

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON ETHNIC CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, European countries have seen dramatic demographic shifts due to an influx of refugees and other immigrants. While this has no doubt impacted political systems in a great multitude of ways, the most obvious consideration is the shifting racial politics it brought. While many have discussed the xenophobic movements that sprouted, oft unconsidered is the effect this wave of immigration had on the many longstanding ethnic conflicts already in place. I intend to analyze the effect of immigration, generally, on ethnic conflicts within a country, turning my attention towards the Northern Ireland conflicts between Irish Catholics and Ulster Protestants during and after the “Troubles” period that defined them. I hypothesize that a higher proportion of immigrants can be associated with lower rates of conflict between existing native ethnic groups. Through this investigation, I hope to advance an understanding of potential solutions to similar local ethnic tensions via a potential expanded immigration policy.

Recent literature on the topic has considered various explanations on the nature of ethnic tensions, such as geography, education, inequality, or income, but research regarding immigration as a potential factor has been more limited. I use these alternative explanations as controls for my own regression, to empirically identify its effect on conflict in Northern Ireland. This is distinct from existing immigration literature, which has primarily paid attention to American immigration trends, rather than looking towards areas with ethnic relations more typically seen throughout history, not known for being hubs of international migration. My

findings were limited, due to limitations on the dataset, but suggest a direct and unique link between immigration and ethnic conflict, at least in the case of Northern Ireland and similar regions. This can be explained as a consequence of the political model of ethnic identity established in existing literature, where identities can be constructed around the relative proportions different groups compose in a society. Through an increase in immigrant groups, these proportions are altered and I suggest they become less significant consequently.

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows: In Section II, I will address the historical context of the conflict in Northern Ireland to explain why it's suitable for a look at existing ethnic tensions in Europe. In Section III, I will review the literature on the subject of immigration and ethnic tensions, and in Section IV, I will establish how my own contribution is unique from what's already been documented. In Section V, I will review the methods used in my regression analysis of immigration on ethnic conflict and discuss where and why I got my variable data. In Section VI, I will go over the results of my regression, and in Section VII, I discuss what can be learned. Finally in Section VIII, I will conclude.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Northern Ireland's "Troubles" can be understood as a prolonged period of terrorism and targeted violence, often cited as stretching from 1968 to 1998, culminating with the Good Friday Agreement that sought to expand regional citizenship and reorganize the government to a more representative system. The conflict was most definitely political in nature, owing itself to the topic of whether Northern Ireland should rejoin the Republic of Ireland (supported by the Nationalists) or should remain a part of the United Kingdom (supported by the Unionists) (Bosi and De Fazio).

In many ways, however, it was just as much an ethnic conflict, with Unionism nearly uniformly supported by Ulster Protestants and Nationalism by Irish Catholics. Both Nationalists and Unionists represent not just an ideology, but also a faith, and an ethnic heritage. The conflict can be traced back to the 17th century, when Britain began attempting to colonize the island of Ireland, centering around the northeastern region of Ulster. In so doing, they brought with them their Protestant faith, contrasting with the Catholicism followed by the native Irish at the time. Over the centuries, this initial group of colonists primarily remained in the Ulster region, most of which now comprises Northern Ireland, and composed an ethnic majority up until very recently. The Protestant and Catholic faiths have become so intertwined into the different cultural identities of these two groups that they can be said to compose larger ethnoreligious identities, at least within the context of Northern Ireland.

Even in the 20th century, hundreds of years after their arrival, Northern Irish society was heavily divided along these lines, with most infrastructure built and run by Ulster Protestants, and with sharply unequal unemployment rates across both groups (Jenkins). Even more broadly, though Ulster Protestants would today all identify entirely as Irish, their political affiliations as well remained a longstanding part of the ethnic identity, with support for British sovereignty going hand in hand with being Ulster Protestant, and vice versa national independence with being Irish Catholic (MacDonald).

For this reason, The Troubles represented more than just a political conflict, but an ethnic and religious one for those experiencing it. Almost all interactions at the time were, “pervaded by a consciousness of the religious dichotomy” (Harris) and being taught from a young age to “judge each other across a gulf of ignorance, (...) arising from this ignorance comes the negative responses of suspicion and antipathy” (Murray). We can thus understand the violence seen

during this era through the lens of ‘sacred values,’ representing a desire more than just political, but deeply tied to the identity of those on either side of the conflict (Atran). The conflict could therefore only be ended through substantial symbolic gains held by both sides, as the Good Friday Agreement attempted to put forward.

