

Rethinking Difficult Pasts: Bloody Sunday (1972) as a Case Study

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Introduction

About half way down Rossville Street in the Catholic-nationalist Bogside area of Derry, Northern Ireland, stands a memorial to the thirteen civilians shot dead while peacefully marching against internment on January 30, 1972. The site of the memorial, known locally as Speaker's Corner, was an obvious, logical and highly symbolic one¹, given that the victims had died on the spot or close by, in Glenfada Park, and had used the already-existing concrete platform at the corner to take cover on the day of the tragic shootings. The event commemorated by this memorial, 'Bloody Sunday', was a highly contested event (Spillman and Conway, 2007; Conway, 2007, 2005, 2003). Indeed, it could be considered a good example of a 'difficult past' (Fine, 2001; Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Jordan, 2006; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991; Olick and Robbins, 1998) that gave rise to emotionally and politically charged and competing impulses to remember and to forget among both victims and perpetrators.

Reviewing the sociology of memory literature in their study of post-apartheid remembrance in South Africa, Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007) argue that two possible kinds of commemoration can take place as responses to difficult pasts – a multivocal one in which a shared object gives expression to different meanings of an event and a fragmented one involving different temporal and spatial commemorations speaking to divergent publics. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a good example of a Durkheimian multivocal commemoration of 'building and enhancing social solidarity despite disagreement' (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002: 47) and the Yitzhak Rabin memorial exemplifies the second, anti-Durkheimian kind (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002). In this and another influential work (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002),

Vinitzky-Seroussi proposes and elaborates a conceptual model that helps explain different commemorative outcomes focusing on three key factors: the influence of what she calls ‘agents of memory’, the salience of the past in the present, and the prevailing political climate. Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi go on to put forward, based on an analysis of a museum in post-apartheid South Africa, an alternative third response of ‘overarching consensus’, in which the focus is on carefully managing the form and content of commemorative objects to promote what they call a ‘controlled consensus’.

Like South Africa, Northern Ireland is a society characterised by ongoing and deep sectarian division and an unsettled² political culture, heightened during the 1970s, the 1980s, and early 1990s, and thus offers an interesting point of comparison with other unsettled societies with controversial pasts such as Israel and South Africa. In this article, focusing on the Bloody Sunday memorial and to a lesser extent the annual commemorative march, I attempt to suggest that, in the 1970s through to the early 1990s, the Bloody Sunday case was an instructive example of the fragmented model and that from this period on it evolved into a consensual commemoration as the remembering society underwent political and social change. During this more recent period, I argue that Bloody Sunday commemoration revealed a convergence in the meanings associated with the event, one aligned with the earlier, non-hegemonic interpretation of NICRA (Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association). I also specify the conditions under which this is likely to develop. Based on this, I propose a model of consensual commemoration closely resembling Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi’s ‘controlled consensus’ framework but departing from it by emphasising the core idea of the importance of convergence between different ‘preferred meanings’ of the past articulated across two key mnemonic sites

rather than the closing down or omission of potentially disruptive narratives within a single memory site suggested by their analysis. Because Vinitzky-Seroussi's analysis lacks a long-range, historical vantage, the contingent and indeterminate nature of commemoration is not theorised very well and the Bloody Sunday case allows for a more extended temporal distance from the original event to help us better understand changing public representations of difficult or controversial pasts.

The focus of this article is the Bloody Sunday memorial and march although a multitude of cultural texts including murals, exhibitions, websites, books, posters, songs, poems and so forth now commemorate this event. Apart from the murals, the memorial is the only site of memory that is co-opted in the annual commemoration march. During this march a minute's silence is observed at the memorial, where floral wreaths are laid and prayers enacted earlier in the day, one site of memory shaping while at the same time being shaped by the other. Unlike the march, however, it has a permanent, year-round presence. It fixes time in space. With the one exception of a stained-glass window in the entrance porch of the city's Guildhall³, which was the product of a motion put before the city council and reflected 'state' memory more than it did local memory⁴, all of these Bloody Sunday memory sites were the result of the active efforts of bottom-up, grassroots civil society groups and explicitly and directly take issue with the official British government memory of the event encoded in the report of the Widgery Tribunal⁵.

The march that resulted in the shooting dead of thirteen civilians on January 30, 1972, was one march among a myriad number organised across the province during its civil rights struggle. At this time, protest marches were part of the 'repertoire of contention' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001) of disaffected nationalists aggrieved by

the discriminatory actions of a hegemonic unionist government in housing, voting practices, and employment that affected their life chances. This event can be understood on two different though related levels. On the one hand, it is an historical event, the general contours and details of which are now well-known and not in dispute. A march against internment organised by the local Derry branch of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association took place in Derry city. It made its way from the Creggan estate to William Street where a confrontation between some of the marchers and the British army took place. A barricade was erected across the street to prevent the march going to the city centre. Following the confrontation, an incursion by the army into the Bogside took place and thirteen civilians were shot and died by the soldiers in the space of a few minutes, all shot in broad daylight and under the public gaze of the camera (Conway, 2005).

But Bloody Sunday also has currency at the level of myth and specifically as an anti-British myth. Along with the Hunger Strikes⁶ of the 1980s (Graham and Whelan, 2007), it became a powerful symbol of that community's experiences of state violence and oppression and of a longer history of colonial domination and victimisation. While Bloody Sunday also has meaning for the other tradition – unionists – and is the focus of commentary in local newspapers with a primarily Protestant readership, this article approaches the memory of Bloody Sunday from one side of this divided society, that is to say, from the nationalist side. However, as within Northern Irish nationalism, no single dominant interpretation of the event prevails among unionists and these meanings have undergone change over time from a dominant construction of the event as an example of nationalist civil disobedience to Bloody Sunday as an example of state injustice against the Other (Conway, 2005). Significantly, there is no Protestant organised

Bloody Sunday commemoration – itself an index of the ‘our past’ frame of reference that shapes sectarian commemorative activity in Northern Ireland (Longley, 2001) – although some Protestants do attend the nationalist organised commemorative events and some Protestant leaders have been invited to participate in them in recent years.

Methods and Data

The data for this case study analysis comes from thirty-one in-depth, semi-structured interviews carried out with members of the victims’ families, memory choreographers, former civil rights activists, and community leaders over a six-month period of fieldwork in Derry. These interviews followed an interview schedule but were flexible enough to take account of different levels of knowledge of the memorial and other sites of memory among informants. Because I was interested in a particular group of people – those directly involved in organising Bloody Sunday commemoration events or those involved in controversies associated with it – I followed a purposive snowball sampling procedure (Sarantakos, 1993) after making first contact with memory choreographers. I also draw on participant observation data of visitors to the memorial and of the Sunday morning memorial service that takes place at the site during the annual 2004/2005 Bloody Sunday commemorations. In addition, from archival research I examined the original architect’s designs for the memorial, posters announcing the unveiling of the memorial and other commemorative events, as well as newspaper opinion pieces written in the early 1970s when the planning for the memorial took place and subsequent commentary in the local press. Finally, I draw on political speeches made at the memorial during various commemorative events.

To help contextualise this analysis, I begin by grounding the present study within existing collective memory research specifically with respect to the social memory of memorials, of which there is a burgeoning literature (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991; Gregory and Lewis, 1988). I also locate it within the literature on memory in the Northern Irish context. This is followed by a narrative history of the memorial focusing on the role of the Derry branch of NICRA in co-ordinating efforts to plan the memorial, secure the site, raise monies for its construction, and organise the unveiling. With respect to the march, my analysis draws on archival, interview, and participant observation data. I hope to show how the memorial was a repository of a non-violent political discourse articulated by NICRA and that this collided with an alternative discourse put forward by SF, manifested at its march, at which Bloody Sunday was pressed into service in the construction of a myth of nationalist victimhood reflected in historical asymmetries of political and discursive power. By the 1990s, the meaning of the memorial and march articulated with and reinforced one another as agreement developed around the quest for power to define what happened on Bloody Sunday. Then, drawing on the work of Jordan (2006) and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002), I examine the factors that help explain the changing form of the memorial (and march) including the role of memory choreographers, the salience of the past in the present, and the evolving political landscape. I look at the reception the memorial received and the extent to which it resonated with its intended audience and the conflicts, tensions and countercurrents that mediated the memorial's capacity to anchor NICRA's preferred meaning of the events of January 30, 1972. Finally, I look at how this site of memory articulated with the annual commemorative march.

