a small village in east Mayo), and its 2014 edition has on its cover a photograph of a solemn crowd gathering for the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the village church. Inset are children in Manchester United and Barcelona shirts, running in what looks to be a sports day. The clergy and the local GAA team (Bohola Moy Davitts) also feature, as well as a curious miniaturised version of the church building, surrounded by candles: an echo of the miniature and reimagined cottages seen in the home of Irish migrants in Leeds discussed earlier in the chapter. The strapline under the title reads 'For the people that went, for the people that came back, for the people that

[120] Jane Platt, *Suscribing to Faith? The Anglican Parish Magazine 1859-1929*, Online Access: Springer Nature Springer Palgrave History Ebook Collection 2015 (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2015), Electronic.

stayed.' This indicates that the magazine is not only of interest to those who live in the town, but that it has relevance and meaning to migrants in the UK and the USA: the magazines were until recently sent out annually, around Christmas, to former Bohola residents all over the world. Indeed, one such migrant, Bohola-born Martin Sheridan - who won eight gold medals competing for the USA in the Olympics in 1908 – graces the cover. The Olympic rings under the title underline the pride the village takes in its diaspora.[121]

The contents of the magazine, representative of other parish magazines, are mixed, but take a familiar form.[122] One area which resonates with a more modern Ireland is the page marked 'graduations'. Bohola natives are photographed in their graduation gowns, showing competencies in a number of disciplines. This illustrates the focus on education as a priority for more recent generations, and its consequent incorporation alongside marriages into the respectability oeuvre. Even Vincent and Declan's conversation, cited above, in some ways displays how a framework of respectability remains established in Irish rural communities: gay relationships are accepted, but gay marriages are celebrated. The commitment, stability, and adherence to existing structural norms is what is valued at a community level.

The *Bohola Post*'s editorial team statement is telling in the context of change:

> The community of Bohola is a resilient, progressive and hopeful one. This year's edition, we hope, accurately reflects the contributions of the many and varied groups and organisations that work in and for our community.

The Ireland Vincent and Declan left is modernising and becoming increasingly liberal and secular. Despite the best efforts of some of the more conservative diaspora, the communities back home in Ireland are not insulated against social progress. Just as the thatched cottages have transmogrified into bungalows and mock-Georgian houses, society has also developed, and this new Ireland may not be to the satisfaction of everyone. Declan's exertion to 'move with the times' suggests he is aware of this. The evolving relationship older migrants have with Ireland is illustrated in their complicated, constantly renegotiated relationship with its physical representations within the home.

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[121] Various, "Bohola Post," (Bohola 2014).Although this analysis focussed on the 2014 Bohola Post, editions since 2012 have been consulted and have a similar format: the Olympic rings and strapline endure, as does the focus on weddings and graduations. The Bohola Post format has now taken a significant online presence, including screening of masses and funerals in the village.

[122] One sees resonances of both the Irish Centre and Comhaltas pamphlets discussed in the first chapter, with the varying public interest stories and focusses on individual tales, and of the workplace magazines by French's in the second chapter, with their 'Here There and Everywhere' column detailing births, marriages and deaths.

More recent migrants

Much as their relationships with institutions show stark differences, so it is with more recent migrants' choices about Irish home objects. David claimed to have no Irish objects at home; Grainne did not mention any, while Karen and Fearghal could not think of any specifically Irish ornamentation in their homes. Mary and Ronan both reflected on their relationship with Irish objects and symbols:

> MARY: we have like Guinness fridge magnets, silly things like that, that we wouldn't have had if we lived in Ireland. On our fridge door! So yeah definitely, we have a few little bits of things, yeah. It's some sort of connection to Ireland I suppose. We do definitely have little bits: things if I was living in Ireland I wouldn't have in a million years! It's weird.

Ronan had an Irish flag and a portrait of his home city of Cork in his apartment: he reflected on the nature of Irish kitsch, and was actively scouting internet auction sites for commemorative plates of John F. Kennedy. He and Mary both showed an awareness of the strange, mass-produced nature of Irish kitsch, and an ability to recognise the ironic elements in their relationship to it. Here one is minded not just of Billig's assertion regarding the banal nationalism of the Irish cottage as a symbol, but also of Kundera's dismissal of kitsch as a smokescreen for nationalism and for totalitarianism.[123] Indeed, Kundera asserts that:

> Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: how nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch.[124]

This recognises how kitsch is affected or transformed in the beholder's recognition of the object as kitsch. The symbol of the Kennedy plate (which also features cultural representation in the TV series Father Ted) is an example of an object imbued with Irish national pride in a popular figure from the diaspora, whilst also representing a move away from religious symbols to more secular ones.[125] Ronan's search for an original plate shows an interest in authentic symbols of Ireland's past, whilst also recognising that the symbol is sufficiently of the past – and of no consequence to the present - to hold inherent and ironic kitsch value. Generationally, the relationship with objects and their value has become self-conscious, and moved towards a more distant and post-modern stance.

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[123] Cusack, "A 'Countryside Bright with Cosy Homesteads': Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape." P228

[124] Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 251.

[125] Father Ted has a picture of JFK above the fireplace, along with legendary Ireland manager Jack Charlton.

Ageing and death

Although change in Irish society and culture is clear, some traditions remain important in Ireland. Earlier, in Silva's interviews, we see Eddie suggest that he wants his ashes scattered in Ireland: his final resting place. He wishes his connection to Irish soil to be an eternal one.[126] Bás in Éirinn, in Irish, means 'may you die in Ireland'. This blessing makes clear the extent to which death is seen as the final homecoming, and sometimes literally so, with migrants wishing to die at home in Ireland, or at least to be buried there. Leeds' Irish migrant population is ageing. The last substantial wave of chain migration to the city from Ireland took place in the latter half of the twentieth century, and most of these migrants are now of retirement age. Interviews with these migrants reflect the stage they have reached in their lives: the interviews have very much been a reflective evaluative process, looking back at their lives and the events that have shaped them. What has also become apparent is their awareness of the proximity of death; they have mostly all lost parents and other loved ones, and are now dealing with the loss of friends and peers and sometimes even children, and their own chronic and sometimes terminal illnesses.

The views of Irish migrants towards death and dying encapsulate folkloric traditions around death and their influence and funerary traditions as well as the difference between approaches to death in Ireland and the UK.[127] The testimonies of Irish migrants from a variety of backgrounds: rural, urban, wealthy and less so, discuss their perspectives on death and ageing, and the extent to which Irish traditions around death are continued, discontinued or reimagined in migrant communities. This reveals a continuity of traditions which spans the generations.