But was the Good Friday Agreement enough to meet the needs of both Protestant and Catholic communities? Existing data suggests, not necessarily. Analysis of sectarian violence in the years following the agreement shows a clear and substantial downward trend, although the proportion of violence occurring in metropolitan areas actually increased relative to other regions (Poole). Presently, most Northern Irish would likely identify the Troubles as a period of tension they’ve since moved on from; but violence across both groups continues to this day and can be observed to spike following new political developments relating to Irish sovereignty, such as the United Kingdom vowing to leave the European Union in 2016. It is therefore necessary to continue identifying sources of conflict resolution, even after the historical breakthroughs that led us out of the most intense violence seen during the late 20th century.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of existing research on both Ireland’s sectarian violence and general ethnic tensions find several different explanations for conflict, with a consistent pattern being an understanding of ethnic identity as political driven. Social Identity Theory and Intergroup Contact Theory in particular are common explanations for how these identities can shift as their relative positions in a given society shift, but immigration as a specific factor has not been consistently tied to these concepts.

Poole's lens of analysis, observing the regional variance in sectarian violence, helps further characterize the nature of conflict. Similar research by Ballcells et al. identified that violence occurs far more often in "interface areas where similarly sized rival communities are geographically in contact with each other". In sum, they find that large, ethnically homogenous communities tend to breed more discriminatory attitudes towards members of the outgroup, which are more prone towards violent interactions when placed near one another. This seems to line up with existing findings by Scacco and Warren that, while *heterogenous ecosystems* don't necessarily immediately foster a decrease in discriminatory attitudes, *homogenous ethnic enclaves* can certainly lead to *worsened* attitudes. Furthermore, this would seem to represent a consistent pattern cross-culturally, as with studies in Bosnia and in Croatia finding that, "high levels of prejudice in ethnic enclaves played an important role in increasing ethnic tensions and facilitating the outbreak of war" (Kunovich and Hodson).

Still, the politicization of ethnicities in conflict with one another is perhaps not a guaranteed outcome of homogenous enclaves. Daniel Posner's research on Chewa and Tumbuka ethnic identities across Zambia and Malawi found a correlation between ethnic antagonism and the relative size of an ethnic group within a given political system. Merely changing the ethnic makeup of a country can apparently radically transform the way members of an ethnic group view one another, with higher proportional representation leading to greater significance being placed on ethnic differences. This held true even in spite of these political boundaries being arbitrarily and recently enforced.

Another popular explanation for social conflict in general has been economic inequality across groups, as was proposed by Imrek Borsuk. Just like Posner, Borsuk has analyzed the ways in which political institutions work to exacerbate existing ethnic distinctions, as with the Tutsis

and the Hutus of Rwanda. In specific, Borsuk has addressed “the role of cleavage structure and political competition in increasing horizontal inequalities.” In specific, Borsuk has called attention to the economic horizontal inequalities as a motivating force in the case of Northern Ireland. That is to say, he argues that varying levels of economic conditions between Catholics and Protestants plays an important role in sowing tension between both groups.

Additionally, in contrast to explanations for the existing conflict, many have also contemplated what forces might correlate with a reduction in ethnic tensions. Mikael Hjerm performed a meta-analysis of several studies on education, showing it to be a correlate with higher rates of acceptance for different social groups. Similarly, Ghatak and Gold show there exists an inverse relation between measures of economic development and instances of ethnically targeted terrorism.

Finally, looking specifically at the existing literature that connects immigration with ethnic tensions, one will quickly notice it almost exclusively focuses on the United States.

Data on White American public opinion towards immigrants *does* find that increased immigration correlates with feelings of greater racial acceptance for those who live near an immigrant. However, for those who don’t, or had preexisting negative opinions towards immigrants, increased immigration correlated only with more conservative positions towards race in general (Hood and Morris) (Hajnal and Rivera). In contrast, American minority groups such as Black Americans have often been pushed into a state of economic competition with immigrants, resulting in greater feelings of racial antipathy all around (Waters et al.).