Setting the Context

There is a large and growing literature on the sociology of memorialisation and the contested nature of this process particularly with respect to what are termed ‘difficult pasts’ (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991; Misztal, 2003). Because little consensus may exist about such things as who are the victims and who are the perpetrators of troubling pasts, the nature of these pasts, the nature of the state’s role in the past, and how much responsibility for the past should be carried by different actors, the project of remembering traumatic events becomes particularly fraught and problematic. Put another way, remembering the past can be as much disabling as it is enabling and the capacity of social groups to articulate their preferred interpretation and meaning of the past is bound up with asymmetries in the distribution of power in society between cultural centres and peripheries (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Spillman, 1997). These narratives of the past are in turn mobilised in the construction of identity story-lines at an individual and collective level and find concrete expression in various artefacts and practices of commemoration (Bell 2006). Some scholars have found the construct of trauma to have some analytical value with respect to historical events that throw a depth charge into this narrative story-line of a group or collectivity, but the construction of a trauma narrative depends upon cultural mediation (Alexander, 2003; Bell, 2006). In this account, events such as the Holocaust could be said to constitute culturally mediated traumas (Alexander, 2003).

A number of empirical studies of memorialisation across quite different national contexts provide evidence for the point that memorials to difficult pasts like this are frequently fought over. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz’s well-known work on

memorialisation in respect of the Vietnam War, for example, examines the rich complexity around remembrance of this event in the United States in answer to the seemingly simple question of ‘how is commemoration without consensus, or without pride, possible?’ (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991: 379; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002). In this example we see an important symbolic struggle between official state actors and vernacular grassroots groups over the ‘proper’ way to remember a contested event that lies somewhere between a triumphant and a traumatic one. This struggle played out in the competition to select an appropriate memorial design and subsequent additions to it (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991). The end result was a memorial whose simple form and content expressed ambivalence yet, against expectations, brilliantly succeeded in creating what David Kertzer refers to as ‘solidarity without consensus’ (Kertzer, 1988: 69). In this case, in strong contrast with the Bloody Sunday example, the moral categories of ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ are ambiguous and there is much more state activity and mobilisation around Vietnam War memory and commemoration. In the Bloody Sunday case, competing definitions of the situation got in the way of the construction of a coherent narrative about what happened. But a common feature of both of these stories was a concern about constructing a memorial that would do justice to the dead being remembered – simplicity being the order of the day – and the sacrifices they made while at the same time giving expression to each society’s highest values of democracy and peace.

Vinitzky-Seroussi’s work also addresses itself to struggles over the meaning of the past with respect to the Yitzhak Rabin memorial in Israel. In this interesting case, two memorials or ‘spaces to remember’ exist, one at Rabin’s grave and another at the spot

where he was assassinated (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002). The inscription on the Rabin grave memorial, in contrast to the Bloody Sunday one, is non-committal about the perpetrators and omits any mention of what happened and the context in which it took place. The memorial at the place of his death, on the otherhand, reflects a more elaborated than a restricted commemorative discourse. The present day Bloody Sunday memorial inscription is an example of an elaborated discourse though up until the mid-1990s the only framing of the memorial was the simple inscription that ‘Their epitaph is in the continuing struggle for democracy’. Although the first commemoration at the site of Rabin’s death was divested of political content, subsequent ones were not and elaborated a more politicised discourse. We learn that the Rabin family’s expressed wishes about the form and content of the memorials were not fully met and the final design, like the Vietnam memorial, was the outcome of political compromises. Vinitzky-Seroussi claims that ‘the two sites clearly transmit diverse messages’, contrasting ‘the restrained and dignified gravesite’ with the ‘politicised’ assassination memorial that speaks to Rabin but, crucially, to a ‘great deal beyond that’ (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002: 43) helping the memorial resonate with multiple audiences. In this example we see heavy state activity around the memory of Rabin, in contrast to the example of Bloody Sunday, and the case also points to the capacity of memorials, through their location and inscriptions, to fix or channel the meanings ascribed to a difficult past in particular ways and to reach particular audiences at particular times. Importantly, Vinitzky-Seroussi isolates the sociological factors – active memory entrepreneurship, for instance – involved in this interpretative meaning-making process.

Contestation around memories of the past, articulated at memorial sites inscribed in geographical space, is also the focus of Simon's work on Taiwan. As with the Vietnam War, Bloody Sunday and Yitzhak Rabin examples, memories of a difficult past, in this case the massacre of February 28, fuel political claim-making about Taiwanese identity under Japanese colonial rule and more recently under mainland Chinese power elites. At the annual commemoration ceremony at the 2:28 memorial, grievances about Japanese rule are expressed in politicised banners and public discourse. These difficult memories co-exist alongside more benign interpretations of colonisation as the conduit for the modernisation of Taiwanese society. The cracking of Japanese colonialism after World War II ushered in a new era of Chinese rule but even this carried its own polysemic meanings. For some the commemoration of 2:28, in both official state ceremonies and everyday bodily practices such as visits to Japanese coffee shops, became an occasion for constructing an anti-China and pro-Japanese myth and the chosen theme for the 1997 commemoration – 'Remember 2:28; don't be Chinese' – articulated this very clearly. For others, it was an occasion for critical claim-making with respect to the Japanese legacy in Taiwan and drawing attention to the less than savoury aspects of its power. These competing memories register a quarrel over 'the right to control social memory' (Simon, 2003: 125) and point to the mobilisable potential of the past as a resource in the narrative construction of national group identity (Ray, 2006).

Within Northern Ireland in recent years, dealing with the legacies of this society's traumatic past and revitalising its moral tissue has become a topic of frequent public and political discourse (Hamber, 2007; Graham and Whelan, 2007; Longley, 2001). Lundy and McGovern, 2001; Hamber, 2007; Graham and Whelan, 2007), adding to an

expanding literature on remembrance in post-conflict societies or ‘societies coming out of conflict’ (Hamber, 2007; Brewer, 2006; Ray, 2006). Indeed, the project of securing a long-term and sustainable peace in Northern Ireland may well turn on a capacity of its two divided communities and the British state to develop inclusive ways of remembering the past that do not privilege the historical suffering of one side over the other. This society’s ‘hierarchy of victimhood’ (Ardoyne Commemoration Project, 2002) has meant that some people’s deaths have been remembered and commemorated while others have been ignored and forgotten. Historically, each community – nationalist and unionist – has remembered its own dead but few occasions of remembrance have commemorated the dead of both communities together. Relatively recent efforts to develop ‘civic remembrance’ – for example, the massive book *Lost Lives* (McKettrick et al, 2001; Graham and Whelan, 2007; Longley, 2001) – aim to do this but the important question of different levels of responsibility for violence inflicted on the Other – the fine, grey line between victims and perpetrators – remains a point of contestation .

Social science scholars have made an important contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of contested remembrance in Northern Irish society. Lundy and McGovern’s work, for example, focuses on the issue of dealing with the legacy of past acts of state and paramilitary violence in urban working-class Catholic communities such as Ardoyne, against a background of an increasingly prosperous and confident Catholic community (Lundy and McGovern, 2007). They make the point that even acts of honouring and paying homage to the dead became flashpoints in deeply fraught ideological contests between political actors within the Catholic community but the chief fault line lies between republican paramilitaries and the Roman Catholic Church. Both

institutions sought to claim the allegiance of local people and to infiltrate their experiences of living in a high-conflict community. This collision played out in everyday social practices but Lundy and McGovern focus on one site of this struggle – funerals of casualties of the sectarian conflict – and how their difficult memory became woven into the identity narratives of the victims’ families and the subject of healing efforts – through community oral history projects – during the ‘peace process’. Lundy and McGovern remind us that funerals ‘need to be seen as a complex, ritualised and deeply emotive arena for the display and demonstration of collective solidarity and identity’ (Lundy and McGovern, 2007: 383) within Catholic communities and as important sites for the articulation of competing pro-political violence and anti-political violence sentiments.

