

Ballymurphy: The Forgotten Massacre? A Study in Differential Memory during The Troubles and in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland

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Abstract

This article establishes the factors that led to the killing of 11 unarmed civilians being forgotten. Then how forgetting an event subsequently denied justice to its victims, in Ballymurphy's case until very recently. Viewing the Ballymurphy massacre through the lens of memory theory allows this paper to examine what factors are needed to form a culture of memory for an event. The intention of this article is to establish that collective memory is formed and based upon contemporary media and social reaction to an event and consequently if there is no culture of memory, it is difficult for victims in post-conflict regions to receive justice.

A comparative analysis of contemporary newspaper reactions to the Ballymurphy Massacre and Bloody Sunday illuminates what factors are needed to garner the attention of the media. This analysis will show that sympathetic victims and becoming an image event is important to the formation of cultural memory. In post-conflict Northern Ireland, the Ballymurphy families without cultural memory of their tragedy were left without justice and so had to employ technologies of folk memory, such as murals and marches, in order to rise up the hierarchy of attention and gain political traction for their mission to achieve justice. The success of the Ballymurphy campaign provides important social and political lessons on transitional justice and its role in reconciliation in post-conflict regions.

Introduction

The Forgotten Massacre references the events between 9th August 1971 to 11th August 1971 where 11 civilians were killed in Ballymurphy by members of the British Army following the introduction of internment without trial by the Stormont Government.¹ Over 3,600 individuals died during the conflict between the IRA, loyalist paramilitaries, and British military forces in Northern Ireland, which came to be known as The Troubles.² The Troubles began in 1968, following the rise of a civil rights

¹ "The Ballymurphy Massacre," Ballymurphy Massacre, accessed January 2, 2022, <http://www.ballymurphy massacre.com/cms/the-victims/>

² Brian Conway, "Active Remembering, Selective Forgetting, and Collective Identity: The Case of Bloody Sunday," *An International Journal of Theory and Research* 3, no. 4 (2003): 317.

movement for Catholics which was met with aggression by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), a largely Protestant police force, and loyalist protestors led by Reverend Ian Paisley.³ After some delay, the largely moribund IRA responded by employing violent tactics to defend vulnerable Catholic communities while re-stating their historic demand for a united Irish Republic.⁴ The British government responded by sending in the military to support the Northern Irish Police in controlling the conflict. The Troubles were characterised by a refusal of the British government to acknowledge the situation as a war, thereby following the approach adopted by David Lloyd George's government during the Irish War of Independence in the early 1920s, 'You do not declare war on rebels.'⁵

Ballymurphy was, and still is, an overwhelmingly Catholic, nationalist area in West Belfast and as an area which saw a lot of violence during the Troubles; it was a microcosm of nationalist tension. Gerry Adams, former President of the Sinn Féin party, said of Ballymurphy, 'If anyone was ever to ask me what makes a revolution, how does it happen, and what are the ideal conditions, I would say, "Go take a look at what happened in Ballymurphy".'⁶ The events of the Ballymurphy killings provide evidence of how a state can fall into conflict. It is also a useful case study for post-conflict Northern Ireland and the role that memory and commemoration plays in transitional justice. This dissertation analyses the factors that make an event culturally significant and argues the formation of memory culture, for an event such as Ballymurphy, is crucial if the victims are to receive justice.

The Ballymurphy Massacre, as it is termed by the families of the victims, is unique in that it was almost entirely forgotten. The 11 innocent civilians killed by British troops were initially painted as members of the IRA and the official British and Northern Irish state narrative of events claimed that many of those killed were armed.⁷ Before 2018, the only investigation into the deaths were individual coroner's inquests held in 1972. The coroner did not call any eyewitnesses and the inquests recorded open verdicts, meaning the innocent dead were left without justice.⁸

The Ballymurphy Massacre (referred to as Ballymurphy hereafter) lacks historiography due to the very topic that this dissertation focuses on: the event was forgotten, not just by the media and society but also by academia. This dissertation intends to play an important role in highlighting the significance of the event. The Ballymurphy Massacre is also a useful case study into memory and victimhood theories. The Bloody Sunday Massacre (1972) provides a useful differential memory comparator for the Ballymurphy Massacre as there is a relatively richer historiography surrounding that massacre. Ballymurphy has been referred to by some as 'Belfast's Bloody Sunday', showing how salient the later massacre is to cultural memory and its political impact on the first event.⁹ This dissertation provides insight into how commemoration many years after an event can reignite victims' demands for justice. Furthermore, the dissertation emphasises the importance of justice in post-conflict states like Northern Ireland and highlights how acknowledging these events truthfully

³ Steve Bruce, "Religion and Violence: The Case of Paisley and Ulster Evangelicals," *The Irish Association for cultural, economic and social relations* (2003): 1.

⁴ David George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 320.

⁵ David George Boyce, "How to Settle the Irish Question: Lloyd George and Ireland 1916-21," in *Lloyd George: Twelve Essays*, ed. A.J.P Taylor (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), 149.

⁶ Ciaran De Bariod, *Ballymurphy and the Irish War* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 20.

⁷ *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, Channel Four, September 8, 2018.

⁸ Colm Kelpie "Ballymurphy Inquest: Coroner finds 10 victims were innocent," *BBC News*, May 11, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56986784#:~:text=The%20inquest%2C%20which%20began%20in.and%20a%20mother%20of%20eight>; Sean Molony, "Judge Told Ballymurphy Massacre Widow she was 'better off' After British Army Murdered her Husband," *Irish Independent*, May 25 2021, <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/judge-told-ballymurphy-massacre-widow-she-was-better-off-after-british-army-murdered-her-husband-40466965.html>

⁹ Ann Rigney, "Differential Memorability and Transnational Activism: Bloody Sunday, 1887-2016," *Australian Humanities Review* 59, (2016): 79.

will build the future. Ballymurphy's significant lack of historiography means that this dissertation fills a gap in historical and wider academic literature and highlights a previously unexplored aspect of the Northern Irish conflict.

The methodology used in this dissertation has been to view Ballymurphy through the lens of memory theory. Despite debates around the term memory, overall, as Confino says memory is the study of 'the ways in which people construct a sense of the past.'¹⁰ Memory Studies were popularised transnationally, by Shoah commemoration studies.¹¹ There was a surge in studying memory at the end of the twentieth century as people worried survivors' tales would not be recorded during a boom in anniversary commemorations.¹² At the turn of the twenty-first century it became a thriving interdisciplinary academic field. Recently, Memory Studies have been criticised for overemphasis on collective memory over individual memory.¹³ I have provided a nuanced portrait of collective memory about Ballymurphy by utilising Winter's idea of individuals as 'agents of remembrance' who form the links between community action and state action for justice.¹⁴

This dissertation argues that memory culture around an event is crucial for victims to receive justice. Chapter One applies memory theory to the Ballymurphy Massacre and demonstrates how knowledge spread from the confines of family and community to wider society. Chapter Two explains what factors are important in garnering a significant cultural and political response, such as where victims fall on the hierarchy of victims. The chapter also analyses how the contemporary response to an event influences subsequent collective memory. Chapter Three analyses Ballymurphy's sites of commemoration in post-conflict Northern Ireland. These commemoration sites indicate a growing acknowledgement of the folk memories of Ballymurphy. The chapter scrutinises how the propagation of the alternative narrative, told by the families and in the wider Catholic, nationalist community, that the victims were innocent, was propelled by the release of a documentary, which advanced the victims' case and brought the survivors closer to obtaining justice. This alternative narrative transformed from folk memory to official memory in 2021, when the second coroner's inquest verdict acknowledged that the victims were innocent.¹⁵

Background and the Events of the Ballymurphy Massacre

The killing of 11 civilians in the nationalist area of Ballymurphy in West Belfast occurred during the first few days of Operation Demetrius, the name given to the military operation which arrested and interned more than 340 individuals from Catholic and nationalist backgrounds.¹⁶ Catholics had initially welcomed the army into Northern Ireland as protectors. However, the policy of internment consolidated a growing Catholic perception that the army were acting as oppressors.¹⁷ Under pressure from the Stormont Government, led by Northern Irish Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, Conservative

¹⁰ Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386.

¹¹ T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper, "The politics of war memory and commemoration: contexts, structures and dynamics," in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* ed. T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (London: Routledge Publishers, 2000): 3.

