

A Structured Comparison of Memory Politics:

Colonial Trauma in Chinese and Irish History Education and Media Discourse

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Bachelor of Arts in Politics, International Relations and Linguistics with TESOL

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how colonial and imperial trauma become politically usable through collective memory across two institutional and discursive arenas: history education and mainstream commemorative news discourse. A mechanism-oriented comparative design is developed, in which trauma narratives are first institutionalized in educational texts and then activated, reframed, and contested in public discourse. China and Ireland are thus placed as paired cases for cross-case comparison on narrative operations across institutional forms with one shared analytical codebook (D1–D5).

This comparative analysis reveals how the two cases institutionalize trauma-linked narratives as state-sanctioned memory resources in different educative forms: in China, the textbook form stabilizes a coherent crisis narrative and moral lexicon; in Ireland, the syllabus organizes an examinable interpretive framework around sovereignty, partition, allegiance, and sacrifice. Media analysis further shows that once these narrativized forms are activated in commemorative news discourse, they travel in compressed forms through canonical nodes, moral shorthand, and boundary cues. However, this form and visibility

of contestation vary across cases: in China, activation largely stabilizes commemorative meaning, while in Ireland, it is much more visible as a site of contestation over interpretive authority, political use, and claims of boundaries.

In this regard, the dissertation contributes by specifying the institutionalization-activation mechanism, explicating contestation as a discourse-level process, and demonstrating the value of structured comparison for memory politics research. Trauma becomes politically consequential not by mere recall but by institutionalized and activated narrative resources that link moral meaning, responsibility, and collective boundaries to the past.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit / grade. I understand the ethical implications of my research, and this work meets the requirements of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Signed: Chenhuiyan Yan

Date: 27/02/2026

List of Abbreviations

A2/A3/A4 — Appendix 2 / Appendix 3 / Appendix 4

D1–D5 — Narrative dimensions used for coding (Selection; Attribution; Role allocation; Moral evaluation; Identity boundaries/action orientation)

JC — Junior Cycle

LC — Leaving Certificate

NCCA — National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

REC — Research Ethics Committee

RTÉ — Raidió Teilifís Éireann

Chapter 1 Introduction

National identity is not something one inherits; it is narrated, learned, and brought to life in daily practice. Indeed, a long tradition of scholarship has viewed nations as "imagined communities" held together by shared narratives and communicative forms that enable most members to feel a sense of collective belonging without ever meeting (Anderson 2006). Importantly, nationalism is not only mobilized in times of crisis; it is reproduced in mundane symbols, habitual language, and everyday reminders, making the nation seem natural and always present (Billig 1995). This calls for attention to the institutional and cultural sites where national narratives have been and continue to be constructed, communicated, and normalized over time. Educational materials are among the most powerful means by which canonical versions of the past are institutionalized, while public discourse reactivates and reframes the past in relation to current concerns. "Public discourse" is operationalized here as a bounded sample of mainstream news discourse during commemorative windows (see Chapter 4 and Appendix A2).

In this dissertation, "colonial/imperial trauma" refers to historically narrated episodes of foreign domination and mass harm that, in turn, are institutionally formatted for national identity work as collective victimization and moral injury. The focus is thus on the political and discursive construction of trauma narratives rather than questions of historical accuracy or psychological trauma (Alexander 2004).

This dissertation argues that colonial trauma becomes politically usable for nationalism and national identity through two interconnected processes: institutionalization in history education and textbooks on the one hand, and activation and re-narration in bounded public discourse on the other. It privileges the mechanism by which traumatic pasts are transformed

into culturally durable narrative resources rather than providing a historical account of China or Ireland. Empirically, this involves a structured comparison between China and Ireland, allowing the analysis to identify where similar mechanisms that travel across contexts and where they diverge.

This dissertation is framed within a social theory of collective memory and nationalism, treating memory as socially framed and institutionalized rather than naturally inherited (Halbwachs 1992; Assmann and Czaplicka 1995). From this perspective, durable carriers such as curricula, textbooks, and public discourse stabilize a particular version of the past by selecting, ordering, and evaluating events in ways that shape national identity. Based on this, this dissertation operationalizes institutionalization and activation along a shared set of narrative dimensions, thus allowing a structured comparison across the two cases (Wertsch 2002).

Textbooks, curriculum guidelines, and examination requirements are thus understood as institutional sites where narrative templates are consolidated and normalized for intergenerational transmission. Therefore, this dissertation empirically centers on senior-secondary history education, using a bounded set of core educational texts for systematic coding, supported by a small number of contextual curricular documents. Chapter 4 details material selection and bounded sections, while Appendix A1 lists the educational materials analyzed. Even when a canonical version is stabilized in educational materials, its broader political life depends on circulation, invocation, and reworking outside the classroom. Hence, this dissertation takes mainstream news discourse as a secondary lens to observe how institutionalized narratives are reproduced, reframed, or contested in commemorative windows.

In this dissertation, "contestation" refers to competing frames within discourse, not evidence of acceptance or rejection by audiences in everyday life. Therefore, the analysis focuses on divergence in publicly available framings rather than on reception. The bounded corpus of mainstream news texts sampled during commemorative windows enables this dissertation to trace how institutionalized narratives are reproduced, reframed, or contested within public discourse without claiming to cover exhaustively national media environments.

The comparison is thus both substantively and analytically motivated. China and Ireland have different historical experiences with imperialism and anti-colonial struggle and have developed powerful public narratives of suffering, resistance, sovereignty, and collective survival. They were selected not because they are institutionally similar but because they constitute a demanding comparative pairing for a mechanism-oriented analysis. They differ markedly in political context, curricular form, and media environment, yet both confront the same mnemonic problem: how a traumatic past is institutionally narrated for the nation and later activated in commemorative public discourse. That makes them suitable not only as two cases of colonial/imperial memory, but also contrasting settings to test whether the same analytical dimensions and mechanism remain observable under sharply different institutional conditions. Their value as a pairing lies less in representativeness and more in analytical leverage (George and Bennett 2005).

Based on this premise, the dissertation develops the following research question: How do China and Ireland institutionalize colonial trauma in history education/textbooks, and how are these narratives reproduced, reframed, or contested in selected mainstream news discourses in ways that shape nationalist narratives and boundaries of national identity? This further structures the empirical analysis into two sub-questions: First, what narrative templates and

moral frameworks are stabilized in the selected educational materials of each case? Second, within a bounded sample of mainstream news texts, how are these institutionalized narratives activated and re-narrated, and what patterns of continuity or divergence do they reveal across the two cases?

This dissertation makes three contributions: first, it links educational institutionalization and discursive activation within one analytical framework, thus overcoming the relative isolation in which textbook and mediated-memory research tend to be conducted. Second, it presents a cross-regional, mechanism-oriented comparison that allows more disciplined inferences about the traveling and transformation of memory politics across contexts (Zubrzycki and Woźny 2020). Third, it employs narrative templates and related narrative dimensions to elucidate how colonial trauma becomes politically productive as a resource for nationalism and boundary-making while recognizing the limits of textual inference.

The remainder of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on collective and cultural memory, nationalism, and institutional and mediated sites of stabilization and activation of trauma narratives. Chapter 3 outlines the analytical framework and operationalizes the comparative narrative dimensions. Chapter 4 explains the comparative research design, material selection, and qualitative analysis strategy. Chapter 5 presents a comparative analysis of the institutionalization of colonial trauma in educational materials. In contrast, Chapter 6 elaborates on the activation and reframing of those institutionalized narratives in mainstream commemorative news discourse. Chapter 7 outlines the cross-case implications for memory politics and nationalism, and Chapter 8 concludes.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with the mechanism through which colonial trauma becomes collective memory: first through institutionalization in history education and textbooks, and later through activation and re-narration in media discourse, where it helps shape nationalist narratives and national identity. Empirically, this dissertation examines this mechanism through a structured comparison of China and Ireland as paired case studies.

Relevant scholarship can be organized into three overlapping strands that are often treated separately: (1) theories of collective/cultural memory and nationalism; (2) studies on history education and textbooks as instruments of constructing national narratives; and (3) work on mediated/public memory and memory politics. Following a thematic rather than a paper-by-paper summary, this review synthesizes these strands to build conceptual "building blocks" for the comparative study of China and Ireland. It concludes by identifying gaps — the weak articulation of "textbook institutionalization" with "media activation" and the relative lack of cross-region, mechanism-oriented comparisons-from which the research question guiding this project is derived.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations: Memory and Nationalism

Most of the collective memory scholarship holds that memory is not a neutral record of the past but an organized social, continuously reconstructed conception of the past. Halbwachs' seminal argument states that remembering depends on "social frameworks": individuals remember and tell the past within categories, cues, and interpretative structures that groups and institutions provide (Halbwachs 1992). Assmann extends this insight by differentiating between communicative and cultural memory, which are fixed in texts, rituals, and institutional carriers that preserve the group's identity over time (Assmann and Czaplicka

1995). From this perspective, textbooks and media do not "represent history"; they are mnemonic infrastructures through which the past is selected, sequenced, and moralized. The theory of nationalism also complements this by explaining why memory matters in politics. Anderson (2006) describes the nation as an "imagined community," limited and sovereign, in deep, horizontal comradeship among those who will never know most of their fellow members. Billig's concept of "banal nationalism" further shows that nationalism is routinely reproduced through everyday symbols and language, making the nation appear natural and always there (Billig 1995). Hobsbawm and Ranger illustrate how traditions can be invented or formalized to manufacture continuity and legitimacy, usually through state-supported institutions and rituals (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). Bell's concept of "mythscapes" refers to how narratives of national identity unfold within a contested discursive space where myths are forged, circulated, revised, and contested (Bell 2003).

Within these frameworks, colonial trauma has been politically effective by providing a strong moral narrative of victimhood, injustice, and redemption, able to mobilize emotional energy for identity. Berezin (2002) note thats collective emotions become politically meaningful when codified, mobilized, and transposed into action or institutional arrangements. Thus, these theories suggest that to understand how colonial trauma fuels nationalism, one must trace the institutionalization of mnemonic content (e.g., education) and its activation and reworking in public discourse (e.g., media).

2.3 Theme 1: institutionalizing Colonial Trauma through History Education and Textbooks

The central argument of the literature is that history education and textbooks are not politically neutral knowledge carriers but key sites where states and societies stabilize "authorized" narratives of the past. Through selection (what events enter the canon),

emplotment (how events are causally linked), role allocation (victims, perpetrators, heroes), and moral evaluation (shame, sacrifice, pride), textbooks translate complex histories into teachable, repeatable public narratives that shape national identity. In this sense, textbooks are a form of cultural memory infrastructure (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995).

