



“SOLIDARITY OF ‘THE COLONIZED’”: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SINN FÉIN’S CONNECTION TO PALESTINE

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Abstract

Ireland and Palestine share histories of colonialism, ethno-nationalist conflict, and resistance characterized as “terrorism.” While Ireland has reached an official status of “peace,” the de-legitimization of its struggle for independence perpetuates cycles of conflict in the region and reveals lasting difficulties with legitimacy between Ireland and Britain. Through discourse analysis, I examine how the Sinn Féin party reaffirms the Irish struggle for independence through solidarity with Palestine. Specifically, I analyze how Sinn Féin constructs moral and immoral identities, de-legitimizes state violence, and acquires agency through linguistic devices. This research interrogates colonialism as a macro social structure and examines the social practice of solidarity among colonized peoples.

Introduction

Ireland and Palestine share histories of colonialism, ethno-nationalist conflict, and resistance characterized as “terrorism.” While Ireland has reached an official status of “peace,” the de-legitimization of its struggle for independence perpetuates cycles of conflict in the region and reveals lasting difficulties with legitimacy between Ireland and Britain.

Over the past decade, the Sinn Féin political party—the remaining representation of the struggle for Irish unity—has regularly expressed solidarity with Palestine. Through discourse analysis, I examine how the Sinn Féin party reaffirms the Irish struggle for independence through solidarity with Palestine. Specifically, I analyze how Sinn Féin constructs moral and immoral identities, de-legitimizes state violence, and acquires agency through linguistic devices.

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This research interrogates colonialism as a macro social structure and examines the social practice of solidarity among colonized peoples. Additionally, this analysis aims to investigate the moral values of identities constructed by Sinn Féin on case-specific and international scale. As outbursts of conflict chip away at the 18-year peace, analyzing Sinn Féin's speeches and fervent solidarity with Palestine could not be more pertinent.

Historical Context: The Making of Sinn Féin

Before analyzing Sinn Féin's discourse of solidarity with Palestine, it is necessary first to consider the history of Sinn Féin and the Irish struggle for independence, and the dynamics of ethno-nationalism, legitimacy, and violence in the ongoing conflict. The modern conflict over sovereignty in Northern Ireland began in 1916 when Irish nationalists seized the General Post Office in Dublin and declared an independent Irish Republic. British forces crushed the rebellion—known as Easter Rising—and executed all seven signatories of the declaration. The failed rebellion sparked the emergence of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army and its political counterpart, Sinn Féin (Lynn and Melaugh 2016). Following the failed rebellion, the IRA launched a war of independence that partitioned Ireland and left six counties under British rule. A civil war followed between Irish nationalists who accepted the partitioning, and Irish republicans who desired a unified, independent Ireland. Tensions between ethnic Irish Catholics and ethnic English Protestants escalated over the course of the 20th century, and violence peaked during the 1950s through the 1980s during a period known as The Troubles. The IRA pursued their goal of national self-determination while Britain continued its colonial campaign.

During The Troubles, the IRA implemented extensive guerilla techniques including car bombings, strategic targeting of political figures, infrastructure, and British Army institutions, and accessed a variety of weapons ranging from homemade explosives to military-grade assault rifles (PBS 1998). At the same time, British troops enforced systematic discrimination policies, terrorized Irish Catholic neighborhoods by conducting home invasions under the guise of "arms confiscation," implemented internment, and deployed military weapons on Irish civilians (Doherty and Poole 1997, 523). In addition to police and armed forces, multiple Loyalist Protestant terrorist groups aided British suppression of the Irish struggle for independence. Each party in the conflict asserted their legitimacy in using violence; the British derived their argument from the concept of State authority, while the IRA appealed to their right of self-determination and resistance of colonial occupation.