IV. Hypothesis

While certainly informative, I argue the existing United States data does not offer enough external validity to apply to the case of most other countries, least not Northern Ireland. Ethnicity doesn't play an active role in United States politics in the same way it would in most other countries. In place of individual ethnic identities are broader racial classifications that engulf them. In Northern Ireland, the predominant ethnic division is between Ulster Protestants and Irish Catholics, both of whom are identified distinctly by tracing their heritage to the island of Ireland. In contrast, the US equivalent would be the division between White people and Black people, an almost entirely visual classification encompassing multiple distinct ethnic groups. Most importantly, if an immigrant moves to Northern Ireland, they'll most likely be approached as an outsider and struggle to fit themselves into the existing ethnoreligious system. Meanwhile, for most European immigrants to the US, while they'll certainly be faced with xenophobia, they'll also be simultaneously seen as a member of the existing majority group in the country.

This is, of course, not meant to suggest that race doesn't also exist outside of America, only that the role it plays will always be different so long as ethnicity continues playing a predominant role in a country's politics. Given this, I argue it's necessary to investigate the history of ethnic tensions and immigration in more countries, adding to the broader literature through an enhanced external validity.

Since the Schengen Convention in 1990, the European Union has had a policy of open borders, and we've seen a gradual rise in immigration into Northern Ireland each passing year. In 1991, just 1.8% of the population was born outside of the British Isles, while that number has more than tripled to 6.5% as of 2021 (NISRA). Following the expansion of the EU into several post-Soviet states in 2004, we've seen a further shift, with a stark rise in Eastern European immigration into Northern Ireland. These groups have struggled to integrate, with a large portion

of Northern Irish exhibiting little tolerance for their presence (McAreavey). Further, there's even been an unprecedented rise in Muslim immigrants, creating a distinct subculture when paired with Northern Ireland's longstanding Christian sectarian conflict (Marranci). With all this in mind, it seems worth considering how a growth of new ethnicities and religions throughout Northern Ireland might impact the existing dynamic between Irish Catholics and Ulster Protestants.

Of the existing literature, the predominant explanations for ethnic conflict I identified can be broken down into being connected to population density, ethnic homogeneity, ethnic economic inequality, education levels, and economic development. Of these, Posner's focus on ethnic homogeneity seems to be directly related to immigration. It stands to reason that in a country with substantive ethnic conflict, the integration of a new ethnic minority via immigration might lower the proportional significance of all others and subsequently decrease ethnic conflict overall.

Should this be attributed to negative attention being redirected towards the new immigrants? Or is it instead due to a greater experience of ethnic diversity causing lowered levels of aggression overall? Well, Eifert et al. identified a link between ethnic self-perception and other modes of identification, whereby, political prompting to identify with one's ethnicity tends to result in a drop in association with occupational and class-based identities. I hypothesize that, similarly, being made increasingly aware of one's identity as an Irish-born citizen corresponds with lower attention paid to ethnoreligious identity. Having a lower relative political presence due to immigration should correlate with a reduction of the influence of Catholics and Protestants as the dominant form of identification, according to my model.

V. METHODS

To test my theory of ethnic identity, I conducted an analysis of the correlation between the amount of population born outside Northern Ireland and the British Isles, and the number of sectarian murders across Northern Ireland. I avoided counting immigrants from Great Britain and from the Republic of Ireland, as each party within Northern Ireland might argue that such migrants aren't making truly international migration in the same way that migrants from any other region would be perceived. I use sectarian murders as a measure of ethnic identity as ethnically targeted violence has generally been shown to correlate with negative intergroup attitudes (Beber et al.), and such murders are easily measured both today and during The Troubles. Despite substantial drops following the Good Friday Agreement, the general pattern of sectarian violence has continued in the years since The Troubles.

For my controls, I chose to use population density, GDP, educational attainment (or, highest level of qualifications attained, on average), sectarian homogeneity, and sectarian employment inequality. Population density is an obvious confounding variable, as crime generally occurs in higher density areas, where people are more frequently within close proximity of one another, often enough to incite violence. And similarly, higher density areas like cities are usually the most appealing parts of a country for a foreigner to decide to immigrate to, being hubs of local culture and affluence. Most importantly, existing literature seems to point towards population density as being a major factor behind rates of violence during the troubles, such as by Poole or Fay et al.