In this respect, state-led nationalism scholarship in China has regarded education as a leading conduit through which traumatic pasts are institutionalized. For example, Zhao (1998) argues that the Patriotic Education Campaign after 1989 promoted a state-centered nationalism based on narratives of humiliation and external threat to establish legitimacy and social cohesion. Wang links tales of national humiliation with history education and the politics of historical memory, outlining how trauma memories can develop into durable identity resources, structuring political interpretation and action (Wang 2008; Wang 2012). Related literature on wartime memory shows selective remembrance: while themes such as patriotic resistance and atrocities can be highlighted, others, such as internal conflict and the complexity of wartime actors, can be marginalized, hence emphasizing the political nature of mnemonic selection (Coble 2007). While this scholarship convincingly shows how state-led education can stabilize "national humiliation" narratives, it usually takes institutional narration to work politically in a relatively direct, state-centric way. Less emphasis is placed on narrative operations that allow such content to endure and transfer across arenas (e.g., how selection, attribution, and moral evaluation are packaged into teachable templates that may later be activated in public discourse). This dissertation fills this gap by transposing the insights into a shared codebook (D1 – D5) and explicitly tracing the institutionalization → activation link across educational texts and a bounded media sample.

In the Irish and Northern Irish contexts, history education also participates in the politicization of identity and contestation over public memory. For example, Tormey's analysis of the Irish case shows that history at the primary school level is involved in the construction of national identity, thus raising questions about what the "national story" comprises and how this story is transmitted pedagogically (Tormey 2006). Barton and McCully also note that in Northern Ireland, where social division is institutionalized within community identities, students' historical understandings are informed not only by school curricula but also by community narratives and lived experience; hence, institutionalized memory can be refracted through competing group frameworks (Barton and McCully 2005).

Another strand of research pertains to historiographical and public disputes in the Republic of Ireland over narrating key "trauma" events, especially the Great Famine and 1916, often framed as revisionism versus nationalist or "post-revisionist" interpretations. As mapped in influential collections, the revisionist debate concerns whether national history should be written as a morally charged story of victimhood and liberation or, more pluralistically, as a demythologizing story resisting teleological nationalism (Brady 1994). This is highly pertinent to education since it directly affects the narrative operations central to this dissertation — attribution of responsibility, moral evaluation, and identity boundary-making, in curricular framings of Union, famine governance, sovereignty, and partition (Boyce and O'Day 1996). For example, scholarship on famine historiography makes interpretive contests about governance, blame, and moral lesson-drawing explicit (Daly 1996). Bringing this literature from the Irish context into dialogue with textbook and syllabus analysis situates the LC syllabus topics within a contested memory landscape rather than treating them as ideologically neutral.

This helps explain why the Leaving Certificate syllabus institutionalizes contested pasts through examinable elements and concept cues rather than a single narrative voice: by specifying what must be addressed (e.g., governance/response, sovereignty/partition) while allowing for competing interpretations of how those issues are explained. In this sense, the revisionist debate is background; it provides a plausible account of why Irish curricular framing privileges “questions to be examined” over morally saturated national storytelling.

Two limitations thus become recurrent in this research tradition. First, analyzes tend to equate textbook content with social memory, ignoring the gap between authorized narratives and how these narratives are taken up, reworked, or challenged in public discourse. Second, cross-national comparisons remain primarily descriptive because narrative feature "coding" has not been standardized, thus impeding mechanism comparison across contexts. These limitations point to the need to connect textbook institutionalization to arenas where authorised narratives are taken up, reframed, and contested in public discourse, particularly in mainstream media.

2.4 Theme 2: Media as Activation and Re-narration of Memory

Studies in public and mediated memory argue that media are not simple conduits carrying fixed meanings from history but can actively produce, magnify, and transform collective remembrance. Media discourse often activates traumatic pasts at certain moments of commemoration, anniversaries, diplomatic tensions, or domestic controversies by framing present issues through historical analogies, apportioning blame, drawing moral boundaries, and mobilizing identities. In this respect, Bell's (2003) is relevant since it theorizes national identity narratives as taking place within a discursive arena contested by myth creation, transmission, negotiation, and reconstruction. Thus, it allows for considering how media discourse may reproduce dominant versions of the past while allowing alternative framings.

Mediated memory becomes particularly salient in digital contexts. Hoskins views digital memory as fast circulation, remixing, and repeated reactivation, making mnemonic struggles more visible and volatile (Hoskins 2017). This is how post-conflict dynamics are reflected in remembering and reinterpreting contentious events in public discourse. For example, research into Bloody Sunday showed that collective identity depends on active remembering and selective forgetting; thus, narratives become sites of political contestation rather than settled history (Conway 2003).

However, these studies have their limits. Media systems differ in terms of their regulation, professional norms, and political configuration; thus, the results from one context do not travel straightforwardly to another without a mechanism-based comparison. Besides, media discourse is not the same as societal memory: it is also the result of institutional gatekeeping, audience dynamics, and strategic actors. These considerations further motivate the study of media activation within the broader chain from institutionalized narratives, i.e., textbooks, to public re-narration. This paper adopts a focused, theory-driven media sample rather than aiming for comprehensive media coverage, in order to trace how institutionalized textbook narratives are reproduced, reframed, or challenged at the level of discourse.

2.5 Comparative Perspective and Research Gap

While the literature so far establishes the importance of textbooks and media in memory politics, these strands are often pursued in parallel, leaving the institutionalization → activation/re-narration link comparatively under-specified. In particular, few studies connect curricular narration to subsequent mainstream-media framing within one comparative design. Further, most research on memory politics has been single-case or regionally bounded; thus, cross-regional comparisons are usually parallel accounts rather than structured tests of shared mechanisms. Recent comparative work in memory studies has foregrounded the wide range of

the field and the continuing imperative of theoretical and methodological innovation beyond nationally bounded frameworks (Zubrzycki and Woźny 2020). This dissertation addresses that gap by using China and Ireland as paired cases within a shared analytical framework to examine how colonial trauma becomes pedagogically canonical and later publicly reworked, and to clarify where the mechanism travels and where it transforms.

2.6 Conclusion and Research Question

This literature review suggests that colonial trauma becomes a nationalist resource through two interacting mechanisms: institutionalization in education/textbooks and media discourse activation. However, systematic cross-regional work that links educational institutionalization to later media activation remains limited. This paper, therefore, asks: How do China and Ireland institutionalize colonial trauma in history education/textbooks, and how are these narratives reproduced, reframed, and contested in selected mainstream news discourse in ways that shape nationalist narratives and boundaries of national identity? Here, “contestation” refers to competing frames and narratives articulated in media discourse rather than direct measurement of audience reception. The analysis will follow a structured, focused comparison along shared narrative dimensions.

Chapter 3 Analytical Framework

The dissertation develops an analytical framework for examining how colonial trauma is transformed into collective memory and later mobilized in nationalist narratives. The framework is comparative and operational in that it translates essential insights from memory studies into a standard set of narrative dimensions for cross-case and cross-text comparison. It builds on the premise that remembering is socially organized and institutionally mediated and that groups and institutions provide interpretive frames through which the past is recalled and given political meaning (Halbwachs 1992). In this respect, curricula, textbooks, and mainstream media can be approached as mnemonic infrastructures through which trauma narratives are selected, structured, and circulated.

3.1 Mechanism: Institutionalization → Activation

This dissertation conceptualizes memory politics in two related steps. Institutionalization describes how state-authorized educational materials — curriculum standards, syllabi, and textbooks — solidify the colonial trauma narrative by inscribing moral and political meanings in pedagogical routines and assessment expectations. Activation describes the later manifestation, reframing, or contestation of these institutionalized narratives in public discourse, most typically in mainstream media texts during commemorations, anniversaries, or other high-profile public controversies. If institutionalization anchors memory in durable pedagogical forms, activation captures the public afterlife of those narratives.

This approach is explicitly discursive. While narrative construction is textual, audience reception is not directly assessed. Therefore, using a common framework for both China and Ireland allows a structured comparison of the sites where similar narrative operations recur across contexts and where they diverge without reducing either to a purely national descriptive case account.

3.2 Narrative Dimensions (Codebook) for Structured Comparison

The dissertation codes texts according to a shared set of narrative dimensions to operationalize institutionalization and activation. The D1–D5 framework is not borrowed from any existing model but is constructed here as a synthesized analytical codebook combining insights from narrative-template, framing, and cultural-memory scholarship. Collective remembering often draws on culturally available narrative templates that structure meaning and guide interpretation (Wertsch 2002); public texts structure causal attribution, moral evaluation, and implied orientations toward action (Entman 1993). On this basis, D1–D5 capture recurring narrative operations that make the past politically usable. The codebook is not intended as an exhaustive model of memory politics, but as a bounded analytical instrument for comparing recurrent narrative operations across the two cases. Its value lies in enabling transparent and contestable comparison of how trauma narratives are selected, attributed, moralized, and linked to collective boundaries and action.

(D1) Selection and boundary of trauma. This dimension captures which events and periods are selected to represent colonial trauma and which are marginalized or excluded. Selection matters because it establishes the mnemonic canon most available for identity work and political reference.

(D2) Causal emplotment and attribution. This dimension examines how events are connected into a causal storyline and how responsibility is attributed. These choices frame legitimacy claims by defining who harmed the community and what political conclusions flow.

(D3) Role allocation. This dimension deals with how actors are placed in the narrative, e.g., victims, perpetrators, heroes, saviors, collaborators, and the construction of collective agents such as "the people," "the nation," or "the state." This is important because it reveals who is made to embody the nation and who is positioned as a threat to it.

(D4) Moral evaluation and affective framing. This dimension traces how texts moralize and emotionalize the past using evaluative language and affective cues such as humiliation, grief,

sacrifice, justice, or redemption. It is important in understanding how trauma becomes politically productive for nationalist identification.

(D5) Identity boundaries and action orientation. This dimension traces how texts draw "we/they" boundaries and what forms of action or obligation they suggest, including unity, vigilance, sovereignty, recognition, or other political imperatives flowing from the trauma narrative. In this regard, this dimension connects memory most directly to nationalism, as it shows how the past is used to define membership and justify present positions.

Together, these dimensions allow for cross-comparison between China and Ireland, using the same interpretive lenses for both cases and reporting the findings in a parallel structure across the empirical chapters.

3.3 Operational Scope and Application

In this dissertation, contestation is operationalized at the level of discourse rather than audience reception. It refers to competing frames across texts or within a text as expressed in divergent attributions of responsibility, moral evaluations, identity boundaries, or action orientation. Hence, contestation is considered a textual and public phenomenon rather than evidence of how citizens internalize particular narratives.

