

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: History
Title of case study: Ireland in the Twentieth Century
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Unit members Hope historians have enhanced public understanding of modern Irish cultural and political history. Principally, this was achieved through the extensive media exposure of biographical monographs published by Bryce Evans and Sonja Tiernan. Tiernan and Evans gained thorough research exposure through several prominent arteries of the national broadcast and print media in the Republic of Ireland and Britain. Collectively, this impacted awareness of Irish women's labour, political and economic history, both regionally and nationally. Research was cited in current affairs discussion, public discussion, and media reviews by journalists and commentators. Research provoked public comment through national radio phone-ins, blog coverage, and reviews. Research also impacted amongst 'hard to reach' groups, particularly women and the gay community. Moreover, the press coverage of works by Kelly and O'Callaghan significantly impacted on the policy-making and culture-informed public in Ireland, as discussed below.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research for Evans' book was completed at Liverpool Hope University in late 2011 and revisions to the text for later editions were completed in Hope across 2012. The study, <i>Seán Lemass: Democratic Dictator</i> (Collins, 2011), was a revision of the Irish politician credited with the 'mainstreaming' of Irish domestic and foreign policy in the 1960s. Its publication builds on a culture of research into twentieth century Irish political and economic history which has been a key feature of the Irish Studies Research group at Liverpool Hope, which was founded in 2009, and certain ideas for the book germinated in that research environment.</p> <p>Sonja Tiernan's long-standing commitment to women's history was displayed in <i>Eva Gore-Booth: An Image of Such Politics</i> (Manchester University Press, 2012), a significant addition to knowledge on Irish influence in the North of England, women's history, and the history of the labour and peace movements. A recurrent topic of discussion in the Irish Studies Research group at Hope has been the extent to which modern Irish historiography is male-dominated; this book did much to enhance public engagement with important but overlooked female figures. Research was undertaken at Liverpool Hope University in late 2011 and early 2012.</p> <p>Other Hope historians have maintained strong research profiles as part of the Irish history case study and, likewise, their outputs have been informed by membership of the university's Irish Studies Research collective, which holds regular meetings and discussions and is currently formulating an impact strategy beyond 2013. Research for Lecturer Liam O'Callaghan's first book, <i>Rugby in Munster: A Social and Cultural History</i> (Cork University Press, 2011), was carried out while he was based at Liverpool Hope University. Similarly, Stephen Kelly completed research for his new book <i>Fianna Fáil, Partition and Northern Ireland</i> (Irish Academic Press, 2013) while at Liverpool Hope.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>Evans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Coercion in the Irish countryside', <i>Irish Economic and Social History</i> 38 (Manchester University Press, 2011) pp 1-17 ISBN 9770332489002 • <i>Seán Lemass: Democratic Dictator</i> (Collins, 2011) pp 328 ISBN 9781848891227 <p>In their <i>Economic History of Ireland Since Independence</i> (Routledge, 2012), editors Andy Bielenberg and Raymond Ryan praised the book as questioning Lemass's 'heroic role' in the Irish economic story (p. 20). The <i>Irish Times</i> (circulation 105,742 Irish Audit Bureau of Circulations) called Evans' book 'a welcome addition to the canon' and praised its depth of research and intellectual integrity (10 Oct 2011). Moreover, Evans' work was heavily cited in John Field's study <i>Working Men's Bodies</i> (Manchester University Press, 2013).</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Tiernan:

- *Eva Gore-Booth: An Image of Such Politics* (Manchester University Press, 2012) ISBN pp 295 9780719082313
- Sonja Tiernan, 'Undercover of The Irish Housewife: a women's magazine for a new age,' in editor Alan Hayes, Hilda Tweedy and the Irish Housewives Association: *Links in the Chain*. Dublin: Arlen House, 2012, pp. 105-16. ISBN 9781851320332

Jad Adams, writing in *The Oldie* magazine in February 2013 (circulation 44,026 ABC primary figure), said of Tiernan's book 'there is much of interest to those keen on the politics of the labour movement and women's suffrage campaigns in the early years of the twentieth century'. Tiernan's book was also cited in Holly Yort, *The Past is Never Behind Us: The Retelling of the Story of Ireland and its Implications* (Princeton, e-International Relations 2012); Claire O'Callaghan's 'The Equivocal Symbolism of Pearls in the Novels of Sarah Waters,' in *Contemporary Women's Writing* (2012) 6(1): 20-37; and Robert Aldrich, *Gay Life Stories* (Thames & Hudson, 2012).