Stories that people tell about the local geography of their community, bodily gestures and practices, the naming of spaces, and parades, all call up and constitute memories of the past in Northern Ireland (Kelleher, 2006; Bryan, 2000; Glassie, 1982; Jarman, 1997; Conway, 2007; Longley, 2001; Brewer, 2006) and help to underwrite people’s identity vis-à-vis the Other in everyday life. Telling stories about the past then, in embodied and textual ways (Spillman and Conway, 2006; Simon, 2003), plays a key role in group identity formation and in recent years participative oral history research projects, organised by local grassroots civil society organisations in places like Ardoyne and Derry, have developed as exercises in peace process ‘truth telling’ (Lundy and McGovern, 2001; Brewer, 2006). In this account, there is an ethics of memory associated with the ‘talking cure’ (Gibbons, 1998) that calls attention to the lessons for contemporary living and the potential for healing and reconciliation with the Other that can be drawn from claiming a group’s own traumatic and difficult past but there is no

simple relationship between articulating one's own story and achieving justice. Being able to chronicle this 'authentic' vernacular memory as a counterpoint to official state memory is also part of this ethics of memory (Lundy and McGovern, 2001; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Bell, 2006).

The British state has also taken upon itself the task of remembering Northern Ireland's difficult past through a state-sponsored assessment of the 'problem' of memory (Bloomfield, 1998⁷; Graham and Whelan, 2007) but even the title of the government report – *We will Remember them* – could not avoid using an 'us'/'them' framework. Like civil society initiatives, this report makes a strong argument for the importance of dealing with the significant human cost of the political conflict in terms of lives lost and the suffering of the victims' families as a result (Bloomfield, 1998). However, the problematics of bringing about healing and reconciliation at a social level, the application of psychological discourse and concepts to collective social experiences, the relationship between institutional and vernacular remembering, and the sociological factors influencing this process are not interrogated as much as one might expect in these state and civil society projects (Tavuchis, 1991; Hamber, 2007; Saito, 2006). Notwithstanding this, they point to the mobilisable potential of memory in settled times of peace as much as in unsettled times of conflict and violence and how the past is an important terrain for the working out of normal democratic politics in societies fractured along long-standing ethno-national lines. In the Northern Irish case it may well be that engaging with past will become more rather than less important in the relatively new politics of peace.

The Bloody Sunday Memorial: A History⁸

As the organiser of the original march at which the thirteen civilians were killed, NICRA⁹ was the major memory choreographer¹⁰ and took upon itself, in consultation with the victims' families, the task of memorialising the tragic events of January 30, 1972. What was surprising about this project, in the light of the deeply divergent and polysemic meanings that Bloody Sunday evoked in later political contestation between NICRA and Sinn Féin, was how uncontroversial and straightforward it was. While there was some critical comment in the letters to the editor pages in the pre-construction phase, once the memorial was built it evoked little debate although it was a key site at which NICRA put forward its construction of the meaning of the event. Consistent with Zolberg's findings, the passage of time has fashioned more consensus about the memorial (Zolberg, 1998). The Belfast-based NICRA had a branch structure and the key figure within the Derry branch of NICRA who was behind the memorial was Bridgit Bond¹¹. In contrast to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Zolberg, 1998), little time was wasted in putting plans in place for erecting the memorial to Bloody Sunday. The February edition of NICRA's newsletter, just a month after Bloody Sunday, announced the establishment of a memorial fund to raise money for the design and construction costs and was non-committal about what shape it would take:

The Executive of the Civil Rights Association have opened a fund to enable Irish people all over the world commemorate those who died for democracy in Derry. The exact form the memorial will take has yet to be decided and the Executive are to canvass public opinion and in particular the people of Derry as to the best form the memorial should take. The Executive feel that the memorial should be the most suitable possible and suggestions are invited from any source willing to contribute viable ideas. Subscriptions for the memorial have already begun to

arrive at the NICRA Office in Belfast. The first subscription came in the shape of a 5 pound note from a lady who preferred to remain anonymous (NICRA bulletin, February 13, 1972, LHNIPC, NICRA box 2).

Letters were sent out inviting contributions from the public for the Derry Memorial Fund as this letter addressed to the people of Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, illustrates:

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association is hoping to erect a permanent monument to the 14 Civil Rights Marchers who were brutally murdered in Derry on 30th January 1972. In order to do this we will need at least 1000 pounds and we will need this within the next few months. We have already received financial support from the people of Ballyhaunis and we hope that you will continue to support this fund. We expect the Derry Memorial Fund to remain open at least until April to enable us to collect the necessary amount to erect the monument (LHNIPC, NICRA box 15)

NICRA replied to Ballyhaunis CRA (Civil Rights Association) thanking it for its contribution to the Derry Memorial Fund. The letter went on: ‘unfortunately the response to this fund has been very low, we only have several hundred pounds at present and we need at least 1,000 to pay for the stone and its transport from Dublin to Derry’ (LHNIPC, NICRA box 15). Other smaller donations came from Harrow NICRA in Middlesex, England. NICRA thanked the sister organisation for its contribution adding ‘we still do not have enough to pay for the monument yet but we hope to be able to pay for it within 5 or 6 months’ (Letter, NICRA to Harrow NICRA, February 21, 1973, LHNIPC, NICRA box 15).

In July 1972, DCRA (Derry Civil Rights Association), the Derry branch of NICRA, announced its intention to hold an open competition for the design of the memorial in an article in a national newspaper which helped to assure the project’s ‘national’ legitimacy and establish its shared ownership (Moriarty, 1997; Gregory and Lewis, 1988). The *Evening Press* newspaper quoted a spokesperson for DCRA as saying

that ‘talks regarding the site have already taken place and no snags are expected. We are also holding a competition for the design of the memorial and entries should be submitted before September 30’ (*Evening Press*, July 21, 1972: 6) though the absence of any explicit rules about the design was noteworthy. The regional executive of NICRA also asked any interested group or person wishing to make a contribution to the memorial fund to send it to NICRA’s headquarters in Belfast.

Suggestions were received from the public like this one from Michael Armstrong, an Irish emigrant living in Australia. Without an accompanying photograph, one can only imagine its visual form from this written account:

I suggest that 13 marble stones be erected in a large circle each bearing the name of a victim. These marbles should be coffin shaped and in the national color of green and perhaps should have red streaked through to denote ‘Bloody Sunday’. In the middle of the circle a plaque could be erected giving some details of that fateful day. It is to be preferred that these marble coffins be five to six feet high with plenty space between them each so that people can come and pay their respects (Letter, Armstrong to NICRA, n.d., LHNIPC NICRA box 5).

Another suggestion came from an anonymous citizen’s letter to the *Derry Journal* entitled ‘A Garden of Remembrance’ proposed the form that this memorial should take and its location while noting the fervent interest in commemoration in the south of Ireland:

When one drives through the South of Ireland one can only be impressed by the wayside shrines commemorating Ireland’s glorious dead. Ours in the past have only had their names enshrined on memorials and tombstones where they lost their lives fighting for an empire that held our country in thralldom and subjection.

Now 13 of our brother Derryman have redeemed our inglorious past by their supreme sacrifice and it is right and fitting that we should honour their memory by the erection of our memorial, a garden of remembrance.

We have the perfect spot in the open space facing Free Derry Corner, the proposed traffic island which is there. This would have the two-fold purpose of

honouring our dead and perpetuating Free Derry Corner, where our great struggle started, a struggle which has been seen now by the whole world (*Derry Journal*, February 8, 1972: 6)¹².

Sculptor Cecil King, designer of a number of other public sculptures in Dublin and Washington, D.C., wrote to the Belfast-based NICRA with his proposal for the memorial. Closely resembling Michelangelo's famous Pietà, it took the form of a bronze statue of three people – one laying died on the ground and another holding the dead body of one of the victims. King sent two photographs of a small-scale model of his proposed memorial with a cover letter to NICRA and asked their consideration of it¹³.

At the November meeting of DCRA, the minute book records that 'it was reported that an eight foot plinth mounted on a four foot pedestal would be the form of the memorial to those who died on Bloody Sunday.' (Minutes of meeting of regional executive of DCRA, November 5, 1972, Bridgit Bond Collection, Derry City Council Archives, Derry, Northern Ireland).