Chapter 5 uses the framework to analyze educational materials to show how colonial trauma is selected, structured, moralized, and stabilized as a canonical narrative resource in each case. Chapter 6 applies the same dimensions to mainstream news discourse to show how those institutionalized narratives are reproduced, reframed, or contested during commemorative windows. Using a single framework across these domains allows the dissertation to trace the institutionalization-activation mechanism conceptually and provides a disciplined cross-case comparison.

Chapter 4 Research Design and Methods

4.1 Research Design

This dissertation adopts a comparative case study design, pairing China and Ireland to examine a shared mechanism in memory politics: the institutionalization of colonial trauma in history education/textbooks and its subsequent activation in mainstream media discourse. The comparison is structured and focused in the sense that the same guiding questions and narrative dimensions (Chapter 3) are applied to both cases, enabling cross-case inference rather than parallel description (George and Bennett 2005). The purpose is to trace how similar narrative operations are stabilized institutionally and then reworked discursively under different political, curricular, and media conditions.

4.2 Material and Data Sources

The study analyzes four state-authorized educational documents, separating core texts from contextual documents to ensure comparability and scope control.

Core texts (systematic coding):

For China, the core text is the unified senior-secondary textbook 普通高中教科书・历史 必修：中外历史纲要（上） (Outline of Chinese and World History, Vol. 1, author's translation) (People's Education Press 2019). For Ireland, the core text is the Leaving Certificate History Syllabus (Government of Ireland 2003).

Contextual documents (no full coding):

For China, the contextual document is 普通高中历史课程标准（2017 年版，2020 年修订） (General High School History Curriculum Standards, author's translation), which is used to clarify institutional aims and framing expectations (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2020). Ireland's Junior Cycle History Specification is used selectively to contextualize earlier-stage framing of historical understanding (NCCA n.d).

Supplementary media lens:

To trace activation and reframing in public discourse, the dissertation analyzes a small sample of mainstream media texts from two outlets per case: China (*People's Daily and Xinhua*) and Ireland (*The Irish Times and RTÉ News*). Media analysis is used as a supplementary activation lens rather than a comprehensive media study. These outlets are selected as mainstream, agenda-setting sources in each case, making them suitable sites for observing how institutionalized narratives enter publicly accessible discourse during commemorative moments, without implying representativeness of the entire media ecology.

4.3 Sampling Strategy and Scope Control

Sampling is purposive and theory-driven. Systematic coding is restricted to tightly bounded sections in the two core educational texts.

Institutional Texts (core sample)

China (textbook lessons):

From the unified senior-secondary textbook 普通高中教科书・历史 必修：中外历史纲要（上） (Outline of Chinese and World History, Vol. 1, author's translation), the analysis codes Lessons 16 – 18 (People's Education Press 2019).

Lesson 16: 《两次鸦片战争》 (The Opium Wars, author's translation)

Lesson 17: 《国家出路的探索与列强侵略的加剧》 (Exploring China's Path and Intensified Imperialist Aggression, author's translation)

Lesson 18: 《挽救民族危亡的斗争》 (Struggles to Save the Nation from Peril, author's translation)

Ireland (syllabus topic blocks):

From Irish history (1815 – 1993) in the Leaving Certificate History Syllabus, the analysis codes two topic blocks (Government of Ireland 2003) that capture (i) institutional framing of

crisis/governance during the famine era and (ii) the sovereignty – partition chain central to Irish state formation:

Topic 1: Ireland and the Union, 1815 – 1870

Topic 3: The Pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition, 1912 – 1949

These bounded selections maintain feasibility while preserving analytical leverage: they are the most direct institutional sites where trauma-related narratives are stabilized for curricular transmission, and they contain dense material for comparing narrative operations across cases.

Contextual documents:

The curriculum standards and Junior Cycle specification are not coded line-by-line. Instead, they are consulted to extract a small set of clauses relevant to institutional aims (e.g., stated purposes of history learning and intended framing), used only to contextualize the core-text findings.

Media texts (activation sample):

Consequently, the "activation window" approach bounds the media component. In each case, media texts are sampled within ±14 days around selected commemorative moments when historical narratives are most likely to be publicly evoked. Windows centered on commemoration are used because they provide relatively predictable triggers for retrospective framing, making the discursive "afterlife" of institutionalized narratives observable within a manageable scope.

Approximately eight media texts per case are analyzed in total and distributed across the two outlets. Within each activation window, items are purposively selected using commemorative and historical framing keywords, with preference given to genres in which historical meaning is relatively more explicit, such as editorials, analyzes, and feature articles, rather than brief notices or event listings. Candidate texts are then assessed in terms of the density of historical

framing, i.e., the number of explicit references to the past containing at least one coded element and balanced within the activation window, if necessary, not to cluster on one day.

4.4 Analytical Procedure and Coding

The dissertation uses qualitative narrative and frame-oriented content analysis guided by the five narrative dimensions specified in Chapter 3. Analysis proceeds in three steps.

Step 1: segmentation and documentation.

Institutional materials are segmented into analyzable units (paragraphs/subsections) within the selected lessons/topic blocks. Media materials are treated as article-level units, with relevant excerpts extracted for coding. For each unit, bibliographic metadata are recorded (document title; lesson/topic; page/section; for media: outlet, date, headline, URL).

Step 2: coding with the shared codebook.

Each unit is coded using the five dimensions: (D1) selection/boundary of trauma; (D2) causal emplotment and responsibility attribution; (D3) role allocation; (D4) moral evaluation and affective framing; and (D5) identity boundaries and action orientation. Coding is evidence-based: each code assignment is supported by short textual excerpts recorded with page/section references.

Step 3: within-case synthesis and cross-case comparison.

Within each case, coded units are synthesized into patterns (dominant causal chains, recurring moral lessons, stable boundary constructions, action orientations). Cross-case comparison then assesses shared and divergent narrative operations across the two institutional contexts. Media texts are analyzed using the same dimensions to observe whether institutionalized narrative elements are reproduced, reframed, or contested during activation windows.

4.5 Operationalizing Contestation

Contestation is operationalized as a discourse-level phenomenon: it is coded where there are competing frames across texts (or within a text) that diverge on one or more coded

dimensions, especially responsibility attribution (D2), moral evaluation (D4), role allocation (D3), and identity boundary-making/action orientation (D5). A frame is treated as competing when it changes the interpretive conclusion about who is responsible, what the moral lesson is, who is included within the political community, or what stance/action is implied.

4.6 Comparability, Limitations, and Translation

Comparability is enhanced by investigating equivalent institutional sites of national narrative production and working from a single codebook across cases. Additional outlets beyond those chosen for this study would only provide limited triangulation against outlet-specific framing but keep the media sample analytically manageable. Importantly, while the Chinese core source is a narrative textbook and the Irish core source is a syllabus framework, both are state-sanctioned vehicles for institutionalizing historical memory among senior-secondary history students. Comparability is preserved by imposing narrative dimensions D1-D5 across the sections in each text where selection, attribution, moral evaluation, and boundary framing are specified or constructed. Although the Irish Leaving Certificate history syllabus lacks thick narrative prose, it is still possible to read off narrative operations regarding the shape of required topics, phrasings of compulsory elements, and key concept cues in ways that implicitly specify causal and moral framings, namely D2 and D4, for classroom delivery and assessment.

As a text-based study, this dissertation does not directly assess audience reception. In addition, differences in educational and media environments may shape how narratives are formalized and circulated; the comparison therefore focuses on narrative operations rather than assuming identical content.

Because the Chinese core text is in Chinese, the dissertation adopts a selective translation strategy: only excerpts used as direct evidence for coding decisions are translated into English,

presented alongside the Chinese original with page/section references. Translations prioritize fidelity for evaluative and boundary-making terms; brief glosses are provided where key terms could be ambiguous.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

All analyzed materials are publicly available documents and media texts. The project involves no human participants, personal data, or interventions. Ethical practice therefore centers on accurate citation, faithful representation of sources, and transparent reporting of sampling and coding procedures.

Chapter 5 Institutionalization in History

Textbooks and Curriculum as Memory Infrastructure in China and Ireland

5.1 Chapter Introduction

Although the Chinese source is a narrative textbook and the Irish source is a syllabus framework, both function as state-authorized infrastructures of institutionalized memory. The comparison is conducted at the level of narrative operations (D1–D5) rather than genre.

This chapter analyzes how colonial/imperial trauma is institutionalized as collective memory through history education in China and Ireland. Building upon the conceptual framework of Chapter 3, institutionalization is regarded here as the stabilization of authorized narratives in and through durable carriers, such as curricular documents and teaching texts (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995). Thus, the focus is on narrative operations rather than historical "accuracy": how trauma is selected, causally organized, morally evaluated, and used to mark boundaries and orientations to action. This operationalization draws on narrative approaches to collective remembering that emphasize how shared templates structure meaning-making (Wertsch 2002). Empirically, the chapter analyzes the bounded core texts identified in Chapter 4: the unified senior-secondary history textbook in China, 普通高中教科书·历史 必修：中外历史纲要（上） (Outline of Chinese and World History, Vol. 1, author's translation), Lessons 16–18; and Ireland's Leaving Certificate History Syllabus (Irish history, 1815–1993), Topic 1 and Topic 3. Using the shared codebook (D1–D5), each section presents (i) evidence from China, (ii) evidence from Ireland, and (iii) brief cross-case comparisons. Chapter 6 will deal with media (news) activation.

5.2 Institutional Framing

This section briefly contextualizes the core texts within the institutional framing of history education. In China's curriculum standards, the official aims of history learning are framed in terms of disciplinary competencies and civic orientation. "历史学科核心素养" is defined in five components: "唯物史观、时空观念、史料实证、历史解释、家国情怀" (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2020, p. 4; author's translation: historical materialism, temporal-spatial concepts, source-based evidence, historical interpretation, and civic/patriotic sentiment). Although these standards are not coded line-by-line in this dissertation, they provide an institutional rationale for how a single textbook can act as a significant vehicle of stable national narratives.

In Ireland, the Junior Cycle specification frames history as inquiry-based and oriented toward historical evidence while situating history learning concerning heritage at different scales. For example, it mentions engaging "local, national, and international heritage (NCCA n.d., p.5)," foregrounding using "primary and secondary sources of historical evidence (NCCA n.d., p.16)," and skills of historical inquiry. The Leaving Certificate syllabus similarly frames historical knowledge as interpretive and evidence-based; rather than narrating a continuous national story, it institutionalizes memory through topic structures, required "elements," and "key concepts" that specify what students must learn and be examined on.