Despite the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 that officially ended The Troubles, communities in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and mainland Britain still experience outbursts of political violence and witness persistent displays of protest (Hill and White, 31-50; Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium 2016a; Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium 2016b). The internationally renowned peace process following the Agreement mandated that Sinn Féin cut all military ties with the IRA in exchange for recognition in a modified political structure in Northern Ireland. But by isolating the political wing from the military and thus condemning violence committed by the IRA, the Good Friday Agreement delegitimized the Irish struggle for independence and aided British suppression of Irish ethno-nationalist sentiment.

Like the IRA, many Palestinians express their ethno-nationalist claims to sovereignty through separatist political and violent movements. The modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict began in 1917 when Britain publicized its design for a Zionist State in the Palestinian territory (Balfour 1917). The subsequent 1947 partition plan led by the United Nations (UN) established Israel as an ethnic Jewish state and triggered the backlash of nearly every Arab state in the region (U.S. Department of State 2016). Israeli seizure, occupation, and settlement of Palestinian territories since 1948 has been met by armed, organized Palestinian insurgency groups like Hamas, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian Authority, Fatah, and their affiliated factions, as well as other groups and disorganized violence against Israelis. Israel's militarized occupation campaign enforces a system of apartheid that oppresses ethnic Palestinian Muslims and crushes opposition through airstrikes, extrajudicial killings, and internment (BBC 2009). Recently, more prominent members of international society have condemned Israel's violations of international law and human rights, but the state's powerful Western status allows it to operate with impunity (Hammond 2010).

While the Palestinian struggle for independence is undeniably more complex than the Irish, several notable scholars have analyzed parallels between the two struggles (Brown 2013, 143; Frampton 2004 61; Richmond 2002, 391; Siqueira 2005, 223). Specifically, both states share histories of colonialism, ethno-nationalist conflict, and resistance characterized as "terrorism." A central feature of this research explores Sinn Féin's identification of parallels between the two struggles and the resulting solidarity among colonized peoples. However, a gap in literature on similarities between the two conflicts remains, perhaps due to contested definitions of "terrorism" and oversimplified characterizations of the Irish and Palestinian struggles, in

addition to a reluctance to criticize violence committed by Western states in a so-called "post-colonial" world.

Text Collection and Methodology: Sinn Féin's Voice for Palestine

My dataset for this research is comprised of four speeches given by Sinn Féin leadership: two speeches delivered in 2005 and two in 2015. I collected my texts from Sinn Féin's website archives, intending to capture the official message of the party. Next, to underscore the modernity and relevance of this research, I selected a timeframe for speeches given between January 1st, 2014 and December 31st, 2015. I used the website search function and entered my key terms "Palestine" [and] "Palestinian" with these dates selected. My first search delivered 125 archived results, from which I selected two speeches at random to analyze. Next, to establish continuity in Sinn Féin's discourse of solidarity towards Palestine, I replicated my text collection process with speeches given between January 1st, 2004 and December 31st, 2005. By using two pairs of speeches separated by a decade, I insulated my dataset from chances of outliers.

The tools of critical discourse analysis I employ in this research include investigation of assumptions, evaluation and modality, and narrative and identity building. Following Norman Fairclough's work, I define "assumptions" in text as "'missing links' between explicit propositions, which the hearer/reader either supplies automatically, or works out through a process of inferencing" (Fairclough 1989, 67). In other words, a listener finds meaning in a text by combining both the explicit connections made by the author—in this research, Sinn Féin speakers—and connections they supplement from context. In his more recent work, Fairclough explains assumptions as "a background of what is 'unsaid,' [in a text] but taken as given" (Fairclough 2003, 40). Any text contains assumptions made by the speaker, and the meanings he anticipates his audience will attribute to his words and phrases. This dual process of assumptions and meaning-making between speaker and audience directly informs the direction of a discourse (Ibid, 153). That is, assumptions within a text reveal underlying ideologies that influence the speaker and audience.