But in addition to deciding upon the memorial design, the question of the site upon which it would be built was also on the table. Securing this meant negotiating with the public bureaucracy of the local city. NICRA wrote to the NIHE (Northern Ireland Housing Executive) about this in May 1972 and asked its permission to erect the memorial (Letter, Stewart to NIHE, May 10, 1972, LHNIPC NICRA box 5) at Speaker's Corner. This location was invested with symbolic meaning because it was here at an already made concrete structure that some of the victims died and others took cover from the shooting. Crucially, the site makes a strong claim on vernacular collective memory because of its explicit linkage to the historical event (Jordan, 2006). As one informant elaborates in detail, 'in those days where the monument was actually sitting there was a

structure of a sort in relation to a sort of a type of structure in such a way that took away the blandness of the area so they put what was known as tree-penny bits in there and what they were I think there were three structures in the shape of an old three-penny bit I don't know ever remember that – it is like a hexagonal shape, you know, and those structures actually saved people that day. People took cover behind those when the Paras were firing and actually within the three-penny structure where the monument sits at the present time, internally there are bullets embedded in that.'¹⁴

In its reply, the NIHE pointed out that ownership of the site had been transferred to the Londonderry Development Commission (LDC) in July 1969¹⁵. Michael Havord and Bridgit Bond agreed to arrange a meeting about the memorial with the Director of Works at the LDC. They reported back to the DCRA regional executive meeting on the 3rd December, 1972, that the meeting with the Director of Works took place and that he had no objections to the memorial¹⁶. But in the present day, the question of site ownership remains in doubt even if a local understanding has been reached as one memory choreographer observed that 'even to this day the ownership of the area is not fully one hundred per cent in relation to who actually owns that piece of land but I think it has been accepted that it belongs to the Bloody Sunday families.'¹⁷

The January 3, 1973 meeting of the regional executive of DCRA was dominated by the Bloody Sunday commemoration. Much of the discussion was taken up with the practical arrangements for the commemoration – purchasing wreaths, organizing a press conference, the rededication to the struggle for democracy and organizing the vigil. As part of this discussion it was agreed that the only fundraising collection that would take place at the commemoration would be for the memorial and it was agreed that only books

and records relating to Bloody Sunday and the NICRA article and program would be sold¹⁸ (Minutes of meeting of regional executive of DCRA, 3 January 1973, Bridgit Bond Collection, Derry City Council archives, Derry, Northern Ireland).

From the proposals submitted to it for consideration, sculptor Cathal L. Newcombe & Sons from Ballycastle, County Antrim, was selected by NICRA to sculpt the memorial at a cost of £1000 (*Daily Telegraph*, October 4, 1973, LHNIPC, NIO Cuttings Files, Londonderry Civil Rights March). A former Long Kesh internee, he was introduced at a NICRA press conference in Belfast in January 1974. The carving of the memorial was delayed for some time because the blue Wicklow limestone for it had to be transported from a supplier in Dublin to Ballycastle. Kevin McCorry said that a commemorative garden would also be built and that this would be cared for by school children from the area. The memorial was designed in two sections – the basic vertical structure and a concrete base known as a thrupenny bit. He stated at the time that the relatives were ‘simple people who want a simple memorial’ (*Irish Independent*, January 16, 1974, LHNIPC, NIO Cuttings Files, Londonderry Civil Rights March).

It was planned to unveil the memorial for the 1973 commemoration. NICRA’s fortnightly periodical, *Civil Rights*, stated:

The memorial when completed will be at Speakers’ Corner where it is envisaged that freedom of speech and political affiliation will be enjoyed. The site will include an eight-foot plinth mounted on a four-foot pedestal which will bear the names of the Derry Martyrs. Once the present struggle is over and freedom and justice obtained the names of all those who have died will be contained within the completed site (*Civil Rights*, January 14, 1973).

Because of time constraints, the 1973 unveiling did not take place. Instead of an unveiling, the symbolic start of the memorial was marked at the 1973 commemoration by

the turning of the first sod on the site by Lord Fenner Brockway who was on the platform at the original Bloody Sunday march and a prominent member of the English left (*Irish Times*, January 22, 1973: 9).

The singing of Bloody Sunday songs, a short address by the NICRA chairman, a recitation of Thomas Kinsella's poem¹⁹, the laying of wreaths, and the non-denominational service all took place before the turning of the sod. Edwina Stewart, Lord Brookway, Ivan Cooper, Bernadette Devlin, Fr. Edward Daly, Rev. Terence McCaughey, Rory McShane and Margo Collins made up the platform party. Speakers were asked by letter to adhere to the protocol limiting speeches to five minutes. Bridgit Bond laid the wreath on behalf of DCRA, the design of which had been agreed beforehand – it was round with the figures in the middle and the flowers were blue and white, the colors of the civil rights association (Minutes of meeting of regional executive of DCRA, 4 January 1973, Bridgit Bond Collection, Derry City Council Archives, Derry, Northern Ireland).

The construction of the memorial began on the Friday afternoon of the weekend of the 1974 commemoration, continued through Friday and Saturday night, and was ready just in time for the unveiling on the Sunday. The *Derry Journal* carried a photograph of Charles Morrison²⁰, Cathal Newcombe and Michael Harkin at work on its construction on the Friday before the unveiling (*Derry Journal*, January 25, 1974: 5)²¹ and a poster announcing the unveiling depicted the outline of the memorial against a background of many people and its simple black and white colours evoked the sombre character of the occasion as well as the simple, non-inflammatory nature of the memorial. In preparation for the unveiling, a crane was hired to erect the memorial and a cover was

placed over it. Crash barriers were erected around the memorial to protect it and vigilantes kept it under observation at night (NICRA memo, LHNIPC, NICRA box 24).

The unveiling by Bridgit Bond of the DCRA, announced nearly three weeks earlier in a NICRA notice in the *Derry Journal* (*Derry Journal*, January 11, 1974: 9), took place on January 26, 1974 (*Daily Telegraph*, October 4, 1973, LHNIPC, NIO Cuttings Files, Londonderry Civil Rights March). The memorial took the form of a Protestant styled obelisk²², instead of a stone Celtic cross²³ or standing stones or the bronze figurative sculpture suggested by Cecil King. On it were inscribed the names of the victims and their ages and the date of the unveiling by Bridgit Bond of DCRA, January 26, 1974. The inscription of the names of the dead has, as Kelleher observes, 'been used to powerful effect on many monuments, perhaps most famously Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC' (Kelleher, 2002: 262). The memorial squarely faces the question of guilt and responsibility - we are told that the dead were 'murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday 30 January 1972'²⁴. The inscription emblazoned above this, 'Their epitaph is in the continuing struggle for democracy'²⁵, evokes the indebtedness of the living to the dead (Winter, 1995) and calls forth a democratic means of achieving political and social change. A peace dove is inscribed beside this. Above this is the inscription N.I.C.R.A. and below it the year 1974.

At the unveiling were gathered relatives of the dead as well as members of DCRA. It was a highly scripted occasion. The unveiling consisted of a meeting at the memorial addressed by Jim Wray, Edwina Stewart (secretary of NICRA), P.J. McClean (former secretary of Long Kesh Camp Council), Brian Brennan (Belfast CRA). Following short five-minute speeches, the 'Lament for Aughrim' was played. A one-

minute silence was observed. Following this the memorial was unveiled. Wreaths were then laid and a rededication to the struggle for democracy and civil rights took place (NICRA Notes for Stewards, LHNIPC, NICRA box 2).