In their study of Irish funerary traditions, *Talking to the Dead*, Witoszek and Sheeran hypothesise that Ireland, particularly its pre-Celtic Tiger version before the 1990s, had cultivated a cultural mythology, building on a colonial victim status, whereby death – and particularly a valiant death – was seen as a triumph. [128] They problematize the postcolonial Field Day approach to Irish identity which they suggest overestimates the role of Anglo-Irishness in creating/reimagining cultural traditions, and propose an alternative view; 'The discourse that really galvanised the nation was based not so much on Revivalist fictions, and not even on Republican rhetorics, but… on vernacular narratives of death'.[129]

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[126] Silva, *Róisín Bán*.p109.

[127] An edited version of this subsection of the chapter appears in a 2017 Four Nations History Network blog by the same author.

[128] Nina Witoszek and Patrick F Sheeran, *Talking to the Dead: A Study of Irish Funerary Traditions* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998).p6

[129] Ibid. p6.

Death is not solely a contemporary obsession. Irish folklore contains many myths around death and dying. There were some interesting folk beliefs from the 19th century: Galway fishermen would say that a blast of air from the sea was a sign of a drowning; in Connemara, a dog's howl outside could presage the death of a loved one, depending on the direction the dog was facing.[130] In Mayo, extension-building could not take place on the west side of a cottage lest one of its occupants be dead within the year.[131] One of the most famous of these death myths involves the bean-sighe, an apparition of a woman who appears at the house as a harbinger of death, not unlike the grim reaper. The banshee is one of the most frightening of the folk tales, and this is shown to good effect in a film full of well-worn Irish stereotypes, 'Darby McGill and the Little People', where the banshee's appearance has now terrified generations of children in Ireland and in America.

Death is an integral part of how the Irish talk about life. It infiltrates its fiction – even if not just the event, the waiting for it.[132] It dominates conversations – between older Irish people, and in their conversations with their children – it is commonly mentioned in stand-up comedy the extent to which Irish parents delight in telling you about the latest deaths in the community. Such a level of cultural and social engagement explains the commonality of death notices on the radio, which are still a key feature of Irish local radio stations. Material cultures around death in Ireland are significant too; many relate to elements of religion, such as religious ephemera on gravestones or placed on graves.

As the comedian Dave Allen famously explained to an English audience, "The terrible thing about dying over there is that you miss your own wake. It's the best day of your life. You've paid for everything and you can't join in".[133] Indeed some of the traditional practices around death in Ireland, such as waking the dead, have recently had a resurgence. Sordid accounts of Irish wakes in England at the turn of the twentieth century include fights breaking out, and one refers to an unfortunate corpse being set alight by a discarded cigarette.[134] Julie-Marie Strange cautions, however, that these accounts should be taken with a pinch of salt as: 'It is difficult to read reports of the wake, formulated overwhelmingly from the English Protestant professional

[130] James Mooney, "The Funeral Customs of Ireland," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 25, no. 128 (1888).p260
[131] E Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London: Routledge, 1967).
[132] Bridget English explores this in her book: see Bridget English, *Laying out the Bones: Death and Dying in the Modern Irish Novel* (New York: Syracuse, 2017).
[133]British Broadcasting Corporation, "The Dave Allen Show," in *Dave Allen on Death* (2010 (uploaded to Youtube)).
[134] Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).p88

perspective, as anything but an exercise in prejudice against the poor Catholic Irish'.[135] Public health officials did discourage waking the dead at home in order to lessen the risk of infectious disease, but they were also dissuaded by local officials and the Catholic Church as they were seen as raucous and superstitious events which perpetuated the stereotype of the Irish immigrant.[136]

The majority of the interviews for this thesis have been with men, many of whom worked in the macho worlds of construction and civil engineering. Hearing them discuss the illness and loss of their family, friends and acquaintances, one was struck by their struggle to find the words to describe these events. Two men of great verbosity lacked the emotional vocabulary to describe their feelings towards ageing and death. They focussed instead on physical descriptions of the events around death, paying particular attention to funny events at funerals, or the bizarre behaviour of a particular local grave digger. One particularly poignant anecdote was around a heavy-set man whose cancer had become terminal; as he was described when they visited him in hospital 'you could have slipped his shirt right over his head without undoing the buttons' – this emphasised the stark difference between the lively fellow they once knew and the dying man, rendered unrecognisable by the ravages of his illness.

The interviews were also liberally sprinkled with mentions of friends and acquaintances who have died. Often short epithets are attached, as though their death is another way to identify them:

> EAMONN: Mickey was one, he died there a few years back, they were all cousins, Mickey was a right little, anyway, he was getting beat every time, we were all steaming, and you know big Mick Kilroy that died not very long ago, he was that height, that much above Reilly…

The deaths of the anecdote's protagonists thus become part of the anecdote themselves, woven into the story in the same way a physical description might be. Most of the men interviewed had grown up in Ireland during the 1950s, when the rifeness of TB and other illnesses meant many interviewees suffered the loss of siblings and parents at an early age: many grew up on farms – one reared a lamb, Joey, as a pet and then sent him to the slaughterhouse. Such experiences may be expected to presage an approach to death as something matter-of-fact and very much a part of everyday life.

So, many of the men who worked on construction sites were no stranger to death, and some of the ones they had been around had been tragic work accidents. Even fifty years on it was clear

[135] Ibid.

[136] McGarry notes that traditionally waking the dead would take place in the home.

that being witness to such events had been an uncomfortable experience. Again, descriptions of the events, though hazy (and sometimes disputed in group interviews) focus on facts and events and steer clear of graphic descriptions, replacing a depiction of the moment of impact with an onomatopoeic CLAP:

> KATHLEEN: Yeah, my sister died, she were only 35, she had breast cancer, he were at her funeral, and then three weeks later, his machine fell over and killed him
>
> EAMONN: They reckon he was probably shouting over the diesel man
>
> SIMON: They say he went to let the dog in
>
> INTERVIEWER: Yeah you said about that, was that the one with the steam roller?
>
> SIMON: Yeah
>
> ROSE: But this one in Whiston with Paddy was to do with the water
>
> SIMON: it was yeah
>
> EAMONN: It was, he was with the tank
>
> SIMON: He shouldn't have been where he was
>
> EAMONN: He was spraying water on the dust just to keep it down, cos he was getting sacked didn't he, and the dowsers were set, he was getting sacked because he'd burned the clutch out of one the riders or something, and they said no, Dowsetts wants you gone, take out that old tanker, it was only an old thing with holes in the back of it, spraying the road with water, and he wasn't used to the carry on, and he went to turn around where the dust was, and *CLAP*