I continue my analysis by assessing evaluation and modality within Sinn Féin's speeches. According to Fairclough, evaluations in a text "are statements about desirability and undesirability, what is good and what is bad" (Ibid, 172). Most often, value in a text presents as inexplicit, or assumed (Ibid). Analysis of evaluative statements in a text may expose the ideology informing the speaker's values and how the speaker understands his identity

(Ibid, 164). Like evaluation, modality inherently discloses ideology and identity within a text. Modality functions in two ways, epistemic and deontic—“what is true and what is necessary” (Ibid) Speakers express their modality commitments on what Fairclough calls a “scale of intensity” (Ibid, 172) Most importantly, a speaker’s modality decisions influence how they understand reality and obligation and seek to communicate these concepts. To further my analysis of Sinn Féin’s discourse of solidarity with Palestine, I will examine the identities Sinn Féin constructs through evaluation and modality, and continue to investigate embedded ideologies.

Finally, following the works of Fairclough and James Paul Gee, I explore narrative and identity constructing devices in Sinn Féin’s speeches. Narrative and identity interact within texts to help a speaker achieve a certain goal. The narrative of any text relies on the epistemic modality commitments of the speaker and the temporal nature of human experience (Ibid, 138). In short, people communicate through stories; discourse analysts call the “storyline” of a text its “narrative.” The identity of the speaker in a text informs the perspective of the narrative, and by extension influences the truth and value systems embedded in the text. When representing social events, speakers often manipulate levels of abstraction in their narrative to accomplish a rhetorical goal, such as emphasizing a specific detail that unites an audience while generalizing another that might cause disagreement (Fairclough 2012, 9). Speakers also use language “to build different identities for themselves [...] and] for other people” (Gee 2011, 110). These strategies often blend together, as speakers define one identity in relation to “other people, social groups, cultures, or institutions” (Ibid, 114). Varying types of grammatical devices assist narrative and identity construction within texts. These concepts provide a crucial tool to analyze Sinn Féin’s conceptualization of identities and their consequences.

After explaining my tools of discourse analysis, I now discuss two fundamental themes in my research: legitimate use of violence and agency. The question of legitimate use of violence manifests in the blurred distinction between a freedom fighter and a terrorist, in the politicized definitions of terrorism, and in the struggle for sovereignty between historically powerful colonizers and their counterpart colonies seeking self-determination. Max Weber in 1918 argued that only the State exercises a legitimate right to use violence; this monopoly on violence now serves as a core tenet of modern Western statehood (Weber 1918, 1). Convenient for colonial powers, this clear-cut and widely accepted delegation of legitimacy affords them the right to suppress any interior threats to state power. However, the UN Charter of

1945 re-introduced the concept of legitimacy and shook Weber's foundation for state authority. Article II of the Charter—respecting a peoples' right to self-determination—provides potential political legitimacy to insurgent groups representing a collective cause of an ethno-nationalist group within a country (United Nations 1945, 1). In context, the right to pursue self-determination followed on the heels of WWII and massive de-colonization efforts, and set an international precedent that challenged Western assumptions about legitimate use of violence and sovereignty. As the last political connection to the IRA, Sinn Féin's discourses on legitimacy and violence offer insight into the value systems of one of the most long-standing insurgent powers in history.

My second term, agency, guides my evaluation of Sinn Féin's discourse for evidence of social action. For this research, I follow Ahearn's provisional definition of agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (2001, 112). According to Ahearn's understanding, agency appears in language practices, but becomes restrained by sociocultural contexts. Agency as a concept remains indefinite, but many linguistic theorists agree that agency contains elements of resistance, complicity, and action (Ibid, 112). In the following Sinn Féin speeches, the speakers demonstrate agency through linguistic choices that reaffirm the Irish struggle and solidify their dichotomized worldview of colonizer states and colonized peoples. Throughout my analysis, both agency and legitimacy serve as fluid concepts in constant negotiation between actors and temporal and spacial context.

Text Analysis

My text analysis consists of three subsections: Sinn Féin's constructions of moral identities and narratives; the process of delegitimizing state violence; and, acquisition of agency through linguistic devices.