5.3 D1 Selection and Boundary of Trauma

This section discusses how trauma is canonized and delimited in each case (D1). Even the unit title "晚清时期的内忧外患与救亡图存" (People's Education Press 2019, p.96; author's translation: internal troubles, external threats, and saving the nation) already suggests reading this as a period of crisis and rescue. The unit preface continues, "中国历史进入饱经磨难的

近代时期" (People's Education Press 2019, p.89; author's translation: "Chinese history entered the modern period, full of suffering"), and summarizes the decades after the Opium War as a period in which the Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties and the country entered a period of severe internal and external crisis (author's translation of the unit introduction). This draws a clear boundary: modern history is canonized not as a neutral modernization but as a trauma-centered narrative structured around imperial intrusion, coercion of unequal treaties, and "national crisis."

That canonical boundary is reenacted in Lesson 16 by treating the Opium Wars as a foundational entry into modernity. The sequence of lessons (16–18) functions as a selection device: from external war and treaty coercion through intensified imperialist encroachment to struggles explicitly framed as "挽救民族危亡" (People's Education Press 2019, pp.89-107; author's translation: saving the nation from peril). In other words, the selection is through periodization (the late Qing as the onset of traumatic modernity) and through em plotted sequencing (aggression → crisis escalation → salvation struggles), thus creating a canonical trauma arc invoked later as a shared referent.

The Irish syllabus institutionalizes selection differently: without narrative prose, trauma is canonized through compulsory topic blocks and "elements." Within Irish history (1815–1993), Topic 1, "Ireland and the Union, 1815–1870," incorporates famine-related content in a structurally centering way. Specifically, "Government responses to Famine" is a listed required element, institutionalizing the Famine not as background suffering but as a governance and responsibility episode to be studied. The inclusion of "famine" and "nation" in the key concepts also signals that this period is to be read as constituting national identity rather than simply socioeconomic history. Topic 3, "The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912–1949," sets another canonical boundary, charting a sequence of events

defining sovereignty: "the 1916 Rising," "the War of Independence," "Partition," "Treaty and Civil War," and "State building ... from Free State to Republic" (Government of Ireland 2003, pp.36-38).

Beyond the very selection of topics, the two cases institutionalize trauma through different curricular "selection technologies." In the Chinese textbook, canonization is achieved by explicitly framing meta-levels of units ("hardship," "crisis," "saving the nation") and a sequential lesson design that treats invasion as the entry point of modernity. The Irish syllabus canonizes less through narrative prose and more through the specification of examinable elements and concept cues, such as "Government responses to Famine," "sovereignty," and "partition." This, therefore, institutionalizes what constitutes a legitimate explanatory agenda. This is expected to influence subsequent narrative operations, especially in attribution and identity boundary-making, which will be discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.6.

Cross-case comparison (D1). Both cases institutionalize colonial/imperial trauma by delimiting a bounded canon of “must-know” reference points for national history. This is canonized in China by the continuous crisis periodization of the narrative textbook. In Ireland, it is canonized by the syllabus technology of compulsory elements and key concept cues structuring what is examinable.

5.4 D2 Causal Emplotment and Attribution

This section examines causal emplotment and attribution (D2). The opening frame links Britain's trade imbalance with opium trafficking: "对华贸易出现逆差，便借助鸦片走私寻求贸易平衡" (People’s Education Press 2019, p.90; author's translation: "Facing a trade deficit with China, [Britain] sought to restore balance through opium smuggling"). In that way, the causal move positions imperial intrusion as strategic and interest-driven, not accidental,

thus setting an interpretive baseline for the subsequent wars. The chain ends with coercion by treaty and loss of sovereignty. The textbook explicitly moralizes and attributes harm in treaty framing: "《南京条约》是中国近代史上第一个丧权辱国的不平等条约" (People's Education Press 2019, p.92; author's translation: "The Treaty of Nanjing was the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history that entailed a loss of rights and national humiliation"). Thus, the institutionalized causal logic of invasion and coercive diplomacy, producing a cumulative national crisis, is built on the repeated emphasis on "unequal treaties" and coercion.

This is not merely a descriptive chronology but rather an institutionalized explanatory template. By linking trauma with foreign aggression, coercion, and the treaty system, the textbook renders "national humiliation" comprehensible as a political resource, precisely the mechanism highlighted in studies of China's Patriotic Education and humiliation narratives. That literature claims that humiliation memories become durable identity resources through state-linked educational narration, and the textbook's causal emplotment (interest-driven intrusion → war → unequal treaty coercion → sovereignty loss) provides the narrative form through which such memory can be stabilized (Wang 2008).

Ireland's syllabus thus institutionalizes causality and attribution not through continuous narrative but by specifying the causal questions that students must address. In Topic 1, "Ireland and the Union, 1815–1870," "Government responses to Famine" appears as a required element (Government of Ireland 2003, p.34). Thus, the syllabus embeds attribution by instructing students that the famine is to be explained through governance, policy, and institutional responsibility rather than as a natural disaster. Thus, causality is institutionalized as an analytic agenda- a set of questions about response, capacity, and responsibility that must be learned and assessed. Indeed, this aligns with the broader historiographical insight that

famine interpretation has long been contested around governance and moral responsibility issues, including revisionist debates on blame and lessons to be learned (Daly 1996).

Topic 3, "The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912–1949," institutionalizes causality within an ordered sequence of developments that implicitly connect the pursuit of sovereignty with partition and state-building dilemmas: "The impact of World War I; the 1916 Rising; … the War of Independence; Partition; Treaty and Civil War. State building … from Free State to Republic (Government of Ireland 2003, p.36). Here, the syllabus encodes a causal chain whereby partition is not a side episode but one of the central structuring consequences of the broader pursuit-of-sovereignty narrative. While the syllabus does not overtly assign blame in a moralized register, the ordering of elements and key concepts attached to Topic 3 (e.g., sovereignty, partition, allegiance, Ulster Unionism) signals what types of causal explanation are institutionally central.

Cross-case comparison (D2). Both cases stabilize causal explanation and attribution by embedding a recurring explanatory structure through which trauma becomes politically legible. China's textbook externalizes attribution in an interest–aggression–treaty–sovereignty-loss chain. At the same time, Ireland's syllabus frames attribution as an examinable causal problem by specifying elements and sequencing sovereignty–partition–state-building as the core explanatory agenda.

5.5 D3 Role Allocation

The following examine role allocation and collective agency (D3). Lesson 16 reads: "各地民众自发抵抗侵略军……侵略军所到之处，人民群众都进行了抵抗" (People's Education Press 2019, p.93; author's translation: "People in many places spontaneously resisted the invading forces… wherever the invaders went, the masses resisted"). This confers on "the

people" the role of active agent rather than depicting the population merely as passive victims. The textbook goes on to authorize such agency through quotation: "恩格斯当年指出：'这是一场维护中华民族生存的人民战争。'" (People's Education Press 2019, p.93; author's translation: "Engels noted at the time: 'This was a people's war to defend the survival of the Chinese nation.'"). In other words, it positions the nation as a collective subject capable of action and resistance as constitutive rather than reactive to national survival.

Role allocation thus contributes to institutionalization by stabilizing a model of legitimate agency: "the people" appear as defenders of the nation, with the main antagonists being external aggressors. Even without all the internal divisions worked out in detail, this role structure is sufficient to normalize the narrative of the collective agent, which may subsequently be activated as a template for interpreting contemporary disputes in national terms.

Ireland's syllabus allocates roles in a more plural and less heroizing way, largely through its lists of key personalities and concept cues rather than narrative description. In Topic 1, the "key personalities" include figures associated with both political mobilisation and administration — such as Daniel O'Connell and Charles Trevelyan, alongside others linked to political movements (Government of Ireland 2003, p.34). This institutionalizes a multi-actor understanding of the period: agency is distributed across political leaders, administrators, and movement organisers, rather than assigned to a single unified national subject. Topic 3 similarly lists key personalities spanning nationalist and unionist leadership (e.g., Patrick Pearse, Michael Collins, James Craig; Government of Ireland 2003, p.36). These lists function as an institutional signal that role plurality is itself a required interpretive frame for understanding sovereignty and partition.

In addition, Topic 3's key concepts — such as sovereignty, partition, Ulster Unionism, and allegiance, encode role differentiation at the level of political community and competing claims to legitimacy (Government of Ireland 2003, p.36). Rather than stabilizing a single heroic narrative, the syllabus institutionalizes the expectation that students recognise competing actors and positions as part of the core structure of modern Irish history. This is consistent with a syllabus form oriented toward examinable explanation: roles are enumerated as interpretive anchors rather than narrated as a single story.

Cross-case comparison (D3). Both cases institutionalize role templates about who acts, who suffers, and which actors are politically salient in national history. China's textbook privileges a more unified collective agent ("the people") against external aggressors, while Ireland's syllabus institutionalizes role plurality through personality lists and concepts cueing competing agencies and allegiances.

5.6 D4 Moral Evaluation and Affective Framing

This section examines moral evaluation and affective cues (D4). Moral evaluation in the Chinese textbook is explicit and often grounded in language about loss of sovereignty and national humiliation. Thus, regarding the Treaty of Nanjing, the text in Lesson 16 reads: "《南京条约》是中国近代史上第一个丧权辱国的不平等条约" (People's Education Press 2019, p.92; author's translation: "The Treaty of Nanjing was the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history that entailed a loss of rights and national humiliation"). Such a phrase does not describe an agreement; it gives an evaluative verdict ("national humiliation") that frames the treaty as a moral injury to the nation. In this way, the text stabilizes a moral vocabulary,through which subsequent events may be interpreted as continuous violations rather than discrete diplomatic outcomes.

The textbook also marks evaluative "thresholds" that consolidate the trauma narrative. Thus, Lesson 18 (and its continuance into the early twentieth-century settlement) notes: "《辛丑条约》的签订，标志着中国半殖民地半封建社会完全形成" (People's Education Press 2019, p. 105; author's translation: "The signing of the Boxer Protocol marked the full formation of China as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society"). Without emotive adjectives, "marked the full formation" works as a normative milestone: it marks a climax of subjugation and anchors a moralized endpoint to the humiliation arc. These evaluative cues thus institutionalize a moral frame connecting trauma to sovereignty violations and degradation, providing ready-made affective meanings of shame, indignation, and urgency to support nationalist boundary-making.