For the same reason as population density, higher GDP areas are also more likely to attract immigrants, but lower GDP areas, where wealth doesn't travel as much through a community, are also more likely to see high rates of crime and sectarian conflict. GDP also helps test Ghatak and Gold's position on sectarian terrorist violence and economic development, as

GDP was a measure of development they cited. Educational attainment, while broken down for the purposes of employment, an abundance of research suggests will also tend to reflect positive attitudes towards members of other religions and social groups. This both correlates with a lower likelihood of sectarian conflict and creating a more welcoming environment to attract potential immigrants (Hjern).

Another frequent explanation for sectarian violence has of course been the direct contact of two large communities from either side of the conflict (Balcells et al.) (Kunovich and Hodson). Sectarian homogeneity is a measure of the absolute difference between the proportion of the population that is Catholic and the proportion that is Protestant. While the nature of sectarian segregation in Northern Ireland has been historically difficult to document, I propose that through a measure such as this, a close approximation of the rate of this intergroup contact theory can also be tested. Finally, sectarian employment inequality takes this same metric and weighs it by differing rates of unemployment between both groups, allowing me to also hold constant the affect of “horizontal inequalities,” another frequent explanation for the sectarian violence of the era (Borsuk).

All data is broken down into Local Government Districts and into decennial years, starting from 1971 through 2021, so as to measure a variety of differing locations and time periods of Northern Irish immigration and ethnic tensions. The Local Government District, or LDG, system was put in place in 1971 to replace the original 1898 divisions, splitting the region into 26 districts. This is the system that every decennial census recorded data by until reforms passed in 2014, which concentrated the LGD system into only 11 districts. No borders were changed beyond merely merging existing LGDs, thus data from before 2014 can be converted into the Modern LGD format simply through an understanding of which districts were combined.

However, doing so substantially limits the available data points to use for a regression. It is unfortunately not possible to discern Classic LGD data using the Modern LGD format, which ended up including not only data taken in 2021, but often 2011 data being retroactively shared. Thus, I decided to run two regressions, one using Modern LGD data throughout the entire period, and one using Classic LGD data while excluding 2011 and 2021.

Losing 2011 and 2021 data is of course quite limiting, as I chose the timeframe of 1971 to 2021 to provide a clean window of 3 decades pre and post the Good Friday Agreement, and thus, three decades of ethnic tension defined by the Troubles era, and three decades of relatively reduced levels of conflict. Still, I believe running both regressions should provide a close approximation of the correlation between the variables of interest.

All variables except sectarian murders and GDP can be obtained through the Census data of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), who can be reached out to for help gathering relevant information. GDP data could be identified through the European Commission's ARDECO database of NUTS regions. To identify sectarian murders, I first turned to CAIN, the Conflict Archive of the INternet, an Ulster University database for collecting information about The Troubles, including a list of names and locations of those killed through each year of the conflict, ending with 2001. Many varying standards exist for how to properly classify victims of sectarian conflict during The Troubles, but CAIN far and away has the most extensive, consistent, and reputable count based on the opinions of most Troubles experts I've read. The only comparative list was taken by the RUC, or Royal Ulster Constabulary (the police force prior to 2001), who have been widely criticized for disproportionately discounting Catholic deaths over Protestants due to the nature of the conflict at the time. However, I thankfully didn't have to categorize the locations of all deaths CAIN identified, as I was able to utilize a list based

on the CAIN data lasting through 1998 taken by Fay et al., only having to identify the relatively few killed in 2001 myself. Beyond this point, PSNI, the Police Force of Northern Ireland (reformed from the RUC with bipartisan oversight), has recordings of generally reliable data on sectarian killings since 2004.

Table I. Sectarian Murders per year per 100,000 people by Modern LGDs 1971-2021

District	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Antrim and Newtownabbey	7.93	2.56	2.46	2.33	0.27	0.99
Ards and North Down	5.03	1.61	1.44	0.67	0.08	0.29
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	9.1	3.93	3.06	1.7	0.19	0.55
Belfast	23.28	11.46	11.27	1.44	1.1	1.21
Causeway Coast and Glens	2.88	4.5	0	0.76	0.52	0.76
Derry City and Strabane	12.58	12.76	2.99	1.39	0.69	0.98
Fermanagh and Omagh	8.68	4.17	0.99	0	0.19	0.4
Lisburn and Castlereagh	9.62	3.45	3.08	0.57	0.11	0.57
Mid and East Antrim	3.78	1.78	0.84	0	0.25	0.47
Mid Ulster	8.99	3.82	3.54	0	0.35	0.83
Newry, Mourne and Down	10.06	3.85	0.71	0.66	0.12	0.4

