

An Investigation into the Motivations, Initiation and Continued Participation in Irish Republican Socialist political Activism.

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Abstract

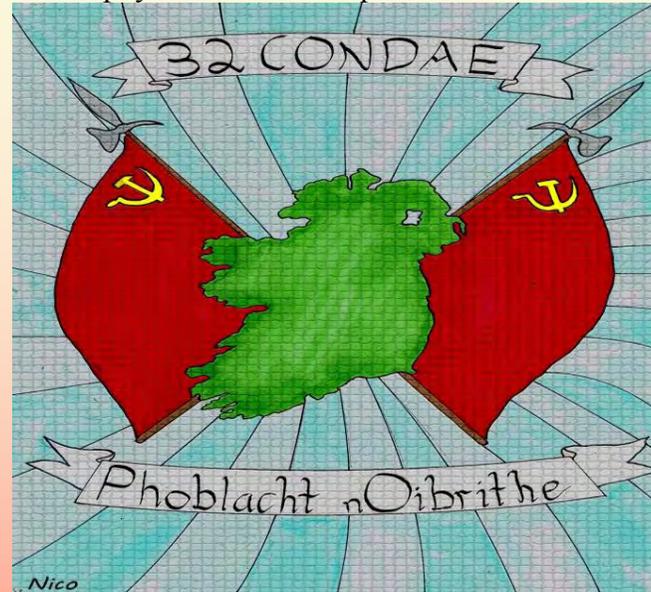
This study investigated the initiation, motivation and continued participation of Irish Republican Socialist Political activists. Using qualitative methodology and thematic analysis six participants were interviewed to explore these three themes for investigation. Eight sub-themes emerged representing patterns and commonalities amongst the participants experiences and views. The main findings suggest that 1) Irish Republican Socialists have distinct familial backgrounds than those of traditional Irish republicans, and 2) That their route to entry to Irish Republican Socialist political activism was also distinct from traditional Irish Republicanism. Other findings were made, however they broadly corresponded to existing findings on the subject.



Introduction

Irish Republicanism can be seen to be a distinct political ideology and social movement within the history of broader Irish Republicanism.

This research sought to find out more about the political activists who compose this distinct historical tendency, and to find out how they got involved, what their background is, their motivations and their experiences of continued participation as political activists.



Method

This research was conducted using qualitative semi-structured interviews of 6 participants.

The 6 participants were chosen using purposive homogeneous sampling, where participants were selected upon the criteria;

- 1) That they identified as Irish Republican Socialists
- 2) That they were active politically at the time of interview
- 3) And that they were based in County Dublin

Interview data, once transcribed, was thematically analysed using Nvivo 9 qualitative software to develop themes and patterns from amongst the data

Results

Of the themes explored in this research – Initiation, Motivation and Continued Participation, 8 sub themes emerged from the data. These were themes of:

- Family Influence
- The Importance of Social Networks to Participation
- Early Involvement with Far-Left Organizations
- Personal Satisfaction from Political Activism
- Activism as being Very Important
- Strong Convictions and Beliefs
- That they would Continue Until Death
- And of their Mixed Feelings of Achievement

Discussion

Two key and unexpected findings emerged from this research.

- 1) That there is a tendency for Irish Republican Socialists, unlike traditional Irish Republicans, to come from politically left-wing familial backgrounds, rather than explicitly nationalistic backgrounds
- 2) That most of those defining themselves as Irish Republican Socialists in this study first went through British based Trotskyist and further-left organisations.

This alongside six other findings which corresponded to existing research in the area of social movement mobilisation.

References

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