Ireland's syllabus conveys moral and affective framing less through emotive narrative than through interpretive cues embedded in "key concepts" and required "elements." Key concepts under Topic 1 include "famine" and "nation," and the required element "Government responses to Famine" instructs students to evaluate responsibility and governance rather than treat suffering as natural misfortune (Government of Ireland 2003, p.34). In this institutional structure, moral evaluation is possible by analytic focus: who acted, what was done, and what counts as an adequate response. In Topic 3, the syllabus has key concepts: "sovereignty" and "blood sacrifice" (Government of Ireland 2003, p.36). The term "blood sacrifice" flags morally charged interpretive frames around 1916 and sovereignty as part of the examinable conceptual repertoire, even though the syllabus does not emotively narrate those events.

Placed alongside "sovereignty" as a key concept, "blood sacrifice" does not merely name an event; it cues a morally examinable problem: how violent action is narrated as politically meaningful and what ethical costs that narration entails. Institutionally, therefore, the syllabus stabilizes a kind of moral complexity: sovereignty claims and the legitimating language of

sacrifice must be treated as part of the interpretive repertoire, not as a settled celebratory script.

Another difference is in the register. Where the Chinese textbook often uses overtly evaluative language ("national humiliation," "whole formation"), the Irish syllabus mainly uses a more administrative, analytic mode of wording ("Government responses to Famine") and relies on concept cues to indicate the interpretive stakes. This does not imply an absence of moral framing; rather, moral and affective meaning is institutionalized more indirectly in what must be examined and the attached conceptual repertoire.

Cross-case comparison (D4). Both cases institutionalize moral meaning by attaching evaluative significance to the trauma canon and making moral interpretation examinable or repeatable. China moralizes directly through explicit evaluative labels and milestone claims, while Ireland moralizes indirectly through administrative registers and concept cues (e.g., "blood sacrifice") that authorize moral interpretation without providing emotive narrative prose. In both cases, D4 is institutionalized through examinable or repeatable evaluative cues, formatting trauma episodes into resources that can be mobilized discursively during commemorative activation.

5.7 D5 Identity Boundaries and Action Orientation

This section examines identity boundaries and implied orientations to action (D5). In the Chinese textbook, the making of boundaries is explicit and primarily externalized. At the unit level, learning objectives state that students will "认识列强侵华对中国社会的影响；了解中国人民反抗外来侵略…理解其性质和意义" (People's Education Press 2019, p.89; author's translation: "understand the impact of great-power invasion on Chinese society; understand the Chinese people's resistance to foreign aggression... and its nature and

significance"). This is an institutional boundary statement: it identifies the relevant antagonistic category ("foreign aggression") and locates the legitimate collective subject as "the Chinese people" resisting an external other. The "we" is thus stabilized as the national collective, and the "they" is stabilized as the foreign invader- a pedagogically mandated identity boundary as part of what the unit is "for".

This is reinforced by depicting resistance as part of national survival. The textbook quotes Engels, describing this conflict as "这是一场维护中华民族生存的人民战争" (People's Education Press 2019, p.93; author's translation: "a people's war to defend the survival of the Chinese nation"). The phrase "survival of the Chinese nation" works at the boundary: it turns the conflict into an existential struggle for the national community. It suggests that collective action, defense, and resistance are proper, even necessary, orientation toward action derived from the traumatic past. Across Lessons 16–18, the selection and sequencing of invasion, treaty coercion, and "saving the nation from peril" further anchor the idea that national identity is forged under threat and, therefore, based on vigilance and defense of sovereignty.

In contrast, Ireland's syllabus constructs identity boundaries in a more internally differentiated way. In Topic 1, key concepts are "The Union," "sectarianism," and "nation" (Government of Ireland 2003, p.34). Instead of positing a single external antagonist as the primary boundary marker, the syllabus suggests boundaries within and across political communities: Union governance structures, sectarian divisions, and national belonging are core interpretive categories. Rather than relying on emotive vocabulary, Topic 1 cues boundary complexity through the conceptual triad of "The Union", "sectarianism", and "nation", framing political community as internally differentiated rather than defined solely against an external other (Government of Ireland 2003, p.34).

This is taken up in Topic 3, where boundary-making is made central through "partition" and associated concepts, "Ulster Unionism," "allegiance," and "sovereignty" (Government of Ireland, p.36). The specified elements sequence the pursuit of sovereignty into a partitioned political landscape and then into "state building... from Free State to Republic," institutionalizing the national community as historically contested and reconstituted through institutional division. The action orientation here is less about "mobilizing against an external invader" and more about "understanding how competing allegiances and institutional boundaries shape political outcomes." The syllabus thus stabilizes an identity frame in which national belonging is entangled with constitutional arrangements, internal political competition, and the lasting impacts of the partition.

Cross-case comparison (D5). Both cases translate trauma narratives into identity boundaries and implied orientations to action by specifying who belongs to the moral community and what stances follow from the past. China externalizes boundaries through resistance to foreign aggressors and national survival, while Ireland institutionalizes boundary complexity through concepts of Union and partition that foreground contested allegiance and constitutional settlement. Across both cases, institutional texts stabilize boundary cues that later become available for activation in commemorative news discourse.

5.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter shows how colonial and imperial trauma becomes institutionalized as collective memory through various institutional technologies in China and Ireland. In China, the narrative textbook reinforces the crisis arc around external aggression, treaty coercion, and "national humiliation," making a portable moral lexicon and an externalized boundary between the national collective and foreign aggressors. In Ireland, the Leaving Certificate syllabus fixes an examinable interpretive repertoire, canonizing famine governance and

sovereignty–partition as compulsory topics and cueing interpretation through concepts such as sovereignty, allegiance, and partition. In both cases, institutionalization works by fixing what counts as nationally salient trauma and formatting responsibility, moral meaning, and boundaries into reusable narrative resources. Such institutionalized resources provide the baseline for later activation in commemorative news discourse.

Chapter 6 turns to a focused, purposive news sample to examine activation: how these institutionalized narrative resources are invoked, reproduced, reframed, or contested in mainstream discourse within commemorative windows and how the discursive afterlife of institutionalized trauma varies across the two cases.

Overall, the chapter indicates that memory politics is shaped not only by what is remembered, but by the institutional technologies that stabilize trauma narratives and condition what becomes available for later activation.

Chapter 6 Activation in Media Discourse

A Focused Comparative Sample

6.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 5 showed how colonial and imperial trauma is institutionalized within history education by fixing canonical nodes, causal attributions, moral evaluations, and identity boundaries. Chapter 6 discusses activation: how these institutionalized narrative resources reappear, are reworked, and sometimes contested in mainstream news discourse in bounded commemorative windows.

This chapter traces whether public texts reproduce, reframe, or contest institutionalized frames. This builds on previous work showing that mediated environments provide windows for activating the past in public communication (Hoskins 2017) and that journalism is a site of memory work where past narratives are constructed and negotiated (Zelizer 2008). To this end, the same D1–D5 codebook as in Chapter 3 was applied to enable comparability across cases.

6.2 Corpus and Sampling

As stated in Chapter 4, the news corpus is bounded and purposively selected. Two mainstream outlets are sampled per case, with eight texts per case distributed across outlets (China: People's Daily Online and Xinhua; Ireland: The Irish Times and RTÉ News). Texts are drawn from commemoration-centered activation windows (Ireland: 2025-04-06 to 2025-05-07; China: 2025-11-29 to 2025-12-27). The three-step filter process outlined in Chapter 4 is applied, prioritizing texts with a higher historical framing density and more developed

genres, distributed across the window to reduce clustering. The full corpus is listed in Appendix A2.

6.3 Coding Procedure and Linkage to Chapter 5

News texts are coded at the excerpt level using the standard D1–D5 codebook developed in Chapter 3. Frames are understood as interpretive packages that organize causal attribution, moral evaluation, and implied orientation toward action (Entman 1993). Where a media excerpt resonates with an institutionalized resource identified in Chapter 5, such analysis records correspondence without implying a causal pathway.

6.4 Operationalizing Contestation

Contestation is observed when at least two texts or passages within the activation window advance competing framings on D2–D5, thus changing the interpretive conclusions regarding responsibility, moral lesson, boundary membership, or implied stance. In the absence of such divergence, differences across texts are interpreted as differences in emphasis rather than contestation.

6.5 China: Activation Patterns

6.5.1 Trigger and Mnemonic Cues

In the China corpus, activation centers on state memorialization, thus delivering a stable trigger and a reliable commemorative script. Indeed, in its memorial-day report, Xinhua states that the 12th National Memorial Day has just been observed "to honor about 300,000 victims killed by Japanese troops" (Xinhua 2025c). It further establishes the event's canonical boundary by restating that the massacre started when "Japanese troops captured the then-Chinese capital on Dec. 13, 1937" (Xinhua 2025c). From a D1 perspective, the focus of this

activation is a stable trauma node and a stable periodization, mirroring this chapter's institutional selection of invasion, atrocity, and injury to sovereignty as crucial references for later attribution, evidentiary rebuttal, moral evaluation, and boundary work.

6.5.2 People's Daily: Didactic Commemorative Register (PD03)

People's Daily Online reproduces this commemorative frame in a more didactic register, foregrounding remembrance as a civic duty and framing Memorial Day as a moral lesson on "never forgetting" and "valuing peace," not as a site of interpretive contestation (People's Daily Online 2025c). D1 activation, therefore, relies on a few canonical cues (the memorial day, number of victims, and identification of the massacre as a prototypical wartime atrocity) that enable the trauma node to be stable without further narrative elaboration. In D4, evaluation is mainly carried by solemn commemorative vocabulary and a forward-looking lesson structure, fixing affect through ritual remembrance rather than argumentative confrontation. Compared to Xinhua's evidence-based rebuttal framing, People's Daily narrative operations are less about refuting denial claims and more about consolidating the pedagogical "lesson of history" that aligns commemoration with a national moral orientation (People's Daily Online 2025c).

6.5.3 D2 Attribution and Evidentiary Rebuttal

The inclusion of attribution in its coupling with evidentiary accumulation sets this activation window apart. For instance, Xinhua reports that the Nanjing memorial hall collected "573 artefacts" in 2025, which provide "new evidence of war crimes" (Xinhua 2025a). Cited in the same article, a soldier's letter describing killings in "chillingly casual terms" and calling an execution site "very interesting" (Xinhua 2025a) does more than record atrocity; it acts as a discourse-level attribution device that fixes intentionality, cruelty, and perpetration while positioning the archive as a rebuttal resource.

More actively, the same report frames denial as a living opponent: it cites a researcher who explains that "Japan's right-wing forces have long denied the massacre" by insisting that Nanjing's population "had been under 300,000" (Xinhua 2025a). Thus, D2 attribution emerges not as a closed past but as an ongoing struggle over recognition in which "evidence" is deployed to affirm responsibility and contest denial. This attribute also explains why this case's activation leans less toward pluralizing interpretive debate and more toward evidence-oriented closure.

