



Royal Irish Academy Grants Report

Title:	Dr
First Name:	Gillian
Surname:	Murphy
Discipline:	Humanities and Social Sciences
Year of Award:	2018
Project Title	False Memories for a Real World Referendum

1. Research background:

I hold a PhD in cognitive psychology from UCC. My research is in cognitive psychology applied to everyday settings. I previously received an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship (2013) and a Fulbright Scholarship (2015).

I traveled to the University of California, Irvine to work with Professor Elizabeth Loftus. Professor Loftus is the world expert in false memories and one of the most influential living psychologists. I was planning a study on false memories for the Irish 8th Amendment referendum and she was the ideal collaborator.

2. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved (did you achieve the primary objectives - if not, what did you learn from the process)?

Yes we achieved the primary objectives and I would say went beyond those. We collaborated on the proposed research project (currently under review at the top journal in the field) and are collecting data for 4 more papers. Our findings demonstrated the ease with which voters could create rich false memories for political scandals that never occurred, and that these false memories were likely to form in line with existing beliefs (e.g. Yes voters formed more false memories about a No scandal than No voters and vice versa). This is an important finding and we will follow this up in future projects.

Myself and Professor Loftus have established a firm research partnership which has had enormous professional benefits for me, as well as my colleagues in Ireland who have joined the project. The paper under review is authored by myself and Dr Ciara Greene (UCD) from Ireland and Professor Loftus, Professor Linda Levine & Rebecca Hofstein-Grady (University of California, Irvine) from the US. We are all continuing to collaborate together on further projects and just last week, as a direct result of my Charlemont visit, Professor Loftus came to UCD to give a public lecture.