A leaflet publicizing the unveiling crystallised NICRA's interpretation of the meaning of Bloody Sunday by stating that 'the dead gave their lives neither for party politician nor private army but for an end to internment, torture and repression. Non-violent mass struggle was their method. Unity of all people in peace and democracy was their aim. The same demands, the same methods and the same unity are still as necessary today as two years ago. Remember the martyrs of Bloody Sunday and the objectives for which they died by attending the march and commemoration starting from the Bishop's Field, Creggan on Saturday, January 26th 1974 at 2.30p.m. The commemoration will include the unveiling of the Bloody Sunday monument' (Leaflet issued by relatives of the Bloody Sunday martyrs and the Executive Committee of NICRA, LHNIPC, NICRA box 1). The *Irish Times* carried a front-page photograph of the newly unveiled memorial the day after and an article about the Sinn Féin and NICRA commemorations (*Irish Times*, January 28, 1974: 1). The *Derry Journal's* front page showed Bridgit Bond standing alone beside the memorial (*Derry Journal*, January 24, 1974: 1). Significantly, the city's Protestant newspaper, the *Londonderry Sentinel*, also ran an article and photograph of the memorial but did not give it front-page treatment (*Londonderry Sentinel*, January 30, 1974: 9).

The March

From this year on, the memorial became a stopping-off point at the annual commemoration. Divested of its political origins and 'transformed into the image of the

people' (Savage, 1997: 7), it became known locally as 'the Martyrs' Memorial'. A report in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* on the 1984 commemoration, in stating that wreaths were laid at the 'memorial cross erected *by the people of Derry*' (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, February 2, 1984: 8, my emphasis)²⁶ omitted to mention NICRA's role in the project of memorialisation and the political meanings it claimed for Bloody Sunday, claim-making that stood in stark relief to that of Sinn Féin²⁷. This contest and debate between NICRA and Sinn Féin took place at the annual commemoration march, marking the original 1972 march and retracing its steps from the Creggan to Free Derry Corner, at which each sought to seize the discursive field and exert control over the meaning of Bloody Sunday in a way that in the early 1970s created a fragmented commemoration with each memory choreographer organizing its own remembrance events competing for the ideological allegiance of northern nationalists. The Bloody Sunday memorial, a product of NICRA, became a carrier of peaceful meanings, epitomised by its inscription and the dove of peace emblazoned on it, that was contested by an alternative interpretation, coming from more militant Irish republicans, emphasising violent political action. Banners carried on the march and the discourse at the rally at the end of it expressed this violent message.

From the mid-1970s on, Sinn Féin invoked Bloody Sunday as a symbol of British injustice and nationalist's victimized status within the union. Political symbolism at Sinn Féin organized marches emphasized republican grievances and were used to mobilize popular support for the key republican goal of a united Ireland. NICRA, on the otherhand, sought to promote a democratic discourse by emphasizing the ideals of peace and non-violence for which the Bloody Sunday victims died and by seeking to drain the

commemoration march of any political or militant content and to make it a solemn and dignified ‘time to remember’ (Conway, 2007; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002: 37).

Transforming a Difficult Past

For the first twenty years or so, the Bloody Sunday memorial received virtually no maintenance²⁸, was rarely reported upon in the local press, and stood on an isolated piece of ground dwarfed by the towering, high-rise Rossville Street flats. Up until the late 1990s, there was no fence or railing to set the memorial apart from the everyday comings and goings of people or to protect it from possible damage by parked cars or passing traffic. Apart from the annual memorial service and occasional visits by locals, the memorial was mostly forgotten and evoked little comment, positive or negative. Its simplicity and lack of grandness did not seem to invite debate about its intended meaning either.

But from the mid-1990s on, three important factors identified by Vinitzky-Seroussi and others such as Jennifer Jordan help account for changes in the memorial – the political landscape, the power of memory choreographers, and the salience of the past in the present (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002; Jordan, 2006). After the 1994 IRA (Irish Republican Army) ceasefire it became increasingly common for public figures who visited the city to lay a wreath at the memorial and for this to be reported in the local press²⁹, which pointed to Bloody Sunday as an increasingly visible ‘usable past’ in the context of an evolving peace process in Northern Irish society. The attention the memorial received from well-known political luminaries and from other peoples in

distant places who experienced similar traumatic events also pointed to its growing resonance and visibility. In June 1996, two Mexicans from the Valley of the White Waters, where 17 farmworkers were killed by the police in June 1995, visited the memorial and laid a wreath at the invitation of the Pat Finucane Center and the Derry Development Education Centre (*Derry Journal*, June 11, 1996: 15). US Senator Edward Kennedy laid a wreath at the memorial during a visit to the city in January 1998 (*Derry Journal*, January 13, 1998: 27) followed by a wreath-laying a few days later by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Bertie Ahern, on the 23rd January, 1998. Lord Saville visited the memorial in April 1998 when the Bloody Sunday Inquiry³⁰ opened in the city's Guildhall. The *Derry Journal* reported that 'from William Street they made their way to the Bloody Sunday monument and stood for a quiet moment, perhaps contemplating the enormity of what had happened here all those years ago' (*Derry Journal*, April 7, 1998: 4)³¹.

Because the political context had changed, Northern Ireland increasingly became a site of tourism from the 1990s on and within Derry city, the memorial attracted more attention than before. In 1994, Cllr. Mary Nelis (Sinn Féin), after representations made to her by Bogside residents, called on Derry City Council to erect signposts for Free Derry Wall and the Bloody Sunday memorial, noting the particular significance this would have in 1994, the 25th anniversary of the Battle of the Bogside³². She pointed out that the existing signposting at Fahan Street made no mention of these two important sites (*Derry Journal*, August 8, 1994, p. 5) and that they were 'as historically interesting to tourists as Bishop Gate³³ or any of the other prominently identified signposts, even though some

members of Derry City Council would prefer to pretend that they do not exist' (*Derry Journal*, June 6, 1995: 11).

In 1995, the BSJC called on Derry City Council and the Department of the Environment to give official recognition to the monument by making it a marked tourist site. It pointed out that the council's official publications made no reference to the memorial. It also endorsed Cllr. Nelis's 1994 call for signposts directing tourists and visitors to the memorial and Free Derry wall. Gerry Duddy, spokesperson for the BSJC, supported Cllr. Nelis and contrasted the treatment of the Bloody Sunday memorial with the war memorial in the Diamond area of the city (*Derry Journal*, April 28, 1995: 5). Two years later, Cllr. Nelis repeated her charge to Derry City Council to erect signposts for Free Derry Corner and the Bloody Sunday memorial (*Derry Journal*, September 26, 1997: 5).

Derry City Council made representations to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in 1996 concerning signage for the two sites but were told that they did not meet the criteria for tourist attractions. In 2001, the Tourist Board informed local councilors that the Bloody Sunday memorial and Free Derry Corner could not be designated as 'tourist attractions' and consequently signposts could not be erected for them. In July 2001, Cllr. Nelis asked the Tourist Board to publish the criteria for designating a site a tourist attraction. These criteria were published in the *Derry Journal* and included the stipulation that sites must be permanent places, have public access within normal working hours for at least 50 days during the April 1-October 31 period, be of good quality and have an adequate level of services appropriate to its location and size (e.g. parking facilities, toilets). (*Derry Journal*, July 3, 2001: 5). The Bloody Sunday memorial and Free Derry

Wall are mentioned in the current tourist guide to the city and are also signposted in the *Alternative Guide to Derry* published in 1996 by the Pat Finucane Centre and the *Political Guide to Derry* published in 1992 by the Bloody Sunday Initiative (*Derry Journal*, June 9, 1992: 13).

Cllr. Nelis's intervention was important from the standpoint of collective memory because it brought into the public domain, for the first time, the question of ownership of the memorial and whether it was, or ought to be, part of the history of the city reported in tourist guidebooks, key mediators of tourists' navigation of time and space (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994). By raising the crucial question of to whom the memorial belonged, what was at stake here was how the city of Derry presented itself to itself and to outsiders. By omitting the Bloody Sunday memorial and Free Derry Corner from the official tourist mapping of the city, it could be argued that the city planners sought to construct an image of Derry as a bright, shiny and new city, one that has jettisoned its difficult recent past, a past that tourists would be reminded of by being directed to these two sites of memory (Yoneyama, 1999). Yet for those groups that oppose British rule in Ireland, such as Sinn Féin, the memorial was an important year-round symbol of this unresolved, and increasingly usable, controversial past.