Identities and Morality: "Colonizers" and "Colonized"

Through evaluative grammatical choices and temporal emphasis in narrative, Sinn Féin constructs a collective Irish nationalist identity inseparable from its connection to the IRA and the struggle for independence. Through humanizing and dehumanizing noun choice, family metaphor, and utilization of the collective first-person possessive marker "our," Sinn Féin unifies and moralizes ethno-nationalist Irish identity while it dehumanizes the British.

The following Table 1 displays nouns used by Sinn Féin in reference to the Irish and the British:

Table 1: Nouns Used by Sinn Féin to describe Ireland and the Irish, Britain and the British

Ireland/Irish	Britain/British
Irish parliamentarians	British Government
Our dead and wounded	British Paratroopers
Family members	British Army
Our friends and neighbors	British soldiers
The thirteen men murdered	British soldiers, unionists, or RUC personnel
Loved ones	Our oppressors
People from Ireland	British governments and its agencies
[names of victims]	British Ministers
Republicans	law makers
	law breakers

When referring to the Irish, Sinn Féin repeats humanizing nouns—“family members, friends and neighbours, loved ones”—while, in direct contrast, references British people only with descriptive nouns that omit a human element. “Family members” humanizes the Irish by referencing the unit of social life—the family—and the word “member” which ascribes humanity to a person as part of a whole. Moreover, “friends and neighbors” are human nouns that are dense with personalized sentiment and connect to each listener, who also has “friends and neighbors.” These choices of humanizing nouns indicate Sinn Féin’s positive valuation of the Irish identity.

Juxtaposed to the humanized Irish, Sinn Féin’s portrayal of the British includes de-personalized, descriptive, and militarized nouns. To Sinn Féin, the British are “paratroopers, soldiers, army.” These Sinn Féin speakers never once refers to the British as “people.” This vocabulary reveals Sinn Féin’s perception of the British, not as people, but as militaristic aggressors. Furthermore, the dehumanizing nouns used by Sinn Féin mark the British as opposites—and antagonists—of the moral “family, friends, neighbours” identity of the Irish, and instead identify them with low value. By simultaneously humanizing the Irish and dehumanizing the British through noun choice, Sinn Féin portrays the Irish as a unified and moral front against the immoral British.

Sinn Féin continues to demarcate the Irish identity through the use of family metaphor. By referencing multiple nouns associated with family and

adding possessive markers like "our," Sinn Féin extends its political identity to encompass all Irish people as part of a national Irish family. "Family" in this sense alludes to bonds of fraternity, innocence of women and children, the home—all emphasized by Sinn Féin to reaffirm a single, moral Irish identity threatened by Britain.

In combination with evaluative noun choice and metaphor, Sinn Féin constructs the Irish identity for his audience as inseparable from its struggle for independence through temporal emphasis in narrative. In a speech given on an anniversary of Bloody Sunday, Sinn Féin spokesperson on International Affairs, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, asserted that the consequences of the attack "were so far reaching that the repercussions catapulted *us* into a spiral of conflict that *left few in Ireland untouched* [emphasis added]." This text uses several ambiguous grammatical devices that leave space for listeners to fill in assumptions that are individually relevant. Specifically, this sentence format allows each listener to assume meaning in "the repercussions" and the ways in which they went "untouched" by the conflict. By leaving openings for listeners to find personal meaning through assumptions, and therefore prompting them to agree with the speaker, this Sinn Féin text unites listeners with their shared experiences of "repercussions" and reminds them of their shared history.

This emphasis on the past in Sinn Féin's narrative of the Irish struggle and Irish identity appears again when Ó Snodaigh rhetorically asks:

1. Does he think that we cannot remember when British Ministers intervened to release?
2. British soldiers convicted of murder here in the North?