Deaths litter the narratives, and clearly there is something violent in the descriptions of the on-site deaths which suggests that the memory is uncomfortable for the narrators. John McGahern's short story '*Faith, Hope and Charity'* deals with just this difficulty, creating a cultural narrative around this relatively commonplace misfortune:

> Murphy was standing on top of the trench watching Cunningham wield the pick below, behind him the fence of split stakes on Hessell Street. The midday sun beat mercilessly down on the trench, and they worked in turn and turn about, coming up every five minutes or so to cool in whatever air stirred from the Thames.
>
> The only warning given was a sudden splintering of timber before the trench caved in. Murphy fell backwards from the edge but Cunningham had no time. The boards and clay caught him. His head and shoulder remained above the earth.
>
> He stayed alive while they dug him out, but as soon as they released the boards he died. The boards had broken his back.[137]

The bald, factual recollections of death that appear in the narratives are faithfully recreated here in a literary narrative: McGahern's spare and unemotional prose lending itself to the factual

[137] John McGahern, "Faith, Hope and Charity," in *Collected Stories* (London: Faber & Faber, 2003).p105

manner in which these deaths are recounted by the observers. A similar, very visual depiction of death at work is seen in O'Grady's *I Could Read The Sky*, where strong sensory memories of the trauma are clearly retained by the narrator:

> He puts the tip of the hammer to the pavement then and begins to dig. I see the little girl in the window reading a book with the sun shining onto her face. I see the black man with the rings fixing a rose to the lapel of his jacket. I see Francie smiling. Then there's a fierce hiss and a blaze and the air around Francie is shimmering in the heat. Flames pour out of his boots and his trousers and his shirt. His hair too is on fire. There is fire in his mouth. There is fire on his hands. His skin flames and then blackens. The jackhammer falls to the pavement and Francie along with it. Myles and John and Pat and the Iroquois and myself and the girl and the black man all look at him lying dead on the pavement beside the hole and the mains cable he cut through with the hammer, the insulation boiling and smoking and the coloured wires inside like the stems of cut flowers.[138]

Abrams attests that 'negative or upsetting emotional feelings in particular are difficult to express' for people who have suffered traumatic experiences; she suggests that many observers of trauma 'recount their experiences matter-of-factly, without much emotion.'[139] It was well known to workers that these jobs were dangerous, as John B Keane, reflecting on the death of a character on a building site in his novel *The Contractors*, makes plain:

> Although Eddie's death had been an accident there were few of the kneeling men who inwardly accepted it as such. To them Eddie Carey's death was the toll for the money they earned and the drink they consumed. It was the Paddy's tally. Every tunnel Paddy dug was a toll-tunnel, every bridge a toll-bridge. Every road had its toll-booth and the toll-man was death. They accepted it as part and parcel of the game they played. Where men worked in a frenzy of hurry for quick money there was bound to be carelessness. There had to be accidents. In that year there were ten times more Irishmen killed on building sites in England than in Ireland. It was an astounding figure but it was a true one. It was a conservative figure compared to bad years when cruel ill-luck would dog the building industry.[140]

When we look at memory and reliability, some accounts are more trusted than others. Aside from aspects of status and power that dominate prevailing discourses, there are physiological reasons that reside in the way that the memory system processes traumatic experiences. There are no hard and fast rules around remembering traumatic experiences: some memories are completely repressed whilst others recur again and again in grim and exact detail. Lynn Abrams notes, however, that the memories are not complete – that is, the events of the past have not yet been dealt with by the respondent. This leads to fragmented, 'emotional and disturbing' accounts, as 'survivors have not achieved closure.'[141] This can therefore make the experience

[138] Timothy; Pyke O'Grady, Steve, *I Could Read the Sky* (London: Harvill, 1997).p136
[139] Abrams, *Oral History Theory* p94
[140] Keane, *The Contractors* p261.
[141] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.p93

unsettling for the interviewer and the interviewee, and possibly be problematic ethically and psychologically. However, if one is to take testimonies from a cross section of people at a certain time, and the speakers are willing to deal with painful memories, the findings can be very important for a wider perspective. An example of an interviewee who had experienced trauma was a woman in her 90s named Lizzie who was interviewed at an over 55s club. She had an engaging tale about moving to Britain, and about her life there, but she also shared references to the death of her husband, and the more recent and sudden death of her son. She relived in minute detail the events leading up to his death; she spoke about it in a matter of fact way, but it was clear from the amount of time she spent talking about it and the frequency of its appearance in her testimony that she was still processing the events around his death:

> LIZZIE: and he'd never been ill, and then he was at work and of course, he did driving, for Leeds Commercial, and they said they couldn't have him back, so he was off for a year, and then we went shopping one mornin', 28th of December, we'd been shopping, and came home, and I said to him will you open the door for me, he parked the car on the other side of the door, and I said, he dropped the shopping in, and I went to go put the kettle on, and he went to close the car and dropped dead on the drive, yeah, 56….And that was that.
>
> And I didn't have any other children, I only had him, so he lived with me, so that was my life really. I've enjoyed it. I get on with things: you have to do haven't you?

It seems that this was her way of keeping her son's memory alive, to share her stories about him with others as a way of grieving. Her memories of the events are clearly vivid, but as mentioned above, Abrams states, 'negative or upsetting emotional feelings in particular are difficult to express' for people who have suffered traumatic experiences.[142] Here, Lizzie could recall the events, but not her feelings around the event, as this may have been too much to countenance. These traumatic experiences can often be related to collective memory and frameworks, particularly for those whose history has been denied or where the public discourse surrounding the event is different to that remembered by those involved.

Another interviewee whose ideas on the end of life process are enlightening is Gerald. Gerald was interviewed initially as part of a project for a local organisation who support elderly Irish people. Gerald, as previously noted, is a street drinker who has had a chaotic life but who, thanks in part to the organisation, has managed to sustain a life for himself and a flat to which he can retire of an evening. He referred consistently to the role of fate in his life, suggesting that he had always been destined for an itinerant existence, and that he had acquiesced to this fate at quite an early age. Gerald's ideas on the subject of death highlight what he deems important:

[142] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.p95

> GERALD: I'm a controlled drinker now. I manage to keep clean and pay my rent, and keep my head above the water. Leeds Irish Health and Homes helps me to do that. I'm no longer destitute. I've saved some money for a funeral and a burial plot – there's a story of the alcoholic who could not afford a funeral – I'll make sure that doesn't happen to me. I won't have a pauper's grave.
>
> I hope I won't end up in a home; they're sad places. I knew someone once who was visiting a home for the mentally ill. He said the worst thing was that they were all sitting in the day room. The day room faces onto the cemetery. That's where they'll end up in 40 years. It comes to us all.

