

Revivalist Movements in Brittany, Ireland, Scotland and Wales around 1900: Discursive Strategies of Self-representation and Relationship to Celtic Identity

Abstract

This thesis explores the formation of collective representation in the revivalist movements of Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales at the turn of the twentieth century. The study examines the self-representation of these movements by analysing their discursive and representational strategies. These findings are framed within a comparative context, exploring mutual influences and inspirations between the movements and identifying the factors that shaped their collective representations. Additionally, the research explores the role of Celtic identity in revivalist self-representation, focusing on the period when Pan-Celtic activities intensified around 1900.

The movements are examined through the periodicals of their leading societies: *Union régionaliste bretonne* (1898), the Gaelic League (*Conradh na Gaeilge*; 1893), the Highland Association (*An Comunn Gàidhealach*; 1891), and for Wales, the Welsh Language Society (*Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg*; 1885) alongside *Wales* and *Cymru* magazines edited by O.M. Edwards. The research employs qualitative discourse analysis, conducted using Atlas.ti software, and is complemented by relevant correspondence and archival materials.

The analysis identifies six key aspects of self-representation common to the movements: language, education, popular culture, history, an apolitical and loyalist stance, and the revivalist association's agenda. The research reveals that none of the movements placed Celticism at the centre of their self-representation, with attitudes towards Celtic identity varying on a spectrum, from negative in Ireland to more positive in Brittany. The comparative analysis highlights commonalities, differences, and key influences on these patterns, including the level of development of each movement, external inspirations, efforts to address deficiencies, state dynamics, and the presence of rival associations. Notably, the Welsh and Breton movements displayed stronger affinities than expected, while the Irish case often diverged. These findings underscore the need to move beyond state-centred analyses and embrace a more nuanced understanding of broader identity frameworks.

Keywords

Discursive Strategy; Self-representation; Celtic Identity; Celticism; Pan-Celticism; Revivalist Movement; Brittany; Ireland; Scotland; Wales; Discourse analysis; Comparative study; Transnational approach; Nineteenth century.