A third important change was reflected in the attempt of memory choreographers to fix the meaning of the memorial more than the original inscription had done and to promote a consensus about its interpretation consistent with the vernacular nationalist memory of the event. Around the time of the 25th anniversary, a number of members of the BSJC decided to upgrade the memorial by redoing the inscription, adding a garden, brick wall and railings around the perimeter in the style of a memorial garden, and,

importantly, a plaque at the entrance. This was done because it was felt at the time that the memorial was bland, that it had been allowed to become untidy and run-down, and that the victims deserved a better memorial³⁴. As one memory choreographer put it, ‘we felt that it didn’t amount up to what the dead and injured deserved to be truthful. You know it was pretty bland. Very, it didn’t look right.’³⁵ The iron railing, as Warner puts it, symbolically sets apart ‘the social boundaries of the sacred dead and the secular world of the profane living’ (Warner, 1959: 280). The emblem or logo of the BSJC is emblazoned on this railing. One of the dove’s wings is inscribed with an oak leaf. Bloody Sunday is inscribed at the top and 72 at the bottom of the logo.

The most noteworthy aspect of the change was the plaque. For almost thirty years the memorial existed without it as much out of a preference for simplicity than indifference to the dead. The plaque’s narrative is set against the iconic photographic image of the lorry that led the march bearing the Civil Rights Association banner and is ‘dedicated to all those throughout the world who have struggled, suffered imprisonment and lost their lives in the pursuit of liberty, justice and civil rights.’ Given its significance, the script is worth quoting at length:

On January 30 1972, a massive British military operation in Derry’s Bogside ended in the murder of thirteen unarmed civil rights demonstrators and the wounding of fifteen others – one of whom died later of his injuries on 16 June.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, was appointed by the British government to hold a Tribunal of Inquiry. When his report was published eleven weeks later, it exonerated the British army. The people of Derry felt betrayed. The Widgery report was branded a whitewash by human rights groups throughout the world.

On 3 October 1972, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Wilford, Commanding Officer of 1 Para, the regiment most responsible for the massacre on Bloody Sunday, was awarded the OBE for services to Queen and country.

Bloody Sunday was a watershed with catastrophic consequences for the peoples of Ireland and Britain: it removed any remaining confidence in the judiciary, the police and the government.

The passage of time has not dimmed the memories or the trauma of those who marched on Bloody Sunday for civil rights and an end to internment. For those who lost loved one, the hurt is particularly ingrained.

A debt of justice and truth is still owed to the victims, the bereaved and to the people of Derry.

The British military, the British judiciary, the British government and the Stormont regime³⁶ – all must accept responsibility for Bloody Sunday and its consequences. Only then can the wounds of that day finally be healed.

This narrative is significant for a number of reasons. It has a moral, didactic purpose, as the storied landscape does in anthropologist Keith Basso's work (see Feld and Basso, 1996), to teach people 'never again'. It also attempts to channel people's interpretation of the memorial in a particular direction, to anchor its meaning in accordance with the vernacular nationalist memory especially for a new generation with no lived experience of the event and for new publics coming to visit the site with increasing frequency. Significantly, the psychological idiom of 'trauma' appears in the inscription. In addition, it clearly points to the perpetrators as well as the victims of the event which the official memory has tended to blur.

It is unlikely that this would have happened without the active and energetic efforts of memory choreographers on the BSJC who took it upon themselves to heighten the symbolic importance of Bloody Sunday around the time of the 30th anniversary commemoration which was marked by a surge of interest in and visibility of Bloody Sunday. As one memory choreographer put it, 'the families are the people who look after it. We've been involved over the last, since 1992 really, in dealing with the monument

itself and looking after the monument. At one time it was just a plain piece, it was just the monument itself sitting on top of a three-penny bit itself, the structure itself, but if you look at it now it has the garden, it has the railings...and we done that three years ago I think it was that we decided to upgrade the monument...we done it for the 30th anniversary...that's when we done it. And we decided to upgrade the monument itself.'³⁷

The project to upgrade the memorial was initially taken up by a small cadre of memory choreographers who discussed the matter among themselves and then enlisted the support of others with valuable skills. One entrepreneur explains the process he and two other allies went through: '...we went and talked to people, and raised funds for it, and put it together...so it wasn't a straightforward situation of you know...right we will do this...what it was really at the end of the day, because we decided to do it, between the three of us... as a matter of fact the first we did was they we got a local businessman in the city...a builder, and he started off...'³⁸

The growing power of memory choreographers was linked, and it could be argued, was given expression in the British government inquiry established to rewrite the official memory of the event and the media attention this inquiry attracted helped to raise public awareness about Bloody Sunday generally, so that the past was brought into the present more often and in more intense ways than before even if some would have preferred if it was over and done with. The informant continues by elaborating the memorial's resonance with new publics:

but then, as I say, on the 30th anniversary we decided to put up the railings and we decided to put plants and all that sort of stuff so...in other words to upgrade because thousands upon thousands of people from all over the world visit that monument every year...and we thought it was only right and fitting that they should see a monument that was deserving of the people who died on Bloody Sunday...so it lay like that for twenty years in an ordinary state of affairs till we

came along...the families came along, within the campaign...and we more or less took over.³⁹

Crucially, the decision to upgrade the memorial was linked to the memorial becoming a site of tourism registering its capacity to resonate with a global constituency as well as its salience 'within the campaign' aimed at exerting moral and political pressure on the British government to establish a second inquiry into the events of January 30, 1972, explicitly linking the commemoration to the ongoing public inquiry which received widespread coverage in the local media.

Reception of the Memorial

NICRA, as memory choreographer, was successful, as we saw earlier, in planning and eventually building the memorial on Rossville Street. But this is not the whole story.

What of the memorial's reception after its initial construction and unveiling? The success, or not, of memory work turns on whether it resonates with an audience.

Audience reactions, in turn, are shaped by their relationship to the memory choreographer. In the case of the Bloody Sunday memorial, different people responded to it and the memorial services that took place at it in different ways. For one informant, participation in the memorial service on the morning of the annual march prisms open the relationship between private, personal remembrance and public communal commemoration:

I think it is actually a very sad occasion...and I think sometimes you nearly feel uncomfortable there...not that anybody makes me feel uncomfortable...sometimes you feel...it is a very private and personal thing for the families...but your there...your showing support and your...your...you've got your own thoughts and feelings about it but...there is something about it I can't quite say...I just think it is a very sad occasion...a very emotional occasion for those people especially and everybody around them...and the minute's silence...at the actual time that the shooting started...on the 30th of January...you

know the march is on the nearest Sunday...the minute's silence on the anniversary itself...that is very eerie...it seems to me the whole Rossville Street...the whole Bogside nearly comes to a standstill...⁴⁰

For others closely aligned with Sinn Féin, the memorial service at the monument evokes little emotion and carries a weaker meaning compared to the annual march but the act of laying wreaths at the memorial during the march does have significance: 'I would say the march is only part of the commemoration...but it is in one sense the most meaningful...because it is the biggest and because it is a public statement and...but...personally I think it is the march...and specifically the march where they lay the crosses on the monument...I find that quite moving...significant moment...the march itself...the wreath-laying...is obviously very significant to the families...the whole wreath-laying on the morning...that was the most significant...I would also see the commemorative events during the week as significant...'⁴¹ For this respondent, Bloody Sunday is commemorated in multiple 'spaces to remember' (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002: 40) including a week-long programme of events and activities including seminars, exhibitions, discos, table quizzes, lectures, video screenings and so forth in the week prior to the commemorative march and memorial service but each one reinforces rather than undermines consensus around the event.

The memorial's meaning, then, is shaped by its relationship to other sites of memory, particularly the annual commemorative march. But in recent times the area in and around the memorial has become a veritable memorial landscape (Graham and Whelan, 2007) with new memorial spaces commemorating the Hunger Strikes, civil rights protest marches, and other significant events in the community's past. The location of these sites of memory adjacent to the memorial helps to elevate it among a bundle of significant historical events in the collective narrative of the city's nationalist population.

All of these sites of memory depend on the presence and willingness of memory choreographers to assert the claim these events have on vernacular nationalist collective memory, their ability to make them resonate with a wide if sometimes limited constituency, and to negotiate with city government, local residents, and paramilitaries around the rights to and ownership of the land upon which they are built. Additionally, almost all of these sites make strong claims to authenticity and historical realism, being positioned on the spot of, or in close proximity to, the events commemorated. The Rossville Street murals, for example, commemorate such things as the civil rights struggle and the Bogside in Derry city was the crucible within which this movement was played out.