Again, the speaker's narrative focuses on the collective memory and experience of the Irish people as victims of British oppression. The phrasing of the question—"Does he think that we cannot remember"—implies intellectual insult to the Irish that this text expects its Irish listeners to react to. The text pits the British "he" versus the Irish "we," and adds value and obligation to remembering the conflict. By emphasizing the Irish struggle in its temporal narrative, Sinn Féin reminds listeners of shared oppression, strengthens ties among them, and solidifies the Irish identity as connected to collective Irish suffering at the hands of the British.

I have so far established that Sinn Féin's linguistic choices fuse Irish nationalist identity with positive evaluative morality and the struggle for independence. These elements of Sinn Féin's discourse allow the extension

of moral identity to be associated with all struggles for independence. In other words, Sinn Féin connects morality with struggle against an oppressive colonizer state. This perspective, informed by the experience of the IRA and Irish history, mandates a dichotomy in international order of “colonized” peoples and “colonizer” states with respective moral and immoral valuations. By applying its evaluation of identity to an international context, Sinn Féin obligates itself to express solidarity with Palestine, a fellow “colonized” people.

Below, Table 2 presents linguistic parallels that Sinn Féin constructs regarding the British-Irish and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts:

Table 2: Nouns Used by Sinn Féin to describe the Irish, Palestinians, British, and Israelis

Ireland/ Irish	Palestine/ Palestinian	Britain/ British	Israel/ Israeli
Irish parliamentarians	the Palestinians	British Government	Israeli Government
our dead and wounded	Palestine and its people	British Paratroopers	an aggressive heavily militarized state
family members	a Palestinian family	British Army	aggressive armed checkpoints
our friends and neighbours	Palestinian civilians	British soldiers	hilltop forts and military spy posts
the thirteen men murdered	Palestinian men, women and children	British soldiers, unionists, or RUC personnel	rogue state
loved ones	Palestinian youths	our oppressors	the occupiers
People from Ireland	the Palestinian people	British governments and its agencies	the occupying power
[names of victims]	the occupied	British Ministers	
Republicans		law makers	Israeli occupation
		law breakers	Israel
			Israeli iron fist

Sinn Féin employs the same rhetorical strategies to humanize the Palestinian people as it uses to humanize the Irish: utilizing human nouns and alluding to innocence through family metaphor. Conversely, Sinn Féin dehumanizes Israel and emphasizes their militaristic, aggressive, occupational presence. By portraying the Palestinians as moral and human and the Israelis as immoral and oppressive, Sinn Féin accomplishes its larger goal

of moralizing the identity of "the colonized" who legitimately challenge the immoral "colonizer" state force. By establishing this type of precedent, Sinn Féin enables the reaffirmation of its own struggle. Therefore, the roots of Sinn Féin's solidarity with Palestine stem from desire to reaffirm the morality of the Irish nationalist identity and its own struggle for independence.

De-legitimizing Violence: A Progression of Identity and Morality

Sinn Féin continues its reaffirmation of the Irish struggle for independence through delegitimizing violence committed by Britain and its parallel, Israel. The dehumanizing and devaluing of "colonizer" state identities provides an ideal foundation for Sinn Féin to delegitimize violence committed by the state against the moral "colonized" peoples. This negotiation of legitimacy allows Sinn Féin to challenge the de-legitimization of the IRA in the Good Friday Agreement and reaffirm the struggle for Irish political sovereignty.

Through high epistemic modality, Sinn Féin's speeches delegitimize British and Israeli violence with verb choice and valuation. The speeches repeat the verbs "murder" and "attack," to describe the actions of British and Israeli troops on Irish and Palestinian people. Both "murder" and "attack" are offensive verbs, with an implied perpetrator and victim. Instead of using a synonym with flexible epistemic modality like the passive "died" or "lost," Sinn Féin demonstrates high epistemic modality commitment to the notion of actor-onto-object violence. This modality choice indicates absolute conviction in the illegitimacy of violence committed by colonial states and removes flexibility from interpretation by Sinn Féin or its audience.

Sinn Féin further undermines the legitimacy of the "colonizer" state by applying a non-dominant definition of terrorism to Britain and Israel.