¹² Ashplant, "War Memory," 4.

¹³ Andrew Hoskins, "From Collective memory to Memory Systems," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011): 131.

¹⁴ Ashplant, "War Memory," 9.

¹⁵ Kelpie, "Ballymurphy Inquest".

¹⁶ Gerry Moriarty, "Internment explained: When was it introduced and why?," *The Irish Times*, August 9, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/internment-explained-when-was-it-introduced-and-why-1.3981598?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw->

¹⁷ Callum McCrae, "The truth about Ballymurphy needs to be told, and here's why," *The Irish Times*, September 10, 2018, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/the-truth-about-ballymurphy-needs-to-be-told-and-here-s-why-1.3624053>

Prime Minister, Edward Heath, authorised the passing of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act and the introduction of internment.¹⁸ The Special Powers Act gave the Minister for Home Affairs (Faulkner had combined this role with that of Prime Minister), the power to issue an internment order against any person ‘who is suspected of acting or having acted or being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of the peace and the maintenance of order in Northern Ireland.’¹⁹ Internment could not be enforced without British troops and the confidential command given to soldiers was if ‘suspects cannot be identified by [the military], all males over 18 yrs at the selected address are to be arrested.’²⁰ Obviously, this instruction led to the arrest of innocent people who were not involved with the IRA.

No loyalists were included in the list of individuals to be arrested. The only Protestants who were arrested were involved in the civil rights movement.²¹ Faulkner falsely claimed that there was no information ‘suggesting that a subversive organisation existed in the Protestant community.’²² Faulkner did not want to antagonise loyalists. Reginald Maudling, the British Home Secretary, stated that ‘I would not seek to disguise from my colleagues that any action we may take [arresting loyalists] may produce grave consequences.’²³ Overall, internment was a poor policy decision taken by the British and Northern Ireland governments, ‘...proved to be the most disastrous security initiative taken in Northern Ireland during The Troubles.’²⁴ The policy radicalised and unified the Catholic nationalist community in a way not seen in decades and became a metaphorical recruiting sergeant for the IRA. Operation Demetrius also hid a much darker secret, the deaths of 11 innocent and unarmed civilians killed by British soldiers in Ballymurphy.

In a strongly Catholic area like Ballymurphy, internment led to chaos. Over 600 soldiers entered Ballymurphy and raided homes rounding up men of all ages. On 9th August, the first day of the internment, Father Hugh Mullan and Francis Quinn were shot dead while trying to aid another civilian shot by soldiers. Four other victims, Joan Connolly, Joseph Murphy, Noel Phillips and Daniel Teggart were shot by soldiers firing from a community hall that same day. On 10th August, another man called Edward Doherty was shot. On 11th August 1971, three more men, John Lavery, Joseph Corr (died 16 days later), Joseph McKerr (died 1 week later) were shot. Several of the dead were shot more than once, some several times.²⁵ Another man, Pat McCarthy, suffered a heart attack after a mock execution by British soldiers.

¹⁸ Martin McCleery, “Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius: The Introduction of Internment in Northern Ireland in 1971,” *Irish Political Studies* 37, (2012): 415.

¹⁹ McCleery, “Operation Demetrius,” 413.

²⁰ Confidential Operation Instructions from Northern Ireland, HQ 19, given on August 8, 1971 quoted in, McCleery, “Operation Demetrius,” 417.

²¹ McCleery, “Operation Demetrius,” 417.

²² McCleery, “Operation Demetrius,” 425.

²³ McCleery, “Operation Demetrius,” 427.

²⁴ Paul Dixon and Eamonn O’Kane, *Northern Ireland Since 1969*, (London: Routledge, 2011): 29.

²⁵ McCrae, “The truth about Ballymurphy”

Chapter One

An Application of Memory Theory to Ballymurphy and the Context of the Event

This chapter outlines memory theory and its application to the Ballymurphy Massacre. It reviews how individuals, who act as agents of remembrance within communities, form small groups of collective memory.²⁶ Community held memory was where the truthful narrative of Ballymurphy was kept for many years. The small-group collective memory was then extrapolated outwards into civil society, to the larger collective memory of Britain and Ireland. Memory culture of an event is established through large-group collective memory and is crucial to receiving justice.

Memory Theory

The concept of memory has been used increasingly in both historical and sociological research; this new theoretical interest was termed by Levy as a 'historical turn'.²⁷ The study of memory is useful as the way individuals and groups remember events is fundamental to the construction of their identity. Identity is particularly important within Northern Ireland as individuals' religious and political identities are crucial to the way in which they live their lives. The Ballymurphy and Bloody Sunday killings were remembered within Catholic, nationalist communities for the best part of 40 years through 'folk' memories as opposed to 'official memory' or 'elite memory'. The term 'official memory' is the version of an event as remembered by those in power and government.

The Northern Ireland state was founded and governed as a sectarian state throughout its history until the March 1972 prorogation of Stormont. Catholics viewed the Northern Ireland state as hostile - its first Prime Minister, James Craig, described it as a 'Protestant parliament and a Protestant state'.²⁸ Catholics found that the Stormont Parliament treated them as a subjugated group. Their poor economic standing was created through historic circumstances, discriminatory employment practices and the discriminatory allocation of public goods, such as council housing. These factors reinforced a collective sense of an oppressed identity.²⁹ Northern Ireland's political climate meant that the folk memory of Bloody Sunday and Ballymurphy had to struggle against the dominant memory supported by the state. Individuals within the Ballymurphy community held on to the folk memory and acted as agents of remembrance. Brian Conway states, in relation to Bloody Sunday, that official memory was 'linked and encoded in Widgery', referring to the 1972 Widgery Report, the first inquiry into Bloody Sunday which found the army innocent of wrongdoing.³⁰ In the case of Ballymurphy, the folk memory of events was entirely dominated by the official record and memory of the actual events was lost to all but a few. The gravestones of some of the Ballymurphy victims state, 'Murdered by Crown Forces' to declare the families' truth.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families experienced 'double victimisation' as they lost a family member and were 'dispossessed of justice'.³¹ Official memory that completely excludes narratives can cause isolation and repression or, in extreme cases, erasure, the suppression of memory.³² For

²⁶ Jay Winter, "Forms of kinship and remembrance in the aftermath of the Great War," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁷ Daniel Levy, "The Future of the Past: Historiographical Disputes and Competing Memories in Germany and Israel," *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999): 54.

²⁸ Conor O'Clery, *Ireland in Quotes* (Dublin: O'Brien Publisher, 1999): 83.

²⁹ Kathryn Woodward, *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage Publications, 1999): 24.

³⁰ Brian Conway, "Active Remembering," 305; Rigney, "Differential Memorability," 79.

³¹ Leah Wing, "Dealing with the Past: Shared and Contested Narratives in 'Post-Conflict' Northern Ireland," *Museum International* 62, no. 1 (2010): 34.

³² Ashplant, "War Memory," 29.

example, Catholic World War I veterans in Ireland who fought for Britain did not fit the hegemonic idea of Irish Republicanism and erased their identities as veterans. The Ballymurphy families set up a group within their community to try to resolve the second layer of victimisation and gain justice. This follows the theory of memory culture, where an event occupies private memory and is remembered individually and within families, then spreads to the community where informal networks are formed called ‘fictive kinships’.³³ These examples go against Hobsbawm’s theories of ‘state-centred’ memory, where commemoration and memory are constructed by and for the state.³⁴

For the Ballymurphy families, the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee, founded in 2007, occupied the space between formal organisations of remembrance and civil society and the informal community environment.³⁵ The Ballymurphy Massacre Committee campaign’s aims were to achieve justice for the victims of the shooting, clear their names of wrongdoing, and establish their innocence as unarmed citizens.³⁶ The group went about this by attempting to achieve public representation of the Ballymurphy Massacre and ‘achieve centrality’ within civil society.³⁷ It is worth noting that public and private memory are overlapping rather than distinct, they are best understood in ‘Gramscian terms, as a hegemonic process of ideological domination and reliance.’³⁸ Private memories are inherently influenced by public discourse and public memory is dependent on the ability to connect to the individual. Nevertheless, attempting to manoeuvre a private, small-group collective memory onto the public platform is difficult, yet crucial for ensuring justice. Despite the difficulty, the Ballymurphy families ultimately succeeded in achieving this feat.