Gerald has struggled financially in his life, and to conform to what he suggested was the mainstream 'white shirt' mentality of Irish migrants in Leeds. However, there is a curious performativity in his attitude to death and his desire to be recognised and buried in the same way as his compatriots who had shunned him in his life. His wish to avoid a pauper funeral, Laqueur suggests, is because it condemns the dead to 'dying bereft of the final signs of communal membership.'[143] This illustrates the importance of death rituals, a 'proper send-off' and a type of respectability to migrants regardless of social status. It also confers the importance of this respectability to migrants; it continues beyond the grave.

Unlike others, Gerald's memories were an unvarnished and sometimes brutal appraisal of his past behaviour. There was no evidence of the prestige-enhancing shift seen with others who had come to believe that their ideas and values had always placed them on the right side of history, when contemporary evidence may have suggested otherwise.[144]

Irish literature and funerary customs suggest a country and a people who are not just at ease with death but obsessed by it. Indeed, this is also clear in the narratives. Vincent and Declan speak at length about a particular funeral director based in Manchester, when a mutual friend of theirs was taken back to Ireland to be buried:

> DECLAN: This grey Colm died.[145] And he was brought back. And he was buried with the father and mother in Ballina. And when they went back, anyways, of course, when he died here, Twomey was arranging everything here, and he asked me and different lads to carry the coffin, you know, this Twomey's a bit of an eccentric, you know. So anyway, back we go to Ballina, and the thing is now, when the person is buried, everyone steps away and they go away: and they're all gone and they fill the grave. But Twomey has this thing now, so they went back anyway, they put grey Colm down in the grave, and the priest hasn't hardly said a few prayers when Twomey starts filling it in. And someone stepped forward to give him a hand, like and he says no leave it, I'm doing this. And the boys are all watching him. And McMahon, the funeral director, he knows my brother. So he stepped back and he says to my brother, 'I wonder who that is'. So my brother says 'I

[143] Laqueur, 'Bodies, Death and Pauper Funerals', p117
[144] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.p89.
[145] 'Grey Colm' was the descriptive appellation given to him by Declan – it must have been a name by which he was popularly known as Vincent recognised him by this name.

> don't know who he is, but I'll be able to tell you before the day is out.' So he rung me that evening, he says there was a bloke at the funeral today, before the people were moved away he had the grave filled, he said, who would he be? And I said Twomey, he said, that's the man.

Declan has another encounter with Twomey later on, with similar hallmarks:

> DECLAN: When my brother died, two years ago last July, we got into the cemetery: I know a shortcut, we got in before the hearse came in. And I could see someone over on the grave down. And there was gravediggers there. And Jesus who was below in the grave about six or seven foot, only Twomey? A bit had fallen in. I mean the gravediggers should be down throwing the pins below in the grave, to level it up. And anyway there was a few bits of timber, cos it's not great ground, strutting it you know, so they put the coffin in and said the prayers: and like everything else, they had hardly said the prayers. And he had brought Jimmy in to sing a song, beside the grave. And Jesus Jimmy hadn't finished singing before he was filling the grave. So when Jimmy had finished singing, Jimmy walked over to me and my wife and says 'Jesus he's fucking mad,' he says. And it was Twomey had asked Jimmy to go in with the singing, and he started filling the grave before: but then all the lads that knew them helped out, like you know. But why doesn't he give them time? And you know at McAuley's funeral the week before Christmas? We were going up to sympathise. And as we came out of the seat, my friend says to me, he says Jesus, I've had a phonecall from that Twomey, he says, wanting me to ask McAuley's son, I don't even know the lad, wanting to ask him can we fill the grave in?

The discomfitting methods of the funeral director were given short shrift by the locals, whose traditions he appeared to be ignoring for expediency's sake. This marked him as an outsider and someone whose disrespect for the correct, 'Irish' way of doing things was noticeable enough to make him much discussed amongst the migrant Irish.

However, a consideration of how Irish migrants talk about death, as well as surveys on public attitudes such as those conducted by Weafer, who suggests that 44% of a representative sample of Irish people surveyed were uncomfortable talking about death – and only 6% think they talk about death too much - suggests that this does not mean they find the grief, or the use of emotional language around death, any easier.[146] Death customs are certainly different from the UK in Ireland, from the short time between the death and the funeral to the community elements of funerals and the re-emergence of wakes. However, elements of these wakes and funerary traditions, for example the open coffin, are effectively re-imaginings of old ways – particularly for those who died in hospital or who were put in chapels of rest, where the body would be kept in cold storage. Mary Kenny suggests the Irish approach to death is comforting as it means Irish people can talk more openly about it; indeed it is a favourite topic not just for Irish writers, but for many older Irish people, regardless of where they live now.[147]

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[146] John Weafer, "Irish Attitudes to Death, Dying and Bereavement 2004-2014," (Irish Hospice Foundation).
[147] Mary Kenny, "The Rest of the World Can Learn from Irish Funeral Traditions," *Irish Independent*, 2 November 2014.

When discussing Irish literature with Gerald, he had little time for many of the writers of the Irish canon, saying Joyce was 'miserable and spent twenty years staring at a wall writing about nothing'. His response to Beckett's existentialist death opus 'Waiting for Godot – he never turns up, does he?' illustrates perfectly the trope of the older Irish person scanning the death notices and attending increasing numbers of funerals, waiting for an omen from the Connemara dog, the banshee, or Godot himself. Death here is the final action to negotiate in a migrant life, and respectability and tradition still play a significant role.

Conclusion

Missing from the narratives is a great deal on the work that takes place within the house: neither women nor men spoke about domestic duties, nor childcare, at any length. The exception was Ronan, who spent some time as primary carer for his son as a baby. Again, the home is not mentioned as part of this. Despite this omission, it was clear from visits to migrants' homes how much of the unpaid labour that took place in the home was done by women. Likewise, despite retirement meaning many interviewees now spent far more time in the home, the main focus of describing homes and living arrangements pertains more to experiences in early life than it does to current and later experiences. It was far more likely that narrators would speak in detail about the day to day life of their previous homes, but would skip over their current living situation as they would perhaps not see anything noteworthy about it. It is clear, however, that some older, more successful migrants have seen their home environments become larger and more expensive over time; the move of Irish migrants away from inner-city areas to disperse around the city further indicates this.