1. "People from Ireland and particularly people from this area know what it is like to live under
2. oppression. We understand the **terror**, which the Palestinian people live with daily."
3. "...they killed our friends and neighbours on the same spurious grounds of defending
4. democracy from **terrorism**."

First, in lines 1 and 2, Sinn Féin spokesman, Conor Murphy, references the abstract social event of Irish suffering under British rule, and denotes it as “terror.” The use of the word terror defies the Western hegemonic definition that excludes state actors as perpetrators of terrorism. By challenging the accepted norm of “colonizer” states with the word “terror,” Sinn Féin undermines the authority and legitimacy of these states.

Second, in lines 3 and 4, the speaker highlights the irony of a democratic state killing innocent “friends and neighbours” as counterterrorism. This text connects two clauses with “on the same spurious grounds,” thus making the information equal. Referring back to Sinn Féin’s moral identity construction, this first clause in line 1 implies that killing “our friends and neighbors,” is immoral. On the opposite side of the connector, “defending democracy from terrorism,” also becomes immoral. In this text, Sinn Féin challenges the Weber-esque legitimizing of state violence against a people by ascribing it negative, immoral value.

5. I would like to reiterate my call to place Palestine and its people under international protection.

6. *The occupiers will not protect the occupied.*

Finally, the grammatical devices in lines 5 and 6 display Sinn Féin’s inability to separate its solidarity with Palestine from its own struggle for independence as it seeks to delegitimize violence deployed by “colonizer” states. In line 5, the speaker implores the international community to protect Palestine and its people. But in line 6, the speaker shifts subjects from the Palestinians to “the occupiers” and the object “the occupied.” This immediate change from the specific “Palestinians” to generalized nouns indicates a broader scope for this statement. Sinn Féin again emphasizes the identity dichotomy of the world as “colonizers” and “colonized:” “occupiers” and “occupied.” The shift away from the specific proper noun “Palestinians” toward the general nouns alludes to the Irish conflict with the British, in which the British “occupiers” failed to protect the Irish “occupied.” This relationship constructed by Sinn Féin obligates them to show solidarity with Palestine and reinforces the morality of their identities in contrast with their oppressors.

Agency in Sinn Féin Discourse

Sinn Féin achieves agency through two key examples from the speeches analyzed. Below, I collocate the repetition of the cognitive verbs

"teach," "learn" and "know" in order of appearance in the text.

Key:	Subject	Verb	Object
1.	The intention was to	<u>teach</u>	the uppity Fenians that failure to obey
2.	The intention was to	<u>teach</u>	us a harsh lesson
3.	and indeed we were	<u>taught</u>	a lesson that day
4.	"Actually we	<u>learned</u>	a number of lessons
5.	Yes, we	<u>learned</u>	lessons that day, but not the one that was intended [for us]
6.	But we	<u>learned</u>	that our oppressors owned the law
7.	We	<u>learned</u>	that when the lawmakers are the law breakers
8.	We also	<u>learned</u>	something else that there will be
9.	We	<u>know</u>	the truth and we will stack our truth
10.	We	<u>know</u>	from our own bitter experience
11.	the world also comes to	<u>know</u>	that there can be no Justice without Truth

In lines 1 and 2, the implied subject of the "teaching" is Britain.¹ The speaker relays the idiom of "teaching a lesson"—punishing or disciplining an unfavorable act, often one of a child. This idiom places Britain in the power position of the punisher, or the teacher of the lesson to the disobedient Irish. However, the speaker's subsequent repetition of the "teach/learn/know" verb corrupts the meaning of the idiom and redistributes power from the British to the Irish; this progression of lines 1 to 11 demonstrates linguistic agency. Following lines 1 and 2 which establish the idiom, lines 3 through 11 all take the subject pronoun "we." As the subject, the Sinn Féin speaker commands control of the verb and the predicate of the sentence. Instead of being "taught a lesson," the speaker repeats that Sinn Féin "learned" truths about the British that undermine their legitimacy. Through these linguistic choices, Sinn Féin resists the punishment of the British "lesson," and instead corrupts the verb to suit its own agency and put itself in a linguistic position of power.