After aggregating the data, adjusting for Modern LGDs, and proportioning based on district populations, I arrived at the figures for Table I and Table II. This relatively small data set is a particular limitation of the Modern LGD classifications, containing only 66 observations for each table. This is in contrast to the Classic LGD data, which spanned only up through 2001 but contained 104 observations total, ideally better allowing for the implementation of place fixed

effects, while limiting that of time fixed effects. Not included here is the substantially larger Classic LGD equivalent data tables.

Using this data, I was able to run a regression taking the form:

$$SectViolence_{it} = \beta_1 * Immigration_{it} + \beta_2 * Density_{it} + \beta_3 * GDP_{it} + \beta_4 * Homogeneity_{it} + \beta * Education_{it} + \alpha_i + \psi_t + u_{it}$$

Table II. Non-British Isles Immigrants by Modern LGDs by Year per 1,000 Population

District	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Antrim and Newtownabbey	10.524	12.92	12.659	19.214	42.855	57.394
Ards and North Down	13.14	15.404	15.019	21.297	34.189	45.369
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	6.797	8.664	7.99	13.764	54.107	86.144
Belfast	10.288	11.08	12.747	27.822	65.6	98.278
Causeway Coast and Glens	9.26	11.176	10.877	16.285	29.252	34.315
Derry City and Strabane	12.032	7.697	7.528	13.317	25.598	29.279
Fermanagh and Omagh	7.227	8.218	7.367	13.106	40.198	51.664
Lisburn and Castlereagh	12.517	14.662	14.667	21.158	38.894	59.87
Mid and East Antrim	9.307	10.07	10.354	15.287	35.697	57.449
Mid Ulster	5.812	5.925	5.707	11.512	65.15	92.147
Newry, Mourne and Down	9.185	9.363	9.319	14.586	42.451	52.951

Here, $SectViolence_{it}$ represents Sectarian deaths per 100,000, $Immigration_{it}$ represents immigrant population per 1,000, $Density_{it}$ represents population density, GDP_{it} represents GDP per capita, $Homogeneity_{it}$ represents either the sectarian homogeneity, or alternatively, $EmplInequality_{it}$ represents the sectarian employment inequality (the latter being a weighted form of the former), and $Education_{it}$ is a collection of controls, representing the proportion of the population to have finished schooling at each of four main levels. α_i represents place fixed effects, ψ_t represents time fixed effects, and β_1 is the coefficient of interest.

In sum, my hypothesis would be that the coefficient of interest, β_1 , is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that an increase in one immigrant per 1,000 population within a given LGD will correlate with a decrease in β_1 sectarian-motivated murders.

VI. RESULTS

Overall, I ran 11 different regressions using the full timespan data and the modern local government district classification system. The first four were run with no controls beyond the year and the district, as shown in Table III. Of the three regressions with statistically significant coefficients of interest, all three portray a similar pattern of an increase of one immigrant per district correlating with a decrease of 0.0001 to 0.0002 sectarian-motivated murders per year, or in more practical terms, an uptick in 1,000 immigrants per district is correlated with a decrease of 1 to 2 sectarian-motivated murders per year.

Table III. Regression of Sectarian Murders on Immigration with Fixed Effects (Modern LGDs)

	Dependent Variable: <i>Sectarian Murders</i>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Immigration_{it}</i> (β_1)	-1.82e-4**	6.60e-4	-1.27e-3***	-1.02e-3**
	(9.03e-5)	(4.88e-4)	(4.56e-4)	(5.03e-4)
<i>Constant/Intercept</i>	7.06***	853.47*	9.82***	199.95
	(2.07)	(445.88)	(2.71)	(198.23)
District Fixed Effects			Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects		Yes		Yes
Sample size (n)	66	66	66	66
Adjusted R ²	0.004	0.137	0.523	0.528

Table IV. Regression of Sectarian Murders on Immigration with Fixed Effects, Controls Added (Modern LGDs)