Home means many different things to interviewees in this thesis. For many, England has become home. Equally, the Irish homestead will also always be home, despite the physical and familial realities of their lives being primarily in England now, and the time that has passed since they lived in Ireland. In retirement, the family home is a place where many respondents find themselves spending more time than ever; those needing care come up against cultural barriers that they and the society they lived in were barely aware existed. Home is a physical space and a metaphorical concept, which migrants are consistently negotiating. So too are their children: civically British, culturally Irish, and with no nomenclature or road map to express their identity, they find different ways to see themselves and to be seen. By and large, return visits to Ireland are still a part of the lives of many migrants, and they have kept abreast with changes in the homeplace. Home is also expressed culturally through the language used to describe it, both in Ireland and in Leeds, and in some cases this language is elevated through poetry. Sustained imagery, cultural and political concepts are also prevalent in this narrative, such as the

comparative dirtiness of industrial Leeds and the sanctity of Irish soil. Returning home is a rite of passage for some, while for others it is to be avoided, or only made possible with organisational support. In later life, it is clear that Irish migrants feel that they benefit from culturally sensitive services when they have to leave the family home to go into hospital or long-term care. Death is embedded in the interviews; the language around it suggests a cohort still coming to terms with the final homecoming. It is however far more pertinent to older interviewees, and barely mentioned by more recent migrants, suggesting that the topic looms more immediately for older migrants, who are watching their friends and loved ones getting older and passing away.

Food plays a significant part in the way narrators relate the idea of home. Hospitality is clearly something which migrants both offer and admire, and esteem is proffered through the medium of hearty food, and particularly meat. It is in the analysis of material artefacts however that it becomes most clear the extent to which Irish society has changed; parish bulletins show the development of progressive ideals such as education and equal marriage in Irish communities, while other objects consciously represent a more traditional Ireland: Waterford Crystal has lost its cachet amongst the young, and the Irish cottage exists far more as an object in a tourist shop than it does as a dwelling. Some migrants seem concerned by social change and how it is reflected through literature, while others are more sanguine. Clearly home is an important and emotional concept, and still tethered by notions of respectability and internalised oppression.

Conclusion

The themes outlined in the introduction provide salient points for consideration at the conclusion to this thesis. They include: the importance of hard work as a gateway to success; the changes to and reflections on identity and Irishness, and how these are perpetuated generationally; temporal change in migrant experiences and networks; and the physical and social legacy of Irish migration to the city in the period after 1960. It also reflects on elements of social control and respectability, and the extent to which the Catholic upbringing of most interviewees shaped their relationship with these two forces.

Perpetuating stories of success

This thesis initially sought to hear from disenfranchised and marginalised people, but over time it became apparent that a number of factors restrain some people from wanting to talk about their experiences.[1] There is also the spectre that delving into the past could prove traumatic for some migrants whose experiences have been less than positive: as Saoirse suggests, a number of clients of her organisation have suffered institutional abuse that they may not have dealt with emotionally. It seemed disrespectful and reckless to attempt to cajole clients into recollecting their experiences without considering the effect it may have on them. Although many attempts were made to reach out to people across demographics through various organisations, most of the interviewees this project yielded came from the same group: older men with a measurable degree of success. The lack of diversity - and particularly of older women willing to share their stories – was regrettable. But there is something of interest to consider: in a certain culture, whose stories are promoted and whose are ignored? This thesis is also cognisant of this: partaking in the propagation of the narratives of successful men is perhaps inevitable with the snowballing methodology used, particularly as gatekeeping organisations like the Irish Arts Foundation and the Irish Centre were keen to promote these narrators as people of interest. However, the narratives gained have given a wider perspective on these people's experiences, and have provided a valuable insight into what is considered to be important to live a good and happy life as an Irish migrant to Leeds in the later twentieth and early twenty-first century. There is also the relationship of the researcher to the interviewees to consider: as someone with Irish parents, known to some of the interviewees, there might perhaps be trust issues with some of the potential narrators that would be less marked with a stranger – worries that the interviewer might have allegiances elsewhere that would make them less likely to respect confidentiality. There is also the issue of familiarity with narrators and whether this could cloud

[1] This could potentially be as a result of fear of appearing outside the narratives of success, or of a loss of respectability, as discussed in the first and second chapters.

the objectivity of the researcher.[2] This cultural familiarity also had its benefits – as Grainne points out, a researcher with links to the Irish community already 'knows the codes' and is able to pass through the shibboleth of 'where are your parents from?' that marks them as authentic.[3]

Identity

Irishness – the maintenance, transmission and retention (or rejection) of it – is a recurring theme throughout the thesis. In the first chapter, Irishness is represented through institutions such as the Leeds Irish Centre, pubs, GAA clubs and the St Patrick's Parade. It is forged in celebration and in difficult times. The latter is shown in the memorial stone to the Irish famine migrants, or through the Troubles, where we see the impact on the lives of migrants such as Kevin and Grainne. The decline of Irish pubs suggests a correlation with a waning in Irish identity in the city, but interviews with younger migrants point to a more varied and assimilated existence for later migrants, which tallies with the Irish Centre manager's comments about the age profile of Irish Centre regulars. It is not Irishness that younger migrants reject, more the socially conservative version of it that they encounter. The continuing appeal of GAA clubs corroborates Gilmartin's suggestion that the best way to map Irish migration is now the establishment and spread of GAA clubs across the world.[4] This is a tradition that transcends age and cultural barriers.

Identity is also reflected through discussions of the workplace, particularly when narrators find themselves confronted with challenges. Narrators' portrayal of themselves as hardworking underpins all the work testimony, across professions and age cohorts. To be hardworking – and be seen to be hardworking – is an extremely important part of Irish migrant identity. The work memories also proudly show narrators having issues with authority and the perception of unruliness and an unwillingness to follow rules – this belies the colonial voice when dealing with Irish otherness.

At home, identity can be freely manifested unfettered by social expectation. We see Irishness maintained through food, decoration and objects. Second-generation Irish people in the city have also negotiated their identity through home and work: some keeping their Irish and Leeds personas consciously separate, while others sought out peers with similar experiences and built cultural communities that way. Despite Irishness being presented as a choice, all the second-generation Irish people interviewed for this research have chosen to retain and maintain their

[2] Valerie Yow, "Do I Like Them Too Much?," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert; Thompson Perks, Alistair (London: London, 2015).
[3] The insider/outsider relationship is further interrogated by Ryan - see Ryan, ""Inside" and "Outside" of What or Where? Researching Migration through Multi-Positionalities."
[4] Gilmartin, *Ireland and Migration in the Twenty-First Century*.p109-110.

Irish identity, despite the sometimes-bumpy road of the Troubles and Brexit. Easier return travel to Ireland, the cultural popularity of Celtic Tiger Ireland, and Irish economic prosperity have made this easier to maintain.

Irish identity is also clearly expressed through materiality. The display of identity through tropes such as leprechauns and cottages seems a rather obvious and reductive choice at first, but increasingly the picture becomes more nuanced, as the objects develop a deeper and more complex meaning. These tropes are easily recognisable markers of identity, but migrants' relationships with these concepts is complicated. What is stark is the way in which nostalgia influences migrants' relationships with the symbols of home: the reproduction cottages on display are more real than the actual cottages themselves, which have long since been improved or replaced in Ireland.