Conclusion

Vinitzky-Seroussi's analytical framework that distinguishes between fragmented and multivocal commemoration has a good deal of theoretical purchase and has clearly improved our understanding of the different forms commemoration can take and the factors that account for this variation in meaning-making and interpretation of the past (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002). At the end of her work on Yitzhak Rabin, Vinitzky-Seroussi invites further research examining commemoration in other national contexts with different societal conditions – particularly with respect to the past-present relationship, the salience of memory choreographers, and the prevailing political climate – to those of Israel.

The case study introduced and elaborated in this paper, Bloody Sunday (1972) in Derry, Northern Ireland, offers an interesting test of Vinitzky-Seroussi's model and suggests that the commemoration of a single event can encompass both fragmented and

consensual commemorations. Like Vinitzky-Seroussi's empirical example, the commemoration of Bloody Sunday involves different mnemonic times and spaces, the times including a week-long series of events as well as the symbolic high point of the commemorative march on the nearest Sunday to January 30, and the multiple spaces encompassing the Rossville Street memorial, the Guildhall stained-glass window, the route of the original march from the Creggan to Free Derry Corner, and the recently opened Museum of Free Derry. Against Vinitzky-Seroussi's line of argument, these multiple mnemonic spaces do not speak to different publics but rather represent different occasions for retelling the vernacular nationalist memory of the event. Vinitzky-Seroussi's analysis would lead one to expect that the commemoration of Bloody Sunday, against a background of an unsettled society and culture, would only take a fragmented form. But her lack of temporal distance from the Rabin memorial means that she is poorly positioned to examine change over time in the memorialisation of controversial pasts in response to changing social and political conditions, and only at the end of her article does she begin to speculate about this.

The present paper, by taking a longer range temporal perspective than Vinitzky-Seroussi, suggests that two different forms are possible within a single event. In the early 1970s, Bloody Sunday remembrance was characterised by different social movement organisations articulating divergent and contradictory meanings of the event, clearly fitting the fragmented model. Towards the 1990s this gave way to a more consensual commemoration in which the Bloody Sunday march became a shared symbol around which different social groups, with different interpretations of 1972, mobilised in their quest for power to define the truth about what happened on Bloody Sunday. During this

period Bloody Sunday was appropriated by republicans and nationalists in a discursive debate about the evolving peace process and clearly became a 'usable' past within a new political environment seeking to resolve Northern Ireland's long-standing conflict. Within this debate, a new inquiry into the events of January 30, 1972, became a critical component of the peace 'dividend' for northern nationalists. Much of the construction of Bloody Sunday as a 'justice' and 'human rights' issue in the service of this agenda was done by local community activists and the victims' families and this project was linked to the commemoration of the event. From the mid-1990s on, the march was a crucial site for mobilising public sentiment behind the public campaign for a new inquiry as well as for remembering the dead, reaching a high water mark at the 30th anniversary march. This anniversary also operated as an important stimulus for journalistic writings about Bloody Sunday such as Don Mullan's *Eyewitness Bloody Sunday* (Mullan, 2002) and, crucially, two docudramas about the event.

With the passage of time then, Bloody Sunday has become an object of broad consensus among Northern Ireland's nationalist and republican population while at the same time operating as a powerful focus of group identity opposed to that of the other tradition, that is, the Protestant and unionist population. Seeking the endorsement of the vernacular nationalist memory at an official British state level and the resolution of this controversial past through a state inquiry has become, however, an important part of the politics of reconciliation and stands as a good example of the capacity of memory and the narration of the past to function as a space for the working out of political and social divisions in an unsettled society.

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Notes

1. *Belfast Telegraph*, October 3, 1973, LHNIPC (Linenhall Northern Ireland Political Collection), NIO (Northern Ireland Office) Cuttings Files, Londonderry Civil Rights March.
2. The concept of settled/unsettled society used here comes from the work of Ann Swidler. See Swidler 2001.
3. The Guildhall is the seat of local political power where city council meetings are held.
4. For a comprehensive history of this initiative see Conway (2005).
5. The Widgery Tribunal, which sat in Coleraine from 21 February-14 March 1972, was established by the British government to unveil what happened on Bloody Sunday. This report became the official state memory of the event. Because it paid little attention to – and was fundamentally at odds with – the vernacular nationalist memory, Luke Gibbons describes it as an example of ‘history without the talking cure’ (Gibbons, 1998).
6. The Hunger Strikes refer to the strategy of refusing food employed by Irish republican prisoners during the 1980s in protest at the denial of their ‘political’ status – as against criminal status – in the eyes of the British government. For an interesting theoretically sophisticated account of this from an anthropological standpoint, see Feldman (1991).
7. The Bloomfield report is available online at:
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/victims/docs/bloomfield98.pdf>
8. This history draws on Conway (2005).
9. For a history of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, see Purdie (1990). NICRA and Sinn Féin engaged in competing claim-making around the event, Sinn Féin emphasising it as an example of the injustices of British rule, and NICRA focused on the Bloody Sunday dead as a metaphor for the continuing struggle for peace and democracy in Northern Ireland (see Conway, 2007 for more detail). The British army defined the event as an example of nationalist civil disobedience and claimed that their killing of thirteen marchers was warranted by the fact that they came under fire.
10. The term ‘memory entrepreneur’ tends to be used in the collective memory literature to denote people who take it upon themselves to memorialise and commemorate the past. Memory entrepreneurs can be state officials, civil society

- groups, politicians, public intellectuals, journalists, historians, artists, business people, and so forth. Some scholars are troubled by the ‘entrepreneur’ label because it seems to suggest that the past can be remembered in ways that benefit some groups over others or in ways from which ‘profit’ can be gained (Jordan, 2006, p. 199). To overcome this, some sociologists such as Vinitzky-Seroussi prefer the term ‘agents of memory’ (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002). I prefer the term memory choreographer and use it throughout the paper.
11. Bridgit Bond was a ‘significant personality’ (Gregory and Lewis, 1988: 219) behind the planning and securing of institutional support for the memorial. She was born in Derry in 1926 and died on the 29th January, 1990 (*Derry Journal*, February 6, 1990, p. 10). A former shirt factory worker, she was co-founder of the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC) in March 1968 and a long-time civil rights activist. The DHAC, a ‘loose group of freewheeling radicals’ (Purdie, 1990, p. 184), was a broad church of socialists and republicans that advocated for better housing for Protestants and Catholics alike (see McCann, 1993). Significantly, an appreciation written after her death in the *Derry Journal* foregrounded her role in erecting the Bloody Sunday memorial: ‘The Civil Rights monument in Rossville St., erected to honour the memory of those murdered on Bloody Sunday (30-1-72), was unveiled by Bridgit Bond and her name is engraved on the memorial. Of all those who struggled for civil rights, none was more deserving of this honour than her’ (*Derry Journal*, February 6, 1990, p. 10). She is one of the ‘wise women hidden from history’ in Nell McCafferty’s account of the Maiden City (see Bell, Johnstone and Wilson, 1991, pp. 58-60). She famously led the DHAC in a sit-in in the Guildhall in 1969. Her last public appearance was at the unveiling of the Bloody Sunday memorial. She remains, however, one of the largely ignored and unsung heroes of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, whose life and work, in my view, is deserving of more serious scholarly study. Bridgit Bond was a civil rights activist. Nell McCafferty, in the preface of a collection of some of her writings, said of Bridgit Bond that she ‘started the fight for Civil Rights when it was neither fashionable nor popular’ (McCafferty, 1984, p. 7). A former member of DCRA described her as ‘an incredible...incredible human being...and a very liberated woman...Bridget really was civil rights in Derry...on reflection it was amazing because she was a female...which was amazing...it was a very male period...and when Bridget spoke everybody listened’ (Interview with author, January 31, 2005). He went on to say that ‘unfortunately Bridget died before anybody really got a significant interview...she had so much to tell’ (Interview with author, January 31, 2005).
12. NICRA’s proposal to erect a non-inflammatory memorial to the Bloody Sunday dead gave rise to some comment in the letter pages of the *Irish Times*. Rev. John Morrow, Presbyterian Chaplain at Trinity College Dublin, stated: ‘In several letters to the *The Irish Times* I have pleaded with those responsible for this memorial to consider the possibility of erecting it to the memory of *all* who died in Derry (that is if it must be erected at all). To this the response has been entirely negative.’ Rev. Morrow went on to criticize NICRA for playing the ‘commemorative game’ governed by selective remembrance: ‘Could I ask the N.I.C.R.A. what plans they have for erecting memorials for Bloody Friday

