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# Manuscript [5000 words]

## Section one: Introduction [882 / 1000 words]

In the run up to the EU referendum, amidst discussions of migration, identity, expertise and economic impacts, the issues of Northern Ireland and its border with the Republic of Ireland received scant attention. This lack of focus on pan-Irish issues seems a conspicuous oversight given: that the Republic of Ireland will remain an EU member state, to which other EU citizens have rights of migratory access; the long and porous border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; and more troublingly the long history of violent sectarian conflict in the region. At the time of writing (5 June 2017), just days prior to yet another political vote of seismic political importance, issues of terrorism have taken centre stage due to two barbarous attacks on English citizens over the campaign period; firstly the suicide bombing of concert-goers on 22 May 2017 in Manchester, resulting in 22 deaths and over one hundred injuries; (Www.bbc.co.uk, 2017) then later a combined vehicle and knife attack by three individuals around London Bridge on the night of 3 June 2017, resulting in the deaths of ten people and the malicious injuring of dozens more. (Www.bbc.co.uk, 2017) In the wake of these events, discussion of terrorist threats and the effective management of risks to UK citizens have only rarely drawn parallels with the UK’s experience of conflict in Northern Ireland. Once again, this absence of focus appears odd in light of the UK’s, and Western Europe’s, longer-term history of terrorism, where available statistics of deaths clearly indicate that the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland consistently led to much higher levels of civilian deaths in Europe than have been associated with Islamic terrorism after 2001; indeed, for many decades Northern Ireland, along with the Basque region of Spain, have been the geographic fulmination points of terrorism-related deaths in Western Europe. (Www.economist.com, 2016)

This paper argues there is a pressing need for a deeper analysis and understanding of the causes and consequences of violent conflict in Northern Ireland, for learning from the history of the region about how a series of political and military mis-steps by the British Government over many years initiated a wave of lethal violence which propagated itself through the fabric of Northern Irish society for over two decades, and for considering whether the socioeconomic and cultural conditions still exist in the region such that further political mis-steps risk reinitiating violent instability in Northern Ireland and additional terrorist risk throughout the UK. I argue such issues seem particularly pertinent given a lack of clarity regarding plans for the Irish border in Brexit negotiations, and the importance of daily freedom of movement across the border in the island of Ireland for both cultural and economic reasons. Three specific empirical aims of this paper are: to use demographic data to visually illustrate the ‘excess deaths’ that appear attributable to the initiation of violent conflict in the early 1970s; to produce a number of estimates of total numbers of excess deaths attributable to the conflict, based on observed patterns and trends in overall mortality, and compare these with estimates based on deaths directly attributed to violence; and to characterise the particular pattern of excess mortality observed in Northern Irish demographic data, and describe why this is consistent with a tit-for-tat form of sectarian conflict. The main substantive aim of these empirical findings is, combined with a discussion of the political and military history of the island of Ireland, to highlight that the fundamentals which led to this earlier wave of death and instability both may still be present within Northern Irish society, and that poorly handled Brexit negotiations risk re-initiating a fresh wave of violence that, once started, may take decades to settle down again. Apropos to this argument about the self-sustaining nature of conflict in the region is a fundamental challenge to a dominant causal narrative about the peace process in Northern Ireland: a suggestion that key political events in this process, such as the IRA’s ceasefire announcement in 199X and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, followed rather than led trends towards reduced violence in the region.

The structure of this paper is as follows: section two, history, will provide a brief history of both the origins of Northern Ireland as a distinctly administered political territory, of the events which led to an initiation of violence in the early 1970s, and of key events and trends in violence and peace which occurred in the decades since. Section three will introduce the data and methods used to both visually identify the impact of sectarian conflict on deaths in Northern Ireland, and produce estimates of the total number of additional deaths which might be attributable to the conflict. Section four will present firstly visual representations of mortality patterns seen in Northern Ireland, in comparison to neighbouring countries and regions; and secondly estimates total excess mortality associated with the conflict. Finally, section five, the discussion, will begin by comparing my estimates of conflict-attributable mortality with extant estimates of conflict-attributable deaths; then conclude with a discussion of political, sociological and social psychological literature which may shed light on the patterns uncovered, before highlighting a number of critical pitfalls that Westminster should be mindful of in Brexit negotiations to reduce the risk of a new initiation of conflict in the region.

## Section two: History: Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the Troubles [1000 words]

As history is one thing happening after another, an understanding of the violence which erupted in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s requires some understanding of the longer term history of Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland.

## Section three: Data and Methods [500 words]

## Section four: Results [1500 words]

## Section five: Discussion [1500 words]

# References [1000 words]