Changing migrant experiences

There is a stark difference in generational experiences of migration. Firstly, migration patterns are different – fewer of the newer migrants interviewed came to places where they already knew people when they moved to England. For a number of more recent migrants, the choice of destination was seen as random, or at least serendipitous – the analogy of 'putting a pin in a map' was used more than once.[5] This can be attributed in part to changes in the education levels of Irish migrants coming to England. Although the more recent migrants interviewed in this thesis were skewed towards being from the Northern Irish education system (and therefore would have studied for the same qualifications as their English counterparts), the testimonies from migrants from the Republic of Ireland, supported by empirical data, suggest that changes in the education system between the 1960s and the 1990s allowed for significant changes to the migrant experience. The reforms that Donogh O'Malley initiated for free secondary education for all in Ireland – and associated transport to schools in rural areas – meant that Irish young people had more opportunities to access education up to second level and beyond. Educational attainment quickly became an element of respectability in Irish society, urban and rural, as seen in the celebrations of community members' educational achievements in the *Bohola Post*, and even the mock graduations of younger children, readying them for the future.[6]

Recent migrants from Ireland are likely to have a higher level of education: this is not, however, because of changes in class; instead, it is reflective of higher overall numbers of third level educated people in Ireland, driven by the changes to the Irish education system of the 1960s that

[5] This was in the testimony of Fearghal and Karen; Tim also used this metaphor to describe Irish migration to Leeds.

[6] Various, "Bohola Post."p45-47.

benefit more recent migrants.[7] Of course, an increase in levels of education is not always allied with a matching rise in the number of professional jobs available, so leaving Ireland was still a prospect for the later migrants. This was particularly marked in the wake of the financial crisis in the late 2000s. One of the differences was access to other migrant destinations, which would have been very difficult to reach – or at least to readily return from – for the 1960s migrants. These destinations include Australia and the Middle East. The migrant networks established are also different; the pubs that served as 'informal labour exchanges' no longer exist.[8] As noted, recent migrants are more likely to have third-level qualifications, and therefore to have access to more jobs without the need for social networks. Despite this, Ronan suggests that networking, and Irishness, helped him to get a job on an Irish site in Australia, while Fearghal acknowledges the ways in which playing for a Leeds GAA club extended his social circle. The difference is that more recent migrants may seek out other Irish people, but they do not see this as a crucial part of their relationships or upholding their identity, with many newer migrants suggesting that they have just as many close English friends as Irish ones. This is due to the auxiliary nature of the Irish social networks for more recent migrants – although they provide familiarity and community, they are not necessary for employment or success. This is also pertinent in relation to the decline in Irish venues; the pubs and Irish Centre were set up for and by Irish migrants in their own image but more recent migrants do not recognise that image in themselves. These venues may be occasionally visited for events such as GAA matches or birthdays, but they are chiefly irrelevant to more recent migrants, whose social choices tend to be more assimilatory in nature.

As the second chapter demonstrates, it is difficult to analyse Irish migrant narratives in relation to class. This is mainly because the Irish class system is hard to migrate to the British system especially for migrants coming from a chiefly rural society like the west of Ireland. The elements of class do not commute in the same way. This thesis also draws on more men's stories than women's. This is because more men agreed to be interviewed, and their narratives had more commonalities. This was not part of the research design, and was frustrating for the researcher. It was identified as a limitation in the selection and recruitment process, and of snowballing in particular. It was interesting to note, however, the role of women (chiefly wives) who were present for interviews, and who listened to men's stories, but also interrupted and nudged with salient details: they showed a clear familiarity with the stories told, and a flair for improving them with interesting anecdotes or rogue details. More recent migrant women were more verbose, but

[7] "Census of Population 2016 – Profile 10 Education, Skills and the Irish Language."
[8] Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain.* .p174.

there was a definite lack of more recent women respondents from the Republic of Ireland, which would have made the analysis of the impact of education more complex and nuanced from a gendered perspective. Experience of work in the home, traditionally undertaken by women (and noted as taking place during the interviews in home settings) was not mentioned; work was only evaluated as a role outside of the home.

The forces of respectability, internalised oppression and a narrative of hard work as the key route to success come together in a symbiotic fashion to mould the Irish experience in Leeds, most pertinently in the lives of older migrants. Internalised oppression affects a fear of expressing any facets of identity that could be considered uncouth elements of Irishness by the host society. This would lead to a self-policing of Irish cultural spaces to ensure that this behaviour would not be displayed in public. Respectability would be a currency in these environments, and, as Declan and Vincent suggest, those at the top of the respectability paradigm would often display the most socially conservative behaviours. The importance of this culture of respectability led some migrants, such as Gerald and John, to feel excluded from Irish cultural spaces such as the Irish centre. Although these expectations are rarely explicit, those who break the 'codes' feel excluded, or at least a pressure to conform. Grainne recognises this exclusion, and the part that internalised oppression plays in the lives of Irish migrants. For some migrants, including Kevin, David, Ronan and Fearghal, tales of conflict or hostility from English people are down-played with statements like 'it never bothered me' but it is abundantly clear that migrants are aware of the pejorative stereotypes that the host population has digested. This is also evident in the poetry in the *Trojan Donkey* anthology, where narratives of internalised oppression such as 'you called me thick' can perhaps be more easily expressed through the anonymity of the 'blank sheets' format.[9] Ronan speaks with acute self-awareness about the effect of these stereotypes and the knowledge that low expectations allow for surprise when one surpasses them, but also that it becomes hard to override them - for example, to be taken seriously when the assumption is that you will be funny or feckless. Younger migrants like Ronan and Fearghal demonstrate an ability to recognise the way in which these standards and fears are internalised, but they still show an inability to circumvent or override them. It is also clear in younger migrants' responses the extent to which the cultural scripts around hard work have become hard-wired into cultural narrative of the Irish abroad. This 'hard work' narrative is particularly intrinsic to men's narratives, and appears to show being hardworking, and being perceived to be hardworking, as a cornerstone of masculinity. Women's stories are more varied and follow less of a delineated pattern: it is clear that work is a key element of identity for men in ways that it is not for women, particularly in the

[9] O'Driscoll and Duhig, *The Trojan Donkey: A Poetry Anthology*.

older generation. Later women migrants are still encumbered by the tropes of women as nurses or carers; although many of them went into jobs outside of the traditional nursing roles, the majority remain in industries centred around community and care.