	Dependent Variable: <i>Sectarian Murders</i>						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>Immigration_{it}</i> (β_1)	-1.38e-3***	1.07e-3*	6.77e-4*	-1.02e-3*	-1.06e-3**	-3.24e-6	-2.11e-4
	(5.03e-4)	(6.00e-4)	(3.83e-4)	(5.35e-4)	(5.21e-4)	(3.21e-4)	(2.93e-4)
<i>Density_{it}</i> (β_2)	8.36***					6.19***	6.46***
	(0.91)					(0.98)	(0.72)
<i>GDP_{it}</i> (β_3)		-7.54e-3***				-2.63e-3**	-3.44e-3***
		(2.80e-3)				(1.18e-3)	(9.48e-4)
<i>Homogeneity_{it}</i> (β_4)				-1.01		-20.55***	
				(13.46)		(7.42)	
<i>EmpInequality_{it}</i> (β_5)					-28.29		2.09
					(37.54)		(17.05)
<i>Constant/Intercept</i>	48.43	-450.28*	13,947.7***	204.07	260.13	2,712.57	-153.58
	(170.67)	(251.74)	(2,741.05)	(182.12)	(245.31)	(2,572.06)	(2,437.13)
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Education_{it}</i> controls			Yes			Yes	Yes
Sample size (n)	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
Adjusted R ²	0.883	0.763	0.792	0.529	0.534	0.945	0.934

Note: The full four *Education_{it}* controls, while not shown here, each had varying levels of significance by regression, which didn't seem to suggest any particular pattern, but the controls were nonetheless quite useful, evidenced by the R² in Column 2

After that, I ran regressions with the existing fixed effects along with each of the control variables, followed by a regression combining all combinable controls, and another replacing $Homogeneity_{it}$ for $EmpInequality_{it}$, all shown in Table IV. Of these controls, both population density and GDP were consistently statistically significant, and sectarian employment inequality never showed any significance. This therefore lends credence to existing notions from Poole or Fay et al. on trends towards urban spaces, while failing to lend any credence to the economic inequalities drawn attention to by Gorsuk. Additionally, while each of the five variables could be controlled individually and leave a statistically significant coefficient of interest, the final two regressions show remarkably low significance on β_1 . This in addition to the high R^2 value on both regressions would seem to suggest a failure to reject the null hypothesis regarding my notion of immigration directly influencing sectarian conflicts.

Table V. Regression of Sectarian Murders on Immigration with Fixed Effects (Classic LGDs)

	Dependent Variable: <i>Sectarian Murders</i>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Immigration_{it}</i> (β_1)	6.66e-3	7.42e-3	-9.90e-3**	-9.86e-3*
	(4.60e-3)	(4.70e-3)	(4.89e-3)	(5.74e-3)
<i>Constant/Intercept</i>	-1.35	629.77**	4.98***	10.78
	(2.60)	(308.20)	(1.49)	(201.32)
District Fixed Effects			Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects		Yes		Yes
Sample size (n)	104	104	104	104
Adjusted R ²	0.267	0.344	0.694	0.694

Table VI. Regression of Sectarian Murders on Immigration with Fixed Effects, Controls Added (Classic LGDs)

	Dependent Variable: <i>Sectarian Murders</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Immigration_{it}</i> (β_1)	-5.74e-3***	-6.49e-3	-9.92e-3*	-1.06e-2*	-5.76e-3***	-5.56e-3***
	(1.65e-3)	(4.87e-3)	(5.88e-3)	(5.92e-3)	(1.73e-3)	(1.96e-3)
<i>Density_{it}</i> (β_2)	6.80***				6.88***	6.88***
	(0.57)				(0.64)	(0.64)
<i>Homogeneity_{it}</i> (β_4)			-1.10		-8.09*	
			(13.33)		(4.40)	
<i>EmpInequality_{it}</i> (β_5)				-53.45		-2.70
				(45.34)		(22.27)
<i>Constant/Intercept</i>	133.01*	7,294.97	7.67	-13.72	-423.27	-508.59
	(76.41)	(5,010.05)	(231.57)	(197.65)	(814.20)	(896.15)
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Education_{it}</i> controls		Yes			Yes	Yes
Sample size (n)	104	104	104	104	104	104
Adjusted R ²	0.956	0.770	0.694	0.699	0.960	0.957