6.5.4 D4 Moral Evaluation and D5 Boundary Cues

Morality is explicitly named in the commemorative coverage. The categorical descriptors are easily grasped without the need for interpretive work. In the memorial-day report, Xinhua informs that the massacre represents "one of the most barbaric episodes of WWII" (Xinhua 2025c). In a longer headline feature, a survivor laments that "the Japanese government still has not officially acknowledged the Nanjing Massacre" and asks, "If they refuse to face the crimes they committed, how can we guarantee such atrocities won't happen again?" (Xinhua 2025c). From D4 ritual mourning, we move into a lesson about recognition and prevention. Later, in the same feature, the writer reports a justice-oriented expression from another survivor: "As long as I live, I will seek justice for the 300,000 compatriots who were slaughtered" (Xinhua 2025c).

These examples also provide boundary cues. The boundary work here is mainly externalized: the in-group is reframed as compatriots and victims, while the out-group is variously anchored in "Japanese troops" and "right-wing forces" associated with denial. At the same time, a boundary nuance relevant for later comparison exists, as this feature provides a conditional boundary statement: "Acknowledging these facts is not about assigning collective

guilt to any people today" (Xinhua 2025c). This statement maintains a moral judgment on past crimes while differentiating between peoples and singling out specific actors in denial.

6.5.5 Contestation or Variation

Within-case contestation is limited in this sample. Rather than incompatible framing conclusions about responsibility or boundary membership, variation appears mainly by emphasis across genres. The memorial-day report foregrounds ritualised mourning and a stable canonical script (Xinhua 2025c). The evidence report foregrounds archival rebuttal against denial (Xinhua 2025a). The feature foregrounds testimony, recognition, and moral lessons for the present (Xinhua 2025b). Together, these variations show activation as a multi-genre process that stabilizes rather than pluralises meaning, even while it mobilises different rhetorical resources. The remaining China items listed in Appendix A2 are consistent with this pattern of genre-based emphasis rather than competing framing conclusions (see Appendix A2).

6.6 Ireland: Activation Patterns

6.6.1 RTÉ Baseline: Ceremonial Activation (RTE01)

RTÉ's coverage of the GPO ceremony provides a largely baseline commemorative script, privileging institutional ritual and official voice, framing activation primarily in terms of reinforcement rather than open contestation (RTÉ News 2025a). In D1, the Rising is activated through the ceremony itself, wreath-laying, reading of the proclamation, attendance of state leaders- anchoring commemoration as the central mnemonic node. In D3, salience is thus structured around officeholders and ceremonial roles, positioning the state as the curator of remembrance. In D4, moral meaning is implied by the solemn register and reiteration of proclaimed ideals rather than direct partisan boundary work. It is analytically beneficial to set

this baseline, given how it contrasts with Irish Times texts in which commemoration becomes a resource contested in contemporary political argument, protest, and policing narratives (The Irish Times 2025a; The Irish Times 2025b).

6.6.2 Trigger and Mnemonic Cues

In the Ireland corpus, commemoration of the Easter Rising shows less even stabilization and is more visibly implicated in contestations over meaning and legitimate political use. In The Irish Times report on Niall Quinn's speech, the commemorative trigger provides an occasion for explicit boundary work. Quinn insists that the sacrifice of 1916 "will not be used to score petty points or back up prejudiced behavior" (The Irish Times 2025b). This is a D4 and D5 move, in which a moral lesson is attached to commemoration, restricting the type of boundary claims in the present that can be considered legitimate under the sign of 1916.

6.6.3 D5 Boundary-making and Contested Political Uses

A second cue is that, rather than having been crystallized into a settled national script, the Rising is an unresolved object of interpretation. Quinn speaks of participants as having "no single vision" except "to be free" and "to free the country from colonialism" (The Irish Times 2025b). This formulation keeps sovereignty central but pluralizes interpretive authority by denying a single authorized meaning. Activation thus moves rapidly from remembrance to what commemoration is allowed to argue.

A second axis of activation occurs where commemorative language legitimates present boundary claims. The Irish Times reports an anti-immigration demonstration "described by the organizers as an Easter Rising commemoration" to honor "those who fought and gave their lives to preserve the Irish nation and create the Irish Republic" (The Irish Times 2025e).

The phrase "preserve the Irish nation" is a direct D5 boundary cue, re-narrating Rising sacrifice into an exclusionary present orientation.

The same report also records immediate counter-framing, noting "a smaller counter-demonstration" and that the gardaí "acted as a cordon between both groups" (The Irish Times 2025e). Thus, contestation here is not only ideological but spatially organized in the commemorative geography of Dublin. Competing boundary projects activate the very same commemorative node. Therefore, this is a clear example of discourse-level contestation as operationalized in Chapter 3 since competing frames shift the implied membership boundaries and the legitimate lesson of the commemoration.

6.6.4 D3 Role Allocation in Disorder Reporting (Derry)

Activation also occurs through the reporting of public order incidents connected to commemorating the Easter Rising in Northern Ireland. In the Irish Times report on the disturbances following a dissident republican parade in Derry, role allocation (D3) is explicit and strongly institutional. Quoting a senior PSNI officer, the report states that young people were "used to shield the masked individuals" during the disorder, calling it "child criminal exploitation" (The Irish Times 2025d). This framing assigns primary agency and blame to the organizers and masked actors while positioning the youths as present and acted upon.

The report then introduces competing claims about what the event was supposed to be. It quotes the same officer: "Despite the claim by the organizers...they wanted to hold a dignified commemoration, what we saw was the complete opposite" (The Irish Times 2025d). This is a direct contestation over legitimacy, with "dignified commemoration" opposed to "disorder." In D5 terms, the boundary between legitimate remembrance and illegitimate violence is explicitly drawn by institutional authority. Significantly, this is not simply "media bias." It is a

publicly articulated frame whereby commemoration is reclassified as a security problem, hence rewriting the moral and political meaning of the commemorative moment. The remaining Ireland items in Appendix A2 are consistent with the contrast between ceremonial reinforcement and contestable political uses of commemoration (see Appendix A2).

6.6.5 Summary of Within-case Contestation

Compared to the China sample, contestation is more visible in the Ireland sample. Competing frames appear across texts and within the commemorative window. Some framings explicitly warn against using commemoration to prejudiced behaviour (The Irish Times 2025b). Others invoke commemoration to justify exclusionary boundary claims (The Irish Times 2025e). Reporting on disorder then recodes commemoration in an institutional security register (The Irish Times 2025d). In this case, activation is thus not mere remembrance but a public contest over the authority to interpret and political legitimacy.

6.7 Cross-case Comparison: What Travels, What transforms

What travels from institutionalization to activation across the two cases is a relatively compact repertoire of narrative resources: canonical nodes, recognizable moral vocabulary, and boundary cues enabling fast interpretive orientation in mainstream news discourse (Xinhua 2025c; People's Daily Online 2025c; RTÉ News 2025a; The Irish Times 2025b). What changes is the visibility and form of contestation. In the Chinese sample, activation stabilizes the commemorative frame and primarily frames conflict as denial, to be rebutted with evidentiary claims rather than interpretive pluralism (Xinhua 2025a). In the Ireland sample, activation becomes much more visible as a site of dispute over interpretive authority and political uses, including competing boundary claims enacted in public space (The Irish Times 2025e).

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter applied discourse-level activation analysis to a bounded corpus using the shared D1–D5 codebook. Evidence shows that institutionalized trauma narratives are reproduced and enhanced in commemorative windows, although the activation modes vary across cases: China shows a largely stabilizing mode of activation through ritual commemoration and evidence-based rebuttal, while Ireland shows more visible contestation in competing moral lessons and boundary claims (Xinhua 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; People's Daily Online 2025c; RTÉ News 2025a; The Irish Times 2025b, 2025d, 2025e). Chapter 7 discusses what such patterns imply for theories of nationalism and the politics of memory.

Chapter 7 Discussion: Implications for Nationalism and Memory Politics

7.1 Introduction

This dissertation examines how imperial and colonial trauma becomes politically usable through collective memory across institutional and discursive sites. Rather than restating the D1–D5 findings, this chapter revisits the debates mapped in Chapter 2 and refines them with comparative evidence. First, by extending cultural-memory accounts of institutional carriers, history education does not "store" trauma but formats it into reusable narrative resources, and different institutional technologies condition narrative closure and portability across cases (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995). Second, consistent with mythscape-oriented approaches, the media chapters show that commemorative cues are repeatedly redeployed for present-oriented boundary work. Still, the visibility and form of contestation systematically vary between the two cases (Bell 2003). Third, drawing on framing as the organization of causal attribution and moral evaluation, this chapter treats contestation as discourse-level frame competition and traces how these interpretive elements move from institutionalization into mainstream news discourse under different conditions (Entman 1993).

7.2 Institutional Technologies and the Form of Institutionalized Memory

One of the critical findings of this comparison is that institutionalization does not result in one textual form but works through different institutional technologies, which make specific narrative operations durable and repeatable. The difference between the narrative textbook in China and the syllabus framework in Ireland strengthens the comparison by showing how state-authorized memory is stabilized through different modes of textual control and pedagogical reproduction.

In the Chinese material, institutionalization worked through narrative sequencing and evaluative language, periodizing modern history as a crisis of invasion, coercion, and survival. Causal attribution, moral evaluation, and boundary-making were relatively coherently linked in a crisis arc, which was readily to repeat. Institutionalization in Ireland took place less in continuous narrative prose and more in an examinable agenda structured by topics, elements, and concept cues. The syllabus did not fix one closed storyline but stabilized a repertoire of interpretive problems around sovereignty, partition, and political belonging, allowing much more moral complexity in framing the past.

If institutionalization is approached as an issue of institutional form, the comparison can be located at the mechanism level rather than national content. As the preceding chapter showed, the Chinese textbook stabilized a coherent crisis arc through narrative sequencing and evaluative labels, while the Irish syllabus stabilized an examinable repertoire through topic structure and concept cues. This is in line with those who understand collective remembering as drawing on narrative templates and textual resources rather than reproducing the past in its raw form (Wertsch 2002) and with the more general line of argument that memory is mediated by cultural forms rather than reducible to the events remembered (Erll 2011). This implies that institutions do not merely preserve trauma; they format it for repetition, assessment, and later reuse (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995).

7.3 From Institutionalization to Activation: What Travels and Why

The media analysis suggests that what travels from institutionalization to activation is not the whole narrative but a compact repertoire of cues quickly accessible within the constraints of genre, attention, and public controversy. In both cases, the three most portable resources were canonical nodes anchoring commemoration, moral shorthand providing evaluation without extended argument, and boundary cues marking the relevant moral community and implied

stance. In that sense, activation does not reproduce the past in full but mobilizes a package of interpretive moves connecting historical references to present relevance and organizing causal attribution, moral evaluation, and implied orientation in public discourse (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Bell 2003; Entman 1993).