Many of these social control measures would have been perpetuated by the Catholic church, whose role in social structures such as Leeds Irish Centre and Catholic schools is very apparent in this research, despite a specific choice to avoid an extended focus on the church, as its influence on migrant communities has already been widely studied.[10] However, the church was rarely mentioned in the interviews. It brings to mind the paradox highlighted by John McGahern in 'What is my Language?' where he mentions a curious story in *An tOiledách* [The Islandman]: the island which has donkeys, but no-one seems to mention them, as it is assumed the reader will know there are donkeys there – it is implicit that in the writer's imagination, there are donkeys on every island.[11] Thus the long reach of the church is implicit in Irish Catholic migration stories in written and oral form. Interviewees do not talk about going to mass, or sending their children to Catholic schools. Priests policed the early dancehalls, and provided behaviour guidance to new migrants- again, this was only ever mentioned in passing.[12] The embedding of Catholic ritual into the opening of the Irish Centre went completely unmentioned and yet the codes of conduct around respectability are very much built on the foundations of religious teachings: that one should behave morally, be disavowed of excess and work hard. Some attendees of an Irish women's group however spoke angrily of the harsh treatment they received from the nuns at school.[13] Many more recent migrants shun religion and reject the strict morality of the church on social issues; nevertheless Saoirse's children attend Catholic school and Ronan's son was baptised in church. The cultural traditions of Catholicism therefore remain important even as its stance on moral issues is soundly rejected.

Legacy

What is the legacy of post-war Irish migration to Leeds? Firstly, there is its physical legacy. As the ruins of Mount St Mary's Church are the manifestation of the famine Irish in the Bank area of the city, so there are buildings and infrastructure whose existence and maintenance owes a debt to the modern Irish community. The Irish Centre is an obvious choice: still housed in the original 1970 building (albeit extended) the Centre has stayed the same whilst the area around it has changed considerably. Irish workers also made significant contributions to the city's road

[10] This is discussed in more detail in the introduction to this thesis.
[11] John McGahern, "What Is My Language?," *Irish University Review* 35, no. 1 (2005).
[12] Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, *A Catholic Handbook for Irish Men and Women Going to England* (Dublin1953).
[13] Field notes, February 2016.

infrastructures, particularly the M1, M621 and the city ring road. Some of the buildings, such as the university and the Merrion Centre, also benefitted from Irish labour. The landscape of modern Leeds would look different without Irish migrants' contribution. Of course, some of the buildings which were important in post-war Irish migration were lost, or changed use. As the first chapter details, all the Irish pubs have now closed. The Grove still exists in its original form close to the old St Francis's site but it no longer is (or maybe never truly was) an Irish pub. St Francis's church and dancehall was knocked down and replaced with an office building; what was the Shamrock is now a mysterious door on the side of a Superdrug store. The pubs have been repurposed by later migrant groups

The non-physical legacy is harder to assess. The influence of Leeds on migrants – and of migrants on Leeds – is nuanced. So much of Ireland's story is centred on an expectation of migration, and for some migrants there is nothing to which they can compare migrant life. Those who have struggled in migrant society, such as Gerald, look to fate for solace: he feels that his misfortune would have befallen him wherever he had ended up, and is only grateful that authorities have helped him to cope with the hand life has dealt him. For older migrants, the spectre of illness and death give cause to reappraise the services that may be needed: family cannot provide all of the care needed in some circumstances, and it has become apparent that culturally sensitive care, where available, is a positive step and an important consideration as the Irish migrant population ages. This is particularly pertinent in relation to migrants whose experiences fall outside the dominant narrative. Interviews with migrants in a later life phase also allows for an exploration of feelings and cultural expectations around death and dying; the reflection of migrants such as Eddie as wanting to be buried in Irish soil suggests there is still a transience to the migrant journey

The experience of migrants in Leeds shows some commonality with those in other places – some of the stories of social spaces are similar to those in Birmingham and Manchester, and Irish workers were employed on motorways and in hospitals across the country; broadly similar themes emerge from the literature around these. Certainly, the Mayo exceptionalism suggested by a number of earlier narrators is not apparent in the stories of newer migrants. The case of Leeds is interesting for two key reasons. The first of these is its depiction as an ageing community; the relative age of Irish migrants makes for a more reflective cohort with particular issues unique to older people. It also allows us to investigate how a dwindling Irish population maintains its social spaces, or in Leeds' case, how it does not. It is not apparent whether fewer new migrants are coming to Leeds, or whether they are still arriving, but the existing Irish institutions have failed to engage with them; as Grainne suggests, 'we don't know where they are

because we don't know where they are.' The second reason arises as Tim reflects on Leeds' singularity as a migrant host society; 'I think you compare it, you could look at things like: one Irish Centre, that would be a starting point.' He implies that the lack of competing Irish venues leads to a homogenous social experience – that within the frameworks of associational culture, there is only one way to be Irish in this city. This, in turn, dovetails with the challenges faced by migrants such as Gerald, who feel isolated by the institutions and the respectability paradigm. In more populous and diverse Irish communities such as London, there may be more different ways to be Irish. Many of the migrants who have stayed now see Leeds as home, of sorts. This suggests a level of assimilation or comfort that means they have settled in the city. There is no 'Irish' area of the city, so integration with the host population has been the chosen option for a number of Irish migrants. They have selected Irish names or Catholic schools for their children, but England has become home, with Ireland a holiday destination or a memory embedded in objects or cultural choices.

The aim of this research was to explore the migration experiences of the Leeds Irish population in their own words; this thesis shows their lives have evidently changed since Brendan McGowan's 1981 incarnation. Returning to Ravenstein's view that 'migration means life and progress; a sedentary population stagnation' it is clear in the Irish case that migration has added to Irish society as well as migrant destinations throughout the world.[14] Almost all Irish families have a migration story to tell. Crucially, because of the widespread nature of the phenomenon, migration is ordinary rather than extraordinary. It is incorporated into the national narrative and the way Irishness is perceived at home and abroad.[15] This corpus of interviews, brought together and interrogated using the grounded theory method, gives us a window into the lives of Irish migrants in the twenty-first century city. It fills the gap in the literature around migrant experiences either side of the millennium, and changes to those lives due to new technology, social change, education, and changing migrant networks.

It is the very ordinariness of migration that this thesis explores and values. The everyday and mundane aspects of migrant narratives are just as important as the spectacular and entertaining unusual events that might be more imprinted on the memory. If those everyday memories – the pubs, the workplaces, the homes and the graveyards – are not recorded (often because of their very mundanity) then we lose an important part of the migrant story. This thesis therefore provides a closer look at the lives of Irish migrants to Leeds, presenting a localised case-study of

[14] Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration."p288.