Subjugated groups cannot access the agencies of state, so are unable to centralise their memories.³⁹ Catholics as a group were marginalised. This restricted Catholics’ access to transitional justice as their ability to access power structures within civil society was limited.⁴⁰ On top of this, the legal apparatus within post-conflict Northern Ireland has been insufficiently supportive of victims and achieving reconciliation. These transitional, post-conflict access to justice issues will be covered in more detail in Chapter Three.

Ashplant et al. discuss subjugated groups attempting to gain justice and state, ‘An excluded group feels alienated from official memory may, if strong and cohesive enough, seek to mobilise its counter memories into an oppositional narrative.’⁴¹ One example of a similar situation was injured French World War One veterans who came together to supplement deficient state support.⁴² Another example, is the Ballymurphy campaign. These community support examples are crucial for the maintenance of memories from generation to generation.

³³ Winter, “Forms of kinship,” 40.

³⁴ Ashplant, “War Memory,” 8.

³⁵ Wing, “Dealing with the Past,” 33.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ashplant, “War Memory,” 13.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ashplant, “War memory,” 21.

⁴⁰ Sarah Jankowitz, “The ‘Hierarchy of Victims’ in Northern Ireland: A Framework for Critical Analysis,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 12, no. 2 (2018): 4.

⁴¹ Ashplant, “War memory,” 21.

⁴² Winter, “Forms of kinship,” 54.

Chapter Two

Critical Review of the Immediate Responses to Ballymurphy and Bloody Sunday and their Contributions to the Formation of Differential Memory

This chapter examines what factors are important to the formation of memory culture. The chapter undertakes a media review by choosing politically representative papers. The *Belfast Telegraph* and the *News Letter* were widely read by unionists and *The Irish Times*, a Dublin paper, reflects the nationalist perception of events. This chapter considers victimology, defined as, ‘the study of the etiology (or causes) of victimization, its consequences, how the criminal justice system accommodates and assists victims, and how other elements of society, such as the media, deal with crime victims.’⁴³ Victimology is essential for understanding why ‘innocent’ victims are more likely to be remembered and receive justice. Another factor, key to forming memory culture, is the photography of a seminal and striking historical moment so that it becomes an ‘image event’, as is the case with Bloody Sunday.

Newspaper Review

The *Belfast Telegraph* headline on 11th August 1971 about the Ballymurphy Massacre stated, ‘In the Early Morning Two Gunmen Die’.⁴⁴ The report goes on to quote a British Army Parachute captain, who says that his men ‘...’fought a two hour gun battle’ with as many as 20 gunmen who he said were using Thompson submachine guns, pistols and rifles.’⁴⁵ The reference to two victims as ‘Gunmen’, rather than Catholic civilians, was important for the British Army in establishing their innocence. The *Belfast Telegraph*, a unionist paper, quoting the captain’s version of events shows how it supported its Protestant readership’s unionist and loyalist views.⁴⁶ The British Army captain also presents the army’s and the official view of events which subsequently came to form the official memory of the Ballymurphy shootings.⁴⁷ There is no representation of the folk narrative of this event at this time. The two dead, who are mentioned in the report, were depicted as Republican paramilitaries to exonerate the British troops for the shootings and excuse their actions as self-defence. Callum Macrae, the documentary director, believes the two victims mentioned in the report were John Lavery and Joseph Corr.⁴⁸ The two men were both shot in the back as they fled paratroopers who were firing indiscriminately into a crowd of Catholic civilians.⁴⁹

The *Belfast Telegraph* wrongly reported that the victims were armed and by doing so relegated the two men down Jankowitz’s moral hierarchy of victims.⁵⁰ The moral hierarchy described by Jankowitz is loosely linked to constructions of innocence, however, ‘the label of moral hierarchies

⁴³ Leah E. Daigle, *Victimology: The Essentials*, (New York: Sage Publications, 2021), 1.

⁴⁴ *The Belfast Telegraph*, “In the Early Morning Two Gunmen Die,” Belfast, August 11, 1971. From British Newspaper Archive Website.

⁴⁵ <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1971-08-13/1971-08-13?county=antrim%2c%20northern%20ireland&retrievecountrycounts=false&mostspecificlocation=antrim%2c%20northern%20ireland&newspapertitle=belfast%2btelegraph&sortorder=dateyearly> (accessed 5 January 2022).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Greg McLaughlin and Stephen Baker, *The British Media and Bloody Sunday* (Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd, 2015).

⁴⁸ Ashplant, “War memory,” 21.

⁴⁹ Callum Macrae, “You Can Remember the Truth, but You Can’t Remember the Lies’: The Lessons of the Ballymurphy Massacre,” *Pulitzer Centre*, June 23, 2021, <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/you-can-remember-truth-you-cant-remember-lies-lessons-ballymurphy-massacre>.

⁵⁰ Justice Keegan, “In The Matter of a Series of Deaths that Occurred in August 1971 at Ballymurphy, West Belfast: Summary of Coroner’s Verdicts and Findings,” *Judicial Communications Office*, May 11, 2021, <https://www.judiciaryni.uk/sites/judiciary/files/decisions/Summary%20of%20findings%20-%20In%20the%20matter%20of%20a%20series%20of%20deaths%20that%20occurred%20in%20August%201971%20at%20Ballymurphy%2C%20West%20Belfast%20-%2011%20May%202021.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 5.

more accurately reflects the subjectivity in assumptions about whether a victim is accepted as innocent within a given moral framework.⁵¹ In the *Belfast Telegraph* report, the two men are not viewed as innocent. The moral framework created a social construction of the ideal victim. Nil Christie refers to the ideal victim as the ‘passive object of unjust harm, and someone who is innocent, moral, vulnerable.’⁵² Although it is undeniable that this perception of victims is problematic and binary, it is pervasive throughout conflict. During The Troubles there was competition over victimhood along sectarian lines, with Protestant unionist loyalists and Catholic nationalist republicans falling on either side of the moral divide.⁵³ Following the events of Bloody Sunday and outrage at the outcome of the Widgery Report, justice for Catholic, nationalist victims became easier to come by, as demonstrated through the Saville Inquiry.⁵⁴ When the 1971 *Belfast Telegraph* article was published, six months before Bloody Sunday, the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland were largely ignored by the state, particularly after the introduction of internment.

Intergroup hierarchy is also at play, where individuals believe members of their own ‘in-group’ to be more entitled to victimhood than ‘out-group’ members.⁵⁵ The unionist majority in Northern Ireland, both civilian and political, meant that republican deaths were less likely to have justice. This is an extension of the moral hierarchy of victims. Protestants, by attaching a moral status to certain people, viewed republican paramilitaries as very low down in their hierarchy of victims. This created a narrative which sanctioned violence against ‘legitimate targets’, like the IRA.⁵⁶ Subsequently, this hierarchy was used to justify collusion between the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the British Army, for example, in the killing of Pat Finucane.⁵⁷ The *Belfast Telegraph* report referenced above provides an example of this moral hierarchy as it is used to create a justification for the Ballymurphy deaths. The moral hierarchy of victimhood is directly related to Erica Bouris’ hierarchy of innocence which has ‘children at the top and all others recognised in varying degrees based on their conformity to the image of innocent victim’.⁵⁸ Within historical narratives there is an importance placed on presenting a group or an individual’s positive or negative positioning in the stories.⁵⁹ Positive positioning translates to victimhood and negative positioning would apply to the perpetrators of violence.⁶⁰ Ultimately, this *Belfast Telegraph* report plays into the hierarchy of innocence and positions the victims negatively in the narrative by ascribing them guilt and presenting them as armed; the report removes the men’s unarmed and civilian status thereby removing their innocence.

The news cameras present at Bloody Sunday and the international outcry meant that even unionist newspapers had a difficult time defending the actions of the British Army. The *Belfast Telegraph*, and another unionist paper, *The News Letter*, however, both attempted to undermine the innocence of the victims by highlighting the illegality of the peaceful protest that preceded the violence.⁶¹ The headline in the *Belfast Telegraph* following the shootings read ‘Standstill, As Derry

⁵¹ Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 5.

⁵² Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 3.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Bill Rolston, “Unjustified and unjustifiable”: Vindication for the Victims of Bloody Sunday,” *Criminal Justice Matters* 82, no. 1 (2010): 12.

⁵⁵ Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 5.