The Chinese sample demonstrates how a stable institutionalized canon supports a largely stabilizing activation pattern. Commemoration remained anchored to a fixed node and was reinforced through ritualized acknowledgment and evidence-based rebuttal of denial. Therefore, while contestation existed, it was mainly structured as denial and rebuttal rather than plural competition among legitimate interpretive frames. Variation in emphasis across genres did not rest on incompatible conclusions about responsibility or membership boundaries.

The Irish sample shows a different pattern: activation increasingly becomes a site of struggle over interpretive authority and political use. Competing frames over who may legitimately speak for the meaning of 1916, what moral lessons commemoration should preserve, and whether memory may authorize present boundary claims arose. Contestation extends from symbolic debate into the politics of public space, where rival framings are enacted in counter-demonstration and policing. Thus, activation works less as a site of ceremonial repetition and more as a site of visible frame contestation.

This comparison suggests that institutionalization is not a mechanical determinant of activation but shapes what narrative resources are most readily available when commemorative windows open. In this respect, journalism can be viewed as a site of memory work in which inherited narratives are pieced together, negotiated, and made usable in the present (Zelizer 2008). Media ecology also matters: the more unified commemorative framing in the Chinese sample was consistent with a state-led environment, whereas the more open

contestation in the Irish sample reflected a liberal-pluralist setting. Under Bell's (2003) notion of mythscape, these activation windows therefore represent moments when national myths re-enter contested discursive space where the struggle over interpretive authority and boundary claims is renewed. In this respect, in China, contestation was more bounded to denial and evidentiary rebuttal; in Ireland, it was more openly pluralized regarding political use, boundary claims, and the governance of public space.

7.4 Contestation as a Discursive Phenomenon

Contestation is understood as discourse-level frame competition rather than audience-level belief distribution. A frame is therefore considered to compete when it shifts the public articulation of the meaning of responsibility, moral lesson, boundary membership, or implied stance. The objective here is to map out divergence in publicly available framings rather than to infer reception at the level of the individual or the media effect.

This approach aligns with those who treat social memory as a set of mnemonic practices across various social sites rather than a single object called collective memory (Olick and Robbins 1998). It follows that contestation varies in form and institutional location rather than simply being present or absent. In the Chinese corpus, contestation was institutionally framed as denial versus evidentiary rebuttal, narrowing the range of publicly legitimate alternatives and reinforcing moral closure. In the Irish corpus, contestation was institutionally framed in disputes over the authority to interpret, political use, and claims to the boundary, including struggles over who may speak in the name of the commemorative nation. Therefore, memory politics must be studied not only in terms of what is remembered but also in how disputes over meaning are organized, by whom, and through which authorized vocabularies and evidentiary practices.

This also helps clarify the relationship between institutionalization and contestation. Institutionalization does not suppress disagreement; it structures the terrain on which disagreement can be publicly legible. In China, the institutionalized lexicon of invasion, humiliation, and national survival provided a basis for strong moral closure; thus, contestation appeared mainly around denial and recognition. In Ireland, the institutionalized repertoire of sovereignty, sacrifice, and contested belonging provided the basis for a wider range of publicly plausible framings. Contestation, therefore, should be understood less as a measure of the quantity of disagreement and more as a property of the institutional and discursive organization of memory.

7.5 Implications for Nationalism and Colonial Trauma

These results have also been integrated into more general theories of nationalism. Nationalism is often theorized as an imagined community and the routine reproduction of national categories through everyday symbols and cues (Anderson 2006; Billig 1995). This dissertation contributes to this insight by identifying the institutional pathways through which such categories become stabilized in historical narration. The key implication here is that trauma narratives may be nationalist resources only insofar as they are stabilized as moral and boundary templates, not memories.

In the Chinese case, nationalist boundary-making was thus linked to the trauma lexicon and survival against the threat of foreign invasion, making the nation the natural subject of history. In Ireland, though the institutional form differed, the nationalist salience did not: the syllabus stabilizes sovereignty, partition, and allegiance as interpretive anchors, thus placing contested political community at the heart of what students must learn. National identity, therefore, was institutionalized not in a unitary triumphalist script but in a structured field of problems and concepts through which the nation could be narrated.

This dissertation adds to the debate on colonial trauma and the politics of memory by showing that trauma does not become politically usable simply because it is painful or morally charged. Indeed, following Alexander (2004), cultural trauma does not exist per se in any event; it is socially produced through ascription of responsibility and reconstruction of collective identity. The comparative contribution here is how such a process is made durable: education fixes the narrative resources through which responsibility, legitimacy, and belonging were articulated. In contrast, subsequent media activation mobilizes those resources into public discourses that either confirm closure or allow further contestation. D4 and D5 repeatedly converge in activation in both cases: moral evaluation implies a boundary and thus a present-oriented stance. This was not a rhetorical flourish but the way the past became politically usable. Memory should not be taken as background context for nationalism but as one of the institutional resources through which moral claims and collective boundaries are repeatable in public life.

In both cases, trauma became nationalist not by recall but through institutionalized moralization and boundary-making, which made the past politically usable.

7.6 Scope conditions and Limitations

If these implications prove relevant, they must be understood within the constraints of the research design. Since the analysis was conducted only at the discourse level, and not at the reception level, it does not assess how widely particular frames were received or accepted.

However, it has also pointed out widespread, publicly contestable framings that precede and shape the available language of legitimate belonging.

Of course, the institutional texts are also incommensurate across cases — from a narrative textbook in China to a syllabus framework in Ireland. Again, this need not be an imperfection

in the study design, but it can be considered a condition of comparison since the analysis is undertaken at the level of narrative operations and how different education forms organize selection, attribution, moral evaluation, and boundary drawing.

The media corpus was thus bounded and purposive rather than exhaustive, making comparison across cases possible using replicable filters and fixed activation windows. Therefore, the results must be read as mechanism-oriented rather than population-level findings: they indicate how institutionalized narratives became available for activation, structurally shaping contestation in specific discursive conditions. For this reason, its design bears a greater affinity to work on mnemonic practices, structured comparison, and comparative memory politics rather than being intended for statistical generalization (Olick and Robbins 1998; George and Bennett 2005; Zubrzycki and Woźny 2020).

Even within the contours of its design, though, the dissertation clarifies the pathway through which institutional carriers shape the narrative resources later made available for public activation and contestation. Instead of an across-the-board introduction or reduction of memory, variation in contestation across the two cases turned out to be inscribed in differences of institutional form and discursive conditions, not in any straightforward contrast between memory and its absence. In that respect, Chapter 8 ties up the research question and overall argument more directly.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This dissertation answers how colonial and imperial trauma is institutionalized in history education as collective memory and how these narratives are activated, reframed, and contested in public discourse. Using a mechanism-oriented comparative design and a shared D1–D5 codebook across China and Ireland, this research moved beyond a parallel description of national stories to explain how trauma-related narrative resources are institutionalized for stabilization and made publicly accessible in commemorative discourse.

The first key finding concerned institutionalization: In Chapter 5, the cases institutionalized trauma-linked narratives as state-authorized memory infrastructure but in very different institutional forms. In China, the narrative textbook format consolidated a consistent crisis arc and a readily reproducible moral lexicon. In Ireland, the Leaving Certificate syllabus does not present itself as a continuous narrative but as an examinable interpretation framework around topics and concepts such as sovereignty, partition, allegiance, and sacrifice. Differences such as these do not represent barriers to comparison; they are part of the explanation. Each system formatted the past into durable narrative operations that defined what would eventually be teachable, examinable, and repeatable.

The second key finding relates to activation: Chapter 6 demonstrated that once institutionalized resources are embedded in mainstream commemorative news discourse, they travel in a compressed form. Canonical nodes, moral shorthand, and boundary cues enable rapid interpretive orientation without reproducing the full historical narrative. However, visibility and forms of contestation differ between cases. Activation in China is stabilized for meaning through ritualized commemoration and evidence-oriented rebuttal, whereas in Ireland, it more visibly becomes a site of dispute over claims to interpretive authority,

political use, and boundary claims. Accordingly, activation does not simply replay the institutional narratives; it is a present-oriented reuse of compressed narrative resources under changed discursive conditions (Bell 2003).

These findings support three broader claims. First, in this dissertation, the institutionalization-activation mechanism has been specified in terms of institutional form and how various educational formats have differentially stabilized different kinds of narrative operations, thereby shaping what becomes portable for later activation. Second, this dissertation has situated activation and contestation as discourse-level processes that identify how public texts organize and contest responsibility, moral meaning, and boundary claims without attempting to identify how belief is distributed among audiences. Third, this study shows how the value of structured comparison is developed through the study of memory politics by comparing narrative operations across cases, not simply by juxtaposing national histories (George and Bennett 2005).

This also contributes to debates on trauma and nationalism. The evidence suggests that trauma is politically consequential not simply by recall but also through institutionalization and activation processes that link responsibility, moral meaning, and identity boundaries to the past. In that sense, this dissertation is compatible with cultural trauma being socially produced through those processes that make the past morally and politically available for use by a collective identity (Alexander 2004). The comparison is not meant to suggest that one national context is truer than the other but how different institutional and discursive arrangements organize the same fundamental work of memory politics by stabilizing narrative resources for present-oriented moral and boundary work.

These conclusions are thus to be read within the scope conditions of the design: this is a discourse-level analysis, not a measure of audience reception. The institutional texts also differ in form across cases; again, this is treated as an explanatory condition rather than a flaw since the comparison is at the narrative operations rather than genre level. Finally, the media corpus is bounded and purposive, focusing on mainstream outlets and commemorative windows. Thus, the findings are mechanism-oriented rather than population-level.

The design can be developed further by extending the media corpus across platforms and genres, including reception-oriented evidence, or tracing other institutional carriers such as examination materials, museums, and commemorative sites.

In summary, this dissertation demonstrates that colonial and imperial trauma becomes politically salient through two interacting processes: institutionalization in history education and activation in public discourse. In memory politics, what counts is not just what is remembered but how the past is formatted into stable narrative resources and mobilized, intensified, or contested in public life. By tracing this mechanism comparatively in China and Ireland, the dissertation provides an empirically grounded account of how mnemonic infrastructures shape nationalist narration and boundary-making across institutional arenas.