[15] The widespread experience of migration among Irish people may have influenced those narrators who felt they had nothing to say – surrounded by other migrants and their stories, they saw nothing unique about their migrant experience.

the everyday. It considers how migrants see themselves, how they communicate, how they live and how they have changed. It is in their very mundanity that oral histories tell us the most about an ethnic collective, in the things that they share with the host population as much as the things they do differently. To consider how people eat, sleep, work and socialise, the things they hold dear and the things that scare them, is to normalise and humanise migrant groups. In a society which is increasingly sceptical about the contributions of migrants, it has been a singular pleasure to record the everyday experiences of a migrant group whose influence can be seen in the very infrastructure of the modern city of Leeds, and who have created a legacy, and made a positive contribution to the place that has become their home.

Primary source interviews undertaken for this thesis

GERALD, 5 April 2014.
Gerald was born in Roscommon, and now lives in Leeds. He is a street drinker who lives in supported housing. This interview was originally recorded and transcribed for Leeds Irish Health and Homes to form part of their annual report, although the final full interview never made it into the report. The researcher on this project was the interviewer, and the interview took place in Leeds Irish Health and Homes' office. Permission has been granted by Leeds Irish Health and Homes and by Gerald himself for this interview to be used as part of the thesis. For the sake of clarity, some words in this interview were edited for its publication in the report: no words were added.

SADIE, 5 August 2015
Sadie grew up in a large family in Kilkenny, and moved to England as a young woman in the 1960s. She lived in Rotherham and in Leeds before settling in Doncaster. She was interviewed at home in Doncaster.Sadie worked as a bus conductor before marriage: she is now retired.

EAMONN and SIMON, 13 August 2015
Eamonn and Simon are both from Mayo, and moved to England in the 1960s. Both lived in Leeds in the early 1960s, and now live in Rotherham. They were interviewed in Eamonn's house in Rotherham, along with their wives, Kathleen and Rose, who also contributed to some of the discussions. Eamonn and Simon both worked in construction, Kathleen was a nurse and Rose a teacher: all are now retired.

TOMMY, 15 September 2015
Interviewed in his official capacity as manager of Leeds Irish Centre, Tommy recognised that anonymity would be difficult given the singular nature of his occupation. Tommy's parents were Irish and ran boarding houses in Leeds. His mother was from Co Galway, while Tommy grew up in South Yorkshire. He has managed Leeds Irish Centre since 1975. He was interviewed at Leeds Irish Centre.

MARTIN, 15 September 2015
Martin is a regular at Leeds Irish Centre. Raised in Dundalk, he moved to Leeds in the 1960s. He moved back to Ireland for a time, but eventually settled on the outskirts of Leeds, where he still lives. He was interviewed at the Tuesday Club at Leeds Irish Centre. He used to work in engineering, and is now retired.

LIZZIE, 15 September 2015
Lizzie has lived in Leeds since the 1950s and is a keen Leeds United fan. She was interviewed at the Tuesday Club at Leeds Irish Centre. Lizzie worked in shops and cinemas, and has been retired for a number of years.

BERNADETTE, 15 September 2015
Bernadette moved to England in the early 1960s, and worked as a nurse. Originally from Tipperary, she now lives in Leeds, and was interviewed at the Tuesday Club at Leeds Irish Centre. Bernadette is now retired.

ELLEN, 6 September 2016
Ellen followed her brothers to England in the 1970s, and settled down to have a family in Leeds. She still lives in Leeds, but was interviewed at her childhood home in Co Mayo. Ellen worked in various jobs, including as a chambermaid and delivering milk. She is now retired.

LIAM, 8 September 2016
Liam moved to England in the late 1950s, and moved around working on infrastructure jobs. He lived in Leeds and Bradford for a number of years. He moved back to his homeplace in Ireland in the late 1970s, and was interviewed there. Liam still works as a farmer.

VINCENT and DECLAN, 9 January 2017
Friends for a number of years, Vincent and Declan both moved to England from County Mayo in the 1960s to work on infrastructure and building projects. Both went on to work in successful businesses before recently retiring. They were interviewed in Vincent's home. This interview was very comprehensive: it took a full day and yielded around 30,000 words. Both worked in the construction industry, and have sons who have followed them into the business: both are now retired.

TIM, 15 September 2017
Born in Leeds of Irish parents from Mayo and Galway, Tim works for an Irish organisation in the city. He is a renowned Irish traditional musician. He still lives in Leeds, and was interviewed at his home.

SEAN, 19 February 2018
Sean moved to England in the late 1950s from County Mayo, and worked on infrastructure projects before setting up in business with his brother. He is active in local Leeds organisations and still lives in the city. He worked in the construction industry: the company he set up with his brother is now run by his sons. Now retired, he was interviewed at home.

KEVIN, 2 August 2018
Difficult to anonymise because of the singularity of his career trajectory, nevertheless this thesis has attempted to use pseudonyms to mask Kevin's true identity although the interviewee was happy to waive anonymity. Kevin moved to Leeds from Belfast as a child in the 1970s, and went on to forge a successful career in local government, serving as Lord Mayor of the city. Kevin was interviewed at his office.

GRAINNE, 21 August 2018
Grainne grew up in Belfast, and moved to England in the 1980s for postgraduate study, eventually settling in Leeds. She works for an Irish organisation in the city, and was interviewed in her office.

LAUREN, 21 August 2018
Lauren is from County Down, and moved to England to study in the 1990s. She has lived and worked in Leeds for a number of years. She was interviewed at her office.

SAOIRSE, 21 August 2018
Born in Leeds of Irish parents from Derry and Mayo, Saoirse works for an Irish organisation in the city. She was interviewed at her workplace.

OWEN, 21 August 2018
Owen's parents are Irish, and he moved to Leeds in the 1980s to study, in part because of his fondness for Leeds United football club. He manages an Irish organisation in the city, where he was interviewed.

DAVID, 30 October 2018

David grew up on the east coast of Ireland and in Canada. He moved to England to study in the 1980s, originally to Middlesbrough, but he settled in Leeds. He works in information technology, and was interviewed at work.

FEARGHAL, 30 January 2019
Fearghal grew up in Fermanagh, and moved to Leeds to study in the late 1990s. He has stayed in the city ever since. He now works for the UK Government. Fearghal was interviewed at home.

MARY, 18 February 2019
Mary grew up in Mayo in the 1980s, and moved to Leeds fairly recently for her partner's work. Mary has postgraduate qualifications and works in healthcare. She was interviewed over the telephone.

RONAN, 15 March 2019
Ronan grew up in Cork, and moved to England to study in the late 1990s. He studied for a PhD before moving to Leeds to be with his partner, and now lives in Liverpool, where he works in education. He was interviewed in his office.

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