⁵⁶ Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 20.

⁵⁷ Julian O’Neill, “Pat Finucane: A murder with ‘collusion at its heart,’” *BBC News*, November 30, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-55100778>

⁵⁸ Erin Baines, “Complex Political Victims,” review of *Complex Political Victims* by Erica Bouris, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2, no. 3, (2008); Erica Bouris quoted in Jankowitz, “Hierarchy of Victims,” 13.

⁵⁹ Wing, “Dealing with the Past,” 32.

⁶⁰ Wing, “Dealing with the Past,” 31.

⁶¹ McLaughlin, *British Media*.

Mourns' failing to mention who Derry is mourning and who caused the deaths, almost implying the deaths were naturally occurring and happened without force or the involvement of other individuals. The *News Letter* follows a similar theme stating coyly that 'Derry March Ends with 13 Dead' but fails to mention British military involvement in those deaths. The paper goes on to say a '...peaceful – though illegal – civil rights march erupted into the worst violence ever seen on the streets of the city.' The use of the word 'erupted' makes the tragedy sound like a natural disaster and evades mention of the army's violent actions in causing the deaths.

By emphasising the illegality of the march, The *News Letter* demoted the victims down the hierarchy of innocence and down the hierarchy of victims. Despite this, even these unionist papers could not deny what millions witnessed through published photographs and images shown on worldwide television. The *Belfast Telegraph* ultimately acknowledged that people were 'entitled to ask if this time the policy of minimum force was in fact, abandoned' and that the army may have 'over-reacted'.⁶² Both comments underplayed the reality, but at least acknowledged possible army wrongdoing. This is much further than the paper went when discussing Ballymurphy. The differences between Ballymurphy and Bloody Sunday made British Army misconduct on Bloody Sunday much harder to ignore or downplay. Bloody Sunday was the contained killing of 13 people over 20 minutes in comparison to the Ballymurphy shootings which were separate and occurred over three days of chaos. Consequently, Ballymurphy was naturally a less newsworthy event.

This was particularly the case, as it was falsely claimed by the British Army and authorities, that those shot were IRA gunmen or nail bombers, which meant that their deaths were placed lower down the hierarchy of attention. The hierarchy of attention is a term used to describe the differential treatment victims receive of a real or perceived focus from the media and politics. This extends to the willingness to investigate and allocate financial provisions to different tragedies.⁶³ This hierarchy is especially prevalent between single casualty incidents when compared to mass casualty incidents. Jankowitz makes a direct reference to the attention disparity between Ballymurphy and Bloody Sunday.⁶⁴ Brian Rowan referenced the cheapness of life in The Troubles when he said '...people here died for two hours, meaning that they were dead on the 10 o'clock news, but someone else was dead on the 12 o'clock news.'⁶⁵ Clearly, large mass-casualty attacks dominated the news and left little space in the media for the deaths of others. The deaths of the victims in Ballymurphy were treated more similarly to single-casualty events. The news quickly died down surrounding their deaths as it was during the turbulent time of the introduction of internment and the civilians were reported to be members of the IRA. Comparatively, Bloody Sunday garnered two national inquiries, the second of which, the Saville Inquiry, cost £200 million. This dramatically contrasts to the lack of financial provision given to the investigation of the Ballymurphy deaths.⁶⁶ This contributed to the 'double victimisation' of the bereaved families.⁶⁷

Nationalist media coverage of Ballymurphy makes it obvious how, in the chaos of internment, the Ballymurphy deaths were almost completely forgotten. An article published in *The Irish Times* on 12th August 1971 had the headline 'Residents accuse troops of terror' and it described how residents of the

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Jankowitz, "Hierarchy of Victims," 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Deric Henderson and Ivan Little, *Reporting the Troubles: Journalists tell their stories of the Northern Ireland Conflict* (Newtownards: Blackstaff Press, 2018); Alan Meban, "Reporting the Troubles: 2 Prime Ministers, 5 P O'Neills, The Last Death Knock, and Addressing Legacy Issues," *Sluggo O'Toole*, April 22, 2019, <https://sluggerotoole.com/2019/04/22/reporting-the-troubles-2-prime-ministers-5-p-oneills-30000-scraps-of-paper-and-addressing-legacy-issues/>

⁶⁶ Jankowitz, "Hierarchy of Victims," 24.

⁶⁷ Krzysztof Wodickzo, "From Theory to Trope to Beyond," in *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*, ed. Lisa Saltzman and Eric Rosenberg (Dartmouth: Dartmouth College Press, 2006), 87.

Lower Falls area of Belfast made ‘[allegations] of provocation, violence, and brutality [...] against troops of the Green Jackets Regiment’. The reference to the Green Jackets Regiment was incorrect as the regiment sent into Ballymurphy was the Parachute Regiment.⁶⁸ This confusion is a testament to the chaos in Northern Ireland induced by the introduction of internment. The article quotes SDLP MP, Gerry Fitt, saying the army was ‘playing the Faulkner regime game of attempting to force the menfolk into the position of defending their wives, families and homes, so that they can be battered about, then arrested in dawn swoops.’⁶⁹ The article quotes a resident saying, ‘All our people [residents] were in their houses, but before the troops came down they just fired away without any regard for our safety.’ The report does not mention any deaths but demonstrates British troop behaviour when making arrests.

If *The Irish Times* had known about the deaths, it likely would have made a point of mentioning them to support their broader argument that the British army was acting with undue force. In fact, the only mention of any of the Ballymurphy victims within *The Irish Times* was an article on 10th August 1971, where the front-page reads ‘12 Die on First Day of North’s Internment’.⁷⁰ The article lists those dead, as well as incidents of arson, then as a final-note states, ‘The Rev. Fr. Hugh Mullan was reported to have been shot and wounded when he went to give Last Rites to those shot in Ballymurphy.’ Father Mullan was already dead at this point, but the paper did not know yet. *The Irish Times* does not explicitly state who Father Mullan was shot by. Again, this is due to the lack of clarity surrounding the shooting. Given the uncertainty, the paper did not attribute the shooting to a specific party, though it may have done so if there had been evidence linking it to the British army. For example, when the Irish Times reported on Bloody Sunday they stated, ‘eye-witness reports claimed that the paratroopers opened fire first and fired indiscriminately into the large crowd.’⁷¹ Highlighting in no uncertain terms who was responsible for the deaths. Furthermore, the report fails to mention Francis Quinn who was shot and killed in the same incident. The backdrop of internment is another factor why the deaths in Ballymurphy did not stand out as suspicious or significant. This corroborates Rowan’s statement in *Reporting The Troubles*, ‘the abnormality of that period became the normality. We got used to the dark. We got used to people being killed.’ Particularly after the introduction of internment, death did not stand out. Comparatively speaking, Bloody Sunday occurred during a quieter time than Operation Demetrius. Therefore, Bloody Sunday occurred at an ideal time to create a media storm.

Bloody Sunday’s violence was striking as it was a response to what was meant to be a peaceful protest. Within the hierarchy of victims, the Bloody Sunday victims were seen as an ideal victim, peaceful protestors. Although the British authorities attempted to relegate them by saying they were armed, in this case it was a transparent lie. *The Irish Times* wrote of Bloody Sunday that ‘Soldiers kill 13 in Bogside’, setting out in no uncertain terms what happened.⁷² Part of the reason for this clarity was that the event was more easily understood at the time, 13 people were shot dead in 20

⁶⁸ Justice Keegan, “In The Matter of a Series of Deaths that Occurred in August 1971 at Ballymurphy, West Belfast: Summary of Coroner’s Verdicts and Findings,” *Judicial Communications Office*, May 11, 2021, <https://www.judiciaryni.uk/sites/judiciary/files/decisions/Summary%20of%20findings%20-%20In%20the%20matter%20of%20a%20series%20of%20deaths%20that%20occurred%20in%20August%201971%20at%20Ballymurphy%2C%20West%20Belfast%20-%2011%20May%2021.pdf>.

⁶⁹ *The Irish Times*, “Residents accuse troops of terror,” Dublin: Irish Times Trust, August 12, 1971. From Irish Times Archive. <https://www.irishtimes.com/archive> (accessed March 13, 2022).

⁷⁰ *The Irish Times*, “12 Die on First Day of North’s Internment,” Dublin: Irish Times Trust, August 10, 1971. From Irish Times Archive. <https://www.irishtimes.com/archive>. (accessed April 1, 2022).