However, as mentioned previously, the limited number of observations available using the modern local government district system can be challenging for properly assessing correlations between variables. To counter this, I ran the previous regressions again, now using the Classic LGD data (limited to the 1971-2001 period, as previously mentioned) (Tables V and VI). Since GDP data by Classic LGDs could not be obtained, this variable unfortunately also had to be excluded. But limitations notwithstanding, this alternative dataset still provides 104 total observations, far surpassing the previous 66. While the data comes out roughly the same across either dataset, we're left with a few interesting distinctions thanks to these regressions. A basic regression of immigration on sectarian murders no longer yields any significance, nor will the addition of an education rate control. However, when simultaneously applying all controls as with before, the coefficient of interest, β_1 , is found to be significant at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels! Furthermore, Columns 5 and 6 of Table VI both contain the highest R^2 values of any regression, making them easily the preferred models to explain sectarian murders in Northern Ireland. Therefore, according to the models presented, at least until 2001, an increase in 1,000 immigrants into a government district could be correlated with the decrease of 5 to 6 sectarian-motivated murders per year.

VII. DISCUSSION

The statistically significant negative correlation between immigration and sectarian violence found through the final two regressions aligns with my hypothesis that immigration might dilute the ethnic homogeneity that fuels sectarian hate. This suggests, then, that the presence of immigrants could potentially reduce ethnic tensions, by developing a more ethnically diverse society and reducing the proportional significance fueling conflict among existing ethnic populations.

Furthermore, my findings offer a broader empirical analysis of immigration on ethnic tensions, by focusing in a non-US context, to address a gap in the existing literature. While US-focused studies on immigration have found mixed outcomes for race relations, I submit that in contexts where ethnicity specifically plays an enhanced role in society, especially due to overlapping religious and political divisions as with Northern Ireland, immigration plays the distinct role of reducing existing ethnic divisions. This supports the positions of scholars like Posner, who argue for the importance of an ethnic group's proportion of the population as a determinant of their political conflicts. From a policy perspective, this suggests that states experiencing substantive long-term ethnic conflict like that of Northern Ireland should consider increasing attention towards immigration, not just as an economic opportunity, but also as a means of promoting broad social cohesion, ironically through the lack thereof they introduce.

Of course, the varying levels of significance across the 21 total regressions run certainly invites broader consideration of alternative causes of ethnic conflict. As mentioned in Section IV, the existing literature I'm aware of can be divided into five alternative explanations for ethnic conflict, being population density, ethnic homogeneity, ethnic economic inequality, education levels, and economic development (including GDP). All five were held as controls, each also being possible confounding variables between immigration and sectarian violence, and of the five, all but ethnic economic inequality were found to be statistically significant correlates of sectarian violence at some point in the process. This study therefore further participates to the existing literature on each topic. Additionally, these significant variables present alternative opportunities for anti-sectarian conflict policies, beyond increasing immigration.

For future research, I suggest looking to further expand the external validity of immigration's influence on ethnic tensions, ideally by using a conflict *without* the religious

and/or political factor distinctive to the Northern Irish conflict. Additionally, I would recommend analyzing a state with public databases that store measures of ethnic conflict beyond the most extreme metric, murders, such as using simple incidents of discrimination, or positive metrics, such as rates of intermarriage between groups.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In aiming to study the impacts of increased immigration on Northern Ireland's ethnic relations, this study successfully produced several informative regression charts. Through this data, we find strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis that immigration had no correlation with sectarian conflict. Further, this was found through a regression utilizing control variables each representative of common alternative accounts of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. When viewed individually, the validity of most such metrics is directly affirmed. But, when held together, the high R^2 value suggests the regression paints an accurate picture of Northern Ireland's varying levels of violence.

From this, we can identify strong evidence of a direct connection between immigration and ethnic conflict. As the world becomes increasingly global and more regions experience mass migration, it is quite likely that ethnic relations will continue to evolve to accommodate these new groups. While this paper identified a key trend in Northern Ireland, it's vital that we understand the nuanced ways in which tensions can adapt to waves of immigrants. In America, it becomes more and more difficult to build a national identity around ethnicity entirely, as politics have increasingly emphasized broader racial trends throughout its history. But in Northern Ireland, religious tensions across two otherwise very similar groups have been seen to fall. While much research has yet to be done on other forms of ethnic relations across the globe, politicians

should be considerate of the importance of more open immigration policies as a potential means of quelling longstanding ethnic violence, like was seen during The Troubles.

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