O'Callaghan:

- *Rugby in Munster: A Social and Cultural History* (Cork University Press, 2011) pp 308 ISBN 9781859184806

The *Wall Street Journal* featured O'Callaghan's research (April 30, 2010), citing the 'clear evidence' his work on rugby in the Irish province of Munster shows that the strength of the game historically lies in this part of the west of Ireland.

Kelly:

- *Fianna Fáil, Partition and Northern Ireland* (Irish Academic Press, 2013) pp 288 ISBN 9780716531869

The book was described as 'a scholarly spit roast of Fianna Fáil's pretensions' in the *Irish Sunday Times*, 28 July 2013 and 'A thorough examination of Fianna Fáil attitudes' in the *Irish Examiner*, 13 July 2013.

4. Details of the impact

A distinctive feature of the impact was its reach amongst members of 'hard to reach' societal groups – specifically women and the gay community. For example, Tiernan's research was used as the historical basis for a play on Eva Gore-Booth by playwright Alan Flanagan, performed at the 2013 Dublin Gay Theatre Festival. The festival's key aims are to 'develop channels of communication to the gay community' and 'promote youth integration and participation' (www.gaytheatre.ie). The festival attracts thousands of visitors, having grown since its 2004 inception to become the largest event of its type in the world. The reach of this is demonstrated in that Flanagan then set about writing a play based on Eva Gore-Booth's life for the festival the following year. Flanagan wrote to Tiernan in December 2012 confirming "I absolutely loved reading the biography" and "I've been using your biography as a reference throughout" (see Tiernan-Flanagan correspondence). In February 2013 Tiernan disseminated her research further amongst the gay community, delivering the key-note public address at the LGBT History Month event at The Working Class Movement Library in Manchester, which attracted 100 members of the public. Flanagan's Tiernan-inspired play sold out every night of its week-long run at Dublin's gay theatre festival in May 2013, its impact demonstrated by a review on popular culture review site entertainment.ie in which it was described as 'in its element in this festival as a play that lambasts the primacy of the familiar and accepted norms'.

Another measure of the reach of Tiernan's research was its feature on BBC Radio 4's Women's Hour on 5 October 2012 (listenership 2.68 million people – source BBC). Moreover, Women's Hour broadcasts an annual 'Power List' of influential females. In doing so the programme's producers claim that it demonstrably enhances women's social standing and sense of worth by profiling women with 'the greatest impact on British politics, society, culture and the economy' (www.bbc.co.uk). Tiernan was one of two female historians who assisted in the compilation of the

'Power List' by reflecting on the legacy of power, in an episode of the programme broadcast on 21 December 2012.

The Irish public benefited from the political insights provided by unit members' research. Bryce Evans' research was widely disseminated in the *Sunday Independent* newspaper, which enjoys the highest readership and highest female readership of any publication on the island of Ireland; two thirds of that newspaper's readership is female. A significant and distinctive feature of Evans' research was its impact in altering assumptions about not only its subject, Seán Lemass (the man commonly dubbed 'the architect of modern Ireland') but the Ireland he 'created'. Evans challenged previous hagiographical biographies and, in doing so, challenged popular historical perceptions about the very nature of the 'forward-looking' modern Ireland associated with Lemass. This was at a time when the national debt crisis (2008-2009 – present) was prompting widespread political reappraisal. Consequently, the book was very widely cited in public discussion, by journalists, broadcasters, politicians, and across social media. It was discussed on six separate occasions on RTE Radio One - 23.4% Irish national listenership (JNLR Irish Radio Listening Figures Feb 2012) – and a dozen times in the *Irish Independent* (readership 465,000 – Independent.ie) and *Sunday Independent*. Commentators cited the book as evidence that the country must rebuild politically 'from the ground up' (*Sunday Independent*, 2 Oct 2011). It sold just under 2,000 copies and, in the week after its release, entered the Irish best-seller lists. The book received complimentary reviews in every national newspaper in Ireland. It was profiled on current affairs show 'Tonight With Vincent Browne' (166,000 average viewers, Nielsen TAM report) and reviewed in dozens of regional news and radio outlets across Ireland (for full list see Bryce Evans' research blog www.drbryceevans.wordpress.org). Significantly, the reach of the book also extended beyond the Irish metropole, with many callers on regional radio stations 'phoning in' to discuss the book's findings with Evans and the presenters: regional radio 'phone in' coverage included South Newstalk FM (4.7% national listenership, JNLR Irish Radio Listening Figures Feb 2012) East Radio, Clare FM, BBC Radio Ulster, East Coast FM, Ocean FM (Irish North West radio) and Sunshine FM.