⁷¹ *The Irish Times*, “Soldiers Kill 13 in Bogside,” Dublin: Irish Times Trust, January 31, 1972. From Irish Times Archive. <https://www.irishtimes.com/archive>. (accessed April 2, 2022).

⁷² *The Irish Times*, “Soldiers Kill 13 in Bogside,” Dublin: Irish Times Trust, January 31, 1972. From Irish Times Archive. <https://www.irishtimes.com/archive>. (accessed April 2, 2022).

minutes. *The Irish Times* also goes as far as to condemn soldiers in the headline. This demonstrates that if the nationalist Irish Times had known about the events surrounding Ballymurphy they would have reported them for their nationalist, Catholic audience in the Republic of Ireland. The front page, the day after Bloody Sunday, also crucially includes a photograph of a blanket-covered body, solidifying Bloody Sunday as an 'image event'. This helps raise the massacre up the hierarchy of attention, above Ballymurphy where there is no photographic evidence.

Image Events

The section that follows discusses and analyses 'image events'. One of the reasons for the differential memory response to the Ballymurphy Massacre when compared to Bloody Sunday, was its effect as an 'image event'.⁷³ The term coined by DeLuca, is described by Johnson as a type of rhetorical address that is 'ocular rather than verbal'.⁷⁴ History as a discipline is traditionally engrossed by the study of verbal texts but visual rhetoric has an increasingly influential and increasingly significant effect on politics and memory.⁷⁵ While the photographs reproduced around the world were entirely unplanned, their effect was significant in creating media uproar which was heard across the world.

The images taken on Bloody Sunday had a similar impact to the photographs taken of the earlier American Civil Rights events in the 1960s Birmingham Campaign. Davi Johnson's analysis of the Birmingham Campaign as an 'image event', showcases how shocking images can create a culture of memory. Johnson explains how the images of the Birmingham Campaign were described by Paul Hemphill, a journalist who was not present, as though he were an eyewitness, 'the line between presence and absence that is destabilised by the mediations of photography'.⁷⁶

The two types of memory recognised by psychologists are 'episodic memory' and 'semantic memory'.⁷⁷ Episodic memory is when one has personally experienced the event and remembering in this way is experienced as travelling back in time. Photography helps individuals remember events they were not present for in an episodic manner, as they retrieve visual information when remembering a photographed event.⁷⁸ Perhaps, the lack of photography surrounding the events in Ballymurphy enabled distance to be created between those who were present and those who heard read about it. A member of the Ballymurphy campaign compared Bloody Sunday to Ballymurphy stating, 'there was no cameras here [in Ballymurphy], so they got away with murder, but in Bloody Sunday they didn't because the cameras of the world was on them'.⁷⁹ The lack of photographs creates distance which allows for an unemotional response, in comparison to when one is confronted with the visual horrors of Bloody Sunday. Photography has the ability to turn everyone, across space and time into an eyewitness. As US Civil Rights activist, Reverend Jesse Jackson, said, 'When people can see, our humanity transcends our politics'.⁸⁰ Photographs encourage an imagination which 'engages a "power of representation" that necessitates images of the self and others to establish the bonds of similarity and difference that define identities'.⁸¹

⁷³ Kevin Deluca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 165.

⁷⁴ Davi Johnson, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2007): 2.

⁷⁵ Johnson, "Image Event," 21.

⁷⁶ Johnson, "Image Event," 7.

⁷⁷ Richard Heersmink, "Materialised Identities: Cultural Identity, Collective Memory, and Artifacts," *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* (2021): 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ballymurphy Campaigner quoted in Jankowitz, "Hierarchy of Victims," 22.

⁸⁰ Jesse Jackson quoted in Johnson, "Image Event," 21.

⁸¹ Johnson, "Image Event," 8.

The image of Bloody Sunday which establishes a culture of memory is the iconic photograph of Father Edward Daly waving a blood-stained white handkerchief as the mortally wounded Jackie Duddy is carried away.⁸² The importance of this image can be demonstrated by its translation into a mural. Although both Ballymurphy and Bloody Sunday have dedicated murals to the victims, the significance of this photograph being translated into a mural shows Bloody Sunday's influence as an image event.

Image events across the world have been significant in converting individuals who have been ignorant observers into horrified witnesses. Another example of such an event is the case of the Vietnam War and the photograph of the 'Napalm Girl'.⁸³ The photograph, aptly titled 'The Terror of War', shows a nine-year-old girl following a napalm attack, running naked towards the photographer. The image of Phan Thi Kim Phuc changed American public opinion of the war. Lyndon B. Johnson stated, 'If you've lost Walter Cronkite, you've lost middle America.'⁸⁴ This demonstrates the political power and effect of photographs.

In this chapter I have considered how the Ballymurphy families were victims of political bias in newspaper reporting. They were also subject to the prevailing official narrative which portrayed the victims as IRA gunmen and refused to acknowledge the link between the deaths. This relegated the victims down the hierarchy of victimhood and therefore reduced media and public interest in the event. Furthermore, the Ballymurphy families and victims did not receive the benefits of being an image event. This in part, denied them access to justice.

⁸² "Bishop Edward Daly: Photo Journalist Recalls 'unforgettable scene,'" *BBC News*, August 9, 2016, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37020493>.

⁸³ Margaret Renki, "When a Picture is Worth a Thousand Tears," *The New York Times*, February 17, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/17/opinion/photojournalism-children-nick-ut.html>.

⁸⁴ W. Joseph Campbell, "Recalling the mythical 'Cronkite Moment,'" *University of California Press*, February 26, 2022, <https://www.ucpress.edu/blog/4249/w-joseph-campbell-recalling-the-mythical-cronkite-moment/>.

Chapter Three

Ballymurphy in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland, Portrayal in Folk Memory and Transitional Justice

This chapter evaluates how the families and friends of the Ballymurphy victims employed folk memory, through the use of murals and the formal-telling of their own stories in *The Ballymurphy Precedent* documentary. The rise in attention given to their private memories, which were previously held in the community, meant that it overtook the official narrative. The rise in cultural memory about the true events of Ballymurphy created political pressure for another coroner's inquest. The official narrative and folk memories coalesced with the verdict of the inquest, ruling 10 victims innocent.

The Significance of Murals and Other Sites of Commemoration in Northern Ireland

Murals in Northern Ireland form part of the memory matrix of The Troubles.⁸⁵ Murals represent 'folk memory', which is the popular memory of an event, it can be represented orally and visually through songs and murals.⁸⁶ Nationalists in Northern Ireland needed to find a technology of memory to spread 'folk memory' into wider arenas, murals successfully fulfilled this role. Murals broadcast 'folk memory' to the wider public and also play the pedagogical role of transmitting folk memories from one generation to another.⁸⁷ Murals are to use Nora's (1989) term a 'lieux de memoire', a physical place or object which acts as container of memory.⁸⁸ Murals are striking in their use of colour and stand out against the grey buildings that characterise the residential architecture of Northern Ireland. Murals take up physical space which serves as commemoration and prevents victims from being forgotten. The taking up of geographical space is particularly important in Belfast, where communities are divided along sectarian lines and murals help to differentiate the communities and delineate territory.

Murals form part of Nietzsche's 'monumental approach to the past' affecting how the living man in the present acts and strives.⁸⁹ Murals serve a monumental function in their occupation of public spaces. There is a hierarchy of public places, which has been created by town planners and architects. For example, paintings and statues within official state buildings are given a high status; an example is the statue of Edward Carson outside the Stormont Parliament building. Gable walls are not significant public places which is why Catholics had access to them. Northern Ireland's mural culture has promoted these walls into sites of interest. For example, the Bobby Sands mural in Belfast has become a tourist destination.

Technology has made access to these murals global. For example, the Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) is a digital site of memory of The Troubles. All these murals can be easily accessed across the world, expanding their reach and impact. The project began in 1996 and the website was set up in 1997. The project represents a neutral attempt to inform individual researchers and provide educational resources about the conflict. Project manager, Martin Melaugh, stated, 'this kind of resource will certainly help to demystify aspects of the conflict and provide a factual basis for argument and interpretation.'⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Conway, "Active Remembering," 306.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Peter Seixas and Penney Clark, "Murals as Monuments: Student's Ideas about Depictions of Civilisation in British Columbia," *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 2 (2004): 146.