Appendices

Appendix A1: Educational Materials Analysed (Textbooks/Curriculum)

A1.1 Core Materials (Main Analysis / Coding)

China (Narrative Sample): People's Education Press (2019) *普通高中教科书·历史 必修：中外历史纲要（上）* [Senior secondary textbook: History (Compulsory) – Outline of Chinese and World History (Vol. 1)].

Analysed Unit/lessons: Lesson 16 *两次鸦片战争* (The Opium Wars, author's translation); Lesson 17 *国家出路的探索与列强侵略的加剧* (Exploring China's Path and Intensified Imperialist Aggression, author's translation); Lesson 18 *挽救民族危亡的斗争*(Struggles to Save the Nation from Peril, author's translation).

Ireland (Institutional Text): Government of Ireland (2003) *Leaving Certificate History Syllabus* (Ordinary and Higher Levels).

Analysed Field/Topic Blocks: *Irish history, 1815–1993*: Topic 1 "Ireland and the Union, 1815–1870"; Topic 3 "The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912–1949".

A1.2 Contextual Materials (Framework / Triangulation, Not Coded Line-by-line)

China (Framework): Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2020) *普通高中历史课程标准（2017 年版 2020 年修订）* [General High School History Curriculum Standards (2017 edition, revised 2020)].

(Used to contextualise institutional aims and competency framing; not coded systematically.)

Ireland (Triangulation): National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (n.d.) *Junior Cycle History: Specification*.

(Used for contextual triangulation only; not coded systematically.)

Appendix A2: Media Corpus (Activation Windows and Item List)

A2.1 Sampling frame (One Paragraph)

Activation is analysed using a bounded and purposive mainstream-news corpus. Two outlets are sampled per case. Texts are drawn from a commemoration-centred activation window and selected using the sampling filter defined in Chapter 4 (genre priority and historical framing density), with the final corpus distributed across the window to reduce clustering.

A2.2 Ireland (Activation Window: Easter Rising Commemoration Period)

Window: 2025-04-06 to **2025-05-07** (commemoration-centred window; extended to include the Arbour Hill State Commemoration)

Outlets: *The Irish Times*; *RTÉ News*

The Irish Times (6 Items)

IT01: "Put him in to get him out" — Brian Maye on Easter Rising veteran Joe McGuinness, **07 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

IT02: Former Ireland international Niall Quinn criticises people who use Easter Rising to 'score petty points', **19 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

IT03: Daughter of Easter Rising participant 'proud' to attend GPO commemorative event, **20 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

IT04: Police attacked with petrol bombs and fireworks after a dissident republican parade in Derry, **21 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

IT05: Thousands take part in anti-immigration protest in Dublin, **26 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

IT06: Council retakes possession of home of 1916 Rising leader after alleged trespassers vacate building, **29 April 2025**, *The Irish Times*

RTÉ News (2 Items)

RTE01: 1916 Rising ceremony takes place at Dublin's GPO, **20 April 2025**, *RTÉ News*

RTE02: 1916 Rising leaders remembered at Arbour Hill ceremony, **07 May 2025**, *RTÉ News*

A2.3 China (Activation Window: Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Period)

Window: 2025-11-29 to 2025-12-27 (±14 days around 13 December)

Outlets: *Xinhua*; *People's Daily Online / People.cn* (English)

Xinhua (4 Items)

XH01: China memorial hall collects new evidence of Nanjing Massacre, **05 December 2025**, *Xinhua*

XH02: Feature: Nanjing Massacre survivors' testimonies renew calls in Japan to confront aggression history, **12 December 2025**, *Xinhua*

XH03: China holds national memorial for Nanjing Massacre victims, calling for remembrance of history, **13 December 2025**, *Xinhua*

XH04: Feature: doves fly into sky as Nanjing stands still, **14 December 2025**, *Xinhua*

People's Daily (4 Items)

PD01: Families remember Nanjing Massacre victims as national memorial day approaches, **01 December 2025**, *People's Daily Online*

PD02: New records substantiate truths of war, **08 December 2025**, *People's Daily Online*

PD03: To remember the Nanjing Massacre, **11 December 2025**, *People's Daily Online*

PD04: Testimonies to the truth: Victims of the Nanjing Massacre share their heartbreaking stories with the world, **12 December 2025**, *People's Daily Online*

Appendix A3: Codebook (Dimensions + Definitions + Examples)

The theoretical basis for the D1–D5 dimensions is outlined in Chapter 3; Appendix A3 presents the operational definitions and indicators used for coding.

A3.1 Coding Unit
Coding is conducted at the level of excerpts (not whole documents). Each excerpt is coded against D1–D5.

A3.2 Dimensions

D1 Selection and Boundary of Trauma
Definition: What is selected as canonical trauma content and how the boundaries of the trauma narrative are delimited (events, periodisation, mandatory elements).

Example indicator(s): unit titles framing crisis/trauma; required syllabus "elements" anchoring famine/sovereignty/partition.

Example excerpt label: "late Qing as 'full of suffering'/'saving the nation' (textbook)" or "Government responses to Famine (syllabus element)".

D2 Causal Emplotment and Attribution
Definition: How events are linked into causal chains and where responsibility/agency is placed (external powers, state policy, governance failures, institutional consequences).

Example indicator(s): interest-driven intrusion → war → treaty coercion; famine explained through "responses" as an examinable analytic agenda.

D3 Role Allocation
Definition: How actors are positioned (victims, perpetrators, heroes, administrators, collective agents) and whether agency is unified or plural.

Example indicator(s): "the people" as collective agent; syllabus lists of personalities across nationalist/unionist lines.

D4 Moral Evaluation and Affective Framing

Definition: Evaluative language, moral lessons, and affective cues attached to events (humiliation, sacrifice, legitimacy, responsibility, moral complexity).
Example indicator(s): explicit labels such as "national humiliation"; concept cues such as "blood sacrifice" tied to sovereignty as examinable moral problem.

D5 Identity Boundaries and Action Orientation
Definition: "We/they" boundary cues and implied stance/action orientation (resistance, defence, constitutional settlement, contested allegiance).

Example indicator(s): "foreign aggressors" vs national collective; "partition/allegiance/Ulster Unionism" as boundary complexity.

A3.3 Rule for "Contestation"

Contestation is identified where competing frames generate different interpretive conclusions (responsibility, moral lesson, boundary, action orientation) across texts within the activation window.

Appendix A4: Media Coding Log (Metadata + Excerpt-level Coding)

A4.1 How to Read this Log

This log records the metadata and excerpt-level coding decisions for the 16-item media corpus listed in Appendix A2. Excerpts (not whole articles) are coded against D1–D5; "high-density excerpt(s)" refers to passages where historical framing and at least two narrative dimensions are clearly observable.

A4.2 Ireland (The Irish Times; RTÉ News)

Item ID	Outlet	Date	Genre (News/Feature/Opinion)	Activation Anchor	High-density Excerpt(s) Used (Short Descriptor)	Dimensions Triggered (D1-D5)	Contestation Present? (Y/N)	One Line Coding Memo
IT01	The Irish Tmes	07 Apr 2025	Opinion/Diary	Easter Rising Period	Veteran memory as personal/heritage narrative	D1, D4	N	Uses personal remembrance to stabilized commemorative tone
IT02	The Irish Tmes	19 Apr 2025	News/Report	GPO Commemoration Week	"score petty points", "prejudiced behaviour"; "no single vision"	D4, D5	Y	Polices legitimacy of political uses of commemoration
IT03	The Irish Times	20 Apr 2025	News/Report	GPO Ceremony	Attendance/Heritage framing; Intergenerational pride	D1, D3, D4	N	Reinforces ceremonial activation and continuity
IT04	The Irish Tmes	21 Apr 202	News/Report	Derry Parade (NI)	PSNI Framing: "shield...", "child criminal	D3, D4, D5	Y	Reclassifies commemoration through security/legitimacy frames

		5			exploitation"; "dignified commemoration" vs disorder			
IT05	The Irish Tmes	26 Apr 2025	News/Crime	Protest Framed as Commemoration	"preserve the Irish nation"; counterdemonstration; policing/cordon	D5 (primary), D4	Y	Competing boundary claims enacted as public-space conflict
IT06	The Irish Tmes	29 Apr 2025	News/Courts	Heritage Property of 1916 Leader	Ownership/Heritage Legitimacy; Symbolic Capital	D1, D5	Y	Memory as resource contested via property/authority
RTE01	RTÉ News	20 Apr 2025	News/Report	GPO State Ceremony	Ritual Script: Wreath/Proclamation; Official Voice	D1, D3, D4	N	Provides baseline commemorative script and register
RTE02	RTÉ News	07 May 2025	News/Report	Arbour Hill Ceremony	State Commemoration + Legitimacy Register	D1, D3, D4	N	Extends institutional commemorative framing beyond GPO

A4.3 China (Xinhua; People's Daily Online)

Item ID	Outlet	Date	Genre (News/Feature/Opinion)	Activation Anchor	High-density Excerpt(s) Used (Short Descriptor)	Dimensions Triggered (D1-D5)	Contestation Present? (Y/N)	One Line Coding Memo
XH01	Xinhua	05 Dec 2025	News/Report	Memorial Hall/ Evidence	"573 artifacts"; denial rebuttal; archival testimony	D2, D4, D5	Y (limited)	Contestation structured as evidence vs denial
XH02	Xinhua	12 Dec 2025	Feature	Survivor Testimony	Calls for acknowledgement; Boundary nuance on collective guilt	D4, D5	Y (limited)	Moral lesson + Boundary Refinement via Testimony
XH03	Xinhua	13 Dec 2025	News/Report	National Memorial Day	"about 300,000 victims"; canonical node + ritual script	D1, D4	N	stabilized Commemorative Frame and Canonical Shorthand
XH04	Xinhua	14 Dec 2025	Feature	Post-ceremony scene	Symbolic Imagery (Doves/Standing Still)	D4	N	Affective reinforcement rather than causal attribution
PD01	People's Daily Online	01 Dec 2025	News/Report	Memorial Day Approaches	Families Remembering; Anticipatory Commemoration	D1, D4	N	Canonical node activated through civic remembrance
PD02	People's Daily	08 Dec	News/Report	Evidence /Records	Records Substantiate truth;	D2, D4	Y (limited)	Supports attribution via "truth" framing

	Online	2025			Moral lesson			(less argumentative)
PD03	People's Daily Online	11 Dec 2025	News/Commentary	"Remember" framing	"lesson of history" orientation; peace/never forget register	D4, D5	N	Didactic commemorative register; consolidates orientation
PD04	People's Daily Online	12 Dec 2025	Feature	Testimonies	Victim stories; Affective Reinforcement	D4, D5	N	Testimony used to stabilize moral meaning

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