Evans used the strength of this impact to help publicise a forthcoming edited collection (he is currently researching with unit member Stephen Kelly) on a political contemporary and colleague of Lemass's: a famous statesman from the era named Frank Aiken. Evans' potted biography of Aiken, in which he revised some of the myths attached to his character, was published on influential Irish political blog 'the Irish Story' (www.theirishstory.com). The article was circulated across social media sites and republished that day by users of politics.ie, the most popular internet discussion chat board in the country with over 32,000 users. The article alone generated 12 pages of comment from over 100 users, with Aiken being celebrated as a 'great man' by some and denounced by others as a 'sectarian thug'. This heavy citation on social media points to the impact of Bryce Evans' name and views in provoking and altering popular historical perceptions about the 'Great Men' of Irish history. The forthcoming publication on the life of Frank Aiken (Irish Academic Press, 2014) was praised by the Fianna Fáil party e-bulletin of March 2013 (circulation 55,000) as promising to be 'a reference text for all interested in learning more about 20th Century Irish history'. This commentary followed a public symposium hosted by Liverpool Hope University, which attracted many men and women from Ireland who are the surviving political colleagues and family of Frank Aiken. They, variously, described the prospect of a publication on the man they knew so well as 'exciting', 'wonderful', 'affirming' and 'emotional'.

Nor was Evans the only unit member to impact online discussion. O'Callaghan's research for his book on Munster Rugby featured heavily on online discussion fora and in email correspondence from fans of the Munster Rugby sports team. O'Callaghan's research further fulfilled the criteria of reaching people in the Irish peripheries as a 'hard to reach' sub-group. In this case, O'Callaghan's research provoked dozens of comments on the popular 'People's Republic of Cork' blog – a very active discussion forum patronised by people living in this county of South West Ireland. Debate about the findings of O'Callaghan's book also dominated the Cork-based newspaper *The Irish Examiner's* (circulation 43,000 JNLR figure) internet discussion forum in November 2011. O'Callaghan's *Rugby in Munster* formed the basis of media interviews on RTE Radio's Sport at Seven, *The Irish Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. The *WSJ* (circulation 2,118,315, American

Impact case study (REF3b)

Audit Bureau of Circulations) featured O'Callaghan's research (April 30, 2010). More pervasive, as discussed below, has been the impact of O'Callaghan's research in influencing public discourse surrounding an institution of popular cultural acclaim in Ireland (the Munster rugby team) through fan internet forums and message boards.

Much of the research on Frank Aiken was itself informed by the party political research of Kelly. After the publication of Kelly's *Fianna Fáil, Partition and Northern Ireland*, the author's critical perspective was praised in the *Irish Sunday Times*, 28 July 2013 (readership average 409,000) and *the Irish Examiner* of 13 July 2013 (readership average per day 189,000). Kelly's work was also reviewed in *The Derry Journal* on 26 July 2013 (readership 59,000), *The Irish News* (readership 60,000) and *BBC Radio Foyle*.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Evans, *Seán Lemass: Democratic Dictator*

- Veteran Irish political commentator Bruce Arnold, writing in *The Sunday Independent* (circulation 237,185 ABC primary figure) claimed that Evans' biography 'washes all other biographies [of its subject] into the sea' (23 Jan 2012) and instructed Irish policy makers to read it to aid them in their diplomacy with the EU/IMF/World Bank troika.
- Former Irish government minister Seán Haughey praised Evans' research on RTE radio's Marian Finucane Show (the second most popular radio show in Ireland with 363,000 listeners – JNLR 2012) on 19 May 2012, saying that the book proved that 'paying continuous lip service to historical figures, invoking them at every turn, does no one [policy makers] any good'.

Tiernan, *Eva Gore-Booth: An Image of Such Politics*

- Tiernan's research was featured as 'this week's essential reading; Eva Gore-Booth's life story is at last being told in this landmark book' in Irish emigrant newspaper *The Irish Post*, 23 June 2012.
- Irish senator Katharine Zappone launched the 2012 Gay Theatre festival by referring to the then-unpublished research of Tiernan as an example of how, 'as people of minority sexual and gender identities, we must present our lives, our truth to the world, have our stories told and our lives reflected back to us.'
- Sonja Tiernan was included in global 'list of 1,000 women speakers worth listening to,' by Michael Nugent, chair of the advocacy group, *Atheist Ireland*, 20 August 2012.

O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*

- See relevant sections of 'People's Republic of Cork' blog, 2011-2012: <http://www.peoplesrepublicofcork.com/>