⁸⁸ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7.

⁸⁹ Seixas and Clark, "Murals as Monuments," 154.

⁹⁰ Stephen Hopkins, "Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN)," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 2, no 2 (2003): 83.

Murals and other commemorative sites help to reflect how conflict has lasting influences within Northern Ireland's post-conflict society. Although Longley argues for 'historical ecumenism' and believes that memorials should remember all the dead in 'the same gesture', this would not allow for different experiences of the conflict to be given proper space.⁹¹ Murals do not prolong conflict but rather 'serves as an intervention to remediate it.'⁹² Another technology of memory which has been significant throughout Irish nationalist culture is songs, for example U2's *Sunday Bloody Sunday*. Songs and murals help combat amnesia which is the largest threat to memory.⁹³

The mural commemorating the Ballymurphy Massacre shows the faces of the 11 victims who were shot by British soldiers. The portraits are painted from photographs and show the majority of the victims smiling.⁹⁴ Herron and Lynch referred to the use of the faces of the dead as important because 'it is in the presentation of the faces of the dead... that resides the power, as a direct response to the effacing of identity undertaken by the British Army.'⁹⁵ The smiling faces of the victims is in stark contrast to the right side of the mural which shows a British paratrooper, easily discernible from his maroon beret pointing a large SLR at Father Hugh Mullan, recognisable by his Roman collar. Father Mullan is standing over the body of Bobby Clarke waving a white handkerchief.⁹⁶ This accurately reflects witnesses' descriptions of events. The two men are on a green amongst residential housing, drawing attention to the way in which this war was fought; people's homes and front gardens became battlegrounds. The contrast between the well-equipped, well-trained soldier in comparison to the priest holding only a handkerchief is dramatic and prominent. The choice to portray the murder of the priest in the mural over the ten others killed is intentional as it plays on the framing of the priest as an ideal victim. Being a priest, he embodies Christie's description of someone who is 'innocent, moral' and in this moment 'vulnerable'.⁹⁷ A priest would be perceived as high on the moral hierarchy of victims, invoking more sympathy than some other victims who may be seen as lower down the hierarchy.⁹⁸ Father Mullan was also the first Catholic priest to be killed in the conflict.⁹⁹ The depiction of Father Mullan is striking in its similarity to the iconic image of Father Edward Daly waving a white handkerchief.¹⁰⁰ The resemblance is no coincidence as the painter is utilising the memory culture of the much more well-known Bloody Sunday to bring attention to the similarities and relative injustice for the victims of the Ballymurphy Massacre. The reference to Ballymurphy as 'Belfast's Bloody Sunday' demonstrates the importance of Bloody Sunday and uses this 'nomenclature to play on the perceived similarity'.¹⁰¹

The mural aims to seek justice for the victims as painted across the top in bold red letters is the text, 'WE DEMAND THE TRUTH'. The significance of the text shows that the struggle for justice for the Ballymurphy Massacre has had a lack of political attention. This was particularly the

⁹¹ Edna Longley, "Northern Ireland: Commemoration, Elegy, Forgetting," in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 235.

⁹² Wing, "Dealing with the Past," 33.

⁹³ Conway, "Active Remembering," 314.

⁹⁴ Appendix 1.

⁹⁵ Herron and Lynch quoted in Wing, "Dealing with the Past," 34.

⁹⁶ Justice Keegan, "In The Matter of a Series of Deaths that Occurred in August 1971 at Ballymurphy, West Belfast: Summary of Coroner's Verdicts and Findings," *Judicial Communications Office*, May 11, 2021,

<https://www.judiciaryni.uk/sites/judiciary/files/decisions/Summary%20of%20findings%20-%20In%20the%20matter%20of%20a%20series%20of%20deaths%20that%20occurred%20in%20August%201971%20at%20Ballymurphy%2C%20West%20Belfast%20-%2011%20May%2021.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Jankowitz, "Hierarchy of Victims," 3.

⁹⁸ Jankowitz, "Hierarchy of Victims," 15.

⁹⁹ Martin Melaugh, "Internment – A Chronology of the Main Events," *CAIN*, Accessed April 4, 2022, <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/events/intern/chron.htm>

¹⁰⁰ Conway, "Active Remembering," 313.

¹⁰¹ Rigney, "Differential Memorability," 79.

case in 2009, when mural was painted, as there already had been one major judicial inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday and a second inquiry was underway. This contrasts with the 1972 Ballymurphy Coroner's inquests into each of the deaths of the Ballymurphy victims that had returned open verdicts.¹⁰² The painting is entirely black and white apart from green paint used to highlight the names of the victims and the red of the soldier's beret and the text. Red is significant as the colour of blood. The green of the victim's names demonstrates an affiliation with the Republic of Ireland and an affinity to the nationalist cause. In contrast, the same red being used for the British soldier's beret and the text indicates that justice needs to come from the British as they were responsible for the deaths of these 11 individuals. The Ballymurphy mural aims to achieve the same purpose of the Bloody Sunday murals. The mural 'privileges the Nationalist narrative of Bloody Sunday over the other principal social actor within it – the Northern Ireland state – and in so doing validates its identity as an oppressed social group.'¹⁰³

The second Ballymurphy mural replaced an existing mural depicting Gerry Adams following his 2014 arrest in relation to the murder of Jean McConville in December 1972.¹⁰⁴ The mural of Adams was replaced by the Ballymurphy families – exemplifying Nietzsche's critical approach to the past – 'who suffers and seeks deliverance.'¹⁰⁵ The mural was painted in 2014 and depicts two women separated by 11 crosses. One woman is older and carries a large piece of paper that states 'Ballymurphy Massacre/ Time for our/ Truth'. The words 'Ballymurphy massacre' are written in red, again, symbolic of blood. The word 'truth' is written larger than the rest of the text in a bright blue colour. Next to the elderly lady is the text 'This WOMAN Wants the TRUTH' and under the other woman is the text 'This WOMAN wants to HIDE IT!'. The woman who supposedly wants to hide the truth is smartly dressed indicating wealth and perhaps knowing the economic circumstances of Northern Ireland, is suggestive of her being a Protestant. The woman is also significantly younger and carrying a file with the words 'TOP SECRET' written on it indicating she is a state official. This mural is a direct call for an inquiry and the file she is holding is in reference to the soldier's witness statements and names which have all been withheld from the public. The push for victim inquiries was criticised by the DUP thus enforcing the hierarchy of victims. However, inquiries provide a public acknowledgement of suffering and may be significant and therapeutic since feelings of neglect or denial of suffering, as experienced by those in Ballymurphy, has led to 'double victimisation'.¹⁰⁶ The mural references the fact that these marginalised groups have less access to the apparatus of the state.

One of the ways that the Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign group has attempted to ensure that their families' stories are remembered and given justice is through a commemorative trail through Ballymurphy that plots the sites of the shootings.¹⁰⁷ The trail allows the past to be 'rewritten by the present'.¹⁰⁸ The Ballymurphy Campaign group have attempted to make space for their forgotten story so that they can have a role in 'co-constructing the future'.¹⁰⁹ In 2008, the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee led a 'March for Truth' along a commemorative trail where temporary crosses were placed at the sites of the shootings. This turned the whole area of Ballymurphy into a large gravesite for the victims of the massacre. The trail also bears many similarities to the Catholic Stations of the Cross.

¹⁰² Kelpie "Ballymurphy Inquest".

¹⁰³ Conway, "Active Remembering," 313.

¹⁰⁴ Appendix 2: Lesley-Ann McKeown, "Gerry Adams denies Kidnapping and Killing Jean McConville," *BBC News*, October 17, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-50062709>

¹⁰⁵ Scott Jenkins, "Nietzsche's Use of Monumental History," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 45, no. 2 (2014): 169.

¹⁰⁶ Wodickzo, "Trope," 87.