The second piece of text that displays Sinn Féin's acquisition of agency occurs in the closing words of Sinn Féin's speech commemorating an anniversary of Bloody Sunday:

¹ The complete sentence of line 1 follows: "The intention was to teach the uppity Fenians that failure to obey British law would have dire consequences."

1. “**We** know *the truth* and **we** will stack **our** *truth* against their propaganda and lies until **we**
2. prevail and **the world also** comes to know that there can be no *Justice* without *Truth*.”

In this text, I analyze the subjects, verbs, and objects to demonstrate Sinn Féin’s assertion of agency. This final passage exhibits the highest epistemic modality and strongest evaluations of the Irish identity. In line 1, the speaker asserts that “we [the Irish] know the truth.” This pairing of a cognitive verb with the ultimate moral concept of truth underscores Sinn Féin’s steadfast belief in the legitimacy of the Irish identity and struggle for independence. It also reaffirms Sinn Féin’s identity dichotomy between “we” the Irish and “they” the British; however, this passage highlights the consequences of these identities by associating “truth” with Irish identity and “lies” with British identity. This polarization leaves no room for flexible morality. In addition, the speaker uses the metaphor of “stacking” truth against lies “until we prevail,” implying that the Irish aggregate the truth and *should* prevail in the end. To underscore this point, line 2 asserts that “the world” will eventually take the moral side of the Irish, the “colonized,” in seeking truth, and will therefore recognize the legitimacy of their struggle for independence.

Summary & Conclusions

A note on reflexivity: my background and my position as an undergraduate researcher have affected the topic choice and presentation method of this research. My preconceptions of the Irish and Palestinian struggles led me to examine similarities between their conflicts and then to my discovery and eventual analysis of the four speeches given by Sinn Féin leaders. Several assumptions and beliefs shape the way in which I present my critical discourse analysis: I come from a blue-collar socio-economic background that emphasized collectivism in my value structure; I believe there is intrinsic value in studying resistance politics, and I believe that unconventional conceptualizations of power and violence should be legitimized for the purpose of understanding today’s (and tomorrow’s) global phenomenon.

Through this research, I have suggested that Sinn Féin expresses solidarity with Palestine as a way to reaffirm the Irish struggle for independence and the legitimacy of the Irish nationalist identity. This solidarity stems from Sinn Féin’s construction of the Irish identity as inseparable from the narrative

of past conflict with the British, and as morally superior for resisting an oppressive state. This link of struggle to morality allows Sinn Féin to expand its conception of identities to an international scale; the texts reveal Sinn Féin's worldview of the dichotomy between "the colonizers" and "the colonized." After demonstrating this connection of morality and identity, I showed that Sinn Féin de-legitimizes violence committed by "colonizer" states in order to reaffirm the legitimacy of the Irish struggle for independence and the current legitimacy of the struggle for Irish political sovereignty. Lastly, I explained the linguistic agency achieved by Sinn Féin that reveals their lasting struggle for reaffirmation.

Also through this research, I intended to expose conflicting ideologies and their impact on unresolved issues of political legitimacy in Northern Ireland. Britain's impending exit from the European Union will soon add strain to the delicate peace in Northern Ireland and once again force reevaluation of identity and values. New economic pressures and freedom-of-movement restrictions may further aggravate tensions between the peoples of the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and England. Through a lens of colonial occupation, Sinn Féin's solidarity with Palestine reveals a powerful undercurrent in international affairs that may explain recent revival of conflict in Ireland and the increasing prevalence of successful insurgencies worldwide. And as transnational actors gain traction in international politics, addressing unconventional conceptualizations of power, violence, and identity could not be more critical. I believe this research began a critical process of interrogating discourses of solidarity and understanding social relationships with state power that are shaping our world.



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