- victims and indeed for all the other Bloody days?' (*Irish Times*, January 24, 1973: 11). In a letter to the *Irish News* asking NICRA to rethink its plans for a Bloody Sunday memorial Rev. Morrow expressed a similar sentiment: 'Would it not be possible for the people of Derry, as a whole, to erect a symbol of some kind to remember all who have suffered in the city?' (*Irish News*, 'Can this help peace?', December 20, 1972, NIO Cuttings Files, Londonderry Civil Rights March).
13. How much consideration it got is difficult to determine. The photographs survive in the Bridgit Bond collection in Derry City Council's archive. It is quite possible that other designs besides those of Cecil King and Michael Armstrong were also considered but, to my knowledge, no visual records remain of others. It appears that the option of having more than one memorial was considered. Of the designs that we do know about, none were particularly radical or unconventional in nature.
 14. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 15. In a letter to the Roads Section of the Londonderry Development Commission on June 8, 1972, NICRA's secretary, Edwina Stewart, wrote: 'The Civil Rights Association intend to erect a memorial to the men and boys shot on the 30th January. We are having a competition for a suitable piece of sculpture, which should be surrounded by grass and flowers. Our Derry Branch have decided the proposed roundabout would be the most suitable place for the site.' (Letter, Stewart to Director of Administration, May 18, 1972, LHNIPC, NICRA box 5).
 16. The Director of Works for Londonderry Development Commission, J.C. Mackinder, wrote on June 9, 1972: 'I should be pleased to discuss with you the question of the roundabout at St. Joseph's Place/Glenfada Park and Rossville Place, and plans are available in my Office illustrating the proposals, which have remained in an uncompleted state for some time' (Letter, Mackinder to Stewart, June 9, 1972, LHNIPC, NICRA box 5).
 17. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 18. At the meeting of DCRA on 11th March, 1973, the committee discussed proposals for raising more monies for the memorial. A concert and raffle, contingent upon the consent of the relatives, was proposed and passed unanimously. Members also agreed to establish a finance committee. Bridgit Bond met with the relatives regarding cheques that were received for the memorial (Minutes of meeting of regional executive of DCRA, March 11, 1973, Derry City Council Archives, Derry, Northern Ireland).
 19. Thomas Kinsella's poem *Butcher's Dozen* is arguably the most famous Bloody Sunday poem. But other Irish poets have also penned poems in memory of Bloody Sunday. The Nobel prize winner for literature, Seamus Heaney, wrote two poems about Bloody Sunday, entitled *The Casualty* and *The Road to Derry*, and Seamus Deane, author of the novel, *Reading in the Dark*, wrote *After Derry*, 30 January 1972. Plays by Brian Friel (*The Freedom of the City*), Lawrence McClenaghan (*The Long Auld Road*), Just Another Sunday (Patricia Mulkeen) and Frank McGuinness (*Carthaginians*) also memorialize the events of January 30, 1972. There is no shortage of popsongs remembering Bloody Sunday either – U2's song 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' is perhaps the best known, and one through which many came first to hear about Bloody Sunday, but there are others such as

- Christy Moore's 'Minds Locked Shut', John Lennon's 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' and songs by less well known bands such as Blackthorn (London's Derry), the Cardiff Red Choir (Derry Streets), and Dinkeas (The Derry Massacre).
20. Charles Morrison was a member of the DCRA and he and Michael Harkin had worked together in the NIHE (Interview with author, January 31, 2005).
 21. Thanks to Charles Morrison for bringing this photograph to my attention.
 22. This curious feature of the memorial was not given much attention by memory entrepreneurs when I asked them about its design. It may be explained by the fact that the membership of NICRA came from both the Protestant and Catholic communities although it was predominately Catholic.
 23. See Jane Leonard's discussion of Irish world war one memorials (Leonard, 1986: 59-67).
 24. The British army, as would be expected, did not approve of the wording of the memorial's inscription that permanently reminded people of its malevolence and culpability. The army made representations to the then mayor of Derry, Raymond McClean, reportedly expressing its indignation at the normative inscription that the dead were 'murdered' by British paratroopers. Mayor McClean advised the general that the inscription would remain as it was, as any attempt to change it would be met with public disapproval (Interview with author, 19 August, 2004).
 25. Interestingly, this inscription was used in NICRA's public notices about their commemoration and reinforced in its rhetoric in the 1970s.
 26. In 1979, a republican newsarticlereport that 'wreaths were laid at the foot of the small monument erected *by the grieving people of Derry* in memory of their 14 martyrs' (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, February 3, 1979: 7, my emphasis) elides the political origins of the memorial.
 27. See Spillman and Conway, 2007.
 28. In 1989, the Bloody Sunday Commemorative Committee (BSCC) publicly accused the police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), of vandalizing the monument and of intimidating young people who were carrying out physical maintenance work at the monument. The BSCC claimed that one of the names of the dead, Gerald Donaghey, had been covered with the slogan Ulster Volunteer Force, a reference to the loyalist paramilitary organization abbreviated as UVF (*Derry Journal*, January 24, 1989: 3).
 29. In 1992, the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign (BSJC) extended an invitation to the then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, to lay a wreath at the Bloody Sunday memorial when she visited Northern Ireland. President Robinson declined to do so on three occasions although she did lay a wreath at the Enniskillen War memorial (*Derry Journal*, June 1, 1993: 5). In 1993, the BSJC re-issued the invitation pointing out the non-political nature of the BSJC. Speaking on RTÉ (Radio Telefís Éireann) radio in May 1993, Mrs. Robinson pointed out that many people had lost their lives in the Northern Ireland Troubles. She went on to claim that among nationalists there seemed to be the view that 'deaths there don't seem to have the same value' as other deaths in Northern Ireland (*Derry Journal*, June 1, 1993: 5), making the hierarchy of victims a salient political issue.
 30. The Saville Inquiry – also known as the Bloody Sunday Inquiry – was formally established by the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in January 1998, and

- sat from April 1998 to November 2004. This inquiry represented an attempt to unveil ‘what happened’ on Bloody Sunday – as against ‘what is said to have happened’ (Trouillot, 1995: 13) in the earlier 1972 Widgery Report – and to rewrite the official British state memory of the event. More detail is available at: <http://www.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org/>
31. While I only touch on the issue here, it would be interesting to examine whether people leave objects at the site, as they do at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC. During the period when I carried out my fieldwork, I observed a makeshift memorial consisting of a picture of the slain American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, placed anonymously at the foot of the Rossville Street memorial. Below this picture the following words were inscribed: ‘His only crime was fighting for human rights without violence. Say a little prayer for Martin Luther King and the Bloody Sunday victims’. The presence of this cultural artifact suggests that the memorial does invite interaction though the extent to which it does was not explored in any detail in this study. Haskins and DeRose point out that ‘these makeshift memorials communicate a point wherein personal memory slides into the public sphere and shapes a wider cultural memory’ (Haskins and DeRose, 2003: 382).
 32. The Battle of the Bogside refers to a lengthy confrontation between the residents of the Catholic Bogside of Derry city and the police in August 1969, set off by a Protestant Apprentice Boys parade which had taken place close to the Bogside.
 33. Bishop’s Gate refers to one of several gates or archways that serve as entry points along the walls of the city of Derry.
 34. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 35. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 36. The Stormont regime refers to Stormont castle in Belfast the seat of political power in Northern Ireland.
 37. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 38. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 39. Interview with author, 23 July, 2004.
 40. Interview with author, 20 August, 2004.
 41. Interview with author, 21 August, 2004.

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