¹⁰⁷ Wing, "Dealing with the Past," 31.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

The title of the march called ‘for Truth’ emphasises that the previous narrative propagated about Ballymurphy had been false. The annual march also occupies geographical space in the city of Belfast which is important as it represents the metaphorical space that the victims and families of the Ballymurphy massacre would like to take up within civil society. The following year, plaques replaced the crosses and the aforementioned mural was painted along the same path. The Ballymurphy Massacre Committee have taken ownership of the physical sites where their family and friends died and this reflects Salzman’s bearing witness theory that the trail provides testimony to the unsaid truth.¹¹⁰ This use of the real environment of memory is referred to by Nora as ‘milieux de mémoire’.¹¹¹ The plaques placed at the sites in 2009 depict the faces of victims which makes the dead visible and visitors have to face the victims knowing that they have not yet received justice. The trail also draws attention to inaccuracies in the official narrative of events told by the state through the physical environment of the trail. This is particularly true of the deaths of Father Mullan and Frank Quinn who were shot in an open field. Wing proposes the questions that might come to mind as a visitor of the site: ‘The fortress provided cover for soldiers and police and this large field provides none – with only a few people in the field surely the soldiers could see that they had no weapons and did not pose a threat? Why were they shot in these conditions?’¹¹² Visitors who follow the commemoration trail are invited to visualise and reconstruct the past alongside those who remember it.

The march is held every year in August to commemorate the deaths, but the plaques remain there all year round. The march now uses signs with QR codes to guide visitors. The QR codes link to families re-telling the events of the day, the use of repetition to retell the story, employs Salzman’s theory of using rhythm and repetition to mark the experience of trauma. This is similar to the way that an individual suffering from PTSD experiences ‘involuntary commemoration’ through flashbacks.¹¹³ The trail attempts to give the visitor the experience that those within the Ballymurphy community would have when visiting those same sites. Furthermore, the voices of families talking about using their loved ones helps to collapse time. Hearing a child talk about the premature loss of their parent, while standing in the same place that that parent was killed, is an emotional experience.

Road to Justice

Callum McCrae, director of the documentary film *The Ballymurphy Precedent* wrote in *The Irish Times*, ‘...this is a story that needs to be told. Not just for the record, not just to help redress a terrible damage done to the victims and their families, but because the failure to acknowledge this history remains a block on Northern Ireland’s painful road to peace and reconciliation.’¹¹⁴ Ballymurphy families have previously attempted to achieve justice through civil cases but found it difficult as judges and those within the legal system were predominantly Protestant and they were not sympathetic to the families’ cause. The wife of Daniel Teggart was told ‘at a very early stage’ by a judge that she was ‘better off’ having had her husband shot by the British as it meant there were less mouths to feed.¹¹⁵ This is evidence of how difficult it can be for a subjugated group such as Catholics within Northern Ireland to have their stories told and justice reached.

In peace negotiations, some countries negotiate a formal truth-recovery mechanism as part of the political settlement. For example, in South Africa and Rwanda a combination of trials and truth

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Nora, “Lieux de Mémoire,” 7.

¹¹² Wing, “Dealing with the Past,” 34.

¹¹³ Ashplant, “War Memory,” 13.

¹¹⁴ McCrae, “The truth about Ballymurphy”.

¹¹⁵ Molony, “Judge Told Ballymurphy Massacre Widow”.

commissions were established to help heal the wounds of violence in post-conflict societies.¹¹⁶ The Good Friday Agreement, which was agreed in 1997 and ratified by 71% of the Northern Irish population in 1998, included provisions such as the reform of policing and the release of political prisoners. However, a formal state-endorsed truth recovery process was not included in the settlement. No party wanted to broach the topic of truth recovery during the negotiations as there was a fear that it would derail the negotiations. Following the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the Ballymurphy families began their campaign for justice.¹¹⁷

Subsequently, the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) was set up in 2005 as a mechanism to deal with Northern Ireland's violent past. However, it was closed in 2014 as it was criticised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) for a lack of neutrality when investigating state violence.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, the HET was in the process of carrying out an investigation into the Ballymurphy shootings when it was disbanded so no outcome was reached through their investigation.¹¹⁹ Therefore, outside of judicial inquiries there is no formal process for victims' families to achieve justice and as time goes on, doing so becomes more and more difficult. The passage of time and its effect on the pursuit of justice has bedevilled the Ballymurphy families and is still an issue in Northern Ireland. In July 2021, the Northern Ireland Secretary published a policy paper proposing that there should be a statute of limitations and no further criminal investigations into killings during The Troubles.¹²⁰ If this statute is passed, it will deeply hinder the reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

The Ballymurphy families came together at a meeting called 'The Forgotten Victims Event' organised by the Relatives for Justice which was set up by families of victims of The Troubles in 1991. It is a non-governmental organisation that aims to provide holistic support services for the bereaved.¹²¹ Throughout the 1990s, there was a greater emphasis placed on human rights and specific events where they had been infringed were brought to the global stage. There was also a strengthening of the transnational arena and its legal agencies.¹²² This became a new forum where war memories could be articulated, particularly in cases where the nation-state was complicit in the human rights violation or failed to address victims' grievances. This was the case with the Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign group who, as of 2011, had taken their call for an independent inquiry to the European Parliament in Brussels and the US Congress.¹²³

The release of the documentary film, *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, was significant in bringing mainstream media attention to the massacre. Callum McCrae, the filmmaker, stated that the documentary 'is not an attempt to rewrite history, but an attempt to tell a hidden history.'¹²⁴ Documentaries are useful for invoking identification with the events shown on screen.¹²⁵ Documentaries and film are unique in their ability to reconstruct the past, and this ability enables the audience to empathise with the events they watch. Indeed, the Ballymurphy documentary features

¹¹⁶ John Brewer and Bernadette Hayes, "Victimhood and Attitudes towards dealing with the legacy of a violent past: Northern Ireland as a Case Study," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (2014): 515.

¹¹⁷ Molony, "Judge Told Ballymurphy Massacre Widow".

¹¹⁸ Brewer and Hayes, "Victimhood," 515

¹¹⁹ Will Leitch, "Ballymurphy inquest: Evidence Halted Over Soldier Memory Changes," *BBC News*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/paterson-meets-ballymurphy-families>.

¹²⁰ Parliament, House of Commons, *Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's Past*, CP 498 (London: Stationary Office, 2021)

¹²¹ "Background to Relatives for Justice," Relatives for Justice, Accessed February 27, 2022, <https://www.relativesforjustice.com/about-2/background/>

¹²² Ashplant, "War Memory," 68.

¹²³ "Ballymurphy families meet DUP's Robinson," *The Irish News*, Feb 19, 2011.'

¹²⁴ McCrae, "The truth about Ballymurphy".

¹²⁵ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History*, (Verso: London, 2005), 142.

reconstructions of the shootings. The reconstruction is filmed through drone footage inspired by similar images shown on the news of US attacks on ISIS and Al Qaeda targets.¹²⁶ The use of this type of footage is familiar to modern audiences and brings the events of 1971 into the present day. Whilst reviewing the documentary, Cath Clarke stated that the reconstructions gave ‘the whole thing a queasy authenticity’.¹²⁷ Reconstructions make the complicated and sometimes confusing circumstances of the killings easily understandable. However, in some cases, dramatic reconstruction can blur the lines of reality in the audience’s memory.¹²⁸ The documentary avoids this issue through mainly relying on testimonials from the victim’s families to narrate the events of the killings.

The use of interviews forces the viewer to ‘confront the relationship between past and present.’¹²⁹ Clarke states that the oral interviews made evident ‘The rawness of [the families’] grief and [the] sense of injustice is hard to watch.’¹³⁰ Documentaries and historical film, according to Rosenstone, ‘emotionalizes, personalizes and dramatizes history.’¹³¹ Rosenstone’s point is proven as Clarke concludes her review by stating ‘What a desperately sad film.’¹³² The strength of emotion is felt through the screen so the audience is saddened by the deaths as if they knew the victims. The documentary helped to raise the memory of the massacre up the hierarchy of attention. The title of the documentary, *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, is poignant as the murders in Ballymurphy were incorrectly ruled by the coroner to be open verdicts, supporting the contemporary news stories that those killed were gunmen or involved in the IRA. These reports and verdicts established a precedent that created a culture of impunity that contributed to the Bloody Sunday shootings by soldiers from the same regiment six months later. Fundamentally, the documentary brought the Ballymurphy Massacre to the attention of the British media. An abridged version was broadcast on Channel Four, a British media channel, in 2018.¹³³

In May 2021, a second coroner’s inquest reported on the deaths of all 11 victims and declared all those killed innocent. Callum Macrae, stated that the results of the inquest confirmed what was portrayed in the documentary and that ‘Only now can I say [the documentary] “told the truth” without inevitable howls of outrage and denial’.¹³⁴ Interestingly, the cavalcade that went through the streets of Ballymurphy following the results of the inquest saw women and children banging bin lids on the streets in the same way that they did on the morning that internment was introduced to warn of British soldiers entering the neighbourhood.¹³⁵ Harking back to this historical method of warning, and repurposing its use for a celebration is taking ownership of the event.

The Ballymurphy families were unhappy with the apology given by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and called it ‘evasive’ as he limited it to an apology for the flawed investigation and for the wrongful association of the victims with the PIRA.¹³⁶ However, he did not apologise for the fact that

¹²⁶ “The Making of the Ballymurphy Precedent,” *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, Accessed April 4, 2022, <https://theballymurphyprecedent.com/the-making-of-the-film>

¹²⁷ Cath Clarke, “The Ballymurphy Precedent Review – Touching Personal Accounts of the Troubles,” *The Guardian*, August 24, 2018,

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/aug/24/the-ballymurphy-precedent-review-touching-personal-accounts-of-the-troubles>.

¹²⁸ Morris-Suzuki, *The Past*, 126.

¹²⁹ Morris-Suzuki, *The Past*, 140.

¹³⁰ Clarke, “Review”.

¹³¹ Morris-Suzuki, *The Past*, 141.

¹³² Clarke, “Review”.

¹³³ *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, Channel Four, September 8, 2018.

¹³⁴ Macrae, “Lessons of Ballymurphy”.

¹³⁵ “Cavalcade of cars makes its way through Ballymurphy following coroner’s inquest,” *The Belfast Telegraph*, May 12, 2021,

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/video-news/cavalcade-of-cars-makes-its-way-through-ballymurphy-following-coroners-ruling-40417483.html>.

¹³⁶ Macrae, “Lessons of Ballymurphy”.

they were wrongly shot by the British military.¹³⁷ This reaction contrasts sharply with Prime Minister David Cameron's apology following the publication of the Saville Inquiry for Bloody Sunday which satisfied the Bloody Sunday families.¹³⁸ The difference between the two Prime Ministers' apologies is an indication of the effect that memory culture can have on justice. The Ballymurphy families would still like an independent inquiry and for the British soldiers responsible to be brought for Justice.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Kevin Mullan, "Diplomat who worked on Bloody Sunday dossier speaks of 'exhilaration' at families' reaction to apology," *Derry Journal*, January 23, 2023, <https://www.derryjournal.com/news/politics/diplomat-who-worked-on-bloody-sunday-dossier-speaks-of-exhilaration-at-families-reaction-to-apology-3997229>.

Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated the significance of the factors needed to garner a political, legal and social response from an event and analysed how the initial reaction to an event feeds into memory culture. The formation of memory culture is a fundamental element to receiving justice in post-conflict regions. The tragic events that occurred in August 1971 in Ballymurphy were reported in a confused manner as the chaos of Operation Demetrius distracted from the British army's offences. Any mention of the event in newspapers portrayed the victims as affiliated with paramilitaries to deny their innocence and sanction their killings as the Protestant hegemony looked positively on IRA deaths. This skewed version of the Ballymurphy events became the official narrative, which dominated for almost forty years. The official memory of Bloody Sunday was more effectively refuted because of its impact as an image event. Bloody Sunday is a useful comparative event as the more widespread media coverage resulted in a memory culture that laid the groundwork for the judicial inquiry which vindicated the innocence of the victims. However, the Ballymurphy families have now managed to close the gap in the hierarchy of attention between the two events.

This paper has elevated the importance of Ballymurphy by framing it within the context of memory theory and highlighting the importance of the second coroner's inquest as a form of transitional justice. This dissertation has shown how private memories held within communities can, through technologies of remembrance and commemoration, disseminate through wider society to become collective memory. Murals and the commemoration trail both represent forms of folk memory which help to 'bring visibility to those wrongs yet to be addressed, serve as a conscience, both to honour the past and to pave the way to a future that recognises the role of justice ethicality.'¹³⁹ Publicising the massacre enabled the release of *The Ballymurphy Precedent*, which finally captured mainstream media attention. The second coroner's inquest is an example of justice ethicality, the ethical principle that decision-makers should act in a fair way and saw 10 of the victims shot in Ballymurphy declared innocent.¹⁴⁰ Finally acknowledging in official memory what had been known within the 'families of remembrance' for decades.

Further research on this topic would benefit from a more in-depth look at transitional justice, particularly in respect to single-casualty incidents where a lack of memory culture is a major obstacle for families wanting justice. The road to justice is far from over for the victims of The Troubles. The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 raised further obstacles to reconciliation. Remarkably, the statute was opposed by all of Northern Ireland's political parties, the Irish Government, as well as victims from all sides, including the Ballymurphy families.¹⁴¹ Callum Macrae has stated that the Act's immunity from prosecution measure 'will enshrine in law the right of the army and its government to "forget" their crimes.'¹⁴² The vital lesson learned from the Ballymurphy Massacre is that forgetting is the greatest enemy to justice.

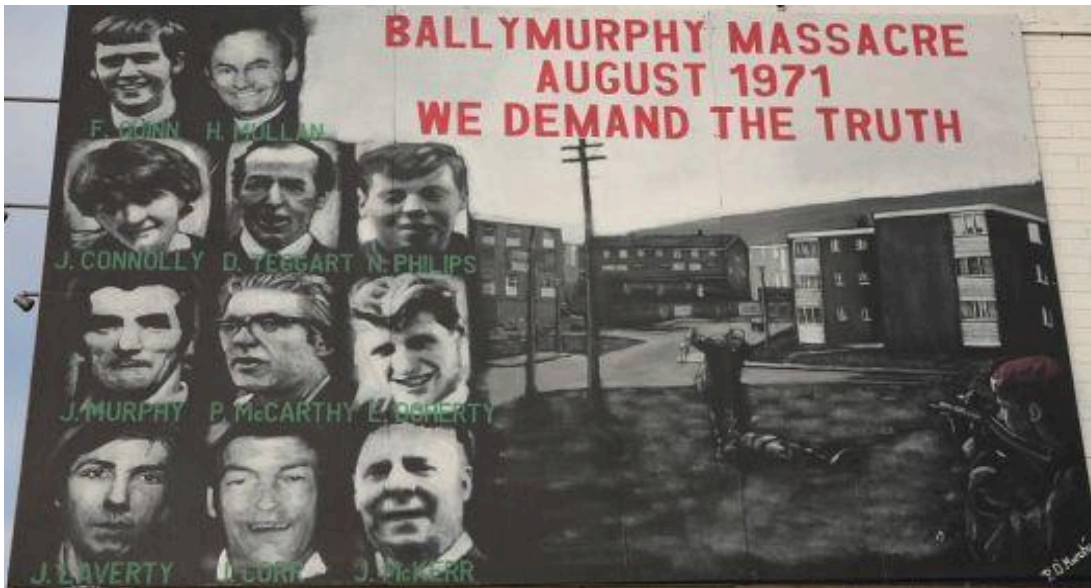
¹³⁹ Wing, "Dealing with the Past," 35.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ "Can Amnesty for Troubles Killings Survive Stormont Opposition," *The Week*, July 15, 2021, theweek.co.uk/news/uk-news/953496/can-an-amnesty-for-troubles-violence-survive-stormont-opposition

¹⁴² Macrae, "Lessons of Ballymurphy".

Appendix 1



Ballymurphy Massacre, August 1971, We Demand the Truth. Mural. Belfast, Ballymurphy. From CAIN, <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/victims/memorials/static/monuments/542.html> (accessed at March 10, 2022)

Appendix 2



This Woman Wants the Truth. Mural. Belfast, Lower Falls. From The Irish Post, <https://www.irishpost.com/news/ballymurphy-mural-unveiled-in-place-of-adams-tribute-as-families-sue-truth-28611>

Appendix 3



The Terror of War. Nick Ut, Associated Press, Photograph. From Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Terror_of_War.jpg.

List of Abbreviations

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party
HET – Historical Enquiries Team
HMIC - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
IRA – Irish Republican Army
MP – Member of Parliament
PIRA – Provisional Irish Republican Army
RUC – Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP – Social Democrat and Labour Party
SLR – Self-Loading Rifle

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